

THE OUTBREAK

DAY ZERO



SKYLER NEWMAN

THE OUTBREAK: DAY ZERO

SKYLER NEWMAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Chapter 1](#).....4
[Chapter 2](#).....19
[Chapter 3](#).....32
[Chapter 4](#).....57

CHAPTER 1

MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
DAY 0, 10:08 AM

It had only been a couple minutes after Ben woke up when Nurse Amy arrived with his breakfast.

AMY: Good morning, Ben. How are you feeling today?

Another long night of tossing and turning from the cold sweat delirium of heroin withdrawal had made Ben exhausted. He looked thin and frail in his 28-year-old body, but the young nurse's warmth gave him strength.

BEN: Not too bad, I guess.

Amy looked down at Ben with caring eyes, and he knew he couldn't lie to her.

BEN: Last night was rough, though.

AMY: Having trouble sleeping again?

BEN: Yeah, I was up all night.

AMY: I had a feeling you were still having problems, but I think there's something we can do about that.

Ben looked at Amy with a curious grin.

AMY: Just don't tell anyone I gave you this, okay?

BEN: Uh, sure. What is it?

Amy reached into her pocket and dropped a plastic-wrapped cookie onto Ben's tray. Ben picked it up and saw the word **SPECIAL** printed in red letters on the wrapper.

Ben looked back up at Amy, astonished.

BEN: Is this what I think it is?

AMY: Oh, I wouldn't know anything about *that*. All I see is a delicious-looking cookie.

Amy gave Ben a sly smile, and Ben caught on instantly.

BEN: You know, at second glance, I don't think I see anything *special* about this cookie at all.

Ben returned the sly gesture, and Amy laughed, placing her hand on Ben's shoulder.

AMY: Good, now enjoy your breakfast. I'll be back to check up on you again in a few hours.

Ben looked into Amy's eyes with a glowing smile.

BEN: You're the best.

Ben watched from his hospital bed as Amy left the room, and then, almost like a ritual, he removed the wrapper from the cookie and took a big bite, ready to drift off wherever his mind wandered.

TRENTON UNIVERSITY
DAY 0, 12:16 PM

The university lecture hall was packed full of medical students.

Adam had just started his second year of medical school a few weeks prior, and the demanding routine was already beginning to take a toll on him.

As Dr. Meyers droned on with his lecture, Adam peered around the hall at the other students who looked upon the gray-haired professor as focused and determined as ever.

ADAM: *How do they do it? How do they put up with this monotony day after day?*

Maybe Adam was just tired of the endless hours of studying and the numerous other pressures that came with being a medical student, or maybe it was something else entirely. Either way, he felt distracted, disconnected.

Lost in thought, he stared off into space, wondering what he'd be doing right now if he hadn't gone back to medical school this year.

Over the summer he had fantasized about taking time off from school, but he couldn't help but feel obligated to wait until he graduated before doing anything else.

And besides, if he had left school, he may have had to break up with his girlfriend, Kate, and that fact alone was enough to end his contemplating.

ADAM: *Maybe this is exactly where I'm supposed to be. Maybe I just have to be patient.*

Adam nodded his head in silent agreement, then refocused his attention back to Dr. Meyers, joining his fellow classmates in listening once again.

**MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
DAY 0, 2:47 PM**

Amidst the high of drug-induced ecstasy, the halls of the hospital shined like dew on a spring morning, and for once the dreary hospital seemed alive and buzzing with activity.

Ben drifted from floor to floor striking up conversations with nurses and patients and passersby alike. He had never been this cheerful on previous occasions, but today he felt reborn.

Ben had been clean for five days straight now, and despite the usual spontaneous aches and jitters from withdrawal, he had a deep feeling inside himself that things would be different this time.

BEN: *This time I will beat it. This time I will drop the habit for good.*

Upon striking up a conversation with a receptionist, Ben locked eyes with Amy as she returned from escorting a patient outside. He gave her a smile and wave, and she returned the gesture as she made her way to the elevator.

It wasn't so much that Amy was charming and attractive that Ben admired about her, but that she so selflessly cared for others without judgment or reservation.

Life as a junkie had not been so honorable for Ben, as motivations lied more in securing the next fix than caring for others. Ben wondered if he was even capable of caring for himself, let alone another human being.

As Ben made his way back to his quarters on the fifth floor, he heard some screaming at the end of the hallway.

Curious, he walked briskly toward the noise, and when he peered around the corner, he saw a male patient lashing out at a doctor while three nurses pinned him down to a hospital bed and secured him with restraints.

Once the hectic scene was over, Ben hurried back to his room, frightened and unsure of what he had just seen.

BEN: *It was just a disturbed patient. This probably happens all the time. There's nothing to worry about.*

Ben laid down in bed, and after a few minutes of tossing and turning, he fell asleep.

TRENTON UNIVERSITY
DAY 0, 5:13 PM

Another long day at school now over, Adam set off back home to his apartment across the vast university campus.

The weather was warm and sunny with a cool breeze that made him regret being inside all day.

ADAM: *What a shame. Another perfect day wasted.*

A few minutes later, Adam received a phone call from Kate.

ADAM: Hello?

KATE: Hey, are you home yet?

ADAM: I'm actually on my way home now. How about you?

KATE: Same here, I just left work a few minutes ago. Are we still on for dinner tonight?

ADAM: Yeah, definitely.

KATE: Great. See you around seven?

ADAM: Sounds good.

The call ended, and after a few more minutes of walking, Adam exited the university campus and entered the streets of the city.

As Adam waited at a busy intersection, he saw several police cars speed by with their sirens blazing.

ADAM: *Must have been an accident or something.*

The stoplight turned red, and Adam walked across the street, then made his way over to a wine shop another block down.

Upon entering the wine shop, a pleasant aroma struck his nose.

He browsed leisurely through the shop, searching the wine selection for the perfect bottle to complement tonight's dinner.

After a short while, he settled on a bottle of red wine, purchased it at the counter, then exited the shop.

As he reentered the streets of the city, Adam saw a multitude of police cars, ambulances, and other emergency vehicles pass by in a hurry.

ADAM: *Damn, whatever happened must have been serious.*

He figured it wouldn't hurt to walk a couple more blocks to satisfy his curiosity, so he followed in the direction of the sirens.

Eventually, he reached the back of a crowd of pedestrians flooding the perimeter of Memorial Hospital while numerous emergency workers and police officers surrounded the front entrance.

ADAM: *Well, this is interesting...*

**MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
DAY 0, 5:41 PM**

Ben sat anxiously on the side of his bed, waiting for some type of response from Amy. He had heard more commotion and frantic screams throughout the fifth floor hallway, and no one nearby seemed to have any idea what was going on.

He figured the best idea was to stay put until further notice, but each minute that went by seemed to last a lifetime.

Eventually, he couldn't stand to wait any longer for a response. He picked up the phone next to his bed to page a nurse, a receptionist, anyone.

Luckily, just before he started dialing, Amy entered the room.

BEN: Thank God you're here. What the hell is going on?

Amy was obviously shaken up but trying her best to hold it together.

AMY: The other patients—they've become unstable.

BEN: Unstable? What do you mean?

AMY: Psychotic, like all of a sudden they just snapped and started acting like maniacs.

BEN: What? How did this happen?

AMY: I don't know. Patients without any history of mental psychosis are suddenly becoming violent. It's completely irrational.

Ben couldn't help but to shake his head in bewilderment trying to process the situation, and when he looked back to Amy, she was in tears.

BEN: Oh no, don't cry. It'll be okay.

Ben moved in closer to console Amy, but she backed away, stricken with grief.

AMY: No, it's not going to be *okay!* Dr. Marshall is dead! One of the patients attacked him, beat him to a bloody pulp with his bare hands! I barely made it out of there alive.

Ben looked at Amy with a grave stare, completely sobered by the news.

BEN: We need to get out of here. Now.

MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
DAY 0, 5:53 PM

As Adam made his way through the crowd surrounding the hospital, he saw two squads of police officers in riot gear stacking up against each side of the front entrance.

After a few moments, the command to enter the building was given, and both squads entered swiftly through the front doors of the hospital.

A cacophony of screams and gunshots filled the area as a horde of violent patients, visitors, and hospital staff brutalized the riot officers and streamed out of the building.

The crowd immediately erupted into a frenzy, and Adam tried to escape the scene.

As he approached the back of the crowd, he saw a frightened little girl standing by herself a short distance away.

Out of the corner of his eye, Adam spotted a patient covered in blood moving quickly toward her.

Adam immediately made a break to defend the girl, and just as the patient reached her, Adam smashed his wine bottle over the patient's head, knocking it to the ground.

When Adam turned around, he saw the little girl staring back at him as she was carried away out of the crowd.

