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The Snowflakes

Started out with eleven of us. Well actual it started out with just me. Then the next few days I ran into more survivors until there were eleven.

Karla's scream got her, Peter and Rufus turned into lunch meat. Then there was eight.

Neal the bully flew off the roof which created a diversion so the rest of us could escape. Then there was seven.

Haywood, Cathy, Bob and Pricilla voted to go south. We thought continuing going east was better so we split up. Then there was three, Jenny, Jose and me.

Jose threw a noise maker but it broke when it hit the asphalt. Then there was two.

Pricilla caught back up with us covered in dried blood. Then she slipped when we were crossing the railroad trestle. She grabbed Jenny to regain her balance and they both fell. Then there was one, me. One is better.



Remember those late night horror movies? “Elvira. Mistress of the Dark”, “The Blob” or the flying monkeys on the Wizard of Oz? I remember my little niece screaming when that Wicked Witch unleashed those monkeys. Dad would tell her to, “Hush up” and threaten to “turn” the channel. Screaming today would get you killed like Karla and the rest of us found out. Those late night movies had nothing on today’s Zombies.

“Return of the Undead”. “Zombie Apocalypse.” “Invasion of the Zombies.” “Return of the Undead II.” Amazing how accurate the Authors predicted. Psychic? Aliens coming back in time to warn us? I don’t know but they almost nailed it!

I say almost because it’s been three months. No retired Special Forces military types have shown up to save the country. No Doctor with a last minute cure. No death ray (or would that be an undeath ray?) that vaporizes the Zombies and saves the heroine (or in my case, me). No top secret military base that I stumble upon, manage to short the correct two wires that bypasses the multiple layers of security and opens the door. To find that all I have to do to launch the Zombie killing, earth saving satellite, is insert the pass code that I took from a Zombie Technician that had surprised me in my sleep.



I’ve got to give my former roommate credit too. If it hadn’t been for him I wouldn’t be here.

He was one of those radical right wingers. Constitutional rights and all that. I am now ashamed I was one of those that got him kicked out of

college. Wonder what happen to him? He would have come in handy now.

Dad was harping about how he was into paying for five years of college just so I could get a Creative Writing degree. He wasn't going to pay for a sixth year! That's what he said last year and mom talked him out of it. That' how I always got my way. What does this have to do with my roommate? I'm getting there!

Sob story to mom, mom crying to dad and dad always cave in. I was dumping this all on my roommate during one of his rare free times. Roommate was studying, attending classes or working. What a fool I thought he was! College time was Party Time!

Roommate's downfall started when he gave a political speech in class about how Snowflakes were ruining this country. Professor ordered him out of the classroom! Snowflakes? How could snow ruin a country I thought when friends told me about what my roommate had meant. Snowflakes are delicate, pretty and one of a kind so he was referring to females in some way? Blondes, brunettes and red heads. Tall, short, big busted, no bust and everything in between, right? No my friends told me, he's referring to all of us! How everything has been given to us and how we couldn't do survive on our own! So when my friends asked me to sign a petition to have my roommate declared a disruptive influence and expelled, I signed.

It was late the next morning when I woke from another hangover. Man that was some party last night. I tried to focus on my phone to see what time it was. I was trying to understand if my phone was dead or I was looking at the wrong side when I heard something hit the window again. Again? Yea that is what woke me wasn't it? Another sharp

“tink” at the window. I sat up slowly to focus on the window. “Tink”. My head hurt like...”tink”. Using my bed for support I lean my way over to the window and fumbled it open. The fresh air cleared my head a little. Standing two stories down was my roommate.

“Daris! Wake up! I need you to throw down my clothes and my laptop!”

“What? Why don’t you just come up and get them? I’ve got the flu or something. I’m going to throw up. Forget your pass key?”

“Daris. Security has told me to leave the school’s property or I’ll be arrested and I’ve already tried my pass key, doesn’t work.”

“I’ll just come down and let you in.” I had picked a pair of Boxers off the floor and was sniffing them to see how clean they were. Coed dorm and a few of the girls were prudes. “Just give me a chance to find something to wear and I’ll be down.”

“Do you really want to be seen with me?”

“Why not? We’re roommates...”

“Was roommates. I’m blacklisted...just throw my stuff down before the Dorm Monitor or Security sees me. Will you Bro?”

“Yea sure.” I dump my dirtiest laundry out of a trash bag and head to the roommate’s closet. I leave his clothes on the hangers as I stuff them in the trash bag. His laptop is on his desk. My bare foot steps on some cold pizza. Man that must have been a party, wish I could remember some of it. Close the laptop and try to put it towards the middle of the bag. I’m surprised when I remembered to throw in the power cord too. “Here it comes!”

“Aim for the bushes!”

“Sure I can do that. You better get going, I see Campus Security headed this way.”

“Thanks Daris. I really appreciate your help. What’s above my desk is yours.”

I’m already sprawled back on my bed looking at my wallet again wondering why I couldn’t find the clock face on it. That’s the last time I saw my roommate.



Dad was yelling at me when my cell went dead. He probably thought I had hung up on him. I’ll just wait and call mom later. Give dad a chance to cool down and mom to work her magic on him. That was the last time my cell phone, any phone worked.

Eight of us were on the Library roof partying. Rufus lean over the edge of the roof to vomit. After he had hacked everything up he told us to come and look! I’d guess thirty or more students were hobbling towards two Campus Security goons. The Goons had their back to their car and they both were armed.

“I thought guns weren’t allowed on campus?” said Karla. Karla lived across the hall from my dorm room and is one of those prudes I had told you about.

“They aren’t. Acting Department must be putting on a play or rehearsing or something.”

That's it! Look! The students are made up as Zombies. Bunch of Actor hopefuls staring in their first B movie I bet!"

"More like a C or a Z movie. That's some pretty poor acting."

We continued to watch from the rooftop as the play unfolded.

"Bang...bang...BOOM" the gunshots echo back at us.

"You got to shoot them in the head you Douchebags!" Rufus yells at the Goons.

"The Prop Department sure did make the Goon's blood look real..."
That's when Karla started screaming.



"Karla you got to shut up! Those things will hear us!"

We had used the outside fire escape to get on the Library roof and we used the same way to get back down. The students we could see were focus on trying to eat what was left of the two Goons.

