

Apocalypse Diaries: Monsters and Men

Doomsday +214

We had reached his farm without difficulty but discovered his family gone. Why they had not come for the boy is unknown but at least we know that there's still a chance of them being alive in the funhouse mirror world that we now reside in. Everything is distorted. Leaving the truck behind I check my map and turn once more towards the ranger cabin located at the edge of the national forest. I hesitated leaving the truck behind but we couldn't be sure of supplying gas for both vehicles and so we stowed the extra cans in the car's trunk and turned our eyes towards the national forest. Isolated and alone as we were it was only a matter of time before the shamblers overwhelmed us. We had to find a way to contact others (Please Lord, let there be others) and find a haven. We need a goal that offers more hope than just fighting until we're killed.

Doomsday +216

The parking lot had nine cars and two trucks sitting abandoned and I made a mental note to scavenge them before we left. No sooner had we climbed from within than we saw the ranger or more accurately the shambler that had once been the ranger. I sighed loudly as my hand dropped to the pistol grip on my AR but there was a loud report to my right and the ranger's head simply collapsed into itself like a blackhole of flesh. I turned to see Pat levering a fresh round into his .30-30.

"Stay with Ashley, Pat. I'm going to check out his cabin." I said even as I was moving toward the cabin. The AR leading the way as my mind idly mulled over the fact that that. I had used it far more in the time since the Apocalypse than I had through two tours in Afghanistan. I cleared the large cabin and after an anti climatic tour of an empty cabin I went outside and found an emergency generator which I managed to start and then I did a quick check of the cabin once more. There, on a side deck in his office, I saw the reason for my search, The holy grail of finding out what was happening in the rest of the world. There sat his shortwave radio.

"All clear Pat. Y'all c'mon in and scout through the cabinets and pantry for something to eat. Remember canned food is your friend right now." I shouted out the door as I moved to the

radio set. I had only the most rudimentary training on one and that had been years before but I'm hoping that I could use it to reach someone else. I'm praying that I can remember enough to reach someone, anyone. There has to be packets of civilization somewhere out there. I knew the radio's range would be increased after sundown so I went out back and carried in enough Wood to heat the room until well after daylight and unloaded and locked the auto. I made a mental note to look over the ranger's Chevy Tahoe. I looked at the papers on the large oaken desk in the office and discovered that the poor ranger had been one James Sherriff Jr.. I cut myself off from that train of thought. I had to worry about keeping the living in that precious and ever so fragile condition.

"When you have that finished help me with fortifying this place so we can last through the night. Just this main area though. We will expand if we have to stay here for any length of time." I put action to my words as I pulled sleeping bags and bedding from the bedrooms into the main living area. The small work area had a hammer and nails as well as screws and sealed each room as I pulled what I needed from it. In the master bedroom I hit the jackpot. There was a large double doored wooden gun cabinet. I opened it and saw our chances for survival increase greatly. He had a few thousand rounds of .223 and an AR with a dozen extra magazines in the bottom drawer. There was a Glock 19 hanging on a peg. Holster and magazines on a shelf below. A Smith and Wesson .44 magnum revolver and a hundred rounds of ammo. After we had secured the building I left the generator running and had Pat put on a DVD for himself and Ashley. I settled down in front of the short wave trying to remember everything I knew about the radios. Which was fairly easy as I knew next to nothing. I allotted two hours a day to my search and started working frequencies. I savored a cup of the coffee we had found in the kitchen cabinet as I called futility into the ether.

Doomsday +226

I sat calling into the void as I had every night since we had arrived at the Ranger's station.

"This is Madison Charles calling to anyone listening. Is there anyone out there?" I sipped dejectedly at my coffee and tried again. "I repeat, is there anyone listening?"

"I am indeed Ms. Charles." Came the sound of a deep and well modulated baritone from the headset.

"Who is this?" I almost screamed into the microphone, excitement bubbling like a hot stew within me.

"This is Lt. Col. Gabriel Fender. I'm retired from the U.S. Army and had been assigned to a classified investigation which fell apart with the spread of the omega20 virus. The government and the country itself have devolved into small pockets of civilization that is only in sporadic communication between them. The official story was that this second virus was spread naturally from a region that it evolved in the wild. That's not the truth however. This virus was created and spread by a mad man. A monster that started life as a silicon valley billionaire and somewhere along the line decided he was god. The shamblers are poor infected creatures but they aren't monsters. The real monster is sitting beside a pool drinking rum and planning that night's orgy. Untouched by the destruction that he has released on humanity in a misguided attempt to save the world. He thinks that the compound and bunker insulates him from the rest of us and he intends to emerge and pick up the pieces afterwards. Not while I live. I wanted someone to know this story in case I don't succeed in my mission to stop him. He can not be allowed to go unchallenged and unchecked."

I could feel his anger and passion over the speaker. He believed every word of his story though it sounded beyond belief to me.

"What's the name of this mystery billionaire and where do you think he's hiding?" I asked.

"His name is Sylvester Crieghton. The inventor of the first virtual computer. I'm still searching for his exact location but he's somewhere near the eastern slopes of the Rocky mountains. I'll try and contact you as I discover more precise information. I'm signing off for now as my charge is starting to drop. tune in here until you hear from me again or until you think you won't. Gabriel signing off."

I sat there long into the night as the generator chugged fuel we couldn't spare and my mind tried to process the full enormity of his words by the faint glow of the radio's tuning bar. My mind was just numbed by what he had said. All the death and misery a deliberate act? A mad attempt at some rich asshole to become a god over the remnants of humanity? My mind just couldn't grasp it even as it struggled with it. Sometime hours later I managed to go to the shed and shut off the

generator and resecure the house behind me. I was lucky that no shamblers lurked in the dark that night for I don't even remember the trip.

Doomsday +238

The now familiar voice with it's calm confidence came over the speaker and I felt my burdens and loneliness easing just a bit..

"Gabriel to Madison, are you receiving? "

"Madison to Gabriel, I'm receiving a strong signal and a clear message. How are you?"

"Alive, Healthy and Free. The target is only a hundred miles or so from me and I intend to close that distance over the next two days. The man has a sense of humor or irony, I'll give him that. He has constructed a compound just outside of Area 51. I intend for him to learn what an unexpected invasion feels like on a real and personal level."

I tried to envision what Gabriel looked like as he sat hunched over the radio in the darkness of early evening. I had too much imagination and not enough information. In my mind he was tall and well muscled. his face hard and craggy as he went about his business with a single minded drive. His baritone was smooth and lulling and I had no idea why I envisioned him as hard and craggy instead of suave and dashing. I sighed and shook my head. Ah well enough daydreaming what was he saying? I jerked my mind back to the conversation.

"Here are the exact coordinates just in case I don't succeed in the endeavour. I'll talk to you soon if all goes well. Gabriel out.."

He signed off and headed to bed.

I turned out the lights and headed to bed as my mind still struggled with the practicality of our situation. Nothing had changed in our existence. I was alone with two children, a small girl and a half grown boy being forced to quickly become a man. They were my family now and I would do everything I can to keep them safe. The last thought that flowed through my mind was regardless,

life goes on.