ADAM: *At least she's safe.*

Adam continued moving away from the crowd, and once he cleared the scene, he strayed off the main road into a back alley.

The moment Adam caught a whiff of one of the dumpsters, he felt a horrible knot grow in his stomach and vomited uncontrollably on the ground.

ADAM: *What the hell is going on?!*

Adam gathered himself slowly, wiping the vomit from his mouth, shaking feverishly.

If there was ever a time in his life that he was truly scared, it was now, but he knew he had to keep moving if he was going to have any chance of making it back home alive.

He peered out into the street from behind the brick wall of the alleyway, then began making his way back home.

MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
DAY 0, 6:01 PM

As Ben and Amy made their way toward the exit of the hospital, Amy strayed off into a side room in the fifth floor hallway. In a hushed tone, Ben called out to her from outside.

BEN: Amy, what are you doing?

AMY: Just grabbing some supplies before we go. Who knows if we'll have access to any of this stuff again any time soon.

BEN: Okay, just make it quick. I don't want to spend any more time here than we need to.

AMY: Agreed.

Ben stood guard anxiously outside the storage room, scanning back and forth to each side of the hallway for any movement. Luckily, he saw nothing, but that made him even more worried.

BEN: *A few hours ago this place was full of people, but now it's empty. What the hell happened?*

He thought back to the patient he saw earlier who was trying to attack a doctor.

BEN: *The anger in his eyes, the animosity, it was inhuman.*

Whatever it was that caused this mess, Ben had no way of knowing for sure. He was lucky enough to be alive as it was, and survival was all he could muster to think about now.

Amy entered back into the hallway and called out to Ben.

AMY: Okay, I grabbed all I could carry. I know of a back exit we can take. It should be a lot of safer than the front entrance. Follow me.

Ben nodded, and they began walking briskly toward the end of the hallway. When they came to the entrance leading to the stairwell, Amy opened the door and entered inside, and Ben quickly followed.

BEN: So where is this back exit exactly?

AMY: It's in the back of the lobby. Hopefully we can slip by unnoticed.

BEN: That may not be so easy.

AMY: Yeah, well it's the best plan I've got.

BEN: Then I guess we don't have much of a choice.

Once Ben and Amy made it down to the first floor, they peered through the window of the stairwell door and saw a horde of dead bodies scattered throughout the lobby.

BEN: Damn, what the hell happened down here?

Ben looked back to Amy, and when she spoke, her lip quivered.

AMY: A *massacre*.

Amy leaned against the wall of the stairwell and dropped slowly to the ground, her hands covering her face.

Ben crouched down next to her and placed his hand on her shoulder.

BEN: Amy, look at me.

Amy wiped the tears from her eyes and looked up at Ben.

BEN: I know things look bad, but we have to stay positive. We'll make it through this, both of us, I promise.

Ben gave Amy a smile, and she nodded in agreement.

Ben stood back up and held out his hand.

BEN: Ready?

Amy took his hand and got back up on her feet.

AMY: Let's get the hell out of here.

As Ben and Amy passed through the lobby, they glanced down at the bloody corpses that laid motionless on the floor. A variety of patients, hospital staff, visitors, police officers, and emergency workers had all fallen victim to a battle that had taken place only a short while ago.

It was difficult for Ben not to stare in amazement at the sheer amount of carnage that laid before him, but he made sure to keep moving.

It didn't take long for them to reach the back exit, but when Amy pulled out her keys to unlock the door, they heard a moan come from behind the front counter of the lobby.

BEN: Did you hear that?

AMY: Yeah, it didn't sound good.

BEN: I'll go take a look. You work on getting this door open.

AMY: Are you sure that's a good idea?

BEN: It could be someone who needs our help.

AMY: Fine, just make it quick.

Ben crept slowly toward the front counter, making sure to keep an eye out for any movement. When he glanced down to the floor, he saw an injured man sitting up against the base of the counter. In a hushed voice, Ben spoke to him.

BEN: Hey, are you alright?

The man turned his head slowly toward Ben, his eyes barely open.

INJURED MAN: Listen...

BEN: What is it?

INJURED MAN: The blood, it's...

BEN: Yes?

The man took a deep breath.

INJURED MAN: Contagious.

Ben stared down at the floor, his eyes wide open and mouth agape.

BEN: *Oh God.*

When Ben looked back to the man, he had a pistol pointed to the side of his head.

BEN: No!

The pistol fired, and the man's body fell to the side, limp and lifeless. When Ben moved closer to search the body, he noticed the man was wearing a visitor ID badge on his shirt: *Dr. Steven Ellis.*

The next thing Ben knew, a patient covered in blood was standing at the front of the lobby, staring straight at him. For a moment, Ben and the patient stood frozen, as if they were both waiting for the other to make the first move.

In an instant, they both sprung into action, and a second before the patient reached him, Ben grabbed Dr. Ellis's pistol off the floor and shot the patient square in the chest three times, its body twitching as it fell to the floor.

Ben stared down at the patient as it took its last breaths, and Amy approached the scene slowly from the back of the lobby.

AMY: Ben?

Ben looked at Amy with a face of dread, unable to express what had just occurred.

AMY: I got the door open.

Ben looked down at the dead patient on the floor as a pool of blood ran from its body, then looked back to Amy.

BEN: Let's go.

WESTVIEW APARTMENTS

DAY 0, 6:23 PM

As Adam entered his apartment building, he passed by several neighbors in the stairwell who looked to be leaving in a hurry. News of the incident must have traveled fast, he realized.

When Adam entered his floor, he ran into his neighbor Roger as he was moving his family's luggage outside of their apartment.

ROGER: Adam, thank God you're okay. Have you heard what's happened?

ADAM: Yes, I was just there at the hospital. I saw everything.

ROGER: So the news report was true. How bad was it?

ADAM: It was a disaster. I, *I can't even...*

Adam's eyes began to well up. He couldn't even begin to explain what he had just been through.

ROGER: No need to explain. Do you have a safe place to go?

ADAM: Yes, I'll be fine.

ROGER: Good. Well, best of luck to you, my friend.

Roger held out his hand, and Adam shook it dearly, knowing he'd probably never see him again."

Upon entering his apartment, Adam broke straight for the bathroom and washed out his mouth. After a few moments, he raised his head slowly and looked into the mirror.

ADAM: *Is this really happening?*

He looked at himself with a blank stare. He had always fantasized about the end of the world, but he never thought it would actually happen.

After a few moments of silent introspection, Adam was knocked out of his trance-like state when he heard his cell phone ring. It was Kate. He suddenly snapped back into action and answered the call.

ADAM: Kate, I'm here.

KATE: Thank God. Did you hear what happened?

ADAM: Yes, I was right in the middle of it. Listen, don't come here. Find someone you trust to stay with, and get out of the city.

KATE: Is it really that bad out there?

ADAM: Yes, it's bad. A lot of people have been killed, and from what I've seen, this is just the beginning. Those people in the

hospital—they must've had some type of disease or something. They were deranged, violent.

KATE: Okay, okay. I'll see if I can go to my sister's. What about you?

ADAM: I don't know what I'm going to do yet, but I'll think of something. I'll try to make it to your sister's, but who knows what it's going to be like out there.

KATE: Okay, call me back when you can. I love you.

ADAM: I love you, too.

The call ended, and for a moment, all of Adam's memories of Kate flashed through his mind.

ADAM: *Am I ever going to see her again?*

Adam looked back at himself in the mirror, but this time, he knew what he had to do.

CHAPTER 2

WESTVIEW APARTMENTS
DAY 0, 6:34 PM

After witnessing the attack at Memorial Hospital, Adam knew he had to get out of the city as soon as possible.

There was no way of knowing for sure how far the infection had already spread throughout the city, but it was a chance he would have to take.

Adam went into the living room and turned on the television, switching to a news station.

NEWS ANCHOR: We've just received a report of an attack at Trinity Hospital in Miami, Florida. This is now the fourth incident in what is believed to be a series of attacks involving the outbreak of a new deadly infectious disease today.

Adam stared at the television screen in disbelief.

ADAM: *The fourth?*

NEWS ANCHOR: Dr. Robert Morton joins us live from CDC headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia to provide further information on this latest development.

Adam took a seat on the couch.

NEWS ANCHOR: Dr. Morton, are you there?

DR. MORTON: Yes, I'm here, Angela.

NEWS ANCHOR: What can you tell us about this new disease, Doctor?"

DR. MORTON: Unfortunately, we do not have sufficient data to provide a proper diagnosis at this time, so we can only speculate what is causing the violent behavior of the victims.

NEWS ANCHOR: Reports have claimed that victims are acting in a similar manner to animals who have contracted rabies. Is it possible that these incidents are the result of a rabies epidemic?

DR. MORTON: Rabies has never caused this type of violent behavior in humans before, so it is unlikely that it is the cause of infection.