"Come on. My dorm is the closest." I said as I lead the others on a run.

I scanned my pass to unlock the dorm door. Held it open for the others. "Elevator up to my room." As I turned to head to the elevator I saw the Dorm Monitor standing in front of the elevator.

"Hey man! Did you see what happened out there..." The Monitor stared in the direction of my voice with a blank look before starting to shuffle towards us. The elevator "Dinged" as the doors slid open. Two more of those...Zombies shuffled off the elevator. When Karla started screaming again the Zombies quickened their shuffle towards us.

“Up the stairs!” I yelled. Had to give Karla a hard slap to break her out of her frozen screaming trace. “Third door on the left.”

We hid in my room trying to figure out what to do. We tried calling 911 on our cells with no luck. What was the NRA ad, “When seconds count the cops are only minutes away?” Bob thought we should go and lock the stairway door with something to prevent more of “them” from coming up after us. Sounded like a good idea so we left the girls locked in my room. We used a whole roll of gray tape to secure the door, only thing we could come up with. We were standing back admiring our ingenuity when the door was jerked open. That’s the first time in my life I wish I had a weapon. We fell over each other falling backwards, trying to get away from the door. I threw the empty cardboard tube from the gray tape at the first head that appeared.

“Hey! What’s the big idea?”

“We thought you were one of them!”

“No I’m Neal. And if you doofuses would get off the floor and let me in I’ll introduce you to Jose and Pricilla too!”

After we resecured the door, this time with a broom handle as suggested by Jose, we went back to my room. After brief introductions all around Neal told us their story.

“I and Pricilla had bummed a ride with Neal into the city. What I saw on the way was a real Zombie apocalypse. I tried calling 911 with no luck so we turned around to head back to campus. Then I saw an empty Campus Security car. Everyone knows the Officers don’t go too far from their car so I reached over in front of Jose and leaned on the car horn to get the Officers attention. Well the two things that stood up on

the opposite side of the security car wearing tattered uniforms sure weren't Officers, at least what was left of them! So I leaned on the horn more to scare them aware. More of those Zombie things showed up. Cop car on my left, building on my right and hundreds of Zombies in front and behind me...where did they all come from so fast? I was trying to get the car door open so I ... we could run when Jose threw something out from the moon roof. What was it Jose?"

"A small canister of air with a plastic air horn attached. I use them as noise makers at the football games. Several rubber bands held the depress button down..."

"Whatever" Neal interrupted. Those Zombie things must have thought it was a bird or something because they all turned to chase after it. That's when I got the car door open and here we are."

I looked at Jose. I'll wait until we are alone to ask Jose's his side of the story. I get the impression that Neal is less than what Neal is trying to project.

"Hey! What kind of hosts are you? You haven't offered me anything to eat!" Neal squirmed his bulk off the sofa to head into my kitchenette.

"Sorry. You not going to find much in the fridge or cupboards. I eat out and my exroommate, well I guess he ate at work."

"Could we check the other rooms on this floor for water and food?" asked Cathy. "Lot of students hid stuff above their ceilings."

"Shouldn't we make sure there aren't any Zombies on this floor? And maybe look for stuff we could use for weapons too."

“I think those are good ideas Cathy and Haywood.” I said as something started stirring in my memory.

So that is what we did. With the pry bar Jose found in a maintenance closet he quickly popped the door locks on the apartments that were locked. Only one apartment we didn't enter because we heard moaning and scratching behind that door. Maybe later when we have weapons?

We only found some bottled water, a few energy bars but no real food.

Bob did find a baseball bat. He thought it would make a good weapon until Neal took it from him.

We decided it was better to hang low and spend the rest of the day and the night together on this floor. We took six apartments, mine and five more close together. Neal appointed himself security stressing the point that Bob had “given” him the bat, not to anyone else. Some of the guys used the opportunity to shack up with the willing girls.

Morning found me last in line for the showers. What was it my roommate had told me? I could have what was above his desk? The only thing above his desk was a wall picture of some dude on a sailboat. Why would I want that? And Cathy said students hide things above the suspend ceilings...”Hey guys. I forgot my body wash. I'll be right back. Don't use all of the hot water!”

“If we can convince these girls that it would be safer if we showered together...”

I didn't hear the rest. I was already in my room and locking the door. Chair pushed to desk, desk held my weight easily. Pushed a ceiling tile

out...there by the wall was a cardboard box... one foot by two feet. I put the ceiling tile back as I carried the box to the coffee table. Plain box with a label, "Sub2000". Cut the tape and opened the box. Look like a gun bent in half. Enclosed instruction manual read "push the release to unfold the stock." I've got me a gun? Included in the box were four loaded clips. Clips had "Glock" embossed on the side. I slid one of the bullets out and looked on the end, "ww6". That must be the type of bullets the rifle used. I've never touch a gun before so this is all new to me. I do know that as soon as Neal finds out I have it he'll want to take it. I fold the rifle back up and put it and the clips into my book backpack.

"Hey Daris. Thought you want back for some body wash?"

I look down at my empty hands. The excitement of finding the gun I had forgotten all about my excuse. "Karla I'll wash your back if you wash mine" was first reply I thought of. From the look I got back from Karla I had my answer.



With the help of Jose's bottle rocket detractions we made it safely to the cafeteria. We filled the backpacks we had taken from the empty dorm rooms with the food we found. The group's consentience is to head to the country where we could live of the land until the authorities' rescue us.

Our plan was going good until Karla opened the walk-in freezer door. Her screams woke the Zombie standing inside the door. She was on the

other side of the counter from the rest of us and just stood there screaming. Before we could jump over the counter to pull Karla back the Zombie grabbed her by the neck to pull her in. The first bite had to hit an artery because blood was squirting all over. I look for Neal expecting him to be closing in with the bat. I saw Neal heading to the EXIT. Bob was the first one to reach the freezer. Bob slammed the door shut and put the pin back in the locker handle.

“NEAL! WE NEED THE BAT!” I don’t know if it was my screaming at Neal for the bat or the Zombies coming towards the cafeteria that we saw thru the plate glass front that made Neal decide to come back inside and shut the door.

Jenny, “We need to get Karla out of there!”

“I think it’s too late. You saw the blood and went happen to those cops...”

