
95.6%

Kally Carroll

Anna sat on the ice-cold curb humming an old country song.

“I can’t believe it’s been three years since the plague hit,” said Mac. “It seems like just last week I was sitting back at the farm.”

Anna nodded in agreement, then leaned her head on Mac’s shoulder. Anna and Mac sat there for a few minutes looking up at the gray sky. She shivered as a gust of cool October wind rolled in. Her cheeks went pink and her teeth chattered.

“Here.” Mac took off his jacket and handed it to Anna.

Anna was pulling the hood over her head, when a raggedy-old van pulled into the empty lot.

“Go get Petey and Dennis, quick,” Mac said in a stern voice. Anna rushed inside and swiftly ran up the stairs to Petey’s room, bursting through the door.

She shook him awake and explained to him what was happening. He grabbed his fur coat and slippers and rushed outside. Anna flew down the hall to where Dennis and Mac’s room was. She opened the door and ran over to the bedside.

Dennis wasn’t there.

Petey and Mac approached the van with caution. They were about 10 feet from the beaming headlights when the car’s door opened. A tall man with a black suit stepped out.

“Excuse me,” said Petey “Can I help you?” He had a firm voice like usual, but this time there was a hint of fear behind it.

The man stayed still for a moment before grabbing the walkie-talkie that was clipped to his pocket. He mumbled something into it that Mac and Petey couldn’t quite make out.

The man took a few steps forward and held out his hand, revealing a picture of a teenage girl.

“Do you know this girl?” The man said in a deep, calm voice.

It couldn’t be. The girl was Anna.

Anna dug around in the covers searching frantically for any signs to where Dennis might have gone. There was nothing. She ran across the hall to her and Jeremiah's room and opened the door. Anna walked over to Jeremiah's bed and slowly rolled him over onto his back.

"You gotta wake up buddy," she said "Dennis is gone."

"Why do you want to know?" said Mac in a questioning tone. He took a step forward and puffed out his chest to make him look bigger.

The man in the glasses stepped backward and mumbled something again into the walkie-talkie.

"Do you know this young lady?" The man's voice sounded angrier this time. Petey pulled Mac back and replied in the calmest voice he could muster.

"Why should I tell you?" Petey said. "I haven't seen another human in years, besides these here folks that is."

The man walked forward so he was not much more than an arm's length away from Mac and Petey. He opened his mouth to say something then closed it. After a few seconds of silence, the man replied.

"I'm her father," With those words the man seemed to stand a little straighter and you could see a glimpse of hope in his eyes.

Mac and Petey stepped back in aghast. They stood there in the stillness, the cold air brushing against their rosy cheeks, and hair flopping in the wind.

"I would be happy to get her if you can show me some identification," Petey said in his gentle, brave voice.

"Are you questioning me?" Said the man in an accusatory tone, yet he yanked open the door to the van and grabbed his wallet.

"Here," He said. "Is that enough?" Then the man unfolded his wallet revealing a picture of him and Anna hugging.

Jeremiah and Anna ran down the hall and checked the kitchen. Sure enough, Dennis sat on the counter waiting for his coffee to finish.

“Dennis, come quick,” Anna said, wasting no time. Mac followed without obligation and ran down the stairs and back outside. Jeremiah waited inside, following Anna's directions. Anna stopped abruptly in her tracks. There in the parking lot stood her dad.

Anna rushed over to him and embraced him in a hug. “What are you doing here?! I thought you were gone.” She said. Mac, Dennis and Petey watched as they clung to each other.

“Y'all need to come with me,” The man said after they were done hugging. The man explained to them that he and a handful of other people had an underground hiding.

They all packed up their needed belongings and after a few days of driving eventually reached the hiding.

After a few weeks, they settled in and made friends with the other members.

Petey and the crew taught them about the bluegrass music and talking cure, and within 5 years 95.6% of the population was back to being human.

THE END