

12 DAYS IN HELL



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Twelve Days in Hell

by Patrick A. Walston

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Introduction

It's been days since the plague hit America.

Most of the population has turned into mindless creatures that hunger for human flesh and blood. Danny Hefner and a handful of others will try to live through this hellish nightmare, but they'll wonder if it's really worth it.

Danny had watched and read plenty of Zombie fiction in his life, but nothing could have prepared him for this unthinkable, unimaginable hell.

Everyone he knew had died. They'd become something less than human—wild animals with no self-control.

He'd had to fight his way past his wife after she had turned into just such a beast.

It's been said that nothing hurts more than losing a loved one. Well, Danny knew a pain that was a thousand times worse—not only had he lost a loved one, but she'd become some kind of zombie. He'd had to fight her, making sure he didn't get bit or scratched, hoping he would gain the upper hand.

The plague had started off as an airborne illness much like the flu. The symptoms were easy to identify—blurred vision, slurred speech, and going from icy cold to burning hot.

After a few hours the symptoms would become worse. It was noted by many health-care professionals that the patients would become numb, like their whole body was asleep—not like pins and needles asleep, just completely numb, where they could no longer feel when anyone touched them.

Without the sensation of pain the patients would start chewing on their hands and arms, and once they got the taste of blood they changed.

It wasn't long before the infected overwhelmed the living. The illness became blood-borne. When the creatures began to bite the other patients the illness spread faster than a wild fire.

From the mountains of North Carolina to the coast of California the sickness was out of control. There were people rioting in the streets.

It made it difficult to tell just what was happening. Madness had taken hold. People were punching, kicking, biting and pulling hair. As the cops tried to break up the acts of violence they soon noticed they were greatly outnumbered and quickly running out of room to lock people up.

Not only were they running out of jail cells, they were running out of bullets.

Day 1

Danny Hefner awoke at 5:30AM to birds chirping and the sound of the trash truck collecting a week's worth of garbage.

He had hopes that today would be his big day. He rolled over in bed and kissed his wife, Molly, on the cheek. She twitched at the kiss, wiggled her toes, and tried to go back to her restful

dreams.

Danny smiled, patted her side, and arose from the bed.

They were truly a match made in Heaven. From the time they were in high school they'd made plans to marry each other, have a couple of good-looking kids, and live in the house on the hill, enjoying every day as if it were their last.

Danny was a muscular young man of twenty seven. He had black hair and a goatee and he sported crystal clear blue eyes that seemed to greet you without saying a word. He had a friendly nature about him, and a caring heart for anyone in need. He was the kind of guy most girls spend their lives either looking for or wishing they could be with.

He had never hurt a living soul and he never would if he could help it.

Molly was his better half, and the life of the party everywhere she went. She was twenty five years old, and happy to say she'd married the man of her dreams.

She had silky blonde hair that flowed past her waist to just below her wonderfully curved bottom. She had the face of an angel, untouched by makeup, a wonderful singing voice, and a way about her that always made people laugh.

Danny went into the bathroom and quietly shut the door. He reached into the shower and turned on the water, first the hot and then the cold, adjusting the temperature until it was perfect to the touch.

He stepped into the gold-trimmed enclosure, closed the sliding glass door, and started rinsing himself off. He closed his eyes and gave a long exhalation through his nostrils.

The water not only felt refreshing but also like it was washing away all the wrong in the world, so he stood under it for a good five minutes before he started soaping up.

He began to sing "It's the end of the world as we know it". He could never have guessed how true that song would become just a few hours later.

That's the funny thing about life, you never know what the day will bring.

He finished his shower and reached for the dark blue towel that hung over the toilet on the pearl white wall decorated with butterflies. He dried himself off before he stepped out onto the green carpet.

He put on a baby blue shirt that matched his eyes and then pulled on a pair of black cargo pants.

He went downstairs to the kitchen, where he brewed and enjoyed a nice cup of coffee. He slowly sipped it while he looked through the kitchen window at the world outside. Everything seemed perfect. It was dark but he could see the stars and the moon, which told him the skies were clear.

He was ready to leave for work at 6:00AM. He went upstairs to kiss Molly goodbye.

She told him to be careful on the road and to have a good day. She wished him luck with the promotion that he had been looking forward to.

He'd started working for the company when he was twenty five years old, and they'd told him to stick with it, keep up the good work, and he would go places. Two years after starting the job he'd been promised a raise and a promotion. Today could be his lucky day.

Danny always tried to keep his head up and think positive. "If not today maybe tomorrow" was one of his favorite things to say.

On the drive to work Danny took in all the sights and sounds, as he always did, but he kept his main focus on the road. His thoughts never wandered far from his driving.

He was an excellent driver, and he loved to drive. He sometimes wished he had taken a job with Checker Cab—or some other job where he could get paid to drive—but he tried to live without regrets, so he just smiled and continued onward toward his job.

At 7:00AM he pulled his lime green Dodge Neon into the parking lot at the furniture factory where he worked.

Another day, another dollar—and hopefully, a well earned promotion. He stretched as he got out of the car, gave a small yawn, and then headed toward the factory entrance.

He spent most of the day feeding wood into a planer and collecting the sticks that separated the sheets of wood. It was a pretty easy job but at times it was hard on the arms and back. But he always did it without complaining, and he found that the day was passing by quickly when he took his lunch break at 12:00PM.

He had packed a can of chicken and stars soup, a thermos full of coke, a BLT sandwich and some crackers for his lunch. First he ate the BLT sandwich, and after that he enjoyed the soup with crackers.

After he finished with his lunch he phoned his wife to let her know he still hadn't heard anything about the promotion. Then they started talking cutesy baby talk to each other, which made his coworkers raise their eyebrows at him.

He just nodded and waved at the poor idiots who must not know what it was like to be in love.

3:00 PM came around, and it was the end of Danny's shift.

He still hadn't received word on his big promotion. He was a little down about not hearing from his boss, but he didn't beat himself up about it.

He knew he tried his best every day, and that it was only a matter of time before he became a "somebody" in the factory.

He climbed into his little green car and drove away.

The sun was high in the sky, and it shone its light and warmth over everything it touched. The sky was blue, with a few fluffy clouds here and there. The traffic was decent, considering the time of day, and the weather couldn't have been more welcoming.

Danny loved his job, but he was always happy to be going home where he could relax for a while and spend a little time with Molly before she headed off for work. Every time she left the house he missed her, and he knew that every time he went to work she missed him too.

There was just something lonely, Molly thought, about being in the house without the companionship of their love.

When it came to work, she and Danny left their home life at the door and focused on their jobs. Truth be known, they both stayed too busy while they were working to notice that they were lonely.

She was employed at a local hospital. She washed the sheets, helped out in the cafeteria, and offered nice warm blankets to the patients—basically, anything that needed to be done.

As she pushed the heavy gray container full of dirty blankets and bed sheets down the hallway to the elevator that led to the basement where the washer and dryers were, she felt a little sad—that her husband hadn't got the promotion, and for the patients in the hospital, and that she didn't have children of her own.

She pushed the morose thoughts out of her mind and started to wash and dry the sheets and blankets. After a couple of hours had passed, she was feeling much better. She was even smiling and humming a happy song while she made her way from room to room offering blankets to the patients.

She felt good in her heart that she was actually doing something to help people in need. She knew she couldn't make friends with the patients but she was happy to help them none the less. From floor to floor and hall to hall she would ask them if there was anything that she could do to make their stay more comfortable.

Most of the time she was either asked to turn on the television set in the room or to change the channels. Every now and then she was asked to raise or lower the bed to make it more comfortable. All she knew was that she was happy to help.

The Ambulance rolled in with lights flashing, sirens wailing, and screeching tires.

Two young paramedics jumped out and flung open the back door. They rolled the gurney out as smoothly as they could while moving as fast as they were able.

One of the doctors met them at the door and asked what the patient's symptoms were.

“Blurred vision, slurred speech, going from icy cold to burning hot, vomiting and diarrhea.” said the younger of the two paramedics.

The doctor escorted them all to an empty examination room, where they began by taking the old man's temperature and blood pressure.

Whatever this illness was, it was new, so they ran a few tests to see what it was doing to his body. They kept him in room 502 while they ran the different procedures and read the scans.

Something was attacking the man's brain and nervous system.

Seconds turned to minutes and minutes turned to hours, and the patient's breathing grew more labored.

Molly made her way to room 502 and knocked lightly on the door.

The patient, an older gentleman, was lying on the bed facing the door when she walked in.

"Is there anything I can get for you to make you more comfortable?" she asked.

He sat up holding his stomach and said in a slurred voice, "I can't feel anything."

She thought he meant he was cold, so she gave him in a blanket.

"So numb" he said.

She told him everything was all right and that he was in good hands, and she walked out the room.

The hospital staff found out too late that the virus was airborne, only after a few more patients were brought in with the same symptoms.

A nurse became sick, displaying the tell-tale signs of the virus.

The doctors advised patients and staff to wear face masks and to report any unusual symptoms as soon as they experienced them.

Meanwhile, in room 502, the first patient was scratching at the flesh on his right arm. When he broke the skin, he placed his cold lips to the cut and tasted blood for the very first time.

His eyes became as large as disks in the sockets; and his pupils became so large that he looked like a cartoon character. Like a wild animal, he ripped off a large chunk of flesh from his right arm and chewed it then swallowed it.

The nurse went to room 502 to find a pool of blood next to the hospital bed and a trail of blood leading to the bathroom.

She called down the hall for a doctor, and then went to the restroom door and gently knocked.

"Mr. Hawkins are you OK in there sir?" she asked.

But the sounds she heard coming from the other side of the restroom door told her what she feared. She heard teeth chattering, and whimpering.

The doctor rushed in the room and he flung open the door to find Mr. Hawkins bleeding from his arms and wrists.

At first they thought it was a suicide attempt, but after looking closer to the wounds they realized it was teeth marks in the flesh and by the time they saw Mr. Hawkins's eyes it was too late.

He lashed out and bit the doctor on the neck and started to drink the warm blood which he found to be much tastier than his own cold blood. He then took a couple of big chunks out of the doctor's throat.

The doctor, unable to call for help, lay on the bathroom floor with blood spurting out of his wound like water from a garden hose. He took his last breath as the nurse ran out of the room

screaming in terror.

Molly was wearing her mask, but she noticed she was starting to feel some of the symptoms that the doctors had warned about.

Her shift was over, so she was making her way to the emergency entrance when she heard the nurse's screams echo through the halls.

