

### **Contains:**

world-building for the sake of world-building with mostly no impact on the plot, body horror, intense violence, coarse language, reader interaction

### **Summary of what's happened so far:**

A wave of energy, helpfully nicknamed 'The Wave' went over the earth, killing most it touched but mutating the survivors, who began to call themselves affected humans. Society has collapsed. Affected humans Theodore Allred and Cassidy "Cass" Luong made their way to the relative safe haven of New York, but didn't exactly mesh well. Now they and their allies are on the run, trying to get out of the country before they all die, being chased by armies of affected and unaffected humans and picking up more allies along the way. They have just reached a ship.

## **Chapter Forty**

### **Week Twenty-One**

Dinner was good, according to Theodore's friends. Allan said it was mostly Rosie and Jay who made it edible. Everyone thanked Oliver for making dessert. Marilyn announced that after dinner, the adults were going to discuss where they should go.

Theodore, Audrey, Allan, Rosie, Jay, Hector, Marcus, Ariel, Jill, Danny, Oliver, Bee, Sarah, Sasha, and six other college students came to the meeting. Tim, most of The Veterans, and the remaining Arrowheads were on guard duty. Marilyn and Jordan were already inside.

Jordan was sitting in front of a desk with a world map on it, holding a pencil.

"When I was writing the Gazette, The Pigeon Queen allowed me access to a radio. Tim has one here, too. I've been checking up on it to correct any information that may have changed. There's a lot for you to catch up on."

She stabbed the pencil into Mexico, "Most of northern Mexico was destroyed in the immediate aftermath of the wave. No-one knows why, but Radio Free World suspect it had to do with an affected human. The blast also took out most of Texas, if you had any relatives there. A cult worshipping affected humans called The Order Of The Holy Light has control of almost all of Central America, and is pushing into South America. New Brazil, an authoritarian dictatorship that is very intolerant of affected humans, is not making it easy. The Peruvian Alliance was fighting off New Brazil, but fell last Thursday. The only resistance forces in South America now are a group of freedom fighters hiding in the Amazon Rainforest and the Cape Horn Free Zone, which protects any ships traveling past. Uruguay might be trying to fight back, but that's all rumors at this point."

"We have the fuel to get there, but I don't see why we would want to," Marilyn added.

Jordan looked around, and stabbed another country, "Greenland's been completely radio silent. No missions sent there by any faction have sent any messages or come back since they set foot on

it. It's theorized that's where the wave started. Great Britain has gone back to its former state as an empire, led by someone called Mother Britannia. She's probably an affected human, but no-one knows for sure. She sounds too much like The Pigeon Queen for my liking. They've expanded into France and Spain, but are receiving pushback from The Maquis, The Spanish Resistance and the IRA in all of their native areas. The Northern German Confederation started in Germany and has spread to nearby regions. Of the three major European powers, they're the one that is the closest to having public support. The Papal Authority, a bunch of hyper-catholic assholes, started out in the Vatican, and couldn't push into The NGC or Britain's territory so they took most of the eastern Europe. Serbia, Croatia, those guys. Switzerland closed its borders since day one and hasn't been taken by any of the three powers. While Britain, The NGC, and The Papal Authority were fighting, Russia is watching and ready to swoop in at any time."

"We have the fuel to get to Great Britain, and maybe Germany," Marilyn said, "Again, I'm not sure we'd want to."

"The IRA's back?" Oliver asked.

"Yeah. They're probably being funded at least partially by Russia, as with the other resistance groups."

"The other options would have to be very bad for me to consider anywhere in Europe," Theodore said. Everyone nodded in agreement.

Jordan stabbed the pencil into the middle east, "Iran's on fire. Literally. It doesn't look like it will stop anytime soon. Saudi Arabia had a massive revolution two weeks after the Wave struck, and is almost a functioning democracy now. For a post-Wave country, they're fucking great. They've been recruiting the rest of the Middle East, trying to build a coalition that can fend off Russia or The Papal Authority. They've got some people on board, but given the history of the region, it's a hard sell."

"So right now, our best option is Saudi Arabia?" Cass asked.

"It's not really an option," Jordan traced the regions of the map, "We'd either have to risk going past the Papal Authority or go around all of Africa. We don't have enough fuel for the second route."

"Are there any good options?" Hector asked.