Karla’s screams had stopped to be replaced with a thump ... thump ... thump on the inside of the freezer door.

“We can’t let that thing out here with us...probably two of them now!”

“Neal. You stand in front of the door with the bat. Bob you unlock the door and I’ll swing it open. When the Zombie comes out whack it hard and...”

“I’m not going anywhere near that thing” Neal said with sweat rolling of his pale face.

The thumping on the door had an echo to it. Two things inside were pounding now on the door.

The acceptance that Karla was gone was showing on our faces when one of the front glass panes broke. The glass couldn't withstand the weight of the Zombies pressing against it. There had to be hundreds of them all trying to spill into the cafeteria.

“UPSTAIRS!!!”

It took Neal only one look back at the Zombies to determine his safest route was up the stairs with the rest us. “Get out of my way!” He yelled as he pushed through us. “I’ll make sure it’s safe.”

That’s when we learned Zombies couldn’t climb stairs. Oh they would try but didn’t have the coordination to do it. We sat at the top of the stairs yelling obscenities down at them. When that got old we started throwing anything we could find down at them. The one that looked like the Professor who was going to fail me, I bounced a fire extinguisher off her head, with a cheer.

Neal had left the show to find a place to pee. He came running back breathlessly, “There’s more of them up here he gasped.”

“How many?”

“Too many for me to kill. I got a bunch of them before running back here to warn you! Three...maybe four are left. I need to find a way out of here!” Neal’s bat looked as new as the day it had left the factory. Not a spot of blood.

“OK Neal. We will go find them and lead them to you. When they are close to the stairs you knock them down...”

“I’ve still got to pee...I’ll be right back...and then I’ll be ready for your plan Rufus.” From the front of Neal’s pants it looks like he had already relieved himself. We watched Neal run down the hall and turned left.

“Guess it’s safe to assume the Zombies are to the right?” I asked.

“Let’s get her done!”

Rufus’s plan worked like a charm. Peter and Rufus worked as a team looking for Zombies and leading them back to Jose and me. We did the manly thing and kept the girls behind us. I had a janitor’s broom and Jose had a floor lamp stand that we used to give the push the Zombies needed to tumble down the stairs.

“Is that all?”

“All we could find.”

“Shame. That was fun!”

“Let’s grab our packs and see if Neal found a way out.”

“I left mine down stairs...me too...”

All of our backpacks were lying in a pile, right where we had dropped them when Karla had started screaming.

“Guys” Jenney called softly. “They are coming up the stairs.”

The front row of Zombies had been pushed over by the masses behind them. Then the next row had crawled forward before falling on top and the next row and the next row...reminded me of how the Egyptians had made ramps of sand to get the heavy blocks of stones up the pyramids. They were a third of the way up the stairs with no signs of stopping.

“We need that food!”

“Try this.” Jose had bent the arms down on his floor lamp to act like a grappling hook with extension cords tied into a rope. By leaning out over the railing I could lower it down to our packs. A few Zombies wondered over to investigate, guess if you don’t smell like fresh lunch meat they lose interest. By the time I snagged (one at a time) all of our packs and had pulled them up to the second the Zombies had only two more steps to conquer. Man what I would have given for a flame thrower!

Down the hall to the left we ran. “Neal? NEAL! Where is Neal?” we asked each other. “There’s his bat by the window.” Window is open so we look outside. There is a small landing with a steel ladder bolted to the brick leading up to the roof. “Guess he couldn’t climb the ladder and carry the bat at the same time.” Bob said as he tied a curtain cord around both ends of the bat for a sling.

We found Neal.

Construction workers had scaffolding on the roof to work on the air conditioning thing. Neal had managed to get two of the planks in position to act as a bridge between the cafeteria roof and the next building’s roof. Neal was already across and looked like he was trying to push the planks off and over the edge. “oh...Hi guys...I thought they had gotten you. I was just making sure these boards were good and solid in case any of you made it. The girls went first, and then Bob, Haywood, Jose and me with Rufus and Peter bring up the rear.

Peter was crossing very cautiously, “Heights bother me” he said just as he looked down.

“Don’t look down!” encouraged Rufus.

In slow motion Peter starts swaying. Rufus reached out to help steady Rufus but he leaned too far and now Rufus is pulled off balance by Peter. They fell two stories into the waiting mouths of the Zombies.



“Hey! That’s my bat!”

“Shut up. You left it behind, it’s Bob’s now.”

“That’s not fair! I was going to come back after it.”

“Fair is where you get cotton candy.” I wonder where I came up with that? Neal fumes at me. I can tell from his expression this isn’t over.

It was several hours since we lost Rufus and Peter. Going across roof tops and using fire escapes we had managed to get to the last building at the edge of campus. The black tar roofs had radiated the heat back at us sucking moisture out of us. The Blondes were badly sunburned. Thankfully the sun was getting low, it would be dark soon. But none of us wanted to spend another night here. The screams in the distances were enough to give us nightmares now, we didn’t want to think what it would be like at night, not being able to see, not knowing.

The roof top we were on was a small single story with steel maintenance ladders mounted on opposite sides of the building. The last 10 feet of both ladders were covered with some type of guard to keep unauthorized people (students) from climbing up. A white suburban with all of its doors standing open was sitting an equal distance from either ladder seemingly waiting just for us. Jose pulled a

scope out of his pack and said he could see the keys in the ignition and no Zombies inside. Climbing down the ladders was no problem. Getting pass the ladder guards, just drop the last five or so feet, no problem. Getting to the Suburban pass a hundred or so Zombies wondering under the ladders was the problem. We wouldn't last another day up here without water, maybe not even with water.

Bob had an idea. "They are attracted to sound. Jose if you could get one of your noise makers over by that ladder, the rest of would quietly climb down the other ladder as far as we dare. When our Zombies leave to chase your noise maker we climb down the rest of the way and run to the suburban. You can catch up with us."

"Wouldn't make it too risky for Jose?" Asked Jenney as she tried too late to try to cover her now sunburned cleavage.

"Once we have the Suburban we can lead off the Zombies and come back for Jose."

Jose is shaking his head.

"We would not leave you!" we all said in agreement except for Neal I noticed.

"No it's not that. I don't have any noise makers left. Used my last one for us to get here."