Frightened, she ran to her car, a silver four door Cadillac. As she was leaving, another ambulance screeched to a stop.

Needless to say, it was going to be a very long and hellish night at the hospital.

Day 2

Police flooded the hospital.

The middle aged doctor lay in a large pool of blood in the bathroom of room 502. The nurse was in shock, sitting in the waiting room wrapped in a blanket.

It was 1:30AM and the patients with the new virus were quarantined away from the larger populations.

An officer shot Mr. Hawkins, and the body was moved directly to the morgue, where they could transfer him to a medical examiner to determine cause of death and perform more tests.

From the coldness of the body the medical examiner was able to tell that Mr. Hawkins had died somewhere between 12:30AM and 1:00AM.

"How can this be?" he asked himself aloud. The patient had died *before* he was shot; the examiner could also tell this from the blood. The tests and examination didn't lie.

He reported his findings to the doctors on staff and told them to check on the other quarantined patients.

Doctors and nurses made their way to the quarantined section of the hospital. What they found was what looked to be a massacre. There were fingers and mangled pieces of flesh on the floor. Blood was smeared all up and down the walls. The smell in the air was unforgettable; a metallic smell that must have been from all the blood.

The police were still in the building when they heard the screams of horror. They rushed to the quarantined section to find the doctors and nurses surrounded by, for lack of a better term, zombies.

The cops immediately opened fire. A couple of bodies dropped but at this time there were around forty wide eyed creatures and the cops were outnumbered. One by one, screaming in the night, the not-so-healthy were joining the ranks of the undead.

Molly's symptoms were getting worse.

She knew she needed help but with the scream still echoing inside her head she decided the hospital was not the best place for her to be.

She didn't wake up Danny when she went to bed, she just hoped that she would feel better later on in the day.

The clock rolled over to 5:30AM and Danny awoke to strange noises. Not those of birds or passing cars but chattering and whimpers.

It was not like whimpering in pain, it was more like the sound of the need to do something, the way a dog whimpers to get outside to use the bathroom. Danny turned to see Molly sitting up in bed, and she looked to be her licking her arm.

"Honey what's the matter?" he asked.

She turned around and faced him, her lips blue and her teeth red.

"What the hell?" Danny leaned toward her to get a better look.

Her eyes were wild and she started screeching. She jumped at Danny.

He was so freaked out by the blood he saw that he didn't realize she was out for *his* blood until the second time she snapped at him.

He grabbed her arm, which was covered in teeth marks. He started to call her name, and then he realized she was not herself, and that he must fight if he wanted to live.

Molly came at Danny yet another time but Danny was ready and he pushed her to the floor.

He tried to run past her to call the cops but she grabbed his ankle and he tripped and fell hard onto the wooden floor. He gained the upper hand by kicking her in the stomach.

He had never fought anyone in his life, and here he was fighting his undead wife for his life.

He ran into the bathroom and locked the door.

She was soon outside it, breathing heavy and wild, banging on it and making chattering sounds with her teeth. Danny looked all around the room to see what he could find as a weapon to defend himself.

The fact that he was going to have to kill his wife started to sink in. He felt an intense pain in his gut, and he found it hard to swallow.

He looked under the sink and found a large wrench that he had used to tighten the water valves on the toilet.

It's do or die he thought to himself as he raised the wrench above his head and shoved the door open with his free hand.

He knocked Molly to the floor and gave her a good whack to the temple.

She went down, never to come up again.

Danny started shaking and crying uncontrollably. The reality that he killed his wife, his high school sweet heart, his better half, his best friend, started to sink in.

He hurried to the phone and dialed 911.

All he heard on the other line was static, hissing and buzzing. The line was dead. He turned on the TV just in time to see the images from the local news choppers of riots in the streets.

What the hell was going on, anyway?

The hospital was where the rioting started, they were reporting, when a large gathering of people spilled from the building onto the streets, but they had no more details than that.

It wasn't just a local thing, either—there were several news stations across America telling how riots were starting, in numerous places all across the map. From the Carolina's to California, it was like all the country was taking a turn straight to hell. Loved ones attacking each other, even children eating the flesh of their parents.

All phone calls to 911 got busy signals or just static. The police started out heavily armed but there were so *many* undead that they were overwhelmed. Most jails across the USA were filled with both the sick and the healthy. The cops could no longer tell the difference, and more attacks would happen in the jails and prison cells. There was a problem of overcrowding,

Danny couldn't believe all of this had been happening while he slept. There should have been warnings and sirens—he shouldn't have had to just wake up next to the wild beast that was once his loving wife.

His heart was broken and he wished that he could die. He never had it in his heart to hurt anyone.

Now his simple life had turned into a struggle for survival.

Danny sat in the corner of the room feeling sorry for himself, something he had never had to do in his entire life. His future no longer mattered to him. He could live without the promotion. He couldn't imagine anything worse than this, whatever the hell it was.

When he finally ran out of tears to cry Danny got up, dead inside with a black hole for a heart.

He went downstairs and looked out the window. Sure enough he could see flames rising up in the distance, and the sun was shining brightly. The clouds were little, white, and puffy, drifting across the sky.

At 12:00PM Danny turned on the TV. The news stations were still broadcasting, so that was a good thing. They were talking about how the virus or plague, as they called it, was a form of Chemical warfare, an attack on US soil—the worst attack in the history of America. They reported how it was airborne for the first few hours and then how it turned into a blood borne virus. One bite or scratch would cause the victim to contract the sickness, which was how it traveled so fast.

There was only one thing for Danny to do now—go out and find other survivors. He got dressed and went out to his car. He drove off, for the first time without paying attention to the sights and sounds of the world beyond his windshield.

He sped through the mountain roads and rushed to the nearest gun and ammunition store.

Most of the guns had been taken and there was no one in the shop guarding the place. All Danny could think about was finding the living in the world of the dead. The air smelled of smoke and a strange metallic substance. He still wasn't too far from town.

As he walked to the counter he shouted, "Hello! Is there anyone in here?"

A crackling noise came from behind the counter,

Danny grabbed the nearest gun and loaded it with ammo. Hoping it wasn't another one of those creatures, he listened closely. Everything was so quiet he could hear and feel his heart leaping in his chest.

The crackling noise sounded again.

He went behind the register, looked under it, and spotted an emergency scanner.

He pushed the button on the radio and said, "Hello, can you hear me?"

A faint voice answered, "Copy that, I read you load and clear."

Danny's heart leaped for joy. Even if it was a stranger it was a survivor.

He asked for the location and was told that the survivors were holed up in the local Buy-Right super center.

Danny wasted no time. He grabbed a gun and five cases of ammo. Each case of ammo held 30 rounds, and he also picked up five ammo clips that held 30 rounds each.

He left the gun and ammo store and drove to the local Buy-Right super center. Knowing that there were survivors out there made him feel a little bit of comfort in a world of chaos.

As he reached town he was surprised to see the amount of damage the creatures had done. Some buildings were on fire, while others were missing their storefront windows and glass doors.

A lot of merchandise had been taken from different properties during the night. The damage was fixable, and the lost merchandise could always be replaced. The thing that really got under Danny's skin was the loss of human life.

Every zombie that was killed used to be somebody's loved one. Danny thought back to when he had to face his wife Molly as a monster, and just as before, he cried until there were no more tears.

Finally he reached town, and it was crawling with a countless hoard of zombies. The streets were full of the filthy beasts.

A female zombie with brown hair stumbled in front of Danny's car. He tried to swerve to miss her, but she fell under his front left tire, and her head exploded between the rubber and the road.

Danny kept on telling himself she was already dead as he drove into the Buy-Right super center's parking lot.

He whipped the little Dodge Neon into a handicap parking space next to a buggy coral. He sat for a few minutes, loading bullets into the ammo clips. He was preparing himself for the absolute worst.

He cautiously climbed out of the car, palms sweating, heart pounding, and with a sinking feeling in his gut.

He grabbed the gun and the ammo clips, stuck the gun into his belt, and put the extra clips in his deep cargo pockets.

He grabbed the scanner radio and pressed the button and quietly said “This is Danny, can you hear me. I am in the parking lot of Buy-Right super center.”

A voice crackled over the radio saying “This is Tom. I hear you loud and clear.”

Danny asked about Tom's location with the other survivors.

“We are in a hidden room just beyond the exit doors at the rear of the store next to the restrooms. Be careful. You can enter into Buy-Right through the lawn and garden section, all you have to do is climb the fence, get to the other side and slide the glass doors open, and you will be in.”

Danny placed the radio through his belt and hurried across the parking lot.

Looking back and fourth through the parking lot he could see the shadows of the zombies growing. He froze dead in his tracks when he heard the chattering and whimpering behind him.

Danny couldn't see the zombie too well because it was on the ground crawling towards him. He saw it at almost at the last minute. He kicked the teeth out of the creature's jaw bone, and then ran full speed to the fence at the lawn and garden.

As he reached the fence he found himself dizzy and out of breath. He looked out across the parking lot and saw that zombies were coming from all sides. Some were missing large chunks of flesh from their throats or their arms, and many were missing their fingers.

They seemed to move as one, all closing in on Danny's position. There must have been fifty or sixty of the sick beasts coming toward him.

Where had they all come from? What was leading them directly toward his exact location? All Danny knew was that he couldn't face so many of them by himself.

He had to do something and do it fast. Every second that he stood there watching them, he was that much closer to death.

He backed up and took a running jump on the fence, but he only made it about three feet high—and it was a twelve foot fence.

The nearest Zombie launched forward and grabbed Danny by the pant leg. It yanked him from the fence and slammed him hard into the pavement.

Danny screamed in pain and horror when he saw the wild eyes of the zombie, with her jaw broken off and her tongue hanging out like a dog panting for water.

He flipped on his back and scooted back away from the hungry dead.

The zombie jumped on Danny again. He pulled out his gun, put it against her temple, and pulled the trigger. The bullet violently ripped off a large piece of the skull and blasted over half

of her brains out of the back of her head.

Danny got to his feet and made another desperate leap for the fence. This time he made it about six feet up the barrier.

He scrambled to get his legs over it and fell heavily to the pavement on the other side.

He got to his feet, listening to the chattering of teeth and the moans coming through the fence.

Just as Danny was about to turn and push open the sliding glass doors, a zombie slammed into the high fence.

But he showed no sign of the ability to climb. He slammed into the fence again and fell flat on his backside, and then sat there and growled.

