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prologue

After the outbreak of the deadly, infectious disease, The Great Languor Epidemic, all civilizations were forced to stay inside homes, apartments or wherever you were at the time of the beginning of the epidemic. which meant that, even if you were at a parking lot you had to live in your car. You were allowed to drive around. But not allowed to open the windows and if you dared get out, you would catch the sickness and die in less than 2 hours. So you were dead either way. Some people survived by drinking their sweat, making air filters through old supplies found in their car and eating their feces.

Twenty two years passed after the outbreak of the virus. It was somewhat under control. You were only allowed outside for the essentials, food, water, all of that. Cerban, USA was the last to be hit with the virus. So a lot of people moved and migrated there which caused an overload of people. Now, the once safest country, was the most dangerous. The virus traveled by people. One person had it. Then that one person met with friends. Then 6 people had it. So on so forth.

In 2965, a boy by the name of Miles was born. He is the focus of this story. Miles was born in Washington, USA and his family also moved to Cerban. As at the time, it seemed like a good place to go.

PART ONE

Chapter One

Narrated by Miles

I sighed as I walked through the never ending halls of the virtual school I was stuck in for seven hours every single day. My next class was Euclidean Geometry, room 34/B. I was thinking up ways I could skip, maybe my VR died? Maybe my controllers broke, no that wouldn't work, Hand tracking is a thing now.

Looks like I would just have to suck it up and deal with it.

chapter two
narrated by ellie

It was on June 6, 2980, when my parents decided that I should get a 'real job,' rather than (at least in their opinion) a 'not-real job.' My 'not-real job' (which was perfectly real) included me checking tickets at virtual concerts. I thought it was a decent job- I enjoyed it; I got some of the world's best music for free; and, I was getting paid a solid \$1.50 an hour, which seemed like fair pay.

Now let me get this straight- this job was not a dream. It was real life. It was my job in virtual reality.

So, a few weeks later, I reluctantly said "yes" to mom's increasingly large question of "can you please work at Dales Food and Goods Store?"

Which basically meant, every weekday (with the exception of Monday because that was when I had Physics Class and I was really bloody good at that) I would get up, yank on my jazzy, black coat and walk 3.2 miles to Dales Food and Goods Store. For some weird reason my boss wanted me there at exactly 6:30 in the morning, and the store didn't start until seven, so why the heck? Once the store opened, I would count the amount of apples, off-brand peanut butter and chocolate cupcakes, bananas, etcetera, and I would order more of them, even though 90% of the time we would have already ordered more, so why? just why?

Anyway, by 12:30, everyone would have their lunch break, which was a chaotic scene. There would be fully grown adults trading ripe apples with ham sandwiches and leftover tomato pasta. It was all a catastrophe, and I hated it there.

The final few hours of my day were spent asleep at work (whilst pretending to read the newspaper to check it was 'kid friendly' enough to be put in the kids aisle) and engaging in small talk with the other equally-not bothered teens who had been sent there for some community service job or whatever.

And the worst bit about the hell-hole known as 'Dales Store' was that it paid nothing. Like, someone could be paid \$0.01 for breathing, and they would still be getting paid more-than one trillion times the amount of money I was bringing in.

In summary, that 'job,' was a time-grab. And time is probably the worst thing to grab off of someone.

I decided to load up my Playstation 8 (it wasn't mine, I had nicked it from my dad,) and played a game called 'Zombies & Crime.' I created an account for it when I was twelve, even though I only played it twice in my entire life.

PART TWO

Chapter Three

Narrated by Miles

After class, I took off my headset and sat on the couch. I had a good 5 minutes of peace and relaxation before I heard my mother yell from the kitchen, "MILES, CAN YOU GO TO THE SHOP AND GET EGGS AND MILK PLEASE! " I huffed and puffed but I reluctantly got up, put on my bag and made the 3-ish mile journey to Dales Food And Goods Store.

I entered the never-ending hoard of green boxes filled to the brim with fruit, veg and rip-off chocolate bars. Dales Food and Goods felt a little dodgy (ie. It had stock photos of fruit in front of the shop,) but I figured that Mom would murder me if I didn't return with her milk and eggs.