"Now what?"

Bob, "I'll climb down close and bang the ladder with the bat. That should draw them away from the other ladder. Someone stay on the roof and signal me when all of you are ready."

Neal raised his hand. "I'll stay and give the signal."

"Let's go!"

I was the last one of our group down the other ladder. Just before my head went below the roof line I gave Neal the thumbs up. I tried to take another rung down but my backpack strap had caught on the end of the ladder. I stepped back up to free the strap, that's when I saw Neal push Bob over the edge of the roof. I was furious! Before I knew it I was back up on the roof to run across and pushed Neal with every ounce of strength I had. Neal went flying and screaming off the edge of the roof.

"I could use a little help down here Buddy."

Bob had slung the bat across his back with his homemade sling. The bat was caught in-between two rungs. If Bob tried to pull himself up to free the bat it would slip and Bob would join Neal.

"Sure Bob. I'm stepping on the bat, you can grab the next rung now."

Didn't take long to help Bob back on the roof. Neal was screaming the whole time. We looked back down just in time to see Neal jump out from the mob of Zombies and take off running. Lucky for us Neal was running away from the Suburban. Unlucky for Neal he ran right smack into another mob.

Jenny was in the Driver's seat with the engine running. Bob and I jumped in and slammed the door shut. "Let's go!" I said double tapping Jenny on the shoulder.

"Where's Neal?"

I looked at Bob before answering, “He decided to go a different route. I doubt we will be seeing him again.”

“Hurrah!” the rest cheered. “Let’s get out of here!”

“First Jose wants me to drive over so he can get his car.”



Our caravan was out in the suburbs making good time.

Jenny, “Jose is flashing his headlight at us. I’m stopping so Jose can pull up alongside us.”

“Guys we just passed a small strip mall. We need to go back and check it out. If there is a hardware store, we could get a lot of stuff we’ll need. Plus we need to find a safe place to spend the night. Any of you notice the Zombies are attracted to our headlights?”

I looked at Jenney and her at me, both of us shaking our heads. I was riding shotgun and neither of us had paid attention to how the Zombies reacted to our caravan.

“Turn off your headlights and back up to that side street. Shut off you engine and give me ten minutes then head to the strip mall. I’ll meet you there.”

We did as Jose had told us. The clocks on our smart phones hadn’t changed since we had left the campus. Cathy remembers her cell had a timer. She found the APP and set ten minutes. A thump or a dink as a Zombie bumped into the Suburban in the dark was the reminder for us to stay in the Suburban and stay quiet. Another reminder was the Zombie groups that were gathering under the street lights, staring up at

them. Like moths drawn towards a light. Again I wished I had a flame thrower. I jumped when a car horn went off not too far way.

“It’s time.” Cathy whispered.

Jenny. “Let’s give it just a little more time. See? The Zombie moths are moving towards the blowing horn.”

When we couldn’t see any more Zombies Jenny started the engine. The street lights provided enough light so Jenny left the headlights off as she slowly drove back to the mall. Jose’s car was already backed up to the hardware but no Jose. We hear a second car horn sounding, further away than the first. “You think Jose has something to do with the car horns?” Haywood asked.

“Sure did.” We all jump then turn towards Jose’s voice. Jose was walking around the corner of the mall. “I had three timers left. Popped a car hood and wired a timer directly between the horn and the battery. Did the same to two more cars, each one further way from this mall. First horn will shut off in...about another five minutes.” Jose said glancing at his wristwatch. “The second will go for a half hour and the third until the car’s battery is dead. That should give us time to go shopping and find a safe place to spend the rest of the night. Here’s some flashlights I found in the cars. Just be careful where you shine them, don’t want to invite those Zombies to come back.”

“I’ve got family south.”

“So do I and it will be warmer too.”

“Why isn’t the government doing something? It’s been three days!”

“Wouldn’t east be better? Mountains would stop them wouldn’t they?”

So a vote was taken. Haywood, Cathy, Bob and Pricilla will take the Suburban and go south. Jenny and I would go east with Jose in his car.

We divided our supplies between the two groups. Jose gave the other group a larger share of the gasoline. “My car gets better gas mileage than that hog, they will need it.” was Jose’s explanation. Jose had found some old fashion printed road maps at a trashed gas station. He showed us how to read them (voice step by step directions from our smart phones didn’t work for some reason). We marked both group’s routes on the maps, just in case one group changed their minds and what to catch up with the other. Tearful goodbyes between the girls and us men said our goodbyes by punching each other in the shoulders like it was no deal.



Jose reminded me more and more of my Granddad with his capability of making something out of almost nothing. Like his latest batch of noise makers.

The same gas station Jose had found the road maps he found a display full of cheap flashlights, Jose had taken all of them! I thought he was holding out on us and was high on something. We each had found our own flashlights and there was no way we would need all of those. But I watched as he pulled out from his backpack the computer board speakers he had taken from a computer store this morning. He removed the lens and bulb from one of the cheap flashlights. He glued

one of the computer speakers into the end of the flashlight where the bulb had been. Then glued the two wires from the speaker to the flashlight switch. When Jose turned it on it made a loud beeping noise! "Version 7.0 noisemaker! Watch this!" Jose said as he reached back into his backpack. "I know I threw some in here...here!" Jose pulled out a condom. Jenny blushed when she saw it, I didn't think she was the type. "Watch" Jose said again as he stretch the condom over the flashlight and then tied the end shut. "A water proof version too. Might even float.

It was that afternoon we were caught syphoning gasoline out of another abandoned car. Not sure where the Zombies came from or how they got so close to us before we noticed them. We barely made it into the car, Jenny screamed when a Zombie tried to climb in with her. Took all three of us to get the door shut while the Zombie was trying to squeeze in. Other than Jenny almost becoming lunch meat it really wasn't a big deal. We had this down to a science. Well actually it was Jose.

Jose would throw one of his improvised noise makers away from us. When the Zombies turned to go after the noise maker Jose would follow behind them. When the first noise maker died he would throw another one as far as he could before running back to us. While Jose was leading the Zombies away, Jenny and I would grab the gas cans, run back to Jose's car, fill the gas tank if possible and then wait for Jose to come running back to the car or we could drive to him if needed. We've done this routine several times and it always works. Like I said, "We had this down to a science."