Danny turned and pushed the sliding glass door open and closed it behind himself.

The Buy-Right was completely dark except for the emergency exit signs. From where he stood Danny could see four emergency exit signs that led to the world outside.

What he didn't know and couldn't remember was which door led to the hidden room.

He thought that Tom had said something about it being next to the restrooms. Just to be sure he reached for the radio, but he discovered that it was no longer attached to his belt.

It must have fallen off when the zombie pulled him to the pavement. Now Danny found himself disoriented and confused as to which exit to make for.

Day 3

Danny took his time walking through the empty aisles.

A couple of times he thought he saw shadows moving towards him from the corners of his eye.

He stopped and listened to the silence. A primal fear was taking over.

Somehow he managed to find batteries. He gathered three of each kind of battery and placed them in his pockets.

He remembered that the flashlights were in the camping gear next to the toys at the front of the store.

He clumsily made his way there with nothing but the exit light to guide him. It took him a good twenty minutes.

Finally he reached the flashlights. He picked one off the end cap and tried to open it.

The blister packaging was much thicker and stronger than he could have imagined. He would have to find a knife.

He searched the camping supplies, but found nothing. He thought hard, and finally decided that the knives would most likely be in house wares, or maybe the hunting department.

Luckily for him the hunting department was right next to the camping supplies. It took him another ten minutes to find the knives, but they were in a locked glass display case.

Danny realized he could just break the glass. He hit it with the butt of his weapon, and shattered glass sprayed the floor.

He picked out a yellow army knife and punctured the blister package of the flashlight. He opened a pack of C batteries and slid them into it.

He closed it and turned it on. The light was surprisingly bright.

He scanned the store with its narrow beam. Now he could find his way without worry of tripping over anything on the floor or running into shelves.

Tom and the other survivors had lost hope that the person they had heard on the radio would ever show up. It had been three hours since they had heard his voice from the parking lot. Tom had tried several times since then to reach him.

Outside, the zombies surrounded the radio. Hissing, growling, chattering and moaning in response to every word they heard coming through the speaker, they cocked their heads as if wondering how to extract the humans from the box.

At the front of the store, Danny pushed the emergency door open to be greeted by a zombie.

It gave a shriek of confusion and surprise. Danny also shrieked in surprise and in turn the zombie shrieked again. Finally Danny slammed the door in the zombie's face.

“Wrong door,” Danny said, his heart pounding.

So the front exit next to the restrooms was the wrong exit, He could also rule out the exits that were not next to bathrooms.

His stomach started to growl, and he remembered that it had been awhile since he had anything to eat. It would be a good idea to find the grocery area and get some food.

With his flash light he made it to the other end of the Buy-Right shopping center and located the deli fridge, where he found sandwiches that had been made the day before the virus had taken hold. He unwrapped a twelve inch sub and got a soda from a fridge nearby.

Danny sat on the floor, eating his sandwich and sipping on his soda.

Tom and the others were playing a card game when the door knob rattled and the door slowly opened.

They jumped up in surprise, not sure what they were going to see come through it.

“Hello, I'm Danny, the one who you talked to over the radio.”

Tom said, “Come in, Danny, it's nice to meet you. Sorry it's not under better circumstances.”

Danny walked into the well-lit room and turned off his flashlight.

He found it hard to believe that a store like Buy-Right would have a hidden room. He also wondered how Tom and the others knew about it. He was on the verge of asking, but he decided that they had more important matters to discuss.

“My name is Tom. and let me introduce you to the others. First we have William. He's a really bright kid” Tom said.

“Pleased to meet you, Danny,” said William.

He was a short, chubby man in his late twenties. He was wearing a loose black shirt with a blue dragon on the front and baggy blue jeans, and he had on a pair of nerdy looking black plastic frames. Danny reached out and shook his hand.

“Here we have Samantha,” Tom said, pointing to a very attractive young female wearing a pink belly shirt and a short blue skirt.

“Pleasure,” Danny said, taking her small hand in his and giving it a nice shake.

“Over here we have Mark” Tom said pointing to a large muscular black man who was probably the tallest man that Danny had ever seen in his life. He was wearing red basketball shorts and a white top.

“Nice to meet you,” Danny said, and he shook Mark's giant hand.

“That's all of us,” Tom said, walking back to the sofa.

“Do you guys have a plan for getting out of here?” Danny asked.

Tom looked up and said, “It would be like suicide. I think we should stay here until this mess blows over.”

“What if it doesn't?” Danny asked.

“We all should try to get a little bit of sleep while we can,” Tom suggested.

The time was 11:59 PM.

Day 4

By 12:00AM Tom and the others were getting ready for bed.

Danny couldn't sleep. He dozed off once or twice, but he had vivid nightmares about Molly and some of the other zombie faces he had seen throughout the last three days.

His eyes were tired, and he started seeing flashing lights from the corners of his eyes. He had been up for a while and his body was trying to shut down and get some rest, but he was not about to let that happen. He continued to fight sleep until morning, and by 6:30 the others were awake and making coffee.

He had trouble getting to his feet. His mouth was dry and his vision was blurred. He started to think he was becoming one of those terrible monsters, and then he realized it was just the lack of sleep.

At 7:00AM, after Danny had had some coffee, he decided to go back into Buy-Right and do some “shopping”.

With the morning sun shining through the skylights he could actually see what he was looking for.

First he made his way to a restroom. He found a place to attach a water hose, which was exactly what he'd been looking for.

He hurried to the front of the store and found a shopping cart, and then headed to the lawn and garden department.

He could hear the muffled cries of the undead coming from outside the glass door. He put a water hose into the buggy and then pushed it to the hunting and fishing department. In the section where he'd picked up the yellow army knife, he also picked up a buck knife and a couple of really sharp pocket knives. Then he made his way to the gun section, which had so far remained untouched.

The guns were in a revolving glass case. It was locked, of course, but under the cash register behind the counter were some sliding drawers. He opened one of them and found a duster that was used to clean the glass. He slid a second drawer open and found a set of keys.

"These must be the keys to open the cases." Danny said to himself.

There were only three keys on the ring, and the first key he tried opened the case. There were many guns to choose from. There were about twenty high powered rifles, fifteen shot guns, and many different types of hand guns. He found a 12 gauge shot gun, a couple of high powered rifles, and a crossbow.

He loaded the weapons into his shopping cart. Then he found the shelves that held the ammo, and he stocked up on box after box of bullets. He also found arrows for the crossbow and put those into his buggy as well.

He passed by the sporting goods section and spotted a selection of golf clubs that would make good weapons if you couldn't reach your gun fast enough.

He hefted several of them, feeling their weight, and selected the heaviest ones he could find. He added them to his shopping cart.

He walked over to the electronics section and found some two-way radios that required a special type of rechargeable battery, so he picked up a supply of the batteries along with a couple of chargers.

He made his way back to the hidden room. Tom, William, Samantha, and Mark all greeted him on his return from his shopping spree.

Tom was impressed. He hadn't thought about going through the store in search of supplies, he'd only thought about hiding until either help arrived or all the zombies had starved to death.

Danny gave out the radios with the batteries and the chargers. He kept one for himself and told them all he was going to go freshen up.

Tom and the others decided to go do some shopping of their own.

Danny picked up another shopping cart from the front of the store and made his way to the personal healthaisles.

Now he was shopping for body wash, shampoo and deodorant. He picked out his favorite brands and then made his way to the men's clothing section. There he found some clean underwear, socks, shirts, and pants.

He chose all black shirts with gray and black camouflage cargo pants. Then he went to the home section of the store and grabbed a couple of towels.

He made his way to the men's restroom. He hooked the water hose up to the faucet, turned the faucet to the left, and was relieved to find that it was warm water that sprayed from the end of the hose.

He started off by washing his hair with his new bottle of shampoo. Then he rinsed out the shampoo and started washing himself with the new body wash, applying it with the sponge that had come in the package with the manly smelling soap.

The soapy water made its way to the drain in the middle of the bath room floor. Danny dried himself with a new towel and put on his new boxer shorts, his black shirt, his black and gray camouflage cargo pants, and his new black socks.

He walked out of the restroom and went to the shoe department. He found a pair of black steel-toed boots in his size and slid them on. He tied the boot laces and then went to the nearest mirror.

He looked good in his new style of clothing.

Tom and the others made their way through the store with radios in hand, talking to each other back, and forth.

Samantha went to the electronics section and picked out a stereo system for the back room. She also went to house wares and picked up a micro wave, and after that she made her way to the toasters.

William went to do the grocery shopping. He picked out the freshest bread and sandwich supplies, and he also picked up a lot of canned good items.

Mark found a pallet jack behind the double doors that led to the shipping docks. He wheeled it into the main store, and then asked the others over the radio to help him move a refrigerator to the back room.

Samantha, William, Tom and Danny made their way to the back of the store with their new supplies. They left their full buggies there and went to help Mark with the refrigerator.

They were able to stand the heavy appliance on the pallet jack, and they all walked back to the hidden room together. Everyone helped unload the fridge from the pallet jack and they plugged it into one of the strange looking outlets in the room. It buzzed to life.

They were happy at the thought of staying safe in comfort. If they stayed in the store they would have everything they needed to survive for a long time.

Danny still said they should move on and search for other survivors, and then they could return to the store after they were finished. Tom and the others agreed that there must be

more survivors out there. Maybe they were stuck in their own homes unable to fight the hordes of the undead.

With their new found weapons they stood a chance of survival. Danny, Tom, Samantha, William, and Mark made their way to the front of the store to have a look at the parking lot.

They could see bodies in the street. They scanned the whole parking lot and it looked like the nightmare could actually be over. They looked all across the empty parking lot, seeing no sign of the living dead.

They went to the lawn and garden to have a look. They saw more bodies lying motionless in the parking lot, but no signs of movement. Only the stench of death filled the air.

“Maybe the beasts have starved to death.”

Danny could sense something was not right about it. The hungry dead had to be somewhere close by.

Tom climbed the 12 foot high fence and jumped to the other side.

He was armed with the 12 gauge shot gun. He made his way to a circle of bodies, wondering why they were in such a strange circular pattern.

He stepped over one body, and then he saw the radio in the center of the circle.

He heard a sharp hiss of breath, and it dawned on him that these were not just dead bodies they were the bodies of the undead.

He tried to hurry over the body that he had stepped over, but it grabbed him by the ankle.

He aimed his shot gun and pulled the trigger. The bird shot scattered into the upper torso of the hideously deformed zombie.

