

Breathless
by
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INT. WHITE ROOM - ANYTIME

LEVI (age 10) wakes up on a metal chair in the centre of an enormous empty white chamber. The lighting is dim.

Levi watches apprehensively as a large screen rises from the ground 10 feet in front of him. He tries moving his arms but they are clasped to the chair.

A projector above Levi's head whirs to life. He looks up curiously. It projects a silhouetted image of a man's head onto the screen.

Water begins leaking down the walls of the chamber, pooling on the floor.

The silhouetted head is shot. A splash of blood flows out of the exit wound and the image fades away. Replacing it is another silhouetted image. This time, of a rubick's cube that falls to the ground and breaks apart.

The water keeps pouring into the room and is now up to his knees.

Levi looks down to his hands which are trembling nervously in their shackles.

The sounds of Tibetan singing bowls (type of bell) echo and pulsate throughout the room. A countdown appears on the screen. Levi looks up. 10...9...

The water is now up to his neck. His heart is beating faster. The bell repeats with every passing number. 8...7...6...

He tries getting out of the clasps. His breathing intensifies. He closes his eyes and takes a deep breath before his head is under water.

INT. ABANDONED HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

JANE (age 30) shuffles through boxes of various items within a closet. She is wearing a gas mask with goggles connected to an oxygen canister on her back. She carries an old worn out backpack and wears dirty and tattered clothing. Jane opens a box and pulls up a broken etch-a-sketch. She shakes it and tosses it back.

After kicking the box closed, she steps out of the closet. She walks to an old, dusty dresser and pulls open a drawer. Inside are a bunch of get well soon cards. Jane picks one up and reads the note scribbled inside.

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She moves the cards aside. Underneath them all, there is a photo of a family on vacation. Two parents and a young boy, all smiling in front of an idyllic beach resort. She folds it and puts it into her backpack.

Hidden under the dresser is a revolver. She checks the revolving cylinder and sees a single bullet. She lifts her shirt a bit to set the gun in the front of her faded jeans.

Jane opens an armoire full of fairly new clothes. She pulls out a pink dress and holds it against her body. She admires herself in the mirror off to the side.

Jane takes a deep breath in and removes the gas mask for a moment. She gently sways back and forth, closing her eyes.

The sound of glass shattering is heard from outside the room.

Jane quickly looks in the direction of the sound, drops the dress and hastily puts her mask back on. She rushes out of the room to find Levi standing in the hallway next to a broken vase. He is also wearing a mask.

Jane motions with her finger to be quiet. Levi mimics her. She goes still and listens to the silence for a moment before giving a nod almost to say "coast is clear".

Jane grabs his hand and they slowly walk down the creaky hallway, stepping over an assortment of abandoned items including a broken violin, toys, dirty laundry etc.

Levi pauses to pick up and examine a rubicks cube. He holds onto it and follows Jane closely as she descends the stairs cautiously.

INT. ABANDONED HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

The floral wall paper is peeling, revealing rust-coloured water stains underneath. The kitchen window is broken; glass litters the countertop and floor.

The kitchen table has morsels of rotten and moldy food strewn about the broken plates and overturned serving dishes. Paw prints can be seen amongst the mess. Cupboards are all open and empty.

Jane grabs a large tupperware container from her backpack and hands it to Levi, who puts the rubiks cube down on the counter. He holds the container up under the air tight refrigerator-freezer door. Jane pulls the door open, and melted ice water spills out. Levi manages to catch some of the water, but most splashes onto the floor.

He looks disappointed in himself. Jane ruffles his hair proudly and puts the lid back on the container before storing it back in the bag.

EXT. GHOST TOWN - MIDDAY

Abandoned vehicles litter the parking lot of a strip mall. Every window to every store is shattered; evidence of mass looting.

Jane and Levi walk down a street in the scorching hot midday sun. Jane scans her environment diligently while Levi plays with the Rubicks cube as they walk, curiously twisting and turning its layers.

Soft footsteps are heard from the parking lot. Both Jane and Levi slow down to look. Levi hugs Jane's leg fearfully as she moves towards a nearby alleyway.

Three young men (age 17-20) with various rusted robotic limbs and breathing apparatuses appear from behind an abandoned cube van, moving slowly and crouching under the roofline of the cars. Two men scan the sky while one looks through the vacant cars, ripping the padding from seats.

One of the scanning men notices Jane and Levi and taps the man in front of him. He points in Jane and Levi's direction. Their eyes meet Jane's.

Jane and Levi take off running down the open street, clutching their backpacks.

All three men give chase. One man's rusted metal leg snaps before he picks up too much speed. He falls to the ground and is left behind.

A booming gun shot echoes across the suburban wasteland, forcing all parties to flinch as they run.

Jane and Levi run into a wall of cars. Jane opens the backseat door of one and pushes Levi through, where he exits on the other side. Jane follows. The gun in her pants falls onto the ground as she gets in. She sees it fall but rushes forward without reaching back for it.

The two men close in. Another gun shot echoes. It pierces one of the men in the head. Blood splashes onto the ground. His friend picks up Jane's gun and hops across the hood of a car with ease. He is only a few feet behind Jane and Levi.