NEWS ANCHOR: If it's not rabies, then what else could it be?

DR. MORTON: It is likely that this is a new type of disease that we have never encountered before, and the coordinated timing of these attacks leads us to believe that it is not a naturally occurring phenomenon.

NEWS ANCHOR: Doctor, are you saying this disease was manmade?

DR. MORTON: I have never been one to support conspiracy theories, Angela, but the only logical conclusion is that these attacks are an act of terrorism via biological warfare.

NEWS ANCHOR: If this is true, Doctor, what do you believe is the objective of these attacks?

DR. MORTON: Well, Angela, that's what's so frightening about all of this. There is no moral reasoning behind terrorism. So, what is the goal of this operation? The only thing I can think of is depopulation.

For a moment the news broadcast went silent.

NEWS ANCHOR: Oh my God.

DR. MORTON: We're doing all we can to learn more about this disease so that we can begin to combat it as soon as possible.

NEWS ANCHOR: Thank you, Doctor. I'm sure you're very busy right now, but please keep us updated with any new developments that arise.

DR. MORTON: I certainly will, Angela.

Adam turned off the TV, exasperated.

ADAM: *And by the time you do, we'll all be dead.*

Adam got up from the couch and went into his bedroom.

Adam laid down on his bed, staring up at the ceiling.

ADAM: *So this is really the end.*

He sat up on the side of his bed and noticed the picture of Kate on his side table.

ADAM: *I will make it back it to you, I promise.*

Adam took the photo out of the picture frame, then got up from his bed and walked over to the closet.

ADAM: *It's about time I got out of these dirty clothes.*

Adam changed out of his dress clothes, then picked up his backpack from the floor and went into the kitchen.

Adam started packing as many emergency supplies into his backpack as he could carry, including a flashlight, food and water, a medkit, and other various items.

ADAM: *This should be enough at least for a few days.*

Once Adam was ready, he savored one last moment inside his apartment, then opened the front door and left for good.

CITY STREETS
DAY 0, 6:41 PM

Upon exiting the premises of Memorial Hospital, Ben and Amy made their way through the back streets of the city as a clamor of screams, gunshots, and sirens echoed in the distance.

Ben led the way quickly and silently, carrying the pistol he had picked up from the hospital, while Amy followed close behind.

There was no way of telling how close they were to the horde that had amassed at the hospital, but they kept moving, block by block, until Amy's apartment building came into sight.

Amy pointed ahead.

AMY: There's Cedar Square, right up there across the street.

BEN: It looks clear enough from here, but it's probably mobbed on the main roads.

AMY: Yeah, I don't think we have any other choice, though.

Ben scanned the area for a moment, then turned back to Amy.

BEN: Okay, move up to the street corner on my signal.

Amy nodded, then after a few seconds, Ben gave the signal, and they advanced forward.

From the street corner, they saw a traffic jam that stretched all the way down the road.

BEN: I wonder how long it will take for them to realize that driving out of here is useless.

AMY: Yeah, there's no making it out of that mess.

Ben took a final scan of the street, then signaled back to Amy.

BEN: Okay, it looks clear for now. Let's move.

Ben and Amy began moving quickly across the street, passing through the traffic jam. Once they made it to the other side of the street, they started hearing screams down the road.

AMY: That doesn't sound good!

Moving quickly through a crowd of panicked pedestrians, Ben looked back and saw a man get pummeled to the ground by a pair of infected.

BEN: Shit, they're coming! Run!

Ben and Amy ran through the crowd, pushing their way to the apartment building up ahead as pedestrians behind them fell victim one by one to the infected horde.

AMY: They're killing them!

BEN: Forget them! Just keep running!

As they approached the apartment building, a small group of infected appeared from the left intersection, advancing straight toward them.

AMY: On the left! Watch out!

Just as Ben raised his pistol to fire, a fire truck smashed straight into the advancing group of infected, sending them tumbling off the dashboard as blood sprayed across the front of the vehicle.

Ben stood dumbfounded at the miracle that had just saved his life.

Amy caught up to Ben and grabbed his arm, pulling him forward.

AMY: Come on, we're almost there!

Ben and Amy started moving again, and a few moments later, they reached the entrance of the apartment building and went inside.

CITY STREETS
DAY 0, 6:45 PM

As Adam exited his apartment building, he heard sirens in the distance and passed by stragglers who were still trying to make it out of the city.

ADAM: *At least I'm not the only one who's still alive out here.*

As Adam moved down the street, he kept a close eye on his surroundings, and once he reached his car, he entered inside and started the engine.

ADAM: *The roads are probably packed, but there must be some way out of here.*

Adam began driving down the road and turned on the car radio, scanning through the channels until he heard a news broadcast.

ADAM: *Great, it's just a recording. A lot of help that's gonna do.*

Stopping at a red light, Adam glanced around and saw no other cars in the surrounding area.

ADAM: *God, even now I can't help but to obey the law.*

As Adam waited, a man ran up to his driver's side window and started pounding on the glass, shouting for Adam to let him inside the car.

Adam immediately hit the gas and ran through the light, leaving the man behind.

Adam continued driving down the road for a few more minutes until he saw a sign for the nearest exit out of the city up ahead.

ADAM: *This is probably a bad idea, but I see no other choice.*

A few minutes later, he reached the intersection that led out of the city.

When Adam made the turn, he found himself entering into the middle of a traffic jam that was backed up all the way down the road.

ADAM: *Shit, this is never going to clear up.*

Adam glanced at the other drivers waiting around him, desperately honking their horns and looking for ways to escape the traffic jam.

When Adam looked behind him in the rearview mirror, he saw some commotion in the back of the traffic line.

ADAM: *Oh no, not now.*

It was only a few moments later when he began to hear people screaming in the distance.

Adam immediately grabbed his gear and got out of his car, waving and pointing to the other drivers behind him to alert them to the danger.

ADAM: *Infected! Behind you! Run! Run!*

Soon enough all the drivers caught a glimpse of the carnage occurring in the back of the traffic line and started panicking.

The entire traffic line burst into mass hysteria, and Adam started running to escape the scene.

Eventually, he saw a sign for the subway up ahead.

ADAM: *At least one of those trains better still be running.*

A few moments later, he reached the entrance and hurried down the stairs to the station below.

CEDAR SQUARE APARTMENTS
DAY 0, 6:57 PM

Ben and Amy caught their breath in the lobby of the apartment building.

AMY: It looks empty in here.

BEN: Everyone must have evacuated already.

AMY: Or they're just hiding.

BEN: Either way, keep an eye out for any movement.

Amy nodded, then walked over to the lobby stairwell.

AMY: My apartment's on the third floor. Come on.

Ben followed Amy up the stairwell to the third floor and then proceeded down the hallway until they reached Amy's apartment.

AMY: This is it, number 327.

Amy opened the door, and Ben followed her inside.

Heading straight to the kitchen, Amy filled up two glasses with water, while Ben waited in the living room.

BEN: Your apartment looks really nice.

AMY: Thanks, I've been here for about two years now.

BEN: Do you live here alone?

AMY: No, well-I guess I do now. My roommate Sarah is away visiting her family, but I don't expect her to come back after all this. Well, I hope she doesn't, for her sake.

BEN: Yeah, that wouldn't be a very good idea.

Amy entered the living room with two glasses of water in her hands and offered one to Ben.

AMY: Thirsty?

BEN: Yeah, thanks.

Ben took the glass and drank a large gulp.

Amy took a seat on the couch, and Ben followed her lead, sitting down on a chair across from her, placing the pistol on the table.

AMY: I still can't believe all of this is happening.

BEN: Yeah, it's all very surreal.

They both took a sip of water.

AMY: I'm sure you probably want to get going soon, but if you don't mind, I'd like to stay here for a little while.

BEN: Amy, you know we can't stay here. It's not safe.

AMY: I know, it's just...

Amy looked down at her water, then back up to Ben again, meeting his eyes.

AMY: If we go out there again, we'll die. We've been lucky so far, but it won't last. All of those other people who died-that could have easily been us instead.

BEN: You're right, but if we stay here, then it will just be a matter of time until we either run out of supplies or the military quarantines the city.

AMY: How do you know that will happen?

Ben sighed.

BEN: I just do.

Amy stood up from the couch, pacing beside the table.

AMY: So what do we do, then?

BEN: We gear up as best we can and take our chances trying to escape the city.

AMY: I just don't think I can go out there again.

BEN: There is no other choice.

AMY: There is *always* another choice.

Amy directed her glance down to the pistol sitting on the table.

BEN: You're kidding me, right?

AMY: How many bullets are left?

BEN: I'm not even going to answer that question. We are *not* going to kill ourselves.

AMY: *We?* Who are you to decide that for me?

BEN: Fine, you're right. It's not my place to make that decision, but hear me out.