Jose popped open the sunroof and tossed one of his new flashlight noisemaker. Less than a count of five the zombies had lost interest in us and turned towards the noise. Jenny and I exited on the opposite side of the car, grabbed the gas and took off at a sprint. As I held the funnel Jenny poured the gas. I looked back to see how Jose was doing. A few Zombies had slipped in behind Jose as the first noisemaker died. Mental note to myself, cheap flashlights have cheap batteries. Jose had noticed them and threw the next flashlight noisemaker off at a right angle. Zombies turned to follow it as planned until it hit the pavement and shattered. Jose will just throw another...Jose turned to look back at the car we had just left. I followed his eyes, Jose's backpack was on the roof of the car we had siphoned the gas from. He must have left it there with the intent of picking it up on his way back. That was Jose's first mistake. His second mistake was to swear out loud. He was now surrounded by Zombies.

"Oh my..." I jumped into Jose's car and pushed on the car horn. Nothing. "JENNY! CAR KEYS!" We heard Jose scream as Jenny pulled the keys out of her jeans pocket.



It was the survivors that gave us the most problems. Territorial with a "shoot first" mentality. They weren't even willing to share whatever they had hoarded. Jenny and I planned on reporting them to the Authorities as soon as we found some Authorities. That's why we started avoiding gas stations and then population centers. And that's why we ended up on foot, ran out of cars to siphon gas from. Before we abandoned Jose's car we took everything we thought had value.

We both had emptied our backpacks to make room. I noticed that Jenny had been carrying makeup, curling iron, sandals, several dresses and fancy underwear.

“Jenny. You might want to pitch some of that...make more room for the bottled water.”

“Well want’s that thing?”

“My roommate had it hid above our dorm ceiling. I think it’s a gun.”

“YOU GOT A GUN!? You know those weren’t allowed on campus! If I had known you had a gun I would have went with Cathy and Pricilla. You get rid of THAT right now!”

“Yea. I had forgotten all about it.” I said as I laid it in Jose’s car trunk.

“Are these MREs OK to take, being military and all?”

“We’ve got to eat and that’s all the food we found in his car.”

I stuff Jose’s poncho and rain hat into my backpack along with an extra set of clothing. The rest of the space I filled with the MREs. When Jenny was busy reloading her backpack I replaced two of the MREs with the gun before quietly shutting the trunk lid.

“You ready Jenny?” I noticed that the only thing she had discarded was her curling iron.

“Yep. Let’s go Daris.”

Looking back I’m not sure it was good or not we had run out of places to get gas.

Good because that was how Pricilla was able to catch up with us. Bad because Jenny died soon after.

It was late the next day when we heard something with a motor coming towards us. Wasn't coming too fast so we had time to debate before agreeing it would be safer to hide until we saw who or what it was.

It was a scooter with a female Zombie hunched over the handle bars going as fast as it could. Zombie's long hair was flapping in the wind. Jenny tried to stand up but I forced her back down. We now have a bigger threat since Zombies could now drive I was thinking.

"Let me up!" Pricilla shouted. "That's Pricilla!"

"Are you sure? Doesn't look like her..."

"That's the same outfit she was wearing when she left with Cathy and the others."

At first I thought Pricilla would run us down. We stood in the middle of the road waving our arms but Pricilla acted like she was in a trance and couldn't see us. I was about to pull Jenny and me safely out of Pricilla's way when her head jerked in recognition and brought the scooter to a screeching stop.

"Jenny?" Pricilla whispered.

"Yes it's me Pricilla. Where are Bob and Hay?"

A panic looked came over Jenny's face, then she started sobbing uncontrollably. Jenny's instinct was to embrace Pricilla to comfort her but the blood and gore that covered Pricilla made Jenny pause. In normal times I would have given my right arm to be able to put my arms around her but not now.

“Jenny. If I’m reading the map right there is a stream over that way, not too far. Why don’t you take her there and get her cleaned up? I’ll hide the scooter and meet you there?”

And that’s what we did.

Wasn’t anything on the scooter and the gas tank was just about empty. I pushed it off the road and thought about rigging a timer on its horn to distract any following Zombies. Instead I just watch for what I would guess was fifteen minutes and when I didn’t see any Zombies I headed towards the stream. When I got there Pricilla was just sitting on a rock covered with a blanket. Jenny was trying to wash the bloody gore clothes in the stream without touching them any more then she had too.

Pricilla still had that wild look on her face so I asked Jenny, “Did she say what happen?”

“No and don’t ask. I did and it took all my strength to keep her from running off. This is hopeless. Without soap these will never be clean. She’s about my size. I’ve got an extra dress she could wear...not to practical I suppose.”

“Here. I’ve got an extra pair of pants. Use this cord for a belt. Use your dress for the top and tuck it into the pants?”

“Well she’s not going to win any fashion shows but it’s the best we can do I guess. And I don’t believe she’s going to complain.” Jenny said as she let Pricilla’s former clothes float downstream.

“You need any help” I asked evidently too eager.

Jenny flashed me a jealous look before answering, "No. You go far away and don't come back until I call you!"

"Well don't yell too loud. I hate to have something else show up before me." My comment took most of the jealous look out of her face.

Jenny did a quick look around before replying, "Just go out of sight and don't come back too soon. You catch what I'm saying?"

"I'll be on the back side of that big tree until you call."

That night was the coldest night yet. Before, huddle up together in a car had kept us warm. Now being out in the open with only one blanket. The girls took turns warming up in the middle of the other two. My male ego wouldn't let me take a turn in the middle. Thought about a campfire but we didn't have any way of starting one. Bad time to remember the lighters we had left back in Jose's car, if we had only known. I'll starting to realize that there is a lot of things I thought I knew but didn't.

In the morning we started early to get warmed up. We found a railroad track and decided to follow it. Nice straight line with a bridge over a river according to the map. Sun was straight up when we reached the railroad bridge. We each had a MRE for lunch as we stayed hidden to watch the far end of the bridge.

"You think it's safe?" Jenny asked me. Pricilla still isn't talking.

"Step on the ties and don't look down. Once we start we need to be quick about it. We don't want to be trapped in the middle with Zombies or worse at both ends."

“I don’t know Daris. The college roofs I could handle but this? What Five hundred or more feet to the bottom? I’m not sure.”

