

The Inconceivable World

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It was pitch black when I woke up, I sat up in the corner staring down at my birth moon tattoo imprinted on my wrist, Finn had the same one. Father branded us at the age of four to symbolize that Finn and I can never be separated. He was only older than me by a few minutes which was another reason why he was over protective of me. In the middle of the filthy floor was carved Finn, Pandora, Ezra, Casper and Raven (that's me), we were The Renegade. The only other survivors from The Mortal Shroom War apart from the troops and President Levi.

100 years ago in 3058, there was a devastating quake that wiped out three quarters of our population. Those who were left from the aftermath were picked up by the hovercraft and dropped off in the Ark base. That's where I am now with the rest, imprisoned in this murky bunker.

"Hey, Raven what do you call a duck on drugs? A quack head!" chuckled Ezra. "C'mon Raven, your body's shaking you've had enough," scolded Finn. I didn't realize my intake amount, I turned away continuing to snort the narcotics. "Hey Raven, pass me a bag," exclaimed Ezra. I swiftly threw it over my shoulder surprisingly, Finn caught it. "C'mon man it'll be out last bag, I swear!" Ezra exclaimed desperately. Finn snickered, "Wasn't it your last bag five minutes ago?" He never seemed to understand my way of escaping the cruel world. "Finn's right Raven, you're not helping yourself by adding onto that addiction" advised Pandora. I cursed under my breath.

Pandora, Ezra and Casper had been very close to Finn and I from a young age. Pandora, loving and compassionate and Ezra humorous and muscular, both moved into our town and we were instantly best of friends. Then we were introduced to Casper, fairly quiet and extremely intelligent. We all were comprised of unique personalities that differentiated us all.

Klink... Klink... "Oh shoot! The troops are coming, code blue" demanded Ezra. We had established drills when the troops came for an inspection every few hours. President Azazel was harsh with punishment. There was death, executions, finger chopping and lots of bloody consequences when rules were not obeyed. Clearly, this was another way to limit the population on the ark. We stood up brushing off the excess narcotics and saluted as they stopped at our cell. One of the troop members banged his rayden staff the other burst into our cell. He then clenched all of us and pinned us onto the ground. Screaming and yelping made it worse as they slapped us with electro whips. We screeched in pain, our bodies were bruised purple and brown and blood was stained on the ground. Before you know it, we all passed out one after the other from fatigue.

I had an intense headache, my eyes were sluggish and soon were adjusting to the luminous lights in a room I had never seen before. My mouth was dry and my body was numb from the aggressive beating. I turned my head to the side to locate my surroundings. My eyes widened at the scene where all my friends were strapped down on a gurney. People with lab coats scurried

into the room, they were pulling out huge needles and preparing their barrier devices. I thought "they're going to kill us." As I opened my mouth to yell a man with the same lab coat cupped his *hand over my mouth and nose. I started to wheeze for air, I began to spasm and that's when he jabbed the needle into my arm. Everything went black.*

I woke up sore, I looked over at my arm, inspecting its state. I was startled by Ezra's raspy voice, "At least were not dead." "Now's not the time Ezra, we don't know what's happening and who these people are" I snarled. "Ravens right, we have to find a way out of these straps" Pandora said as she convulsed hoping to loosen the straps. There were ponderous footsteps approaching our room. We pretended to be asleep. I listened, "Hello sir, we have just injected the microchips into their bodies, none have died yet and so we may proceed to the next step." "Ah, good work I'll just have to call in Henry to equip them and send them off." I wondered, whos Henry? *What they were planning to do with us? One of the men with lab coats walked in and I yelled, "What do you want with us? Why are you doing this?" He ignored me. Aaaargh! Abruptly, Casper began to produce excessive salivation. You can anticipate the despair in everyone's eyes. Once Casper was cleaned off by the doctors we were unstrapped but unfortunately, handcuffed as if our wrists weren't already in enough pain.*

The troops escorted us into another room. They flicked on the lights and all five of us were in awe. Everywhere we looked sharp, we saw deadly weapons in a dome. There were different sections, electric, nuclear, knives, spears, bows and arrows, firearms and rifles. The troops took us to each section. Pandora nervously asked, "Why are showing us these weapons?" The troops continued to ignore us. They each told us to choose a weapon. I went towards the bow and arrow as it was the first to catch my eye, it was very tempting to run my finger across the arrows blade but, the handcuffs restricted me too. Pandora chose a pair of shiny twin Elven daggers. Finn and Ezra both chose the exquisitely detailed spear. Casper was wise about his choices, he examined every one of the weapons and finally chose the sickle sword.

