

Dystopian Dawn

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Prologue

As he stood on the rooftop of a lone skyscraper, David looked up to the sky and closed his eyes. The warm sun and gentle breeze filled him with the reassurance which he craved for so long. He briefly glanced at his handgun before throwing it to one side, it tumbled across the rough, hard rooftop. He had no use for it now, anyway. David looked down at his clean, shiny shoes, and adjusted his belt, straightened his jacket and shirt collar and tightened his tie. He hadn't looked this good in years. Once again, he looked up to the sky. The bright blue, sunny summer feeling made him feel alive. The sound of seagulls, the smell of the salty water trickling up the warm sandy beach. It was perfect, it doesn't get any better than this. With his eyes closed, he took a step forward, followed by another and another. He could already feel the cool breeze from the sea air. One step closer, the wind picked up slightly and held him back, just momentarily. He raised his arms if to resemble a cross, he was two steps from the edge. His suit jacket started blowing in the wind as he took one more step. Focusing on the sounds of good times, the beach, people having fun and laughing. The smell of barbecues and fish n' chips. The fun and laughter from birthday parties, Christmas, Easter, but most importantly; his family. He

took a deep breath and leaned forward. The weight of his body and gravity did the rest.

The last thing his eyes saw was a bright blue sky, even though they were closed. The last thing he felt was the warmth of a summer's day, a sensation when falling from such a height would surely make no sense at all.

Chapter 1: Awake

In a small, dimly lit room was the lone present sound of a ticking clock. A room with little substance. Dark and damp, without character, nor style, but mould on the ceiling and a hard cold floor. A misted window let in a rationing of light. The light disturbed a man who was sleeping in a small and cramped bed fixed to the wall. He began to stir; his fingers started to twitch as his head gently turned towards the light source. Soon enough his eyes started to open. He squinted as the sunlight grabbed his pupils and held his head as he winced from the pain in his eyes. Whilst struggling to see, he gently removed the covers and sat himself upright. He stayed there, trying to remember, trying to understand exactly where he was. It felt like a bad hangover.

He got up from the bed; it took him a few seconds to steady himself on his feet before walking over towards a tall standing mirror. As he stood there with legs shaking from the strain, he studied himself in the mirror. His scruffy hair needed a wash, so did his dirty vest and strangely enough some very comfortable though dirty jogging trousers. His attire completed by the presence of a scuffed pair of trainers, worn out, just like the rest of him. He finally managed to fully open his eyes. Fixated on the face he saw before him. “Who... the fuck am I?” he asked himself hesitantly, with a gruff voice in need of some liquid. He jolted backwards from the mirror. “Who the... who

the *fuck* am I?" he said, breathing heavily, with his hands pressed against his head in panic, David looked over at a door riddled with chipped paint. He carefully walked over and slowly grabbed the door handle, paused for a second, and then turned it. The door opened, he cracked it slightly, just enough to see a corridor, a couple of chairs a vending machine and another door opposite to his. A flickering light along the corridor barely helped but did offer some sporadic visibility of sorts. Faint repetitive noises could be heard, noises that resembled some kind of machinery. He opened the door wider and peered his head around, he noticed a wooden plaque on the door that read 'David'. "Well, I guess I'm David, then," he whispered to himself. Nothing else was written, no last name, no information, nothing!

Slowly making his way out, he began closing the door behind him. He didn't close it fully; he left it open ever so slightly. No matter which direction David looked, it was all the same; long corridors, resembling what you would see in a hospital. "Am I a patient?" he asked himself. David quickly checked himself over, looking for any injuries, trying to find some kind of clue as to why he was there, but couldn't see anything. He looked over to the door opposite as a subtle sound was beginning to stir from behind it. He began walking towards it but stopped as he noticed that door had a plaque also, the plaque read 'Reaction Room', "What the fuck is a 'reaction room'?" David asked aloud. He shrugged his shoulders, "Fuck