Begrudgingly, Amy motioned for Ben to continue.

BEN: Look, for the first time in the last few years, I'm clean, and I owe that all to you.

AMY: What do you mean?

BEN: If it wasn't for you taking care of me at the hospital, I would have left there the second I had the chance, but you gave me hope. You made me feel alive again. You saved me.

AMY: I was just doing my job. I'm like that with every patient.

BEN: I know, but...

AMY: What?

Ben stood up from his chair, staring Amy straight in the eye.

BEN: I believe we can make it out of here alive.

Tears ran down Amy's face as she nodded her head.

AMY: I know, I'm just scared.

BEN: I'm scared too, but we can't let that stop us.

Wiping her tears, Amy pulled herself together.

AMY: You're right.

Ben walked over to the window and looked outside.

BEN: We're losing daylight. We need to leave soon.

AMY: Okay, I just need to go pack.

BEN: Don't take too long.

AMY: I won't.

Amy exited the living room, and Ben picked up the pistol from the table, ejecting the magazine. Only two bullets remained inside.

SUBWAY STATION

DAY 0, 7:09 PM

Adam heard commotion up ahead as he walked quickly toward the subway station lobby.

ADAM: *Something tells me this is not going to be good.*

When he entered the lobby, he saw a large crowd of people waiting anxiously to pass through the security gates.

ANGRY MAN: Come on, let us through!

ANGRY WOMAN: I have children here!

A few moments later, the crowd began rioting, and the people rushed forward through the gates as the security guards retreated in terror.

Pushing through the crowd, Adam followed the mob through the lobby down a flight of stairs to the station platform below.

As the crowd waited nervously for the next subway train to arrive, Adam struggled to hold his ground as the mob pushed forward.

Eventually, the sound of an incoming train was heard advancing down the train tracks, and the crowd began rushing to the front of the platform.

As the train pulled in, the crowd waited desperately for the doors to open, and the passengers on the train looked out in shock at the frantic mob on the platform.

A few moments later, the doors opened, and the crowd rushed onto the train, pushing their way in until there was no room left onboard.

Shrieks of horror then began to ring out from the back of the platform, triggering the crowd to completely lose control.

Adam immediately knew what the reaction was coming from, and as he looked behind him, he heard the voice of a man calling out his name from the crowd.

MARCUS: Adam! Adam!

Adam searched through the crowd and spotted Marcus, a fellow medical student, calling out to him.

Adam and Marcus pushed their way through the crowd, meeting each other behind a pillar.

ADAM: We need to get out of here right now!

MARCUS: I think the train is full! We need to find another way out!

Adam and Marcus ran along the platform, watching as people desperately tried to squeeze through the doors of the train.

A few moments later, the train doors closed, and Adam and Marcus watched from the end of the platform as the train departed from the station.

MARCUS: What do we do now?!

Adam scanned the area for an exit.

ADAM: There, the emergency exit!

Marcus followed Adam as he ran toward the exit, but before they could reach it, a pack of infected attacked the crowd only a few feet away, blocking their path.

ADAM: Shit, go back!

Side by side Adam and Marcus ran back to the front of the platform.

ADAM: The train tracks, jump!

Adam and Marcus jumped down to the train tracks below, stumbling as they landed, and entered the darkness of the tunnel.

CHAPTER 3

SUBWAY TUNNELS
DAY 0, 7:41 PM

As Adam and Marcus made their way through the darkness of the subway tunnel, Adam shined his flashlight ahead while Marcus used his cell phone to illuminate his path.

MARCUS: If we can find a way out of here, you can take cover at my apartment. It's only about thirty minutes away from the station-that's where I was heading.

ADAM: Thank you, Marcus.

MARCUS: It's the least I can do.

The two men continued through the darkness, searching for exits along the walls of the tunnel.

MARCUS: So what do you know about this disease? Other than what I've heard in the media, my only experience of it was from the encounter at the station.

ADAM: Consider yourself lucky, then. On my way home from school I decided to see what was going on at the hospital, and it almost costed me my life.

MARCUS: You mean, you faced one of those things up close?

ADAM: It tried to attack a little girl in the street. I managed to take it down with a wine bottle.

MARCUS: Damn, I never knew you had it in you.

ADAM: Neither did I. After that I tried to drive out of the city, but the highway was completely backed up.

MARCUS: So you tried the subway.

ADAM: I had no other choice. The infected reached the highway, and there was no way through the traffic, so I abandoned my car and escaped on foot. If I hadn't left when I did, I don't think I would have made it out of there alive.

MARCUS: Sounds like you've had a lot of close calls.

ADAM: Yeah, I've been lucky so far, but who knows how much longer that's going to last.

MARCUS: I think there's more to it than that. You've been quick to react.

ADAM: No, trust me. I've been lucky.

Walking further down the tunnel, Adam and Marcus eventually came to an intersection that led off the train tracks.

MARCUS: What do you think-should we take it?

ADAM: Your guess is as good as mine. These tracks seem to go on forever. At least it's something different.

MARCUS: Well, we can always come back if it's a dead end.

ADAM: Right.

Adam and Marcus started again down the tunnel, shining their lights ahead to illuminate their path.

MARCUS: I still don't know what to make of all this. I've never seen anything like it before except for well, rabies, but that type of vicious behavior doesn't occur in human hosts.

ADAM: Maybe it's some type of amplified version of it, genetically engineered to invoke that type of behavior.

MARCUS: It's certainly possible. Something like this doesn't just happen by accident.

As they walked ahead, they heard some voices echoing in the distance.

MARCUS: Shit, do you hear that?

ADAM: Yeah, I don't think we're alone anymore.

MARCUS: It might be just some homeless people.

ADAM: Probably, but be ready for anything.

Adam and Marcus crept slowly through the darkness until they saw two men arguing in the distance.

FRANK: Roll again, damn it! That's not fair!

JACK: Bullshit, I won fair and square! Now pay up, you fat fuck!

FRANK: You know I don't like it when you talk about my weight like that.

JACK: Aw, did I hurt wittle Frank's feelings?

FRANK: Fuck you, Jack! Why do you always have to be such an asshole?!

JACK: Because I'm better than you, that's why.

FRANK: Oh, so that's the way it's gonna be now?

JACK: That's the way it's always been, fat ass.

Adam and Marcus stayed hidden in the shadows as the two men continued to argue.

MARCUS: They don't seem like a very welcoming bunch.

ADAM: No, they don't.

MARCUS: They must know a way out of here. No one could survive down here for that long.

ADAM: Well, there's only one way to find out.

Adam and Marcus approached the men slowly, shining their flashlights ahead to avoid spooking them.

ADAM: Hello, can you hear me down there?

The men immediately went quiet, looking toward Adam and Marcus with terror.

JACK: Shit, it's the cops!

FRANK: I told you they'd find us down here!

ADAM: Gentlemen, please. We are not here to arrest you. We're just trying to make our way out of the tunnels.

JACK: Bullshit, I don't believe you!

ADAM: I'll prove it to you, then.

As Adam moved closer to the men, Marcus whispered to him from behind.

MARCUS: Adam, what are you doing?

ADAM: Trust me, I've got it all under control.

Marcus looked at Adam with disbelief, but continued behind him.

ADAM: If we were police officers, wouldn't we be dressed in uniforms?

JACK: Not if you're a bunch of narcs!

ADAM: We're not narcs, we're just medical students. Here, look.

Adam took out his wallet from his pocket and held up his student ID. Jack stepped forward to analyze it.

ADAM: See? I'm not lying to you.

JACK: Okay, maybe you're not narcs. But why are you here in the tunnels, then?

MARCUS: Haven't you heard what's happened in the city?

JACK: No, I've been down here all day with this loser.

Jack nodded his head toward Frank behind him, who shook his head in disgust.

MARCUS: Well, I don't know how to say this, but there's been an incident.

Jack laughed to himself.

JACK: What, did the mayor get himself shot or something? It's about time someone took out that asshole.

MARCUS: No, there's been an outbreak of an infectious disease that's turning people violent. The entire city has been ordered to evacuate.

Jack's eyes grew wide.

JACK: Damn, Frank! It sounds like we missed all the action! We gotta get up there and start lootin' before everything's all gone!

Adam and Marcus looked at each other, confused.

ADAM: So can you help us find a way out of here?

Jack thought to himself for a second, then gave Adam a wide smile.

JACK: It would be my pleasure.

Jack turned around, and Marcus gave Adam a look of dismay as they followed him up the stairs.

JACK: Alright, follow me, and don't fall behind. Once we start, we don't stop until we reach the end of the tunnel. Got it?

ADAM: Got it.

Jack turned to Frank, pointing a finger at him.

JACK: You stay here.

Frank glared back at Jack with disdain.

FRANK: Fine by me.

Jack opened the metal door, and Adam and Marcus followed him through.

