

Lauren Hankins

GOODBYE

“Like a grotesque puppetmaster, Anna’s leg wriggled into the cab, pulling the rest of her along with it.”...

She was almost a full on zombie. None of them wanted to admit it, but they all thought the same thing. They needed her gone. Mac built up the courage to admit.

“Guys, I’m sorry but...” Before Mac could finish, Anna grabbed Jeremiah at the arm, ready to take him away, to join the undead army.

“I can’t! I can’t! I don’t want to!” Jeremiah was wailing hysterically, not wanting to face the reality of what could happen next. Dennis was losing control of the wheel in all the chaos. Mac had an idea, but it was overwhelmingly grotesque.

When they had been at the gas station, Mac kept a soup can that he planned to throw at the zombie that came out of the bathroom. He looked at his target, and closed his eyes, for what he had to do next was simply unbearable.

He chucked the can as hard as he could at Anna’s skull, creating a gaping gash that stretched from the corner of her right eye to her right temple. It oozed purple pus. Still trying to control the wheel, Dennis looked back to see what had happened. After seeing the mess that was Anna, Dennis stuck his head out of the driver’s side window and barfed, causing his entire body to jerk to the left, driving them into a deep ditch.

“Get back! Get back or I’ll...” Mac roared. Dennis woke to the sound of commotion. Mac was clutching Jeremiah in his right arm. Jeremiah’s cheeks were red with streaks of moisture dripping down them. His crying was softer now, but he was still indescribably terrified. Anna came closer to the pair, with a large amount of skin on her head entirely gone. In an instant, Dennis had taken a full gas can and swung it like a baseball bat. There was a thud, a screech, and then a hard crash. A body falling to the ground.

Anna layed there, eyes wide and bulging. Jeremiah was still bawling, now because of the trauma of standing in front of his deceased friend. Mac now held Jeremiah tighter, and began to cry, too. They experienced the loss of, not just a friend, but a part of the entire society that they built in their hearts. They all sat down and did what they needed to do a long time ago. Cried.

Around three hours later, after they left it all behind and walked carefully on foot, they reached the large studio where their favorite radio station was played. Since the music was simple bluegrass, they expected the towering place to be a rickety old shack.

“Hey boys!” A man with white hair and long beard stepped out of the doors in a hawaiian shirt and khaki pants. They instantly knew they had found Petey Coltrane. Dennis found something wrong, the way that Petey was just there, waiting at the entrance. Like he... expected them.

“It’s crazy out there. Zombies *everywhere*! C’mon inside and get comfy!” Petey hollered at them from the doorway. Dennis was suspicious, but Mac and Jeremiah were eager to find some real shelter. They all entered and awed at the radio station. It seemed to be three floors tall.

“Look at that couch!” Jeremiah ecstatically wailed as he got a running start to the light brown sofa.

“Ha,” Petey laughed heartily. “It’s just what I’m using to get by. Nothing special.” Dennis couldn’t believe it. Just getting by? With *this*? He wondered what Petey’s real home looked like.

“So boys,” Petey began. “Here are the controls I use for my music.” Dennis looked in awe of all the switches and buttons. “Do you know why I decided to go into the music career?”

“Why?” Mac said, distracted by the pictures on the wall. “I can control the zombies with it!” Petey hollered, his expression becoming more and more sinister.

“Wow!” Dennis said. “So did you know the disease was coming?” Something wasn’t adding up.

“Yep,” Petey started. “I *made* the plague!” Dennis couldn’t believe it. His idol, the man he always looked up to, ruined the world. Just then, Dennis felt a force against his shoulders.

“You see, boys, I just wanna rule the world. Nothing too extravagant.” Petey said. He was shoving the boys out his shelter, leaving them to die.

“No!” Dennis wasn’t prepared for this. Just then, they were out in the open. Now the outside world was suffocating him. Bluegrass banjos started, and the zombies surrounded them. They were going to *die*.

“NO PLEASE! I CAN’T GO LIKE THIS! I HAVE SO MUCH TO LIVE FOR!” Jeremiah was screeching. Mac was already gone. Then... it was over. All turned black.