Jordan nodded, stabbing the pencil into the map again, "Africa has a good option. The Northern African Alliance consists of most of Northwest Africa, though the borders are a little sketchy. The NAA has a lot of major cities, a fairly democratic system, and is definitely the top candidate for the post-Wave society that most resembles pre-Wave society. They're on good terms with Saudi Arabia, the Spanish Resistance, and are trying to contact the rebels in the Amazon. Middlish Africa was hit really hard by the Wave, and survivors either migrated somewhere else or formed small groups that don't really bother anybody. Anywhere remotely in the vicinity of South Africa is a mess. The racial tension finally boiled over and the ensuing civil war has been slowly expanding to nearby

countries. So far, none of the factions have gotten anywhere near enough power to be a threat, unless you're trying to pass by in a boat."

"We can easily reach any parts of Africa with the fuel we have. I personally feel that we should go to the NAA," Marilyn added.

"I also feel that is our best option," Theodore said. Most of the room nodded in agreement.

"It's definitely my choice. China's government survived the Wave, and looks to stay in power, for a while, at least in the central area. There's no more U.N. to stop them from slaughtering half the population of Taiwan. They made a deal with Russia early on to stay out of each other's way for a while, so China's expanded into Mongolia, the -Stans, the Koreas, and most of Southeast Asia. They're pushing into Japan, India, and the southern asian islands, but are having trouble holding their newly acquired territory because they can't implement their surveillance tech fast enough. Japan's barely holding it together, and will definitely fall soon. India's formed a fashy empire state, it's first actions being nuking the shit out of Pakistan and doing lots of bad shit to religious minorities. They should hold against China for a while. The southern Asian islands are mostly individually self-governing, but are working together to push back China. It's going to take a lot of force to take them. And that's not saying the individual governments are that great, they just have a good system for routing threats."

"We would definitely have to make some stops to get anywhere in Asia. I don't know why we would want to, because it sounds like an all-around nightmare."

"When did they nuke Pakistan?" Hector asked.

"Two, three weeks in. Some other groups have used them. Las Vegas was destroyed by one early after the wave hit, and Russia's been testing more nukes in Finland. The Papal Authority's been threatening to use them for a couple weeks, but it's probably bullshit."

"So Asia's not in a good place right now."

"It is not," Jordan agreed, and stabbed the pencil into New Zealand, "New Zealand's government survived the Wave as well, and reacted pretty well to the Wave. Australia was hit pretty bad, and there's no dominant force there, just small communities. Some of the communities are receiving aid from New Zealand, but others are more stubborn and thus worse. New Zealand's providing aid to the southern Asian islands as well."

"New Zealand would be a good option, but it's practically impossible to get there, with all the refueling and threat-passing we'd have to do. So. Where are we going?"

The majority voted to sail for NAA.

One of the Arrowheads came in, and said to Marilyn, "We're approaching prepper territory. They've spotted us."

## **Chapter Forty-One**

### **Week Twenty-One**

Marilyn Dixon looked at Sasha Bliss, who nodded. Sasha Bliss stepped out on the deck, empty on Marilyn's orders, and strung an arrow into the bow. Firing at a target that was outside of view, she strung the bow on her back and reentered the ship.

Marilyn said, "Let's hope they got the message. If they didn't, let's get out of range of their weapons."

The three heavily armed men watched as the arrow stuck into the tree next to them. There was a note tied around it.

It read:

*We are on the run from the Pigeon Queen's forces. They are likely going to attempt to slaughter you on their way to us. You might want to prepare.*

The three men smiled to take the message to their leader. They were too proud to realize they were being used as a delaying method.

### **Interlude Seven**

#### **Week Twenty-Two**

Maxwell Green stood at the front of his forces, staring at the crucifixes in front of him strung with corpses and the thick forest behind it.

"After we kill Theodore's shithheads, we're coming back here to deal with this," He addressed the troops, "Charge!"

They had dug trenches throughout the forest. It would not be enough. In one of the trenches, four men were operating two machine guns. A dark shape flew into the air, making a noise as she stuck into the trees. One of the men looked up. The shape fell from above, impaling him on one of her harpoons. The other three men didn't have time to react before six more harpoons stuck out, spearing them. Claire Reed pulled her harpoons out and flung herself to the next machine gun nest.

Jax Ambrose jumped into another trench, his two blade-arms shining. He ran towards the closest unaffected humans he could find, smiling.