The entrance to the tunnel lied ahead.

JACK: Here we are. Right this way, *gentlemen*.

Marcus gave Adam a look of dismay, and they entered the darkness of the tunnel.

CEDAR SQUARE APARTMENTS
DAY 0, 8:13 PM

As Ben scavenged supplies from Amy's kitchen, Amy entered the living room with a full backpack slung over her shoulder.

AMY: Okay, I'm all set to go.

BEN: Good, I think I've gotten all I can carry from the kitchen. Between this and the medical supplies you lifted from the hospital, we should be well covered, at least for a little while.

AMY: Yeah, if we even survive that long.

Ben zipped up the backpack on the kitchen counter, then looked back to Amy.

BEN: We will.

Ben slung the backpack over his right shoulder, pulling his left arm through the other side and securing the strap.

BEN: Okay, let's go.

Ben opened the front door and went outside, and Amy followed behind.

As Ben and Amy made their way across the hallway and down the stairwell to the first floor of the apartment building, they heard some commotion coming from the lobby.

Peeking around the corner of the stairwell, Ben saw a woman run through the lobby with a young boy in her arms as an infected man followed behind.

Hiding behind the front counter, the woman shielded the boy with her body as the infected man stopped in the middle of the lobby.

Ben looked back to Amy.

BEN: Stay here.

Amy nodded, and Ben crept forward through the lobby with the pistol drawn, signaling to the woman and the boy behind the front counter to stay quiet as they made eye contact with him.

The infected man walked slowly along the lobby floor, turning its back to the survivors, and Ben advanced quietly toward him until he was in range to fire.

BOY: No! Don't shoot!

The boy cried out from behind the counter, and the infected man immediately reacted to the sound, spotting Ben a moment later.

Startled, Ben looked toward the boy at the counter, and when he looked back, the infected man was racing toward him.

BOY: No! Stop!

The boy cried out, but as the infected man approached Ben, he shot him twice in the chest, dropping him to the floor.

The boy broke free from the woman's restraint and ran over to the dead man on the floor as the woman approached Ben.

WOMAN: That was my husband.

BEN: I'm sorry, but-

WOMAN: It was either you or him. There is no need to apologize, although I can't say my son will understand.

Amy entered the scene, offering her condolences.

AMY: I'm sorry about your husband.

WOMAN: It's not your fault.

AMY: I'm Amy, by the way, and this is Ben.

Ben nodded his head.

WOMAN: I'm Shaina, and my son is Adrian.

AMY: It's nice to meet you both.

SHAINA: Likewise.

Ben signaled to Amy that it was time to go, and as Amy began her departure, Shaina called out to her.

SHAINA: Wait, before you go, I must tell you what happened to my husband.

Amy turned back around.

SHAINA: As we tried to escape the city, my husband was attacked by one of those psychopaths. Somehow he managed to break free from it with only a minor wound, but...

Shaina began to tear up, and Amy walked over to comfort her.

AMY: It's okay, just finish your story.

SHAINA: Sorry. Well, my husband began to convulse after a few minutes. I thought he was just in shock from the attack, but it turned out to be something much worse.

BEN: He was infected.

SHAINA: Yes, I suppose that would be the appropriate term for it.

BEN: A doctor at Memorial Hospital told me it was something in the blood, that it was contagious.

SHAINA: That is the only reasonable explanation. There is no way that my husband would ever turn into a monster like that on his own. He was a good man, but once he became infected, the man who was my husband was gone.

AMY: How long would you say it took for the infection to take full effect on his body?

SHAINA: Like I said, he started convulsing after only a few minutes, but it took longer for him to completely lose control. Maybe fifteen to twenty minutes.

BEN: That's good to know. Thank you, Shaina.

SHAINA: You're welcome. I just hope the military comes to clean this mess up soon.

Amy began to speak, but when she looked over to Ben, she stopped.

AMY: I hope so, too.

Shaina turned to leave.

AMY: Shaina, one more thing.

SHAINA: Yes?

Amy handed Shaina her door key.

AMY: Here, if you need a place to stay, you can use my apartment on the third floor as long as you'd like. Number 327.

SHAINA: That is very generous of you. Thank you.

Shaina went to gather Adrian, and Ben and Amy walked over to the front entrance.

BEN: You know there's no way they could have come with us, right?

AMY: I know. I just wish there was something more I could have done for them.

BEN: You gave them the key to your apartment. That was more than enough.

AMY: It feels more like I gave them a death sentence.

BEN: Maybe, but they don't know that.

AMY: Yeah, for now.

Ben and Amy exited the apartment building and entered the streets of the city.

SUBWAY TUNNELS

DAY 0, 8:46 PM

Adam and Marcus followed behind Jack as he led the way through the tunnel.

JACK: So you boys say there's some type of disease killin' everyone on the surface, huh?

ADAM: Yeah, it's bad.

JACK: Well, how do you know if you got it? You start coughin' up blood or somethin'?

MARCUS: More like you go insane and start killing everyone around you.

JACK: What kinda disease'll make you do that?

ADAM: Not one that we've ever heard of before.

JACK: You mean even all you tight-ass doctors don't know what the hell this thing is?

MARCUS: No.

JACK: Well, shit. I guess we're all screwed, then.

When they came to a fork in the tunnel, Jack stopped and lit a cigarette.

ADAM: I thought you said we weren't going to stop.

Jack took a long drag of his cigarette, exhaling a large cloud of smoke.

JACK: I lied.

MARCUS: What are we waiting for?

JACK: Relax, hombre. We're just takin' a breather.

Adam and Marcus strayed a few feet away from Jack.

MARCUS: I don't trust this guy. He's up to something.

ADAM: I don't trust him either, but he's all we've got right now.

MARCUS: Yeah, well first sign of trouble, I say we ditch him.

ADAM: Agreed. Just stay alert-it can't be that much farther.

Jack turned around and called out to Adam and Marcus.

JACK: You pretty boys ready to get movin' or what?

ADAM: We're coming.

Adam and Marcus made their way back to Jack as he pulled out a flask from his back pocket and offered it to them.

JACK: Drink?

ADAM: No thanks.

MARCUS: I'm good.

JACK: Suit yourselves.

Jack took a swig from the flask as he began walking.

JACK: Not much longer now. You'll be back up to your precious world in no time.

Adam and Marcus continued behind Jack for a few more minutes until he broke off down the tunnel, leaving them behind.

ADAM: Hey, wait!

MARCUS: Damn it! I knew that son of a bitch was planning something.

Jack's voice echoed from the shadows.

JACK: Come on, kiddies! Come and play with Uncle Jack!

Adam and Marcus scrambled through the tunnel, searching for an exit.

JACK: How about a game of hide and seek? I hear all the little boys love that one!

MARCUS: What the hell is wrong with that guy?

ADAM: Ignore him. Just look for a way out of here.

JACK: Oh, but there is no way out, kiddies!

ADAM: He's lying.

JACK: Only Uncle Jack knows the way! Follow his voice and come play!

Adam and Marcus came upon a dark hallway in the tunnel.

MARCUS: You think this is the right way?

ADAM: I don't know.

Jack appeared out of the shadows.

JACK: Welcome, boys and girls! Step right up to Jack's Wonder Emporium, where all of your wildest dreams come true!

When Adam and Marcus turned around to leave, they saw Frank pointing a pistol at them from behind.

FRANK: Move.

Frank crept forward, pushing Adam and Marcus further down the hallway into a dark room.

JACK: Come one, come all! Don't be afraid!

MARCUS: What do you want from us?!

JACK: Aw, pleading for your life already? That's no fun.

ADAM: Just take what you want, and let us go.

Adam slid off his backpack and dropped it on the ground in front of him.

JACK: Look at 'em, Frank! They think we're just a bunch of petty thieves!

Frank grunted.

FRANK: Stop fucking around, Jack. See what's in the backpack.

JACK: Relax, fat man. I'll get to that in a second.

Frank rolled his eyes.

JACK: First, I want to have a little fun.

Jack pulled out a switchblade from his pocket.

JACK: Who do you think will squeal first? The pretty boy or the beaner?

FRANK: Enough with that shit already, Jack! Take their fucking shit, and let's go!

JACK: Don't you fucking talk back to me, fattie! I'll gut you like a pig!

FRANK: Oh, yeah? Why don't you come over here and try it, then.

Jack grunted in disgust, then grabbed Adam's backpack from the ground.

FRANK: Yeah, that's what I thought.

Jack zipped open the backpack and searched through the contents.

JACK: What the hell is this shit? There's nothin' but food and water in here!

Jack threw the backpack on the ground and walked up to Adam, holding his knife to his throat.

JACK: I oughta slit your fuckin' throat right now, you little cocksucker. Now where's the money? You must have taken some of your daddy's stash with you.

Adam pulled out his wallet from his pocket and shoved it into Jack's chest.