So, I wandered over to the aisle labeled with the word 'dairy' in Lato font. I saw a girl on a ladder- blonde, with her hair tied up into a bun. She had a maroon red shirt on, with dark blue jeans.

I kept walking, looking for goat milk, because one of my millions of sisters was allergic to cow's milk. I saw this guy in his 70's explain to his Primary School-aged grandson about the virus, which had been intoxicating billions of people. I moved away from him- due to sheer nervousness- and heard a thud. I paused. Oh God. I thought.

"I'm sorry." I panicked, trying to catch a gasp of a breath.

"It's okay." She replied. I was 95% sure she was lying.

She stood up, before brushing a bunch of dust off of her back. I thought about the two options I had- one. To leg it; and get the hell out of here, and, two. To get the hell out of here. So, without much thought, I ran (whilst picking up goat milk and some eggs- which weren't free-ranged- but who cares?) I paid about six times the amount of money the cashier was needing, figuring that some rich billionaire would be happy with me. Then, I legged it- running faster than my legs could take me.

I got home with sweat dripping down my spine, then handed the eggs and milk to Mom.

chapter four
narrated by ellie

THE MOST INTERESTING THING THAT HAPPENED TO ME whilst working for Dales was the time I was stocking milk. It sounds boring, and it is, but this nerdy guy came to get some milk, I tried to warn him that I was here, but he was looking at some Grandpa- and boom- I'm on the floor in complete agony worrying that my upper right rib cage had broken.

I told him that I was 'okay,' even though I wasn't. Whatever 'okay' meant. So, I asked my boss if I could take the afternoon off, but he said 'no.' *Screw him* I thought.

I decided to spend the remaining one hour and thirty-six-minutes of my shift at checkouts, because it was the only place in which minimal manual labor was required.

When I got home, I was, admittedly, pretty depressed, so, I decided to load up my ancient Playstation 8 (it wasn't mine, I had nicked it from my dad,) and played a game called 'Zombies & Crime.' I created an account for it when I was twelve, even though I only played it twice in my entire life.

PART THREE

***chapter five
narrated by Miles***

That night, to make me feel better about myself, I turned on my decade-old PlayStation 9, and played a game named 'Zombies and Crime,' which, apparently, I had made an account for around six years ago. So, there I was. Sat there, cross legged, 7 minutes past midnight, on some game. The game itself was alright, basically the pitch was that there were a tonne of murders committed by zombies (on Earth,) however, us humans couldn't figure out what the heck was going on- because we didn't know we had zombies- so, the guy you're in control of has to figure out how the zombies got to Earth.

I had been playing for a solid two hours- and getting a little bored- when I stumbled across this other player, with the tag of EllieGamer124 and I got pretty curious about why she was playing this dead game.

U still playing this lol? MilesPlays12

Ye, idk why. EllieGamer124

Me neither, just found it on my PS MilesPlays12

Me 2- how often do you play on PS? EllieGamer124

Not often. MilesPlays12

The conversation continued from there- we played for hours exchanging fascist of our lives and talking. She told me that she worked at Dales Food and Goods Store, which I thought was weird. Because, I had been there. I was wondering if she was the girl I had hurt. What I'd she was? She must've been, right?

I went to sleep that night, thinking about her. Thinking about her personality. I couldn't get this question, this person, out of my head. It wasn't romantic. It was strange.

chapter six
narrated by ellie

We spent the following four weeks talking to each other. We'd talk whenever we could. We'd talk about our lives, our problems, so and so. I felt like I loved him- not in a romantical way, but in a person way. In that sense, I couldn't live without him. He was my anchor, and I was the ship. A lite one. I felt like I knew him for being a person. An ordinary fifteen-year-old.

chapter seven
narrated by miles

I think I started to love her when we would talk for a while. Again, not in a romantic way- but in a different way. A special way. Our times were spent existing with one-another. Not the opposite way. Sometimes we'd spend hours on call without saying one word. It felt like life was good, for me. It felt like life was good.

PART FIVE

***the epilogue
narrated by miles***

So in summary, she died. I think her household had been infected with the virus, then she died. She was the second to last person to die. Her sister was the last. All I can say is that I was devastated. I cried for days, upon days, upon days. I felt sad. I felt depressed. Maybe, after all, it was her time to die. Maybe she needed to die. Maybe it was a sign.