The first layer of trenches had been overrun, and the second was about to be. The preppers were ordered to retreat, but ranks had already broken down. Five of them, greatly wounded, were running for the home base, when something flew through the air and landed over four of them. The fifth staggered back, looking at the dome of leathery black skin. He could hear the rest of them inside it, screaming and trying to shoot through the material. In a matter of seconds, the dome flattened

completely to the ground. Blood began trickling from underneath it. The fifth ran, managing to make it to the base. Warren Cho didn't care, and sprang back up, looking for new targets.

The preppers had a tank. They had moved it in front of the only entrance to the base, to hold off the Pigeon Queen's Army. A six-armed affected human with coal-black scales charged forward, grinning. The tank fired into his chest, and the hill in front of them was shrouded in smoke. Tony Bestman emerged, smirking. "Y'all are fucked."

The remaining preppers had barricaded the door, and were standing, waiting for it to be punched down. One of them had the plan to shoot down Tony Bestman's throat. It was a good plan.

The sound of breaking glass came from behind them. Turning around, they saw a dark-green skinned woman covered in bark-like armor and thorns running towards them. She slammed the first into a wall, and kicked the next in the chest. Where her thorns made marks, bulbous green dots appeared, quickly swelling and exploding. When Tony kicked down the barricade, all he found was Meg Haskell, smirking and surrounded by sickly green corpses.

Everything had gone to shit. The Field Commander, an old veteran in charge of the preppers, was the last one left. He ran back to the armory, planning on going out in style. He was too panicked to realize the door was unlocked.

"Who the hell are you?"

Max Green pulled the trigger.

## **Chapter Forty-One**

### **Week Twenty-Three**

The Radio reported the prepper's fall five days ago. Nobody was really surprised.

To get to the next couple shelters, they decided to split up. The *New Horizon* would continue down the coast, stopping at Anita Brown's warehouse. A 'strike team' led by The Veterans would leave the ship and travel by car towards the warehouse, picking up shelters along the way. Once they met back up, they were going to leave for the NAA.

The 'strike team' consisted of Hector, Marcus, Ariel, Sasha, Bee, Sarah, Cass, Theodore, and five other Veterans. Marilyn sent Sasha to make sure they did the right thing, and Hector kept Danny on the ship for the same task. Theodore was there because he was likeable, and could probably persuade hesitant groups. Besides, they figured he could take a lot of damage.

The team set off early, trying to avoid too many goodbyes.

## **Chapter Forty-Two**

### **Week Twenty-Three**

They hid their two cars for the night and made camp. They were in Manifest Destiny territory, and they had been on good terms with the Skeletons and the Rorschachs.

They had already decided on the watch program. Everyone except Theodore was in randomly assigned pairs. The point of contention was that Sasha had always been placed with a Veteran.

“Why do you always need to keep an eye on me? What the fuck are you worried I’m going to report back to Marilyn?!”

“I’m not... You’re overreacting,” Hector likely knew she was not.

“You’re gaslighting me now? This is new,” Sasha smiled.

As the argument continued, Cass leaned over to Sarah, “Why aren’t you getting involved in this? Weren’t you an early leadership candidate?”

“Me? I’ve always been middle management. Both Marilyn and Hector are good leaders, so I don’t really care.”

“Shouldn’t you be trying to defuse this?”

“You can’t get anyone to actually stop fighting if you just tell them to stop fighting. They just keep their grudge stewing inside. Either they’ll work it out or they start physically fighting, and then I’ll choose a side.”

Cass raised an eyebrow, “Who?”

Sarah smirked, “Probably the Gay Punishers.”

“Really? You still remember that?”

“We all still remember that. Did you think we were going to forget?”

“Not really, no. So you think the Veterans would win in a fight?”

Hector and Sasha heard her comment and turned to stare at them.

Sarah grimaced, “I don’t know when I would have ever said anything to you or anyone else about that. I must have said something wrong.”

Hector and Sasha sighed and went to their tents.

“That wasn’t on purpose, was it?”

“Maybe? No?”

“Shouldn’t you know?” Sarah went to her tent.

## **Chapter Forty-Three**

So in this chapter they reach the next shelter, an artists commune deal. I’m having some problems figuring out what to write for this. Please discuss potential ideas/conflicts/characters so I can steal and/or ignore them.