ADAM: Here, this is all I have on me.

Jack opened the wallet and inspected the contents.

JACK: Hmm, not bad. Thanks, kid.

Jack turned to Marcus.

JACK: Now you, beaner.

Marcus pulled out his wallet and handed it to Jack.

JACK: Well, at least it's not a total loss. Too bad it's not enough.

Jack grabbed Marcus by the throat and forced him down to his knees.

ADAM: No! Let him go!

JACK: I'm sorry, kid, but this is the way it has to be.

As Jack put his knife up to Marcus's throat, Frank stepped forward, pointing his gun at Jack.

FRANK: I can't let you do that, Jack.

JACK: What did you say?

FRANK: Put the blade down, and step away from the kid.

JACK: Got a hard-on for the beaner now, do ya? Well ain't that a fuckin' joke!

FRANK: I'm tired of your sick games, Jack, and I won't take part in them no more.

JACK: Oh, so you're leavin' me now? Well, good riddance, ya fat fuck!

Frank cocked his pistol.

FRANK: No, Jack. You're the one who's leavin'.

Frank shot Jack in the neck, and Jack fell to the ground, gasping for air as Frank sauntered over to him.

Frank looked down at Jack as a pool of blood formed on the ground.

JACK: Help... help me...

FRANK: I think I'd rather watch you die.

JACK: Fff-

Jack tried to say something back to Frank, but he choked on his blood.

FRANK: What was that?

Frank crouched down closer to Jack.

JACK: Fffuck... you... ff-

FRANK: I'd stop right there if I was you.

Jack stopped for a moment, then blurted it out.

JACK: Fffattie!

Frank stood up slowly.

FRANK: You just made the worst mistake of your damn life.

Jack's eyes opened wide as Frank stomped his head in with his boot, while Adam and Marcus watched in terror.

Once Jack's head was nothing more than a bloody pulp, Frank spit on his corpse and backed off.

FRANK: Piece of shit.

Frank holstered his pistol and started walking out of the room.

FRANK: Grab your shit. I'm takin' you to the surface.

Adam and Marcus immediately complied, following Frank back to the tunnel.

CITY STREETS
DAY 0, 9:18 PM

As the day turned to night, Ben and Amy quickly made their way through the back streets of the city.

BEN: Howard Street should only be a few more blocks down from here. That will take us to the highway.

AMY: Are you sure that's the best idea?

BEN: It's the quickest route out of the city. If we don't take this chance now, we may never get another opportunity.

They continued forward until they saw a dead end up ahead.

BEN: It looks like we'll have to take the main roads from here. Come on.

When they reached the corner of the next intersection, they saw a squad of police officers walking toward them on the street as one of the officers reported into his radio.

MOORE: Franklin Street's clear. Advancing to Marshall.

Amy whispered to Ben as the squad cleared the intersection.

AMY: We should go with them. They can keep us safe.

BEN: Absolutely not. They will shoot us on sight if they think we're infected.

AMY: Ben, there's no way we're going to survive out here unless we start trusting other people.

BEN: I agree with you, but this is not-

Amy ran out onto the street and called out to the squad as Ben watched from the street corner.

AMY: Hello! Officers!

The squad immediately turned around, targeting Amy in their sights.

LOGAN: Don't move!

VASQUEZ: Put your hands up!

Amy complied, and Ben watched as the squad moved in to search her.

VASQUEZ: She's clean, sir.

MOORE: Alright, lower your weapons.

AMY: Thank you.

MOORE: What's your name, ma'am?

AMY: Amy.

MOORE: Amy, I'm Sergeant Moore, and these are officers Vasquez and Logan. Why are you out here alone at this hour?

AMY: My apartment building wasn't safe.

MOORE: Where do you live?

AMY: Cedar Square.

LOGAN: Yeah, that area's a mess. We just came from there a little while ago.

MOORE: Where are you heading now?

AMY: Howard Street.

VASQUEZ: We'll be passing by there soon. We could take her with us.

Moore thought to himself for a moment.

MOORE: Alright, stay close, and let us know if you see anything suspicious. Let's move out.

Amy glanced behind to Ben as she moved forward with the squad.

BEN: *Crazy bitch.*

As Amy advanced through the streets with the squad, Ben trailed them from behind.

BEN: *Just keep her safe until we're out of here, and we never have to see them again.*

The squad moved quickly, patrolling the streets for infected, and when they reached the next intersection, they heard a loud boom echo in the distance.

VASQUEZ: What the hell was that?

LOGAN: Sounded like an explosion.

MOORE: Logan, you're with me. Vasquez, stay back with Amy. Let's see what's going on down there.

VASQUEZ: Yes, sir.

As Moore and Logan continued forward, Amy and Vasquez took cover in an alley while Ben kept an eye on them from across the street.

Ben couldn't make out what Vasquez was saying to Amy, but he could tell by his body language that he was flirting with her.

BEN: *You put one hand on her, and I swear...*

Ben pulled out the pistol from the back of his jeans, readying it at his side.

Luckily, a few moments later Vasquez took guard at the corner of the alley, leaving Amy alone beside a dumpster.

BEN: *I guess he got the point.*

Another boom echoed in the distance, and Ben could tell Vasquez was getting nervous as he checked in on his radio.

VASQUEZ: Moore, come in. Moore, you there? Shit.

Amy appeared out of the shadows.

AMY: What's going on?

VASQUEZ: I don't know. They still haven't reported back yet.

That was all Ben needed to hear to know there was danger ahead.

A moment later, Vasquez was back on his radio.

VASQUEZ: What? A riot? Shit.

Vasquez turned back to Amy.

VASQUEZ: There's a riot going on a few blocks down from here, but we should be able to get through it.

AMY: What? Are you sure?

VASQUEZ: Sarge says there's no infected, just civilians. We can handle it. Come on.

Amy and Vasquez started down the road toward the riot, and Ben followed them silently from behind.

SUBWAY TUNNELS
DAY 0, 9:34 PM

Adam and Marcus felt numb as they continued behind Frank to the end of the subway tunnel.

FRANK: Almost there now. Keep up.

A few minutes later, they reached a carved out doorway that led to a ladder.

Frank pointed ahead.

FRANK: That ladder will take you to the surface.

Adam and Marcus peered through the doorway.

ADAM: Thank you.

Frank glared at Adam and Marcus.

FRANK: Consider yourselves lucky.

Adam and Marcus glared back at Frank as he made his way back through the tunnel, then they proceeded through the doorway to the ladder.

As Marcus climbed to the surface, Adam shouted up to him from below.

ADAM: How's it look up there?

MARCUS: Looks safe as far as I can tell.

ADAM: Alright, I'm coming up.

Adam began his ascent to the surface, leaving the darkness of the tunnel behind.

CITY STREETS
DAY 0, 9:55 PM

Ben followed behind Amy and Vasquez as they proceeded down the street, and the commotion grew louder as they advanced toward the rioters.

Ben could smell the stench of smoke in the air.

BEN: *Fire.*

When they arrived at the scene, Amy and Vasquez joined Moore and Logan behind an abandoned truck, watching as the rioters created chaos on the street.

VASQUEZ: It's just a bunch of kids makin' trouble. They're no threat to us.

LOGAN: Yeah, until they lob a fuckin' brick at your head.

MOORE: Just stay sharp, and we'll get right through this mess. Howard Street's only a few more blocks down. Vasquez, take point. Let's move.

Ben followed the squad from behind as they advanced through the rioters' territory, watching as a molotov cocktail exploded on the street in front of them.

VASQUEZ: What the hell is wrong with these people?!

LOGAN: It's the end of the fuckin' world! what do you think is wrong with 'em?!

The squad continued forward until they heard screams ring out in the distance.

LOGAN: I don't like the sound of that!

Ben watched as a horde of infected began swarming the rioters up ahead.

VASQUEZ: Infected! Take cover!

The squad took cover behind a car, waiting for an open shot on the infected.

VASQUEZ: Move!

LOGAN: Get outta the fuckin' way!

The rioters screamed in terror as they tried to escape the scene.

AMY: What are we doing?! We can't just stay here!

VASQUEZ: We're takin' those fuckers out! Just wait!

A moment later, the last of the rioters cleared the street, leaving only the infected and their victims ahead of the squad.

MOORE: Fire!

Vasquez, Logan, and Moore unloaded a barrage of gunfire on the infected horde, blowing them away one by one, and more screams erupted from the crowd as another wave of infected broke out in the street.

MOORE: Infected, 3:00! We gotta move!

The squad rushed forward as the infected horde swarmed the rioters, but when they looked behind them, Moore wasn't with them.

VASQUEZ: Shit, where's Sarge?!

Logan spotted Moore battling an infected on the ground through the crowd.

LOGAN: There, on the ground!