“I’ll go across first, show you that it’s safe and that the far end has no Zombies. Then you follow Pricilla across. She doesn’t seem to be too aware and might need your help...just don’t look down. You know it’s like going up stairs; you do it naturally without thinking, but stumble when you think about how to do it.”

Thinking back about it maybe I should not have used the stair analogy?

I jogged across the bridge being as quiet as I could. I ran on pass the end a ways to check for Zombies and Survivors. Clear. Went back to the bridge and motioned for the girls to cross. Then I took a position of to the side so I could watch the girls cross and still watch my back. Something was rustling behind me. I looked back at the girls just in time to see Pricilla stumble. Jenny reached out towards Pricilla and then they both fell off the bridge. I watched helplessly as one of them scream all the way down and then as both of them bounce off a large boulder. From the weird angles their bodies landed, no way anyone could survive that. I remembered that I had Jose’s scope in my backpack. Jenny eyes were open and staring but unseeing. Priscilla’s head was unnaturally flat. I kept looking and hoping. Jenny and I had had some good times... the noise behind me brought my attention back. I got my roommate’s gun out and figured out how to unfolded it, the instructions were long lost. I managed to get a clip in and then pointed it towards the noise. A large furry animal poked it’s head out of the brush. When I pushed the gun towards the animal it turned around and ran away.

Then there was one, me.

If you travel during the day the Zombies and Survivors would get you. If you traveled at night then just the Zombies and Survivors would get you. Kind of a catch twenty-two. So I split the difference. Travel at night when there was enough moon light then travel during the day when there wasn't.

Ruth. I forgot about Ruth. Well it wasn't like we had spent a lot of time together, it was just an afternoon. Jenny had carried all of our bottled water and I was dry. So when my map showed a town ahead I decided to risk it. The town turned out to be a gas station, Post Office and a few stores. Gas Station had already been picked cleaned. I was looking out the Station's window debating which store to try when I heard them. You know that annoying sound of a mosquito buzzing your ear at five in the morning when you are sleeping off a drunk? Take that buzz and multiply it by ten and then a hundred. Zombies were walking down the street from the direction I had just come. First just a few, then several and then a solid stream. More Zombies the louder the buzzing. I knew if I moved or made a sound they would be on me like a Drug Dealer that was owed money. I froze to watch and that's when I noticed Ruth. One of the Zombies wasn't "acting" quite right. Old female in her forties? A couple inches shorter than me and a shaved head. Filthy condition of the strange Zombie made hair color hard to tell. Other than the shaved head she looked like a zombie. What made her strange to me was that she wasn't quite walking in step with the others. It took me awhile to see the pattern. For every two or three shuffled steps forward she made a partial step to her left, towards the Post Office. It was a slow process but she gradually worked her way

across the streaming herd until she was standing alone in front of the Post Office. She stood there frozen until all of the Zombies had finally passed. Then she quickly ducked into the Post Office. I waited until I was comfortable there would be no more zombies before I jogged across the street to knock on the Post Office door.

“Hello?” No answer so I knocked louder and shouted, “HELLO?”

“Shut up! You are trying to bring them back?”

“No.” I replied with a quieter voice. “How did you do that? Walk with them without being attacked?”

“Go away.”

“OK. Just trying to be friendly. I’m out of water. Any of these stores have any?”

“I said go away!”

“I can trade for water.”

“What do you have?”

“Well I’ve got military MREs and…” The Post Office door opens and I am staring into the biggest gun I’ve have every seen.

“Shut up and get in here.” And that is how I met Ruth.

While I unpacked by backpack to get the MREs, Ruth spied my gun. She picked it up, quickly unfolded it and inserted one of the clips. She pulled something back and let it fly back.

“Nine mil. Popular cartridge. What will you trade for this?” she asked.

I shook my head.

“You know I could take it from you.” It wasn’t a question, it was a statement. “As a matter of fact I could easily take everything you have.”

I looked at her big gun lying by her side. And then at my gun she was holding in her hands with everything in my backpack spread out between us. I realized she was right.

“I had son that would have been about your age. Here.” She had removed the clip and refolded my gun as she had talked. She laid my gun back in front of me. “I’ll trade two bottles of water for every MRE. Shaving your head will help keep the head lice in check.” That would explain why I kept scratching my head. “Throw that body wash away. You are keeping yourself too clean, Zombies don’t like that. Then you can move with them, just don’t make any sudden moves or be too quick about it.”

I counted ten MREs. I slid five towards her. She shook her head as she pushed two MREs back at me. Without taking her eyes off of me or even turning her back to me she stood up and walked over to some boxes on a table. Out of one box and using one hand (her other hand held her gun) she removed six bottles of water and tossed them to me one at a time.

“Don’t throw those plastic bottles away when they are empty. They are PET, you can refill them and set them out in the Sunlight for a day, two days are better and the sun’s UV rays will disinfect the water. Now get out before I change my mind.”

From the look on Ruth's face I knew she meant it. I quickly packed my bag and started to leave. As I reached for the door knob Ruth grabbed my arm. I thought she changed her mind and was going to rob me.

"How did you ever last this long? Lived in your mommy's and daddy's basement so they would take care of you? Look you Snowflake. Before you open that door I'd suggest you look thru the window and see if it's safe. A zombie postman could be waiting outside to have you for their main meal." Ruth pulled back the window curtain a little. "Look. I mean really look. See any movement? Anything that looks out of place? Nature doesn't have straight lines so when you look at those bushes any straight lines would be manmade. Rifle? Spear? Take time and look! And don't get too close to the window or you can be seen looking out. Step back a bit."

I had felt my face turn red when she called me a Snowflake. And how did she know I had lived in my parent's basement during school break? But my temper cooled as she continued to talk and I listened. There! I had seen some movement. I watched until a cat poked its head out from under a car. I slowly scan the scene again until I was confident there was no danger. I turned to thank Ruth. The room was empty. I thought about searching the Post Office for her but I remembered her words, "Now get out before I change my mind."