The other zombies roared to life, scratching and biting at Tom as he ran back to the fence.

He jumped back to the other side, to safety. The others asked if he was OK. He said he was, but they had just about scared him into a heart attack.

Now they knew the living dead slept during the daylight hours. The shotgun blast had awakened all the other sleeping zombies and they were soon surrounding the lawn and garden section on all sides.

“Well, looks like we will need to wait till tomorrow if we want to make it out of the parking lot alive.” Tom said.

They went back into the main store. Suddenly Danny figured out why the zombies were in a circle around the radio.

He had a plan. He talked it over with Tom and the others, explaining that it might be possible to lure the zombies to the back of the building using a couple of two way radios.

They had to act fast if they wanted it to work. Mark and Tom volunteered to take the radios out the loading area at the back of the store. They placed one radio on one side of the back doors and another on the other side.

They closed and locked the doors. On another radio Danny started making loud noises, and the hordes made their way to the back of the store, leaving the front and side parking lots empty except for the two truly dead zombies at the lawn and garden fence.

Samantha, William, and Mark stayed in the store making noises over the radios as Danny and Tom jumped the fence of lawn and garden and made their way to a large black SUV parked in the side lot next to lawn and garden.

They had no luck finding a key but Tom said he could hot wire the car. Danny sat in the passenger side of the SUV as Tom crossed the wires and the big car roared to life. They peeled out of the parking lot and onto the main road.

Danny and Tom were heavily armed, ready to start their search for survivors.

They decided to check all the local churches. The first church they pulled up to was a two story Baptist church.

They exited the vehicle and cautiously looked around. There were no signs of the dead or the living. They went to the door and turned the knob, listening.

When they decided the coast was clear, they finally turned on their flashlights. They went from room to room, looking for any signs of life.

When they reached the middle of the church and opened the double doors that led into the sanctuary, they spotted bodies in all the pews. But they noticed that the air smelled not of death but of body odor and sweat. These people were alive!

“Hello!” Danny called. One after another heads started popping up from their resting places.

“My name is Danny and this is Tom, we want to take you to a new place of safety.”

People sighed in relief that help had come. There was cheerful whispering throughout the church.

“We have to act fast if we want to make it there alive.” Tom said.

“Is there anyone here that can drive the church bus” Danny asked.

One man stood up and said “I am a regular driver of the bus.” It was the youth pastor.

“Are there any more people located in other parts of this church?” Tom asked.

“No,” said the youth pastor. “We are all in the sanctuary.”

“Good,” replied Tom. “Follow us.”

There must have been sixty to eighty people lined up to go through the doors of the church and they made their way to a large church bus that only held about thirty people. They squeezed onto the bus more packed than a can of sardines.

All together there were forty passengers on the bus. Others climbed into the four remaining church vans. The keys were always kept above the driver's seat in a magnetic box that was attached to the roof of the vans.

“Follow us, keep together and when we get to where we are going keep quiet.”

They took off down the road in the black SUV with a bus and four vans behind. They drove through the mountains back to Buy-Right super center.

They pulled up to the front entrance and radioed to Samantha, Mark, and William to unlock the front doors of the store. They had many survivors. Mark and William made their way to the front of the massive store and unlocked the doors while Samantha stayed in the back room making screams over the radio to the two radios out the back door.

The zombies remained at the loading dock of the supermarket while Tom, Danny and about eighty others made their way into the front door of the store.

The time now was 7:00PM. They had another long night ahead of them but at least they made it into the store safe and sound.

With the front doors of the store locked again and the bars on the windows and doors they decided to turn on the power to the whole store. The store was now well lit, and everybody could see each other clearly.

They were then told to make themselves at home, that there was access to water hoses in the restrooms where they could shower. Any needed supplies could be found within Buy-Right. The members of the church were reluctant to take anything without asking and without paying for it.

Tom then told them, "Your money is no good here, not now. Please feel free to take what you need."

Tom started to explore more of the store and he found the employee break room. It had a stove, microwave, toaster oven and coffee makers. There were plenty of seats and even a smoking area.

He came back into the main store and picked up a nearby telephone and put it up to his ear. He heard nothing, no static, no crackling just anything at all. He pushed the intercom button and he heard himself breathing over the stores speakers.

The others heard it too. He made the announcement that there was a way to cook food and he needed some volunteers to do some shopping and some other volunteers to do some cooking in the break room. He also asked for help to hook up more stoves and ovens so they could have more people cooking.

Many volunteers showed up at the front of the store more than willing to shop and cook for the survivors. They had enough people willing to help to split the group up into two smaller groups, the cooks and the shoppers. There were also enough volunteers to help with getting more than one stove operational.

Everyone seemed happy to be in a well lit store. It was much better than being in that cold dark church.

The shoppers filled their buggies with frozen meats, canned goods, breads, pizzas, tacos, and noodles of all shapes and sizes. Tonight would be a pizza night.

The youth were with their youth pastor and he was leading them up and down the toy aisles. He told them to pick out toys that they could share and have fun with to keep them busy

throughout the day.

The less they thought about those monsters that lurked outside the better off they would be. He picked out some card games and some of his favorite classic board games and tucked them into the youth shopping cart.

Many people were putting together beds, tables, desks and anything else they thought they might like to have right in the middle of the store.

Danny had asked over the intercom if there were any hunters or sharp shooters and if they could make their way to the back of the store. About thirty men showed up, all members of the church, and all hunting buddies.

He told them he knew it wasn't going to be easy to do this task but they needed to narrow down the zombies as much as possible. He equipped them with weapons and sent them out into the lawn and garden section. Then he asked them to make as much noise as possible to lure the zombies to the garden fence and when they came around they could fire the weapons through the fence and hopefully thin out the hoard of zombies.

The men all started screaming and jumping up and down and sure enough the zombies found their way to the fence.

"This is going to be like shooting fish in a barrel," one of the hunters said.

The zombies came close to the fence but again showed no climbing ability. The men took their guns and started firing into the night. Most of the bullets hit their marks and the men shouted with the joy of having thinned out the large group of zombies.

There must have been over a hundred zombies and the bodies continued to fall as each blast rang out into the night. Finally the survivors had the upper hand. All but ten of the zombies were dead. The hunters talked about it and took aim at the last ten standing and fired. All the zombies in the parking lot were now on the ground unmoving, dead.

The hunters went inside and reported the good news over the intercom. The people cheered and ran to the barred windows for a look outside. It was dark but no zombies were out.

They remained happy. At 9:00PM dinner was served.

There was pizza for the youth, tacos for whoever wanted them, salads, and sandwiches. It was a large feast and everybody was fed.

Things were definitely looking up. Danny was hopeful that they would all be rescued and taken somewhere much safer, where they could actually have individual rooms, bathrooms, kitchens, play areas and everything they needed to start life over.

They knew with the staggering number of survivors found in that one church that they must go out tomorrow and look for more survivors. Danny and Tom went to the youth pastor and asked him if he would be willing to drive the church bus to look for more survivors.

"Of course," the youth pastor said. "I will do anything to serve, and if you think there might be more survivors I will be willing to pick them up."

The youth pastor found four other men and brought them to the hidden room where Samantha, William, Mark, Tom, and Danny were sitting

He said, "Here are some more drivers."

Danny looked up and greeted all four men and said how thankful he was to have people ready and willing to go on the dangerous mission of locating survivors.

Each driver would drive his own van and they made plans that night to rescue more human lives.

Everybody found a place to lay a pillow and a blanket, when they ran out of pillows they would find towels and clothing to lay on and then they all got ready and said goodnight. The time now was 11:55PM.

Day 5

Tom, Danny, the youth pastor, and the four other drivers went out the front door and into the parking lot. They were welcomed by a sound that they hadn't heard for days; the sounds of birds chirping. The sky was a brilliant blue; not a zombie in sight, but the stench of the dead lingered in the air.

Tom and Danny told the other men that if they saw bodies lying on the ground not to go near them, because the zombies sleep during the day.

Tom and Danny jumped into the black SUV and wired the car where the engine would start again. They led the bus and the four vans out of the parking lot.

They made their way back over the mountain roads and passed the first church they had been to. A few blocks away they turned into the parking lot of another. There were bodies on the pavement.

Each man was armed with a gun, and they carried plenty of bullets. They just hoped they would not have to use them.

One of the bodies got up and made a long groaning sound and it seemed that he was communicating with the other zombies. One by one they started to stand.

Tom put the Black SUV in drive and started hitting them. He took out six and he didn't give any others time to jump up, he just started running over the lifeless bodies. The SUV bounced over them with ease. On every bounce you could hear them giving way with a thud.

Tom drove all the way around the church, back to the front entrance, and put the SUV in park. Danny and Tom got out of the vehicle and walked to the doors of the church. They pulled out their weapons and tried to push the door open, but it was locked.

Tom went to the window and tried to look in. It was impossible to see in through the stained glass windows. He took out his hand gun and shattered the glass. Inside he could see movement, he smelled death. He tried to look into the window but he still only saw shadows moving, he called in through the broken class that he was there to help.

Suddenly a wide eyed man burst through the window and grabbed Tom by the neck. Danny was fast to react and he kicked the zombie in the face.

It was too late. Tom had been scratched.

More zombies appeared at the shattered window. Others came from the back of the church through an open door they had somehow missed when they drove around the building.

Danny told Tom everything would be alright. They would make him as comfortable as possible when they got back to the Buy-Right super center.

Tom couldn't believe what just happened. He knew that soon the infection would take hold and he would become one of "them".

Danny jumped behind the wheel of the black SUV and led the bus and four vans to the safety of the Buy-Right super center.

It was still early in the day when they reached the store. The sun was high in the sky and the clouds made it look like it would rain. Danny and Tom went into the store together.

It wasn't long before Tom started having symptoms: the blurred vision, slurred speech, going from extreme hot to extreme cold, vomiting, and diarrhea. They both knew it was only a matter of time before he would change. They had to figure out what to do, and fast.

Tom and Danny agreed on putting a cot from the camping department outside of the lawn and garden section just outside of the 12 foot high fence. They got the cot and made their way out the front of the store to the side of the building.

They both worked on piling the dead zombies onto each other and they ran into the store to get some flammable things so they could burn the zombie bodies.

They found large cans of Kerosene and poured it all over the zombies. Danny went inside and grabbed a Zippo lighter, a case of beer and a pack of cigarettes.

They sat outside for a couple of hours, watching the zombies burn.

They smoked their cigarettes, talking about how to go about finding more survivors. The day was still pretty young but they both knew they didn't have much more time to spend together.