The man catches up and grab's Levi by his collar. Levi screams in shock and his rubicks cube slips out of his hand and shatters on the ground.

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Jane slows to a halt and turns around with her eyes closed, looking defeated. The man has the gun pointed at her. A tear forms in her eyes and she raises her hands to surrender.

The man gestures the gun to Jane's backpack then plants the barrel of the gun on the side of Levi's head. Jane throws her backpack towards the man and falls to her knees.

The man pushes Levi to the ground and puts away the gun. He runs off behind a vehicle and disappears. Jane holds Levi and kisses his forehead, crying.

Another gun shot is fired. The bullet skips off the ground and hits something, making a pinging noise near them. They quickly run away to find cover.

Levi slows down and pauses in the shadow of a tall building to put his hands on his knees. Jane scans the sky and taps her thigh, motioning for him to keep up. He hobbles up to her, looking weak. His breathing is laboured.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Jane and Levi reach an open field that is overgrown and burnt because of a lack of rain water.

Levi walks much slower than before. Jane gives him a piggyback and walks through the field.

They reach a clearing with a low-standing, makeshift shanty built of corrugated metal and plywood. Solar panels line the roof.

There are various signs of no trespassing planted in the ground and hung on the walls of the structure.

Jane unlocks a hefty padlock and swings open the heavy door, kicking up dust. Her and Levi shuffle inside and she pulls the door shut.

INT. SHANTY - MIDDAY

It is dark inside the shanty. Pinholes of sunlight filter through small cracks and bulletholes in the structure. Jane grabs a flashlight and shakes it until it turns on. She hands it to Levi, who is breathing heavy under his mask. His mask is foggy.

Levi points the beam of light to the floor, where a massive metal door sits on an angle. It has a rusted metal wheel holding it shut. Written on the door is "Air Chamber".

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Jane twists the wheel and pulls it open, revealing stairs leading down. Jane begins descending the stairs, pausing to stare at Levi who is now sitting with his back against the wall, shining the flashlight aimlessly.

Jane snaps her fingers at him. Levi lethargically shakes his head "no". His breathing is heavier and more forced than before. Levi closes his eyes and goes limp.

Jane rushes to him, leans him forward, and notices a puncture in his air canister. She takes a deep breath and removes her mask. She removes Levi's as well and puts hers on his face.

Jane picks him up and carries him down the steps. She closes the door and spins the wheel, locking it from the inside.

Jane presses a button and a motor comes to life. A red light flashes and toxic air is filtered through a ventilated shaft. Beside the vent is an advertisement poster that reads "Get Your Very Own ChemiFree Mask Before They Sell Out!".

Levi's lips are blue and his face is pale. Jane listens to his heart and feels for a pulse. Almost out of breath, she stares at the blinking red light. After three more long blinks, it turns white and Jane abruptly fills her lungs and breathed quickly as if she has just sprinted. She takes her mask from Levi and drops it to the ground.

INT. BOMB SHELTER - DAY

Jane carries Levi into the underground shelter and rests him on the floor. She begins performing CPR, listening to his chest. She is crying.

Jane breathes into him, filling his lungs with air. Again, she pumps his chest. Her tears fall onto Levi's shabby shirt as she lets out a loud, haunting sob.

INT. WHITE ROOM - CONTINUED

Levi opens his eyes underwater. The sound of Jane's sobbing is distant and muffled from inside the water. Levi sees the screen in front of him.

5...4...

He tries shaking free from the shackles.

3...

Levi panics.

(CONTINUED)

2...

He closes his eyes and shakes again.

1...

A bubble of air leaves Levi's mouth and he becomes motionless, still attached to the chair.

INT. BOMB SHELTER - DAY - CONTINUED

Jane is hunched over Levi, sobbing. She takes a few deep breaths to calm herself down before getting up.

She grabs a blanket from a shelf and drapes it over Levi's body. She lifts up the bottom to take off his shoes then sits in the corner of the room and rocks herself back and forth in quick movements, nervously running her hands through her hair.

She looks at Levi and shakes her head.

The clock on the wall reads 1:25pm

INT. BOMB SHELTER - LATER

The clock on the wall reads 5:40pm.

The door to the airlock opens and Christian, a husky man (age 35) walks in with a dead rabbit hanging from his hands. He unpacks his backpack, setting items such as salt and matches on the counter. He sees Jane asleep in the corner and walks to her with the rabbit.

Christian nudges her, smiling in anticipation to show her his catch. She opens her eyes to look at him, sees the dead rabbit and covers her mouth sadly.

Christian gives her a puzzled look. Jane gets up and takes the rabbit from him. She puts it on the counter then bends to the floor to uncover Levi.

When Christian sees him motionless on the floor, he collapses and stares at Jane with tears in his eyes.

Jane shows him the canister, which he picks up and holds. He stands and throws it across the room in outrage, holding his head in his hands.

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Jane puts her hand on his back and he nods. Christian puts his ChemiFree mask on and grabs a shovel from a pile of tools. He lifts Levi up and gives Jane a long look of displeasure. A tear runs down her face.

Christian leaves through the Air-lock. Jane walks to the counter, pulls out a knife and holds it in her hand. A tear falls down her face. Suddenly, she chops off the head of the rabbit.

END