The closest store was a Drug Store. Door had been forced open, most of the windows broken too. Everything that looked like it could be a drug had been taken. I found some pencil flashlights that could be made into noise makers, shaving cream and razors too. Restroom didn't have any running water but there was a mirror over the sink. Lathered up my head and took my time shaving my head and then my

face whiskers. Found some mouthwash, label said it was 22% alcohol. Back to restroom to wash my head down with the mouthwash. That should kill the head lice! While I'm at it I shaved off my eyebrows too. It's not like I'm going to have any dates with any beauty queens soon. I was looking at my new look in the mirror when I realized I had been scratching my crotch too. Why not go all the way? I dropped my pants and shorts on the stool lid, lathered everywhere that had hair and I could reach to shave followed by the mouthwash which stung! I was staring at the pale bald head with sunburn face staring back at me from the mirror when I heard a noise out front. My gun...in the backpack out on the prescription counter. Ruth was right, amazing I had survived on my own for this long. I hid behind the shelving as I slowly threaded my way to my pack. Reached for my gun, unfolded it and put a clip in quietly. Then I pulled back like I had seen Ruth do and let go. A loud "CLANK!" as that part went flying forward taking a bullet along with it. Well so much for my stealth mode. I stood up and thrust my gun towards the noise and pulled the trigger. Cat. Same cat I had seen under the car was now sitting in the doorway staring at me. Evidently the cat decided a hairless male wearing just a tank top was harmless because it started licking its paws. I walked back to get dress wondering how a fool like me had survived. As I pulled on my pants something crinkled in my back pocket. Instructions for my gun! I must have put them there when? What I called a clip was a magazine. And I read the gun didn't fire when I pulled the trigger because the safety was on.



I was now ripe enough to move with the zombies during the day but then I stood the risk of getting shot as a zombie by another survivor. If I traveled alone then I would get shot by a survivor for what I had. Safer to travel at night. If I ran into zombies I could shift in to the “shuffle I’m one of you” mode and survivors could not see to shoot me. That’s how I ended up in the attic of this two story brick house.

Bridge over a large river ahead. Only crossing within days of walking. So the night before I had silently worked my way pass a cluster of houses to this last one just before the river. From the attic windows I had almost a clear 360 view. I preferred attics. Basements usually had the best finds but too easy to get trapped down there. Main floors had too many entries to try and defend. Pull the attic stairway down and up I go something Zombies could not do. Pull the stairway back up, broom handle across the beams with the stairway pull rope tied to it locking the stairs in place. I did make a quick trip to the basement to find the hot water heater to fill my water bottles. Water bottles were now laying in the roof gutters. They couldn’t be seen from the ground and when the morning sun came up, all day to disinfect the water. Better safe than sorry I figure. Last week I had gotten some bad water, thought I was going to die.

I had just got comfortable and dozed off when banging and clanking woke me up. I looked out the attic window facing the bridge. Army! It wasn’t too long ago I would have been protesting the Recruiters on campus. Then after the ‘event’ I was wondering where the Army was. Then I was avoiding the military for fear of forced conscription or worse. At least they looked like Army. Not all of their uniforms matched. Definitely not a local militia.

They were unloading big metal boxes. Think they call them shipping containers. Those containers full of merchandise that were loaded on ships, then onto trains and finally trucks for delivery to the store? They had a crane that was picking the containers off truck as the trucks arrived. They also had two tractors that had long forks on the front. One tractor on each end of the same container. Tractors worked in unison to pick up one container to take it across the bridge. Metal banking on metal, truck engines and the revving of the crane's engine as it lifted another container. Don't these soldiers know all that noise is going to attract zombies? I know behind me is the largest herd of zombies I have seen to date and they were coming this way. I don't know why but Zombies take the path of least resistance. This herd had stayed on the main road while I had cut around them on the backroads to get ahead of them. All that noise the Soldiers were making will draw the Zombie herd down on us all. I'm doubly glad I picked this brick house over the yellow house across the street. That house is two story too but wood instead of brick. I've seen the body mass of a herd press and flatten small buildings. Like a funnel with more and more being poured into the top to be forced out the smaller end. Zombies at the back of the herd don't care or know what going on in the front they just keep pushing forward.

With the sun up and my attic view I could see the yellow house better. Six foot chain link fence around the property topped with barbed wire. Inside that fence was a second chain link fence. The second fence looked like it was put up in hast and built from salvaged fence sections. My impression was someone was in that house and didn't want to be disturbed.

I turned my attention back to the Army. On my side of the bridge they have stacked the containers two high to form a barrier. And on their side they were building another barrier, look like it was going to be four containers high. I'd guess they were going to stop the zombies at the river. Which means IF I can get across I should be in safe territory but how? Army controls the only crossing point for days and I assume they will control the next one too. In a few days this side will be filled with Zombies and I'll be stuck in an attic on the wrong end of a battle. Army is more likely to shoot and ask questions later. River banks aren't too deep but the river is wide with a strong current. I'm not a strong swimmer. I study my map for different crossing that the Army may have miss, a natural gas pipe line or...nothing. I make a plan. Once the Army is done banging around I'll catch me some sleep. After dark I'll sneak my way to the barricade and see if they are guarding it. I don't know why they would; the herd is almost two days away. I'll sneak across the bridge, drop to the bank on their side before I get to the bigger barricade. Then I will work my way along the river until I find a safe place to come up.

Never eat where you sleep. One of my new rules. I made it when those dogs smelled my food and attacked. Surprisingly (to me) I not only shot at both of them but I hit them too! I've been in the attic all morning and I'm hungry. It's a good rule. I'll wait until tonight and eat on my way to the barricade.

“YOU GUYS STOP MAKING ALL THAT RACKET! ARE YOU IDIOTS OR WHAT?” It sounded like it came from the yellow house. One of those megaphones I thought as the Army replied with machine guns. I counted four machine guns on the barrier on my side all firing into the yellow house. “Cease Fire!” and the guns stopped. Then all four guns

rotated to aim at my brick house. You could do everything right, not make a single mistake, planets lined up perfect, favorable horoscope and one small detail outside your control gets you killed. I moved from the window to hide behind the brick chimney and waited...and waited. Luck was still on my side.