it!” He figured he had nothing to lose, and the curiosity was certainly playing its part. Within a second, he grabbed the door handle, quickly opened it and walked a few steps inside. Shocked by what he saw, he stood very still and incredibly quiet, for an ominous looking man dressed in black stood directly in front of him, this man did not move a muscle and didn’t say anything. They were both standing there, facing each other. David noticed something odd about the man’s face, something not quite right. Suddenly, this strange figure was bleeding from both eyes. David felt scared and took a step back. “Shit... hey... y you alright?” he asked, nervously. The strange, darkly dressed figure continued to bleed from his eyes, in turn the blood ran down his clothes and onto the pristine floor. The bright white floor tiles soon turned into a deep red blood-splattered masterpiece. David took another couple of backward steps, trying to avoid the blood that was creeping towards him. Suddenly, the man started convulsing. “Shit!” David yelled.

As David continued edging backwards, the bloodied man quickly raised his right arm, carrying a pistol, and aimed it directly at David’s face. David gulped, he felt his life flash before him as this evil looking man gave a sickening smile, showing off his wet blood-soaked teeth. He pulled the trigger. A deafening gunshot erupted, David screamed while shielding his head with his arms. Without a second thought, he quickly ran out of the room, and back into his own. He slammed the door shut and forced his body weight against it. Dripping with sweat

and breathing heavily, his heart rate pounding like a drum. He stood there with eyes closed, wondering what the hell just happened. “David,” a man’s voice calmly spoke. David’s breathing was beginning to normalise. He opened his eyes, confused as to who this calm voice belonged to. Across the room, leant against the wall was a smartly dressed man, a slightly older looking gentleman, maybe in his fifties, he was holding an unlit cigarette. He had greying hair and with a long ponytail. “You don’t mind if I smoke, do you?” the man asked. David slowly shook his head.

“Thank you, David, that’s kind of you. I know you’re not a smoker yourself.”

“That’s... that’s okay!” a baffled David nervously replied, still pressing his back against the door. The man then took a step towards David.

“David, my name is... Dan... Dan Guira.” He explained, pausing a little between names. Followed by lighting his cigarette.

“David, just try to relax a little. I know you’re scared and confused. Believe me, I genuinely understand what you’re going through. Now just come away from the door and take a seat.” Dan gestured in the direction of the bed. David, still a little shaken; steadily made his way to the bed and sat down.

“What the fuck was that out there? How the fuck am I still alive? were they blanks?” David checked his face and head for any gunshot wounds.

“I wouldn’t worry too much about him.” Dan said, reassuringly. “Look, I know you have many questions, but what’s the most important thing on your mind at this point? Just forget about what happened out there!” Dan asked as he gently placed his hand on David’s shoulder.

David lifted his gaze up to the tall man and thought for a moment, “Who am I,” David asked with a puzzled expression. Dan puffed from his cigarette and walked towards the blurred, misted window. He looked down at the bedside cabinet and slid open the top draw. David, intrigued; slowly stood up to see the mysterious man pressing a button located inside the drawer. The two remaining cabinet drawers both opened simultaneously and revealed a mini fridge inside, the kind in you’d keep a few bottles of beer. David walked over to the fridge and took a knee to get a better view. Dan bent down beside him and opened it.

“These are yours,” Dan explained, pointing at a large selection of vials.

“What do they do?” David asked.

“Tonight, at around ten, you *will* need to consume one vial. By doing this, you give yourself a ninety-five percent chance of waking up in the morning to fight another day,” Dan explained.

David scoffed at what he was told.

“If you choose not to take a vial,” continued Dan, “you give yourself a death sentence. You will be dead within two weeks!” A laugh of disbelief from David as he got back up.

“This is bullshit! so, if I’ve got to take all these damn things to keep me alive; what the hell is wrong with me?”

Dan quickly replied, “If you don’t take it tonight, then after the first week, you’ll wish you were dead.” He then closed the cabinet and stood back up.

“Why can’t you answer my question? Look, I don’t know you, so why should I trust you?” David’s frustration was beginning to surface.

“You don’t know anything about yourself, either.” Dan replied.