We were sent back into the lab, handcuffs removed and sitting up on our gurneys. "Why do you think they made us choose weapons" questioned Finn. There was a long pause. "They're testing our ability" whispered Casper gazing at the ground. We all turned to look at Casper, I almost forgot he was here because he rarely speaks. "What do you mean by testing our ability"? I asked. Casper replied, "I'm not sure, but if they want us to choose weapons, I'm assuming they will make us go up against something."

"Or each other" whimpered Ezra. We all strode around the room trying to uncover a hint to figure out why we were there. A woman with dirty blonde hair put in a neat bun rushed into the room with her arms full of neatly folded clothes. The name tag on her blazer read "Blake." She rushed us into dressing up in the given clothing. *Our clothes were dystopian style, with many pockets zippers and a bullet belt across our chest.*

We were escorted into the dome again and once we entered the lights flickered, the weapons we selected were placed on a table. Ezra, Finn and Casper walked towards the table. We were startled when the unselected weapons resting on the walls were elevating from the ceiling down into the ground. Pandora and I gave each other a nod and walked towards the table to obtain our weapons too. As we took a few steps back the table also elevated into the ground and down came a TV screen from above. It was the president, he explained, "You five young teens were selected to be trained and fight the outside world and what lies outside the ark. You may be wondering what the heck I'm talking about, that remains a mystery for now. Use your weapons wisely and we will see." The TV was interrupted by binary codes running across the screen. "See what!" exclaimed Finn. "So what do we do now?" asked Ezra. "Fight!" yelled Casper. Suddenly, troop members were projected with weapons. Ezra and Finn work together by slashing each one of them with their spear. Pandora and I were amazed with the skills we didn't know they had. Casper shouts "watch out Raven!" I turn around and see a troop member with a sword slashing away. I swiftly dodge it and pull out one of the arrows and attach it onto the bow. I fling it and it cuts through one of the troops. I was surprised the bow and arrow was fairly easy to use. Casper stabbed a troop member with his sickle. The projections disappear. The TV screen returns again as we were panting. "Well done, I'm quite surprised you five could kill for the first time." "Who said it was my first?" I blurted out. The four gave me a death stare and so did the president. "Alright, well it's obvious you all don't need your training so I'll be off now" he said. A group of real troops had escorted us back into the gurney room.

We were resting from the hardcore fighting. Blake came back with more dystopian clothing and with our weapons again. "Listen, you all are going to the real world" she announced. There was a long pause. We couldn't believe ourselves, after these 100 years we could really go see the outside. Pandora said, "What's in it for us?" "Yeah, The Great Shroom war probably caused radioactivity in the air and we don't know if it's safe" continued Finn. "This is our punishment, as prisoners we are to discover the earth no matter the condition and dangers." Mumbles Casper. "That is almost correct, well, our scientist have discovered we don't have a single earth." She declares. We all gasp of confusion. "Let me show you." She took us to the lab, but she enters first to ensure the scientists are not inside. She explains how after the apocalypse the earth had split and formed another identical earth on top of it. "It is your jobs to figure out if the second world is able to have human life forms survive." "That's why we have injected microchips into your arms to track you, c'mon now we must hurry" she says.

We put on our gear and grabbed our weapons along with a survival bag for each of us. We nervously entered the hovercraft and took our seats. So much was running through our minds at the moment as we were processing everything Blake had told us. It was all too fast, and there were so many questions to be asked. We were all patiently waiting to arrive at our destination. We weren't sure what we were going to be looking forward to. The first step we take on earth in 100 years could be our last. None of us spoke until the hovercraft landed. We all took a huge breath, in three, two, and one.

The hover craft door opened. Our jaws dropped and eyes widened. It was extravagant, marvelous and we stood there speechless. The nature was absolutely beautiful, nothing like how mother and father explained when they passed away a few years ago. Now, for the first step, we all did it in sync and it just felt great to be back to where humans really belong. I ran out flailing my arms and take huge whiffs of the fresh air. "It appears there is no radioactive air to poison us" Pandora says in relief. Casper replies, "The ark supplied us with earth's air so we are able to adjust to the oxygen on earth." Ezra was completely confused by what Casper had just said. This made me laugh, I finally felt the joy I had never felt since I was on the ark. Finn began to examine the plants. He made sure it made no contact with his skin as it could be possibly corrosive or poisonous. "How do we know if it's safe?" I asked Casper. "I'm not so sure but we shouldn't touch it for now" he replied. We went on to discover the new world. Pandora slashed the grasses with her blades and we continued to walk till we saw an ocean. Hours have passed by and we planned on camping out in an area. We built a fire however, we were not planning on sleeping until we found water. We walked and walked and finally Ezra runs up to what he sees as a lake. Suddenly, he stops at the sand and drops onto his knees. We run over to him to check what had happened. I gasped, it wasn't an ocean, it was body of bloody water and dead animals. I couldn't believe my eyes, did something do it to the animals or did it just die on its own? Casper went to examine them, I tried to go to but Finn blocked my way. "Finn I want to go see, let me go!" I ordered. "No, don't go close to it, it could infect us or something" he said. Casper runs back to us and announces, "Hey! They were one of us, I found a chip in their neck when I dissected it. They're genetically modified animals also here as one of the lab rats from the ark. By the looks of it, they were here not so long ago" We all looked at each other concerned. "So what does that mean for us?" I asked. "Were not alone" cautioned Pandora. Worriedly, we began to walk away from the blood sea as much as possible. Camping out in a world we don't know is highly dangerous but The Renegade is strong enough to.