It was good and dark when I left the attic and started working my way towards the Army barricade. Spot lights were sweeping back and forth, automated I hoped. As I got closer I could hear the soldier's voices. That eliminated my hope that barricade wouldn't be guarded. Briefly thought about checking out the yellow house, might be wounded survivors needing help. Good way for me to get killed too. I ate a can of cold Pork & Beans washed down with peach juice before heading back to my attic. Zombies a day behind me, Army in front and the Yellow house on my right a bad place to be when the gunfire starts. I'll get some sleep and then headed out to the left before daylight and get as far away from the upcoming fight as possible. A good plan except the Zombie herd showed up a day early.

Being by myself was safer I thought. I didn't have to worry about anyone else but me. Easier to find food for one. No friends, no comrades no nobody, shoot whatever moves and live another day. It also left me in a wearied tired state all the time. I haven't slept soundly since. Half asleep with one ear listening all the time. Is it REALLY safe? Anything I may have overlooked? And when you manage to fall asleep, abruptly awaken like just now.

It was still dark when the Army starting shooting. Their flood lights were drawing the Zombies in like moths. Then the machine guns joined in and flame throwers! Cool! Time for me to get out! I look out the

attic window towards my escape route. Zombies coming from that direction too. I'm stuck here! A quick decision, down stairs to the bedrooms for the mattresses. Louder guns shots as something bigger has joined in from across the river. My house shakes. I get two mattress up in the attic and leaned against the chimney for more protection. I'm now thinking perhaps the basement would be better after all. "BAWAMP! BAWAMP!" The house shakes again and I hear glass breaking down stairs. After ten or fifteen minutes the sound of the battle hasn't let up. Better yet there are no bullet holes in the roof. My curiosity gets the better of me so I creep over to a window. The mass of Zombies have collapsed both fences around what remains of the yellow house. Most of the Army's gunfire is directed down the street and towards the yellow house. The big guns and the "BAWAMP" are coming from the far side of the bridge. I hear another "BAWAMP" and soon after a big splash irrupts where there was once Zombies. Maybe the Army isn't idiots; they are using the floodlight to draw them in! I move over to the window overlooking my escape route. Not as many Zombies coming from that direction but when the Army trains one of their guns in their direction to mow some of them down, I'm absolutely not escaping that way.

Sun is coming up and the guns aren't as loud as they were. I have never seen this many Zombies massed in one area. Soldiers are running back and forth on the bridge. Only two of the machine guns are firing the other two have soldiers working on them. The mass of Zombies are pushing the containers slowly backwards! Many of the Zombies are pushed over the river bank and down into the river to be sweep away by the current. A container jerks, a soldier loses his balance and falls cursing into the Zombies. Only one machine gun is firing. There is a

breach between the containers and the Zombies start pushing though. A few soldiers keep their cool by lying down on the top of the two story containers. But most jump or try climbing down to run back across the bridge. Only a few made it. I expect the Army to blow up the bridge but it doesn't. Surely the larger barricade on the far side can stop the Zombies?

The four story barricade on the far side of the bridge did hold. I found it comically how the Zombie mass kept pushing the Zombies in front up and over the sides of the bridge to cartwheel down into the river. This worked in favor of the soldiers because from four stories up they had a hard time pointing their guns down at the Zombies that were against the barricade.

The soldiers that had stayed on my side must have gotten their machine guns working again because they had started shooting. That is until the Zombies continued to press against their barricade and it tipped over to fall down the river bank. As the containers fell one of the machine guns ventilated the roof just above my head. I decided to it would be better if I stopped watching and move back behind the chimney.

Sun was low in the sky, dusk in another hour I'd guess. I heated my last MRE. When I was done I stuffed all the food trash back into the bag. Zombies shuffling towards the bridge never even noticed when I tossed my food trash out the back attic window and watched it bounced off one of their heads. On the other side of the river were the "BAWAMP" makers. I would hear a "BAWAMP", the house would vibrate as another eruption of flying Zombies pieces could be seen on the road

behind me. Sure hope those soldiers didn't aim closer! One hit on my house and my body pieces would be flying too.

More flood lights were turned on. Firing has slowed. I moved back to the bridge side attic window to watch again. The "BAWAMP" and Zombies pushing themselves into the river were causing more destruction than the soldiers shooting. The flood lights were angled down so they weren't blinding me. Off to my left I can see shadows moving along the river bank. Soldiers bring up more ammo and reinforcements. Interesting nothing moving on the right. The "BAWAMP" has finally stopped; maybe I can get some sleep tonight and slip out before dusk? The flood lights start wavering as some are turned towards the moving shadows. The shadows aren't reinforcements they are Zombies! The Zombies that had been swept downstream must have found a way up the far river bank and were drawn back to all the noise! Rapid gunfire starts up briefly before dying all together. The only sound left is an engine running across the river and when it stops the flood lights go dark. All is quiet.

Amazing how a person can adapt. When the noise of the battle was over I had curled up and went sound asleep. The attic was warming up from the morning sun when I finally woke up. A look out the attic windows in all directions showed the Zombies had moved on. The bridge and the yellow house I studied with Jose's binoculars for a long time. No movement in either direction. I'll risk the yellow house first.

I took the long way to the yellow house, didn't want anyone to see where my safe spot was in case I had to retreat back to it. I found 15 bodies. Three older men, five adult women and seven children. One of the children was a baby. Most of them had been shot numerous times.

All (including the baby) except one had been shot once in the forehead. One of the adult women (she would have been a looker, even at her age) was the only one that didn't have a bullet wound to the forehead. Hers was in her temple. A quick look for ww6 ammo to replace what I shot when I was learning how to shoot my gun turned up none. Hopefully the Soldiers had left some behind. Somewhere I had read or was told the bullet was commonly used among the military and police.

I found more bullets than I could carry on my side of the river. Some of the extra I buried under the bridge the rest I hid in my attic along with some of the guns I found lying around. I thought about trading up to a better gun but decided against the idea. I barely knew how to work the one I had. Sorely tempted to take one of the flame throwers. Found several MREs that hadn't been torn open or trampled that went in my backpack. I risked crossing the bridge. Barricade was built in such a way that I (or Zombies) could not get around or over it. River bank was too deep to jump to. That means a long walk for me to find another river crossing. I wasn't too disappointed because I knew there were a lot of Zombies on the other side plus any retreating soldiers. Downstream would be the Zombies that had fallen off the bridge so that leaves me following the river upstream.

Well Dad if you could see me now. I'm finally surviving on my own.

The End