“Okay, so who the *hell* am I then? Who the hell am I? And who are you, and what the *fuck* is going on?” David blurted out as he started pacing. “What the hell is happening to me?” he asked, becoming emotional. “Check your back pocket, you always keep it there!” Dan explained. David looked down and grabbed his back pocket, he could feel something there, he pulled out an envelope with ‘David’ written on it. The handwriting looked familiar. David looked up to Dan, but he was nowhere to be seen. He had disappeared within a couple of seconds, the smoke from the cigarette had vanished just as quickly.

In pure puzzlement, David did a three sixty on the spot, wondering where the hell that man had gone. He looked at the envelope again, took a deep breath and opened it. Inside was a photo of David with his arm around a woman, and standing in front of them were two children, a boy and a girl. He looked at

the back of the photo, in the same familiar handwriting reads; "Day out at the beach 2025." He looked at the photo again and remembered something, but it was a hazy memory, a memory engulfed in a dense mist of confusion. David started feeling a sense of love and loss, more hazy memories popped up sporadically in and out of his head. The photo had already served a purpose for David, knowing he must keep this safe, he placed the photo back into the envelope and then back into his pocket. The photo could be the one thing that helps him remember anything.

David needed a moment to think, a moment to collect his thoughts. He really had no idea what was happening. It was as though he was living a nightmare. He decided to take his chances and opened his door and quietly walked out. Closing the door behind him, he looked left and right, making sure the coast was clear. All he could picture was the man in black, the mysterious figure that tried to kill him. He decided not to go into the 'reaction room' this time, instead he hurried past it.

The light flickered as he quickly made his way down towards a set of double doors. A faint buzzing sound was getting louder as he got closer. At first, he thought it was the flickering light, but this sound was coming from the other side of the doors. He gently opened a door and passed through into the connecting hallway.

David straight away located the buzzing sound. A vending machine was the culprit. The display message read 'EMPTY'

though continuously trying to pour a drink. David unplugged the machine, with everything that's happened today; a constant annoying buzz would be the straw that broke the camel's back!

David found himself with many options, there were several rooms dotted around. He needed to find Dan, or somebody who could help. It's difficult knowing what dangers are lurking in this place. "Where the fuck are you, Dan? Where the fuck is anybody? And why isn't there any fucking windows?" The only one he'd seen was in his room, but that was a small and misted window. You couldn't see anything out of it apart from the light.

A creaking 'Exit' sign grabbed his attention. Hung up by a couple of old dusty chains, *must have a caught a breeze from a ceiling fan*, David figured as he looked up. He decided to go searching for the exit, but after a few meters he could hear music playing. He slowed down slightly but kept edging forward as the music got louder. "Jazz?" Questioning the musical taste rather than the source of it. "I hate jazz!" he sighed whilst shaking his head, still walking towards the music. "Somebody *really* hates me," he continued.

The sound of a jazz band playing was becoming very near. A loud crash echoed from the direction of the music and stopped David in his tracks. He quickly moved to the right, keeping close to the wall to prevent being seen. He could hear movement as the music played on. David noticed a door up ahead and realised all this noise was coming from behind it.

David knew he had to find out what was behind the door, but first he had to find something to protect himself with.

“I guess I’ll take the fire extinguisher!” he muttered to himself. He failed to see anything else that could resemble a weapon.

He made his way to the small extinguisher fitted to the wall and took it, removed the safety clip and held it like you would a pistol.

“Now or never!” David told himself before taking a deep breath. Quickly tiptoeing his way to the door. Standing right outside it, holding the fire extinguisher with both hands and giving himself a moment to prepare for the worst.

David felt the beads of sweat manifesting from his head, trickling down his face and dropping from his chin like a drip from a tap. David started counting down. “Three, two, one.” Just as he was about to grab the handle, the door quickly opened.

A high-pitched shriek startled David, and in turn, David let out a scream. The shrieking person had fallen backwards over some boxes that were stacked behind them. David caught his breath for a moment with his hands on his knees and composed himself.