Logan broke toward Moore, wading through the crowd.

VASQUEZ: Logan, no!

By the time Logan reached Moore, he was already dead, and when she looked back to Vasquez, she saw a rioter sling a molotov cocktail in the air toward him.

LOGAN: Vasquez, look out!

Logan tried to warn Vasquez as the molotov soared through the air, but it was already too late.

The molotov exploded on Vasquez, incinerating him.

LOGAN: No!

Amy stared in shock as Vasquez burned alive a few feet away from her.

The flames spread quickly, and it wasn't much longer until Amy was completely surrounded.

The flames burned her eyes, and she could barely breathe as the smoke filled her lungs.

The world ran in slow motion as she watched the fire consume everything in its path, but before the flames could reach her, a hooded man burst through the fire.

AMY: Ben?

BEN: Come on!

Ben grabbed hold of Amy, leading her out of the fire to an abandoned shop nearby.

Coughing and gasping for air, Amy tried to speak as Ben opened the shop door.

AMY: Ben, I'm-

Ben signaled for Amy to be quiet.

Amy nodded as Ben drew the pistol and entered inside.

Ben quickly searched the shop, then signaled for Amy to enter.

Amy collapsed on the floor, and when Ben turned around to check on her, a rioter crept up behind him with a pistol drawn.

RIOTER: Freeze, motherfucker.

The rioter pistol-whipped Ben in the back of the head, knocking him unconscious, as Amy lay helpless on the floor.

CHAPTER 4

CITY STREETS
DAY 0, 10:13 PM

Under the cover of night, Adam and Marcus made their way through the streets of the city.

ADAM: How much farther is your apartment from here?

MARCUS: I think we're about two miles out.

ADAM: Okay, let me know when we're getting close.

Adam and Marcus continued forward, and after a few minutes, Marcus stopped abruptly.

MARCUS: Alright, I have to say something about what happened in the tunnels.

ADAM: Marcus, this is not the time for this.

MARCUS: I can't just keep pretending like nothing happened down there.

ADAM: We're not pretending to forget about anything.

MARCUS: Fine, I'm just saying...

Marcus leaned his back against an abandoned car.

MARCUS: I can't keep going on like this.

ADAM: Marcus, you don't have a choice. You either keep going, or you die.

MARCUS: How can it be that simple for you?

ADAM: Because it *is* that simple. This is the world we live in now, and the sooner you accept that fact, the better.

MARCUS: I guess I'm still in denial.

ADAM: This isn't easy for anyone to accept.

MARCUS: Yeah, I guess you're right.

Marcus stepped forward off the car.

MARCUS: Okay, let's go.

Adam and Marcus continued down the street.

MARCUS: Hey, do you smell that?

Adam sniffed the air.

ADAM: Smells like smoke.

MARCUS: Yeah, that can't be good.

Adam and Marcus continued further down the road until they saw a fire burning in the distance.

MARCUS: Damn, what do you think happened?

ADAM: Maybe there was an accident or something.

MARCUS: That's certainly possible.

ADAM: Do you think we'll have to pass through it?

MARCUS: Hard to say-it's too far to tell from here.

ADAM: Maybe we can find a way around it.

MARCUS: Let's hope so.

Adam and Marcus continued down the street toward the fire.

ABANDONED SHOP
DAY 0, 10:28 PM

When Amy awoke, she found herself on the floor with her hands tied behind her back.

AMY: *What the hell?*

She scanned the room and saw Ben sitting unconscious on the floor with his hands tied to a pole behind him.

AMY: *Oh God, Ben.*

She whispered to him.

AMY: Ben, can you hear me? Ben-

A moment later, she heard footsteps coming toward her, and she immediately went quiet. The rioter appeared in front of her.

RIOTER: So you're awake. What's your name?

AMY: Amy.

RIOTER: Here's how this is going to work, Amy. I'm going to ask you questions, and you're going to give me answers. If I feel like you're lying to me, I'm going to hurt you. Got it?

Amy nodded.

RIOTER: Good. First question: How the fuck do you know Ben Young?

Amy was shocked.

AMY: *He knows Ben?*

RIOTER: So?

AMY: I was his nurse at the hospital. He came in for drug abuse treatment a few days ago.

RIOTER: You're a nurse?

AMY: Yes.

The rioter thought to himself for a moment.

RIOTER: This changes things.

AMY: What?

RIOTER: It's my brother. He's been hurt.

AMY: What's his condition?

RIOTER: He's unconscious right now.

AMY: He's here?

RIOTER: Yes.

Amy thought for a moment.

AMY: If I help him, will you let us go?

RIOTER: That depends.

AMY: On what?

RIOTER: On Ben.

AMY: And if I refuse to help you?

RIOTER: Do you really think you have a choice?

Amy lowered her head.

AMY: No, I don't.

RIOTER: So you'll do it, then.

Amy sighed.

AMY: Fine. Yes.

RIOTER: Good.

The rioter cut Amy loose, then pointed ahead.

RIOTER: Walk.

Amy began walking to the back of the shop as the rioter followed her from behind.

AMY: Hey, I gave you my name, don't you think it's only fair that you give me yours?

The rioter walked up to Amy and looked her straight in the eye.

RIOTER: The name's Andre. Now move.

Amy continued forward to the back of the shop as Andre followed behind.

CITY STREETS

DAY 0, 10:46 PM

When Adam and Marcus arrived at the scene of the fire, they saw a mob of dead bodies scattered throughout the street.

MARCUS: Damn, what the hell happened here?

ADAM: Looks like there was a riot.

MARCUS: Must have ended pretty quickly once the infected arrived.

ADAM: Yeah, let's get out of here before any more show up.

MARCUS: I think we might be too late.

Adam turned to Marcus as he saw three infected wandering toward them on the street.

ADAM: Shit.

MARCUS: They haven't seen us yet.

ADAM: Just stay quiet, and let them pass.

Adam and Marcus took cover behind an abandoned car, watching as the infected crept down the street in front of them.

Marcus breathed heavily as the infected drew closer, hunkering down as they passed by.

Once they were clear, Adam whispered to Marcus, tapping him on the shoulder.

ADAM: Come on, let's go.

Staying low behind the car, Marcus led the way down the street.

MARCUS: My apartment is just around the corner.

Adam and Marcus kept moving until they heard a man call out to them from across the street.

MAN: Hey, over here!

Adam and Marcus stood frozen.

MARCUS: Did you hear that?

ADAM: Yeah, I think it came from across the street.

Adam and Marcus quickly made their way across the street, searching for the man as he called out to them.

MAN: Over here!

They found the man trapped under some rubble.

MAN: Please, my leg is stuck.

Adam moved into position and signaled to Marcus.

ADAM: Okay, I'll lift the rubble, and you pull him out. Ready?

MARCUS: Ready.

Adam lifted the rubble as Marcus pulled the man out.

ADAM: Can you walk?

MAN: Yes, but I think my leg is broken.

ADAM: Here, I'll help you walk. Marcus, lead the way.

The man put his arm around Adam's shoulder, limping on one foot as they followed Marcus around the corner.

MARCUS: Almost there now. My building's on the next block.

The three men continued forward until the apartment building came into view.

MARCUS: That's it over there. Come on!

When they reached the front entrance, Marcus stopped.

ADAM: Marcus, what's wrong?

MARCUS: There's blood on the door.

ADAM: Someone must be inside.

MARCUS: Do you still want to go in?

ADAM: We have no other choice.

MARCUS: Alright, here we go.

Marcus opened the door and peeked inside.

MARCUS: Looks clear. Follow me.

The three men entered inside the building.

MARCUS: My apartment's on the second floor. Come on.

As they passed through the lobby, Marcus spotted a trail of blood on the floor.

MARCUS: That doesn't look good.

When they turned the corner, they saw an infected woman standing by the wall.

MARCUS: Oh shit.

ADAM: Run!

The infected woman burst toward them as they ran up the stairs, and once they made it up to the second floor, Adam broke off from the injured man as Marcus opened the door to his apartment.

MARCUS: Come on!

Adam joined Marcus inside his apartment, and they watched as the injured man limped down the hallway while the infected woman chased behind him.

MARCUS: Come on, you can make it!

The man looked behind him and saw the infected woman gaining closer.

MAN: Don't leave me!

The man was only a few feet away from the door now, and the infected woman was right behind him.

ADAM: He's not going to make it.

MARCUS: Come on, you're almost there!

ADAM: Marcus, close the door.

The man was right outside the door when the infected woman finally caught up to him.

MARCUS: No!

Marcus closed the door, and they listened from inside until the man's screams went quiet.

ABANDONED SHOP
DAY 0, 11:02 PM

Andre stood by Amy as she examined his brother in the back of the shop.

AMY: What's your brother's name?

ANDRE: Ricky.

AMY: How long has he been unconscious?