Tom started complaining about feeling nothing. Shortly after that he raised his left arm and bit it. As soon as he got his first taste of blood his eyes became large and he became wild. Danny almost didn't have time to react.

He raised the crossbow took aim at Tom's face and pulled the trigger.

The arrow flew into one of Tom's wild eyes. Blood and pus oozed out of the empty eye socket. The arrow didn't stop until it was half way out the back of Tom's head. He fell to the ground with a thud.

Danny went inside the front of the store and asked one of the men to help move the body into the burn pile.

One of them stepped forward and followed Danny outside. They picked up the body and tossed it into the now raging fire. Thunder rolled in the distance.

"Looks like we are in for a storm," Danny said.

He was now desensitized. He had killed his wife, his friend Tom, and watched as other zombies were blown to pieces by the hunters. Now his heart was an abysmal vessel of hatred. He no longer cared to find other survivors, but it was Tom's dying wish.

With a storm brewing up Danny jumped into the black SUV and he went in search of more living in the world of the dead. This time they only took one bus, driven by the youth pastor.

The rain started out as a tiny drizzle. By the time they reached the last church in town, it was pouring and pounding on the windows. The windshield wipers were moving at the fastest settings and Danny still couldn't see through the fogged up windshield. He turned the defroster on low heat and it cleared up the fog but nothing was allowing him to see through the rain.

He was hoping that he would find survivors in this church. He got out of the SUV and ran up the steps to the church doors. He flung them open and called inside.

"Hello is there anybody in here" his voice echoed off the walls as he stepped inside. He opened the double doors that lead into the sanctuary and found it to be empty.

"What a waste of time!" Danny said as he rushed out of the church and into the rain. He slipped on the first stair and fell the rest of the way down.

The young youth pastor rushed out to help him. Danny got to his feet and found out he couldn't put any pressure on his left ankle. He thought it must be broken or really badly twisted.

The young pastor helped him on the bus and closed the doors. "Are you OK?" he asked.

Danny replied, "I've seen better days."

The youth pastor started the bus and drove it back to the Buy-Right super center.

The burning zombies had been reduced to a pile of ashes. The rain put the fire out and the air smelt strangely of electricity.

The young pastor and Danny made their way to the entrance of the massive store and waited for someone to unlock the front doors. A few minutes after waiting in the pouring rain someone finally came to open them.

Danny and the youth pastor made their way to the hidden room in the back of the store where Danny could lay on the sofa and keep the weight off of his left ankle.

Samantha went to the pharmacy and used a crowbar to break into the locked door. On her way out of the pharmacy she found the most expensive ankle brace, thinking it would also be the best.

Meanwhile the others were in the break room preparing another large dinner to feed the massive amount of survivors. The children were hooking up game systems to TV sets. A few children were passing around a hand held system that took mini disks and small memory sticks. Some of the adults were talking amongst themselves about how much life has changed since the sickness hit.

Mark and William set up a TV in the hidden room and connected it to the cable to see if there were any news stations available. They started flipping through the channels and they actually

found a news broadcast about the sickness.

It said that the government was searching for a cure and the army was starting to search for survivors of the plague. Millions of people had been killed across the USA. The best thing to do was to stay inside until help arrived. Military bases across America had troops roaming from town to town, door to door, seeking out survivors and destroying the infected.

The living, were more numerous than anyone could have imagined. The tally of survivors was growing with every day.

The broadcast kept repeating itself over and over. It must have been broadcasting in a loop, just in case survivors turned on their TVs to see if there was any new news.

This was wonderful news that they thought they must share with everyone. Mark went to the telephone, pressed intercom, and got everybody's attention and told of the news broadcast. He survivors all cheered and it gave him hope that soon they too would be rescued.

It was only 9:30PM. The survivors scattered across the store to eat dinner.

Danny was wearing his new ankle brace and was walking with the help of a pair of crutches also found in the pharmacy department. He was also thankful to be on the pain killers. He hopped his way to the smoking section of the break room, shut the door and lit up another cigarette. He inhaled deeply letting the smoke completely fill his lungs. He held it in for about two seconds and blew the smoke out of his mouth and nose.

He was only in there for about two minutes, when Mark walked in and asked to bum a smoke. Knowing that there were plenty of smokes lined up at isle 16 behind the register he pulled a smoke from the package and handed one to Mark.

"Thanks" said Mark as he took the cigarette and the Zippo lighter from Danny. He lit the smoke and drew in a nice breath full of smoke. He hadn't smoked in a while so he developed a head rush and had to sit down before he fell down.

Danny said, "Yeah, these things have been known to kill, you know."

Mark smiled and drew in another puff.

"Do you think that they will come?" Mark asked.

Danny leaned forward and said "I know they will show up but I don't think they will be happy with the way we have just taken what we need from the store."

"Under the circumstances, I don't think they will mind" Mark said as he finished his smoke.

William and Samantha entered the break room together. Danny offered them a smoke.

William just said, "I don't smoke. I only wanted to check to see how you were feeling after that fall."

Samantha reached across the table to the opened pack of cigarettes and pulled one out for herself. She asked for the lighter and Danny handed it to her. She lit the cigarette and she began to cry.

It was not necessary to ask her what was the matter, everyone who was in the room already knew. Tom had been kind of like her man, they'd had a strong connection when they first met and they'd bonded together nicely.

Nobody had the words to say to make her feel better. So everyone kept silent as she pulled herself together.

“So what are your plans when we get rescued?” she asked.

Nobody had given it much thought, possibly because they didn't think it would truly happen.

They stayed in the room staring out the glass that divided them from the non smokers. “What do you think they will do?” asked William.

Danny looked over and said “I think they will carry on like the rest of us, with scars so deep they will never heal and will never go away.”

After everyone got their fill of dinner, they went off into the store to find something else that would distract them from the horror that they have lived through. Until they were rescued and on their way to a new life, it wasn't over.

Some people were sitting in metal chairs reading books, Other people were sitting at computers playing the newest and hottest games. The teens were still playing on game systems and watching movies on the TVs. It seemed like there was something for everybody at Buy-Right super center.

Mark, William, Samantha and Danny all decided to make their way to the security room. They turned on all the cameras and watched over their new found friends. They also turned on the outside cameras and started counting the cars in the parking lot.

They counted Danny's green dodge neon, the large church bus, four of the church vans, and they saw that there were more vehicles lined up in the parking lot. More survivors had showed up.

They grabbed flash lights and radios and made their way to the front of the store. They hurried out the front door, went to the new line of vehicles, and started searching for survivors.

They found twenty five survivors in all and welcomed them into the store. Most of them had suitcases with them and they carried them in one by one until everyone was in. Danny was thankful that so many had showed up instead of him having to go look for them.

Many of them had said they've been traveling when the sickness struck. They had some how avoided the illness but when they stopped for gas it was clear that something was very wrong.

They told of how they had all met at the bottom of the mountain and took turns filling their fuel tanks from a tanker truck that was parked at a gas station, in the middle of nowhere.

They decided it was not safe to travel alone so they followed each other one by one up the steep mountains that led to this town. They saw the lights on at the Buy-Right super center and they saw no signs of the walking dead, so they thought it would be safe to spend the night in the parking lot.

They were amazed at how many other survivors were in the store. That's when Danny told them of the repeating news broadcast. They all looked a little puzzled.

They said, "We've been driving from town to town, there are no signs of military vehicles or the army."

"They will come. It will take them awhile to come up the mountain, but we have enough food and supplies to last a good while."

"Do you have any fuel for our cars?"

Danny remembered that behind the super center there were gas pumps.

"Yes we have plenty of fuel for all the vehicles. The gas station is around the back of the store. We can fill up your cars first thing tomorrow."

Day 6

Everyone awoke to the sound of the intercom clicking on and the announcement that breakfast was ready and everyone should meet up at the front of the store.

The children and young adults ate first, then everyone else got in line. After everyone was fed they all gathered at the front of the store.

"OK everybody here?" came a voice from the karaoke machine.

"We will be taking a trip today" the voice continued, "so everyone get a shower and pick out some new clothes. Bring only what you need. It's going to be a trip to the bottom of the mountains."

Some were very confused, and the question popped up from somewhere in the middle of the large group of people. "Why are we going to leave if we have everything we need right here?"

"Excellent question" said Danny over the karaoke machine. "We have a gas station behind the store. We can all fuel up and search for another store at the bottom of the mountains. We stand a better chance of getting rescued in the lower elevations."

The people all looked around at one another and started to talk amongst themselves. They all agreed it might be the best chance of rescue they would have.

The youth pastor was the first one to pull to the gas pumps in the church bus and he filled it all the way to the top. Next the four church vans pulled into the station and they topped off. Then the individual cars started fueling up. After a while everyone had a full tank of gas. Every car was loaded with weapons and whatever ammo they could find.

The children and teens all climbed in the large church bus. All together there were now fifty kids and teens on the church bus. Each church van held ten passengers, the left over persons climbed into the individual cars.

Samantha, William, Mark, and Danny all climbed into Danny's green Neon. They left the safety of the super center followed by the bus, four vans, and a line of cars. They all had a long drive

ahead of them, but they knew at the bottom of the mountain there was another fuel truck just waiting for them.

The line of cars drove slowly out of town and started off down the mountain. If there had been any other cars on the road it would have looked like a strange funeral procession, but there was no other traffic.

They could all see bodies lying in the streets off to the side of the road.

“Are they dead?” Samantha asked.

Danny kept his eyes on the road and said, “I wouldn't count on it.”

They continued down the steep, curvy roads. It turned out to be a real nice day.

“Great day for a drive.” Danny said as he turned on the radio and slipped a CD in the CD player. “Not Falling” from Mudvayne started blaring through the speakers.

They didn't know where they were going. All they knew was that they had to get there.

Hours had passed when they reached the bottom of the mountain. The kids were getting restless and hungry. The cars were in need of fuel.

They stopped when they found the tanker truck sitting in the parking lot of the gas station. “That's our refill station” Danny said.

He grabbed his cross bow and pulled in next to the tanker truck. He saw how, earlier, the cars that had used the truck had left the hose and the empty containers.

He got out of the car and scanned the area for the living dead. Then he placed the hose in his gas tank, twisted a knob on the end of it, and fueled his car up to F again. The church vans also fueled up and so did the individual cars.