“Sorry, uh... lady... Miss! I didn’t mean to scare you like that!” David called over to the crumpled load of boxes.

“Hey, could you help me out, please? Just grab my hand for us! I’m a little stuck!” A man’s voice had spoken, although muffled by the boxes.

“Oh, you’re a guy?” David responded with a wry smile. He grabbed the raised arm protruding from the wreckage of boxes.

“Yeah, unfortunately that wasn’t my most macho moment, just then when I screamed like a girl and nearly shit myself.” The helpless man had an American accent and was slightly flustered as he was being helped from the mess. As the odd little man fumbled around dusting himself off and picking up his glasses, David couldn’t help but keep looking at this odd little character. A short man, no older than twenty-five, not much over five feet tall, with lots of hair, curly hair with sideburns. This weird little creature looked as though he’d just come out of the seventies, especially with his thick framed sunglasses and denim flares.

“I’m David.” David held out his hand, figured he would make the first move.

“Yeah... David, I’m Arthur White.” Arthur replied as they shook hands.

“Nice to meet you, Arthur.” David kept hold of Arthur’s hand. “You’re not gonna’ do some weird shit or disappear into thin air, are you?”

“Erm, nope.... Not that I’m aware of.” Arthur replied. David therefore let go of his grip. “So anyway, how you feeling today? You good?” Arthur asked sincerely and with a smile.

“Why? Am I not well?” replied David.

Arthur nervously started to fidget with his hair. “Well, yeah. I mean like, you’re sick, man.”

“Go on,” David said calmly. “I know about the vials of... whatever the fuck it is, and I know some weird shit is going on in this funny farm,” he concluded.

Arthur still slightly fidgety, rested his hands on his hips. “Well, you know you’re dreaming, right? I mean, you know you’re not *really* here?” Arthur explained.

“Seriously?” asked David, with a glimmer of hope in his eyes.

“Nah, I’m just fucking with ya!” Arthur, quickly admitted, followed by a quick and short outburst of laughter and a pat on the shoulder for David.

Rolling his eyes, David nodded a sarcastic appreciation for Arthur’s joke.

“I guess maybe a good laugh is what I need, but right now, Arthur, I need answers.” David said, grabbing both of Arthur’s shoulders to get his full attention.

“Okay, yeah, sure. Okay!” Arthur quickly nodded in agreement with a little smile. “I’m here for ya! Whatever you need!” he added.

David now reassured; took a breather and paced slowly. With so many questions floating around his head, topped off by a ton of confusion and seasoned with a large pinch of WTF! David stopped pacing, looked directly at Arthur and pointed at the lab coat he was wearing. “So, you’re some kind of doctor or something? Some kind of scientist?” he asked, intrigued.

“Uh, yeah, yeah...well, uh...kind of like... I’m kind of, no, no I’m not.” Arthur responded, looking slightly disappointed with himself. “I used to study a lot of medical...stuff!” he added, vaguely. “Hey! You’ ever seen those videos of people having really disgusting things removed from their bodies? Like blackheads and pimples n’ shit?” Arthur asked with excitement, in the hope he’d found someone who shared his interest.

“No, sorry,” David shook his head as he looked up to ponder for a moment.

“Okay... that’s cool, man. I’m sorry, I keep asking you that. My bad!” Arthur gets annoyed with himself.

“Did you, I mean, do you...? When?” a slightly bemused David responded. Arthur wanted to get off the subject,

“So, like I was saying, I’m no doctor or anything, but I do help out around here with some meds side of things, since they started... I mean, since we became short-staffed.”

“So, I guess you supply me with the vials? What are they?” Asked David, expecting an answer, when suddenly a door swung open down the hallway. It banged against the wall, damaging the plaster board.

Both Arthur and David looked towards the disruption as a large, muscular figure, dressed similar to David; stormed his way through the door. Oozing aggression as he made his way towards them.

“Oh, fuck!” Arthur quickly checked his pockets and then hurried through the boxes in which earlier he’d fallen. He made