We spent the night at a dry sandy area. We had eaten some of the canned food the ark had provided and slept cautiously. In the morning we all got our weapons ready to find animals to hunt. We couldn't survive on the canned foods alone because we didn't know how long we will be out on earth. Day two had begun and we ventured through the west. Casper and Finn were leading the group we kept a keen eye out for anything that could harm us.

We sat down for a break, we examined our weapons. "Why did we need these weapons anyways? It's not like there's anything out here that's going to kill us." Pandora grunted. "Didn't you just see the blood sea and its dead animals" Ezra pointed out. Casper and Finn began to walk again and we followed. They stopped immediately. "Hey why'd you guys stop?" I asked. "Take your weapons out now!" Finn shouted. Casper and Finn started to back away. We all looked up, and there it was, we didn't really know what it was actually but, a Nanobot virus. It was humongous, about 90ft tall with its diamond shaped head, long sheath and legs. We equipped ourselves, and quietly backed away preventing it from locating us and attempting to kill us. Ezra began to panic, I cupped my hand over his mouth like the man in the lab coat and pulled him

away. As we turned around to sprint away, there was another coming in our direction. "What do we do?" I exclaimed. We were all frozen, this wasn't going to help, we were going to end up like those animals if we didn't fight back. Casper whispers, "I read something in the lab at the ark when Blake was explaining the double earth with you all, this Nanobot virus can kill us with one shot and the only way to defeat it is to aim at the base plate." We nod in fear to show that we understand but so far, no one knows what's going on. The one in front of us has suspected us, Finn sprints and throws his spear hitting the bull's eye of the base plate. The Nanobot crashes to the ground and dust flies up into the air. The Nanobot behind us shoots a laser at Finn and hits the ground beneath him which crumbles and makes Finn lose his balance. I sprint after him, "Finn are you okay?" I yell. I help him up and shoot a few arrows at the Nanobot behind us. It didn't hit the base plate but it cracked its head. I made it furious and so it shot more lasers missing all of us. Pandora chops off one of its legs and Casper spears it right into the base plate. We defeated both of the Nanobots. We weren't able to sit and rest because now we know what we were up against. We began to head south after the scary discoveries of the north and west. If we ever encounter anything else we were prepared. Luckily none of us were hurt, we camped in a few spots for some sleep while someone was on lookout and we also had to hydrate and eat for energy.

The next day we continued on south and encountered more Nanobot's. These ones were more difficult to defeat than the ones from yesterday. Today after killing off three Nanobot's we tried to disassemble them to determine what they are controlled by and how they roam the earth. Casper and the others couldn't figure it out. While they were busy, I snuck out the bag of drugs. Before we went on the hovercraft a few days back I sneaked into the cell and grabbed a stash hidden in the brick wall. I sat on the ground snorting and inhaling some of it without looking suspicious. By the end of the day I went through 12 bags, I was hallucinating but that was just a small side affect for me. Finn usually gets worried but since he wasn't paying attention I was able to enjoy life.

That's when I suddenly fell asleep. It was a long sleep, for days? Months? Maybe even years! My eyelids were heavy, Beep...Beep... I could hear the heart monitor, I was wearing a neck strap. Straight ahead there was a white board on the wall and written on it was, "2 months in coma state cause of over consumption of narcotics. It took me a while to comprehend what was going on. It was 2020 when I woke up not the post apocalyptic world I thought I was living in. I told everyone about my emergent phenomenon during my drug induced coma. Yes, I really was in a coma dreaming about a world where I was living in the disturbing effects of drugs. I told Finn, Ezra, Casper and Pandora about the double world with Nanobot's that occurred during the traumatic dreams I was having. I tried to escape the world but I ended up with a traumatic experience. It let me see what drugs can do to you and change how life is. Days after I recovered from the drug induced coma, I still wonder about that post apocalyptic dream. Could this really be the world my escape had lead to? Can drugs really make my life seem more dreadful than it already is? This is where my addiction ended and how a new drug free path into life started.