Danny hobbled inside to turn on the pump so the church bus could be fueled up. While he was in the store he saw that they had plenty of candy and snacks for the kids so he got a few bags and filled them completely with candy and other sweets. He also grabbed all the freshest sandwiches he could find along with apple pies, bubble gums and sodas.

From the bathroom he heard a scratching sound. He thought it was all in his head until he heard the unforgettable chattering sounds. He rushed out the store as fast as his crutches could carry him and told everyone to get back into the cars.

The zombie did not come out of the rest room but he didn't want to take the chance.

“It seems that zombies can't open doors” he said to William, Mark and Samantha.

He ran the candy to the bus and he kept the sandwiches and pies. He also put the sodas in the bus for the children.

There were not enough for everybody so he told them to take a sip and pass it around.

The children were happy to get their sugar high.

Once the bus was completely filled up the line of cars took off again. Now they were on their way.

They pulled out a map and looked for the closest town. They found that the next large town was 20 miles away.

Surely help would be found there. So they kept driving until they reached the place.

No signs of life. No Army or anything. They drove around town until they found another Buy-Right super center.

They had no way of knowing who or what they would run into there but with their hopes smashed they pulled into the parking lot. There were bodies littered all on the ground, a lot more than at the last Buy-Right.

"I have an extremely bad feeling about this." said Samantha.

"So do I." Danny, reluctantly, admitted to himself that maybe he had made the wrong call. Maybe they would have been safer in that Buy-Right store located on the top of that mountain in the middle of nowhere.

Danny, Samantha, William and Mark climbed out of the Neon as silently as they could.

Danny asked for all the hunters to take up their weapons and then he asked all the newest members to join them if they had weapons. Forty people with guns started filling their clips, and Danny loaded his crossbow.

At the sound of the first clip a zombie sprang to life, and made a chattering whimpering sound, and then another ten zombies stood up

"TAKE EM DOWN!" Danny shouted, He fired the crossbow, hitting a zombie in the spine.

The sound of gunfire filled the parking lot. Danny loaded another arrow and took aim, shooting a zombie directly in the eye. He had to look away, because that was how he'd killed Tom.

Round after round, the zombies were falling to the blacktop, never to get up again.

There were so many zombies left that Danny was afraid they wouldn't make it. To make matters worse the sun was sinking fast. Soon they would run out of light and be outnumbered.

Danny dropped his cross bow and ordered everybody back into their vehicles, and they all obeyed.

Danny climbed on the bus and told the children not to worry. He than asked the youth pastor to start running over the zombies.

The heavy bus lurched forward and plowed it's way through the zombies. Blood and guts were all over the parking lot. The smaller cars joined in the zombie hit and run game.

The bus made its way to the other end of the parking lot and turned around and started down a new line just like it was trying to mow the grass.

The other vans and cars were mowing them down the same way. Soon the parking lot was free of the living dead, but it was a mess of zombie corpses.

Danny, Samantha, Mark and William walked all sides of the massive store in a search for an entry point. The store was completely dark. They tried going in through the auto repair shop

but the door was tightly locked.

Next they thought maybe the lawn and garden could be opened like the last store. Mark was the one that climbed the fence. He went to the sliding glass door and pushed hard. Nothing happened.

They made their way to the front of the store and saw that all doors were locked and the bars were in place on the windows and the doors.

They decided it would be best if they got back to the lawn and garden section, and this time William, Mark and Samantha climbed the fence, and they shot out the sliding glass door. If zombies couldn't climb they wouldn't need that door anyway. They made their way into the new Buy-Right super center.

They called out into the store and heard nothing but the echoes of their own voices. They shined their flashlights across the store. Nothing moved. No scary, wide eyed monsters came out of the shadows.

This store was twice as big as the last store!

They made their way to the front and unlocked the doors from the inside. As soon as the people in the bus, vans, and cars got word on their radios, they all headed into the Buy-Right super center.

"It's dark in here, one of the children cried."

"It's OK" Danny said as they closed and locked the doors after all the people had swarmed inside.

Danny, Samantha, Mark and William made their way to the breaker box and turned on the main power. The electronic buzz was heard throughout the whole store, and one by one the lights began to flicker on.

The children began to laugh and feel like they had at the other store, nice and safe. Once again Danny went to the nearest phone and pressed intercom and his voice was heard loud and clear over the stores speaker systems.

Again he asked for volunteers to do shopping, cooking, and of course some to move and hook up stoves. The same volunteers as before plus a few new ones came to the back of the store. They got right on working because it was almost time for them to start dinner.

Danny made his way to the break room and saw that this store also had a smoking section. He walked in and closed the door and lit yet another cigarette.

He looked around the break room. It was so much larger than at the other store! It even had three stove top ovens six microwaves, four coffee makers, and two large screen TVs.

Samantha, Mark and William came into the break room. They all went inside the smoker's section.

William asked about Danny's ankle, and the other two wanted to smoke.

Danny told William with the ankle brace, the crutches and the pain medications he was better than he had been for a few days now.

Samantha, Mike and Danny enjoyed their time smoking together. When went back into the main store they found everyone having a good time and doing what needed to be done.

Danny hopped his way into the restroom and searched for a water faucet for a water hose. He found it and then it was time for him to go shopping again. He found an electrical cart charging at the front of the store where the rest of the shopping carts were.

He hopped on the cart and made his way to lawn and garden section where he picked up two water hoses. Then he went to the guns and ammo, looked into the drawers next to the cash register, and pulled out the keys to the knife box and gun case.

He steered the cart to the revolving gun case and tried the keys, The third key opened the case.

He found a phone next to the hunting register and called for all the hunters and sharp shooters to come pick out their new weapons. They made their way back to the hunting goods section and piled up on new guns and ammo.

The kids had brought some of the small hand held game systems from the last store but now at the new store there was enough of the systems in the storage area and on the store floor for each child and teen to have his or her own! There were plenty of games to choose from, as well.

Again some people were setting up computers and running new games on them. Others were reading the latest in fiction novels. Others were setting up the TVs to play game systems on. They were all trying to distract themselves from all they had seen.

Dinner was almost ready at 9:30PM. The children were still going through their bags of candy and trading this piece for that one.

Finally dinner was ready and all were ready to eat. People came into the break room to fill their plates with the green bean casserole, corn, corn bread, rice and baked French fries. Then they would wonder out of the break room and take it to their own place to eat it, wherever in the store they wished to be.

Samantha, Mark, William and Danny went back into the smoking section eating their food and talking about the day.

They were really getting to know each other well. It was hard to believe that they only met each other about three days ago, It felt like they had spent a life time together as best friends. Danny knew if he lost them there was no going on with life. He was sure they all felt the same way about him. When they finished their cigarettes and their food they made their way back into the store.

Danny picked up the phone and hit intercom and once again his voice flooded the store. This time he was looking for someone to replace the lawn and garden door. He didn't think the zombies could climb the 12 foot high fence but he didn't want to take any chances.

A couple of men looked around the store and decided the best way to block the entrance would be to build a door out of the fitting room walls. They worked until they constructed a good sized door and then they bolted it into the metal frame of the smashed sliding door. Danny checked out their handiwork and he gave them two thumbs up.

He turned the electric scooter away from the lawn and garden and made his way to the first exit.

He pushed the door open. Nothing but the night beyond.

He checked another exit. Still nothing.

He checked the exit near the front restroom and once again he was facing the world outside.

He then drove his cart to the rear exit next to the restrooms swung it opened and to his delight there was also a hidden room in the new store!

He took out his radio and reached Samantha, Mark and William to let them know about the new hidden room. It had two recliners, a new sofa, and a big screen TV.

The four of them went to find another recliner to put in hidden room and they also searched for the newest gaming system to hook up to the TV.

While they were trapped in a store they thought they should find something to help them pass the time. The time now was 11:57PM and they called it a night.

Day 7

Everyone slept all night long.

Many people awoke at 9:00AM to a bright and beautiful day.

The milk in the walk-in fridge was still good, and many kids got up and ate a bowl of cereal.

Danny, Mark, William, and Samantha awoke at 9:45AM and went to the break room to cook some eggs and pancakes with buttered toast. It was a much needed meal that they all enjoyed.

Now it was the volunteers' job to make a huge breakfast for all the survivors. They prepared a large pan of scrambled eggs, pancakes, and muffins for everyone.

After everyone ate their breakfast, the grownups started setting up basketball nets. They also set up pool tables, air hockey tables, foosball tables—anything they thought the children would enjoy.

Some of the kids were walking back and forth through the Toy section looking for something special to play with. There were just so many things to choose from in this new store.

Danny made his way to the lawn and garden in his little electric shopping cart. He opened the newly made door and saw that it was yet another beautiful day. If it hadn't been for the stench of the dead, he might have been able to forget all that had happened for a while.

He found a phone next to the lawn and garden register and pressed the intercom button.

This time he was looking for a clean up crew that he would take outside to clean up the zombie remains. When he got back inside he made his way to the front of the store and found thirty men waiting for him.

He told a couple of them to look in lawn and gardening for some shovels and he told the others to try to find snow shovels.

They met up at they entrance again a while later and made their way out into the parking lot. They were very quiet and very cautious, keeping an eye out for the undead. They saw nothing except for the blood and gore that was smeared all across the pavement. Guts, bones, brains, and limbs were smashed and spread across the blacktop.

“This might take awhile” one of the men had said as he tried to scoop zombie parts into the snow plow shovel.

Danny agreed that maybe their tools were never designed to scoop up human remains. He thought about it for a few minutes, and then asked the guys to check the back of the store for another gas station and some gas cans.

They returned shortly to report that there was indeed a gas station. One of them ran inside and got a buggy and then went to the automotive section and grabbed fifteen little fuel containers. They all met at the gas station took turns filling up the containers.

They started pouring the fuel over chunks of the dead zombies. Soon the whole ground was awash with gasoline.

They went inside and locked the door behind them. One of them lit a match and tossed it over the fence. A huge fireball erupted.

Danny watched as the fire spread through the parking lot. “I sure hope this gets rid of those remains,” he said to the others as they watched the whole thing unfold.

Samantha, Mark and William paged Danny and asked for him to come to the break room.

He rode his scooter all the way to the back of the store and when he entered the break room he stood up and hopped to the smokers section.

The others were already there waiting on him. He lit a cigarette for himself and he passed one to Samantha and Mark.

They finished their smokes and made their way to the hidden room where they took turns playing one of the most exciting racing games they had ever seen.

Many people were walking around the store to get some exercise in. Many of the kids were playing their beloved games. Some of the people went to the electronics section and found e book readers that had 100's of books already loaded on them.