ANDRE: Hard to say-I think it's been about two hours.

AMY: And what was the cause of injury?

ANDRE: We were in a car crash.

AMY: So you weren't involved in the riot?

ANDRE: No, we ran into it on our way out of the city.

AMY: I see. Well, there isn't much that I can do for him right now other than dress his wound, but I think he'll be alright.

ANDRE: How long will it take for him to wake up?

AMY: There's no way to say for sure. It could be hours or minutes from now. You'll just have to wait and see.

Andre crossed his arms.

ANDRE: Okay, go ahead.

As Amy unzipped her backpack and started pulling out medical supplies, she noticed blood soaked inside the right sleeve of Ricky's hoodie.

Andre stepped forward.

ANDRE: I'll be right back.

Amy quickly averted her eyes from the bloody sleeve.

AMY: Okay, this shouldn't take long.

ANDRE: Good.

Andre exited the room, and Amy gently pulled up Ricky's bloody sleeve, revealing a bite mark on his wrist.

AMY: *Oh God. He doesn't know.*

Amy pulled the bloody sleeve back down over Ricky's arm and began dressing his wound.

KINGSTON APARTMENTS

DAY 0, 11:19 PM

Exhausted, Adam and Marcus rested in Marcus's living room.

MARCUS: Honestly Adam, I don't even know what to say to you right now.

Adam sat up from the couch.

ADAM: What is it now?

MARCUS: Do I really have to spell it out for you?

ADAM: What, the crippled guy?

MARCUS: What the hell is wrong with you? Yes, the crippled guy, you know, the one who just died right outside my fucking door?

ADAM: There's nothing to say. We did all we could for him.

MARCUS: You left him to die!

ADAM: I did what anyone else would have done. If I had stayed back with him, I would have been killed too.

MARCUS: Yeah, or maybe you just used him for bait so you could escape.

ADAM: What? How could say that?

MARCUS: Or, you know what I really think?

ADAM: No, but you're going to tell me anyway.

MARCUS: I think the moment you realized that he was just slowing you down, you decided not to give a fuck about him anymore.

ADAM: No, Marcus, that's not true.

Marcus sighed.

MARCUS: Look man, I know this is some crazy shit that we're dealing with here, but you've changed, and frankly, it scares me.

Adam stood up from the couch.

ADAM: You know what, Marcus? Maybe I have changed, but at least I'm not living a fucking lie.

Marcus shifted uncomfortably in his chair as Adam continued.

ADAM: You still think there's hope out there, that this is just some phase that's going to blow over, but you need to wake up. The lives that we had before are over, and survival is all that's left now.

Adam turned away from Marcus, gazing out the window.

ADAM: All we have left are the ones we love, and if we aren't willing to fight for them, then why even live at all?

Marcus sighed.

MARCUS: I guess you're right. I'm sorry.

Adam turned back to Marcus.

ADAM: You don't have to apologize to me.

MARCUS: Then how about I get you a drink?

Adam smirked.

ADAM: That I can do.

As Marcus went into the kitchen, Adam received a call from Kate and answered the phone.

ADAM: Kate, can you hear me?

KATE: Yes. Oh, thank God.

ADAM: Are you alright? Where are you?

KATE: Yes, I'm okay. I'm with my sister at her place. How about you?

ADAM: Do you remember my friend Marcus?

KATE: Yes, I think so.

ADAM: I'm with him at his apartment.

KATE: I'm glad you're with someone you trust. When are you coming?

ADAM: Tomorrow, I hope. It's pretty bad out there.

KATE: We've heard screaming outside. I don't know how much longer it's going to be safe here.

ADAM: I don't think it's safe anywhere anymore. Just stay inside, and don't let anyone else in, okay?

KATE: We won't. That's the last thing we would do.

ADAM: Good. I'll be there as soon as I can, I promise.

KATE: Okay, I love you.

ADAM: I love you, too.

The call ended, and Marcus came back into the living room with two shot glasses and a bottle of whiskey, pouring the glasses full as he spoke.

MARCUS: So, Kate has a sister?

ADAM: She does.

Marcus handed one of the shot glasses to Adam, then raised his own.

MARCUS: Then count me in.

Adam and Marcus threw back their shots, gulping them down as they gazed out the window at the dark city below.

ABANDONED SHOP
DAY 0, 11:35 PM

When Ben awoke, he found himself tied to a chair.

ANDRE: Rise and shine, motherfucker.

Andre stepped forward out of the shadows.

BEN: Andre, is that you? I thought your voice sounded familiar.

ANDRE: Yeah, well here I am, bitch.

BEN: Always such a pleasure.

ANDRE: Shut the fuck up.

BEN: I see you haven't changed a bit.

ANDRE: And I see you still have a smart fuckin' mouth.

BEN: Are we going to keep trading insults, or are we going to get down to business?

ANDRE: Straight to the point. I've always liked that about you, Ben.

BEN: What do you want?

ANDRE: My baby brother's lyin' all fucked up in a room in the back of this shithole, and your nurse girlfriend-or whoever the fuck she is-has proven herself to be quite useful to me.

BEN: No. No fuckin' way.

ANDRE: You give me the girl, and I give you your life. Fair trade.

BEN: Not happening.

ANDRE: Come on, Ben. You know you don't really give a shit about her.

BEN: Don't you fuckin' tell me what I care about.

ANDRE: Ben, I'm trying to do you a favor here, and you're not making it easy for me.

BEN: Fuck you.

ANDRE: That's no way to treat an old friend, Ben.

BEN: We were never friends, Andre. You were my drug dealer. I gave you money, and you gave me drugs. That was about the extent of our relationship if I remember correctly.

ANDRE: I'm sorry to hear you feel that way, Ben. I always thought we were closer than that, and since you're obviously not thinking clearly, I'll give you a break.

BEN: Oh yeah? What the hell is that supposed to mean?

Andre stepped closer, crouching down in front of him.

ANDRE: Instead of just putting a bullet in your head, I'll give you one last high-the best high you've ever had-but this time, you won't wake up.

Andre grabbed a backpack sitting on the floor nearby, and Ben watched as he zipped it open and pulled out his supplies.

BEN: Andre, wait a minute. You don't want to do this.

ANDRE: It's too late, Ben. You've already made your choice.

BEN: Look, I can talk to Amy for you, okay? I'll put in a good word.

Andre laughed.

ANDRE: As if I need *your* fuckin' help.

Using a spoon and a lighter, Andre prepared a speedball, then drew the liquid into a syringe.

ANDRE: You know what, Ben? I think I might join you in this little party of yours.

Andre pulled out his pocket knife, sprinkled some cocaine on the blade, then snorted it.

ANDRE: Ah, now that's the good stuff! You want some, Ben? I've got plenty for the both of us.

Ben turned away.

ANDRE: Oh, what was I thinking? You don't want any of this kid stuff. You want the *real* deal.

Andre took the syringe and grabbed hold of Ben's arm, holding it steady as Ben struggled.

ANDRE: Come on, Ben. You're just making this harder on yourself.

Andre kicked Ben in the jaw, and Ben went limp.

ANDRE: See, that was your fault, Ben. You made me do that.

Andre inserted the syringe into Ben's arm.

ANDRE: You know this ain't nothin' personal, right? It's just business.

Ben gasped with euphoria as Andre made the injection, and a moment later, Andre heard Amy yell his name from the back of the shop.

ANDRE: Shit.

Andre pulled the syringe out and ran to the back of the shop as Ben laid motionless on the floor.

ANDRE: What is it?

AMY: It's your brother. He's awake.

A moment later, Ricky appeared in the doorway of the back room.

ANDRE: Ricky?

Ricky lifted his head slowly, meeting Andre's eyes.

ANDRE: Oh shit.

Ricky let out a monstrous growl, and as Andre tried to pull his gun from the back of his jeans, Ricky burst straight toward him, tackling him to the floor.

ANDRE: Ricky, no!

Amy watched as Ricky ravaged Andre on the floor, then silently walked over and picked up Andre's gun.

AMY: *You son of a bitch.*

Amy pointed the gun in back of Ricky's head and pulled the trigger, killing both brothers with one shot.

As the two brothers lay dead, Amy searched Andre's pockets and grabbed his knife, then called out to Ben.

AMY: Ben, I'm coming!

Once Amy reached Ben, she immediately cut him loose, then began applying CPR.

AMY: Come on, Ben. You can't die on me now.

Amy made another attempt to revive him, but he had already started to fade.

AMY: Hold on, Ben. Just hold on.

Amy made a third attempt, but it was of no use.

AMY: I'm sorry, Ben. I was too late.

Amy lay next to Ben on the floor, staring into the darkness.

AMY: Please don't leave me, Ben. I can't do this alone.

Exhausted, Amy held out as long as she could until she drifted off to sleep.

END OF DAY ZERO