It was only 11:00AM but everybody seemed to be in a good mood. Everyone was just doing their own thing.

It was about time for the volunteers to start making lunch. So they lined up in the break room to discuss what they would be making.

They decided on something easy that almost everyone would like. They ended up boiling hot dogs and making some chili and using up the hot dog buns before they went stale.

They also brought several different brands of chips and placed them on a table in the center of the room so that people could just make their own plates. Cheese puffs, originals, ranch, cheddar, sour cream and onion—you name it, they had it. Everyone was fed and almost everyone came back for seconds.

Danny got back on his motorized cart and went to the front of the store to see if the remains were all burned up.

All that was left of them was charred ashes. It would be easy enough to find a way to sweep the parking lot.

Danny went back inside the store and found a large rectangular push broom. He tied it to the shopping cart of the scooter and took off back and fourth across the parking lot.

The remains sort of floated away with each pass of the broom. There were still dark stains in the parking lot but you couldn't tell what they had come from if you didn't know. It was much better than seeing all the zombie remains. The smell was also gone now that the rotted flesh was burned away.

By 3:00PM the whole parking lot was clean again. No signs of zombies anywhere—but also, no signs of rescue.

It would only be a little while before people would get tired of walking the store and doing the same things every day. Soon they will lose their cool and start tearing the place up. Danny was already starting to feel trapped.

He also didn't see himself as a leader. Yet everybody else did. He was not only afraid that the survivors were going to snap but also feared that *he* would snap.

Maybe it was the lack of sleep. Maybe he would feel better by tomorrow.

The time was slowly slipping away Danny's watch read 5:30PM.

He ditched the scooter and started using his crutches again. He had hopes of being able to put pressure on his ankle by tomorrow morning. With the help of the pain killers it might just work out that way. The ankle brace helped a lot more than he had thought it would.

He wanted to let his ankle rest for the remainder of the day. The sharp, shooting pain was gone, the feeling had come back, and his ankle looked its normal color. He was sure that by tomorrow he would be walking again.

Samantha, Mark, and William were playing a childish game of Go Fish when Danny entered the hidden room. He told them about his fear of everyone freaking out, but he kept his fear of losing it himself buried deep inside. He couldn't let them know.

They counted on him way too much, and if they thought he was losing his cool, then they would leave him there in the Buy-Right store all alone. He couldn't face that reality.

His brain was starting to hurt.

He asked William to walk with him to the pharmacy to pick out the best headache medicine on the shelves. William said that he would like to look for some medications for himself as well.

William walked while Danny hobbled to the pharmacy. Danny looked at William and asked, "What is the best medication for a headache that won't leave your insides bleeding?"

William reached to the top of the shelf with the headache and fever reducers and pulled down a bottle that said All Natural Pain Relief.

He tossed the bottle to Danny and said, "Here, give this a try. It's pain relief without the harmful side effects."

"Thanks William, Tom was right about you. You are a very bright young man."

"Thanks" William said as he filled a carry along basket with some strong muscle creams and cough and cold medications.

"Feeling a little under the weather William?" asked Danny.

William replied with, "Yeah, just a little bit."

They both decided that they had gotten what they needed and they started their way back to the hidden room.

Danny, William, Mark and Samantha stayed in the back room telling stories of what their lives had been like before, and talking about how if they could have made some changes they would have. They opened their souls to each other and told of their fears and regrets.

Danny didn't feel as bad as he had before because he'd found out that just like him the others were worried about how much longer they would need to stay in the super center.

No doubt help was on the way. Good old USA never fails.

Whoever had unleashed this new virus across the Country was most likely being punished to the fullest extent of the law.

Maybe that was why help hadn't shown up yet. Or maybe the Army was tied up in a war against whatever country the virus had come from.

That was what had happened, he was sure of it.

Danny got lost in his thoughts for hours. He hardly spoke to anyone. He just felt like there was no need to speak.

Everyone must have felt the same.

Then he fell asleep on the sofa.

Finally it was time for the volunteers to start another dinner to feed the survivors. Mark called into the hidden room that dinner was ready.

Danny woke up with a startled expression on his face. Samantha, Mark, Danny and William all headed to the break room together.

Without realizing it Danny had left his crutches behind and was putting full weight on his injured ankle.

He found that he was running low on smokes, so he walked to the front of the store, got behind register sixteen, and grabbed the most expensive brand he could find.

If you were going to smoke for free, you might as well make it an exotic blend.

Danny made his way back to the break room and sat down in the smoking section. He shared his new cigarettes among his friends.

He couldn't believe that out of all the survivors only three of them actually smoked. He didn't mind. He actually liked just having the smoking section to himself to share with his friends.

It seemed that this has been the longest day of Danny's entire life. He went to the hidden room and fell asleep on the sofa.

He dreamed of the zombies and he got no rest. He tossed and turned and awoke several times in the night.

The clock crept on to 12.00AM.

Day 8

Danny awoke at 6:30AM with thoughts of his wife flooding his head.

He tried to remember the last things he said to her that day. All he could hope was that he had told her how much he loved her and how much she meant to him.

He decided that he should go shopping in order to take his mind off of the pain and loneliness that he felt in his heart.

He limped to the front of the store with his ankle brace wrapped around his ankle. He grabbed a buggy and began to push it down the personal hygiene aisle.

He grabbed some new shampoo, body wash, a scrubby, and a tooth brush, some mint tasting tooth paste, some deodorant, razors, aftershave, and a few more odds and ends.

He walked around for hours, just taking his time, looking at shelf after shelf.

He went back to the men's section and picked out some shirts, some more pants, socks, and a couple of pairs of shoes.

He had no need for the things he placed in the buggy. He just wanted to feel like there was something normal about this new life, so he shopped just like he had in the days before the dead started to walk the earth.

He had always used to hate going shopping, but now it makes him feel like there is nothing wrong in this world. Zombies were only fictional creatures. His wife hadn't turned into a monster, she just died.

He lied to himself a lot these days.

After his shopping spree he went for a nice shower.

He put his new clothes on the counter next to the sinks. He put his towel on the sink as well. He stripped down and sprayed himself with the hose.

He was feeling refreshed after his shower, nice and clean. He put on his new Mortal Kombat shirt and his new cargo pants. He also put on fresh clean socks and he slipped on his high dollar Nike shoes.

All and all he was a fairly happy person. He still had his three new best friends.

He went to the smoker's section of the break room, pulled out the box of exotic blend smokes, and lit one up.

He enjoyed the mellow flavor. He enjoyed the head rush too. He hated to admit it but he was addicted. No force on earth, heaven or hell, could make him give up his smokes. He knew the health risks involved.

Danny had only started smoking after he lost his wife and his good friend Tom. Now he'd made it a daily habit.

Samantha and Mark had started smoking at about the same time. The only one of the four with enough brains to turn the smokes down was William, who got enough second hand smoke to kill an elephant.

After Danny's smoke break he went on yet another shopping spree.

He put things in the buggy just because of the high prices. He was not pretending to be rich, he just wanted to know what it felt like to put items in the buggy that he could not afford.

He was starting to get hungry, so he made his way to the grocery isles.

He picked up a two liter bottle of cherry cola, unscrewed the cap and put the open bottle in his mouth, and chugged himself a good liter of cherry cola,.

He put the bottle in the front seat of the cart and made his way to the electronics department. He searched through all the latest and greatest electronic gear. \

He found an e book reader that took a small memory stick and he opened it up and charged it.

He then opened a laptop computer and set it up for the internet. He was shocked when he found the internet was still on.

He pulled out his credit card and searched online for some books that to fill his newfound toy with.

He was able to find a lot of e books for anywhere around 2.99 to 5.99. He searched for his favorite authors and, sure enough, he found many of them for a good low price.

Once the others heard that the internet was up they started pulling lap tops off the shelves and opening them.

They saw the internet as a way of getting to know how bad the country's losses really were. They also used them to read about whatever chemical warfare was being used.

The only information that they got from the internet was that there was an accident in a lab in America, where the chemical was being tested.

So all the information they had heard on the news was a lie. It was an accident in a lab in the USA that had caused such madness.

They started searching for the Army's rescue operation, and they couldn't find anything about that either. They also discovered that really big bombs were going to be used on the "hopeless" areas of the map.

Danny couldn't believe what he was reading. The news was very hard to swallow. Just a couple of days ago they'd seen a news broadcast that said the US Army was going to aid the survivors.

He couldn't understand why the government would lie about something so huge and try to blame it on someone else. He also wondered how big the bombs were going to be and just where the hopeless areas on the map would be.

They didn't give times or dates as to when they would drop these bombs. He started to fear the worst. What if they were trying to clear out the American population altogether? What if the bombs turned out to be Nuclear bombs? Danny felt sick to his stomach.

He could sure use a smoke right about now. So he made his way to the break room and paged Samantha, Mark and William. He told them about what they'd found out on the internet.

Danny had downloaded more than a couple of books to keep him busy for a while. He just plopped on the sofa, and he read for hours. He only stopped reading when it was time for dinner and when the battery needed to be recharged at 11:00PM.

A new day was fast approaching.

Day 9

He read until 11:30AM. He finally got off of the sofa and picked out some clean clothes and made his way to the bathroom to take a shower under the water hose. He didn't stay in the shower as long as he usually did. He stayed in long enough to get clean and that was it.

He got dressed in a hurry. His ankle was feeling so good that he didn't even put the brace back on.

Danny thought it would be fun to hang out with the kids today. He made his way to the youth's hang out spot at the front of the store and challenged anyone who would take him on to a game of air hockey.

He had challenges left and right. He spent most of the day playing against all of the kids at whatever game they wanted to play.

He found out he was a terrible shot at basketball. He got on the phone and pressed intercom and paged Mark to the front of the store. When Mark arrived he asked if he would shoot some hoops with the kids for a while and Mark said he would love to shoot some hoops.

Next Samantha was paged to the front of the store and he asked her if she would like to play with the kids and she said that would be great. He gave her the choice between air hockey

and Foosball. She thought it would be great to play air hockey.

Danny paged William to the front of the store. When William showed up he saw the other two playing the games with the kids so he automatically walked to the pool table and set up.

This is great, Danny thought, just a day with the kids.

Samantha, Mark, William and Danny switched games so it didn't get too redundant. The kids were having a great time playing against the "Old People".

Other adults thought it was a wonderful idea to play with the kids today as well, so new faces and challenges arose as the day went on. Everyone was having a good day. The young youth pastor brought board games for the kids and adults that were waiting for their time on the big games.

Danny thought it was good to see everybody getting along in such a way. He went to the party supplies and started filling up helium balloons. He tied strings to them and he made enough for all the kids to enjoy. He then took the balloons to the front of the store and tied them to a rail next to the game area.

When the kids saw the balloons their smiles brightened. The teens that hung out in electronics made their way to the front of the store and got into the gaming as well. It was just a day filled with friendly competition.

The way all things must come to an end, so did the wonderful game day. Eventually they were all in the break room, eating dinner. Everyone was still talking about the games and some new challenges were made for the following day.

Danny, William, Samantha, and Mark sat together in the smoker's section talking about how much fun they had playing games all day.

They finished smoking and went to the electronics department together. They started looking through the CD section and found some of their favorite music and then they went to a computer and ripped the music from the disks they then found their favorite colored MP3 Players and added the music to the players by using a USB cable. They picked out some high quality head phones and they started to enjoy their portable sounds.

The teens hadn't thought about doing that before, but now, seeing their elders with MP3 players they thought it was a good idea and they started their own search for music.

Danny was sitting up on a recliner in the hidden room listening to his MP3 player while reading his e book. He was completely lost into the story.

He enjoyed reading so much more than watching movies. If the author was good enough he could paint a picture with his words and your imagination could take over from there. Movies were too Black and White, you see what you get.

Samantha was on the sofa talking to William, and Mark was playing a basketball game on the game system. Everyone was doing their own thing.

In the main store all was calm. A few of the kids were writing letters back and fourth to each other. No doubt they were the kind of letters that a child cherishes and wants to keep forever. A few kids were in the crafts section making friendship bracelets and putting together puzzles.

Some of the teenagers were building model cars, others were drawing pictures or writing stories. Most of the girls were at the jewelry counter picking out some nice pieces that looked good on them.

Some of the older people were drinking beers, telling jokes or just sitting around doing nothing. It had been a good day and a lot of the kids were still chattering excitedly about the games that they played earlier in the day. All in all it wasn't such a bad day being stuck inside a shopping center.

Day 10

When Danny looked up from his e book reader he saw that it was 3:00AM.

He had to use the restroom so bad he couldn't stand it. He got up, walked to the restroom, and relieved himself in a urinal.

As he washed his hands, he stared at himself in the mirror and saw that there were large purplish black bags under his eyes.

He thought it was time to get some sleep but he knew when he returned to the hidden room that he wouldn't be able to fall into sleep.

He headed back toward the hidden room, and then changed his mind. He was in the mood for another cigarette. He stopped dead, turned around, and headed for the break room.

He walked into the smoker's section and he lit up another cigarette. He filled his lungs with the exotic blend cigarette smoke and exhaled slowly.

His nerves were calmer already. He just sat back and relaxed while puffing smoke. When he finished with the cigarette he headed back to the hidden room. He found it difficult to fall into sleep; so he continued reading his e book.

He got so wrapped up in the book that he almost missed out on breakfast at 8:30AM. The volunteers had prepared biscuits, gravy, scrambled eggs and orange juice. Everybody enjoyed their breakfast.

After he finished his morning cigarette he asked one of the volunteers how much food was left.

She told him that the food would last for maybe a month, maybe less.

He told her to let the other survivors know and to only give seconds to the children and young adults.

She let the other volunteers know what Danny had said, then she grabbed the phone in the break room, pressed the intercom button, and made the announcement to the whole store.

They had known the food shortage would happen sooner or later, but they'd been hoping for later. There were still aisles full of canned goods, but the reality that they couldn't live in the store forever was dawning on everyone at the same time.

They had been counting on a rescue that now didn't seem likely to happen. Then again, they hadn't thought they were going to be rescued in the church, either. Nothing was set in stone.

Morning gave way to noon time and everyone lined up for lunch.

Danny wasn't feeling good, so he headed to the smoker's section, lit up a cigarette, and tried to think of a solution to the problem. After five minutes of smoking and thinking he came up with nothing.

There was nothing more that he could do. He made his way to the hidden room to have a much needed nap.

Danny awoke from his nap at 6:30PM. He decided to go for a walk. He made his way to the lawn and garden area.

He heard moaning and chattering from beyond the newly constructed door.

He had known that the dead would find them. When he opened the door, he saw a horrific sight.

Beyond the fence, zombies were shoulder to shoulder throughout the whole parking lot.

He picked up the phone and paged William, Samantha and Mark.

When they got there, they saw a sea of zombies coming, wave after wave. They stank of rotting flesh.

They looked nothing like the living people they had once been. All of them were now skinny, with blackened skin all crawling with maggots. They were obviously in the advanced stages of decomposition.

The smell was too much for Samantha. She vomited into an empty flower pot.

They had thought these stinking creatures would have starved to death by now.

They didn't have enough bullets to kill all the zombies. They were now trapped, with no way out.

At least the zombies hadn't figured out how to get in.

Danny, Samantha, William and Mark made their way to the front of the store. When they looked out, they saw zombies stumbling around in the parking lot.

Danny made an announcement over the intercom to let everyone know that the zombies were back, and to tell them to stay away from the doors and windows.

The hunters and sharpshooters grabbed their weapons and made their way to the lawn and garden. They opened the newly constructed door and walked up to the 12 foot high fence.

They took aim and started to fire into the massive crowd of zombies. Zombie after zombie went down with the sound of each gun blast. They continued shooting until they were out of bullets. Surprisingly, they cleared out a large portion of the living dead.

Now there was nothing more that could be done. These damned creatures couldn't live forever. Sooner or later they would drop from starvation.

Danny went to the smoker's section of the break room and lit a cigarette. He knew that everything was going to be all right. The creatures were in bad shape, the last stages of decomposition. Soon there would be nothing but bones.

After finishing his cigarette Danny headed to bed. It was 9:30PM.

Day 11

Morning came quickly, and breakfast was served.

No one seemed to mind the zombies outside. They felt safe and secure in the super center. Many of the kids and teens went back to playing the games set up in the front of the store. The adults were placing bets on how long the zombies could survive.

Danny, Samantha, Mark and William watched the living dead through the fence in the lawn and garden center. The zombies were all asleep on the black top. The stench of death was all around.

Danny lit a cigarette and started puffing on it nervously. He wondered how many of those bodies would get up and start to walk when the evening came.

Samantha, Mark and William were talking about making explosive devices out of house hold items. William knew a little too much about making homemade bombs, but no one was complaining about that at this point in time. They had devised a plan to rid themselves of the zombies once and for all.

William went inside with Samantha and Mark. Danny stayed outside to finish his smoke. The zombies were still lying motionless in the parking lot. Danny finished his smoke and went back into the main store.

Samantha and Mark were on a quest to find the materials needed for the bombs. William was in charge of building the explosives. As the day went on he made a few small explosives and a couple of pipe bombs. He took the bombs out to the lawn and garden center along with a couple of RC cars.

The plan was simple—attach a homemade bomb to an RC car and ram it into a pile of zombies. The impact would be enough to set off the explosive. Everyone was confident in the plan and Danny was sorry it had taken so long to think up such a clever one.

At noontime lunch was served. It was spaghetti rings with meatballs and grilled cheese sandwiches.

The survivors were excitedly talking about the new plan to destroy the zombies. There were also questions arising about what to do once the zombies were destroyed.

The dead would be up and walking again by five or six o'clock. Everyone still had plenty of time to kill before the firework show.

Someone had the idea to have a movie night. They found a video projector, hooked it up to a TV with a built in VCR and DVD player, and also hooked up a stereo sound system so that everyone watching the movie was sure to hear it. The video selected for the night was *Ghost Busters*.

The movie would not be played until later on in the night when all the living dead returned to the dead.

During the rest of the day the survivors were extremely happy. They were in high spirits and couldn't help but to put together a party. The celebrations lasted until 6:30PM.

At 6:45PM the leftover zombies were already up and walking around, much slower than they had been in the days before. The zombies were in fact beginning to die a second death.

William cut a hole in the bottom of the chain link fence just large enough for the RC car to pass through. Once it was past the fence, William steered the little radio controlled car past a group of zombies.

The zombies turned in unison and stared at the little car in bewilderment. The car raced across the parking lot, and the zombies chased after it in slow pursuit.

"This is going to be easier than I thought" William said as he chuckled at the ignorant zombies. He raced the RC car around the zombies a couple of times and watched the frustration build as the creatures grunted and reached for the car.

William then decided to control the RC car in a zigzag motion and he watched in amusement at the zombies dancing from left to right.

In a way, it reminded him of the Michael Jackson music video Thriller. Danny, Samantha and Mark also laughed at the spectacle.

The other survivors were inside the super center waiting to hear news of the destruction of zombies. After teasing the zombies for about five minutes William crashed the vehicle into the large group of zombies.

The explosion was small. Pieces of metal and nails sprayed from the pipe bomb and into the surrounding zombies. All the zombies in the group fell down, but only a handful stood back up.

William strapped a bomb on another RC car and fed it through the hole in the fence. This time the zombies did not give chase. They stared at the car and as it drove closer to them, and began to back away from it.

They did have the ability to learn, after all, but they were slower than the car so when it crashed into a zombie's foot it exploded on impact.

The zombies were sent flying forward, and this time none got back up. William, Samantha, Mark and Danny gave each other high fives and shouted into the night with joy.

When Danny, William, Samantha and Mark came back inside they got on the intercom and announced that the zombies were dead. They wanted everybody to meet up at the front of the store to watch the movie selected for the night. Everyone grabbed blankets and pillows and those who could not find blankets or pillows used towels and clothing to lie down on and while they watched the movie.

After the movie was over, everyone made their way to the break room to get some dinner. There was a lot of laughter and joy filling the room. It was as if a giant weight had been lifted.

Danny, Samantha, William and Mark made their way into the smoker's section. Danny lit his cigarette and they talked about how the zombies chased the RC car around and how happy they were that their plan had worked.

After dinner everybody turned in for the night. Danny, Samantha, Mark and William stayed up for a while in the hidden room and talked about what the new plan should be.

Day 12

After everyone woke up and had breakfast, there was a meeting to determine what their next action should be.

Now, with the zombies out of the way, they could either wait in the super center for help to come or they could go out into the newly dead world in search of survivors.

Everyone chose to leave the safety of the store to go out into the newly dead world to search for survivors and start the journey to their new lives.

Where would they go and what would they do were just questions that they would have to take one day at a time.