

Malachi A.

Outbreak

Alice was a normal girl, in the normal town of Crockett, TX, on a normal day. So it came as a surprise when the dead rose. I, your noble narrator, shall take you on a journey, following young Alice through her story. But first, we must go to the beginning.

A sunny winter day in Crockett, (because it's in TEXAS, where it's always sunny) Alice is on the square, walking towards the Moosehead Cafe. Alice, as it happens, is going to meet a friend of hers for lunch. As she reaches the street corner, she sees a man, deathly pale, sitting on a bench, moaning quietly. She thinks nothing of it, believing it to be another homeless man. They seem, as of late, to be appearing more and more frequently. However, she dispels the thought from her mind, and continues upon her merry way towards the cafe. She enters the cafe and is greeted by the friendly carved wooden bear that guards the door day and night. She searches for her friend, and, noticing her, sits down at the table. Melissa, her friend, says sarcastically, "Hey Alice! Nice of you to join me!". Alice replies, "I know I'm late, and I'm sorry. I got distracted by this homeless man on the corner. You see them just popping up everywhere nowadays!" Melissa, satisfied with Alice's response, moves on to the next subject, that of her new purse.

"Guess what I just got!" "Wha'd you get?" replies Alice, excited to see Melissa's newest accessory. "It's the new Louis Vuitton purse! I won it at Purse Bingo¹" Melissa shows off the purse, which Alice thinks is quite ugly, but she pretends she likes it so she doesn't hurt Melissa's feelings. Finally, to the delight of Alice and the annoyance of Melissa, who was still showing off her purse, a server showed up to take their order. After they ordered, Melissa and Alice made small talk about boys, the latest fashion, and drama at the high school. Afterwards, they parted ways, Melissa going to her car, of which Alice was envious, and Alice walking home, which only happened to be a couple blocks away. She walked past the old Callaway-Allee funeral home, all the ornate houses, to her father's walled "compound", as she called it. Her father was a "doomsday prepper". It had high walls, made of cinder block and mortar, a gate made of tube steel with a keypad entry, and a house reinforced with rebar and concrete walls. But you wouldn't know this, because the walls were covered in very pretty rock, the gate had the family crest welded to the center, and the house had a wooden covered outside and a wraparound porch, with the inside being styled as was customary of the area, and looked very clean, especially for houses in the area. What no one but Alice, her father, and her mother knew was that there was a nuclear fallout shelter filled with enough guns, ammunition, and rations to supply the whole US Army for a month. Alice's mother, Mary, thought that it was all unnecessary, and was a waste of money. Oh how she would be proven wrong. Her father greeted her on the porch, sipping sweet tea and swinging on the porch swing. She goes inside to find her mother cooking chili soup² and cornbread. Alice went up stairs to her room, where she turned on her radio to the local news station and caught up on the Crockett news. This, my friends, is where the news broke. Alice heard on the radio an automated message repeating, "THIS IS NOT A DRILL. A SICKNESS HAS SPREAD ACROSS HOUSTON COUNTY. AVOID ALL THOSE INFECTED. SIGNS OF INFECTION

¹ Purse Bingo is an annual contest held in the Civic Center, where hundreds of Crockett residents, mainly female, go to play bingo. The awards are purses, both explaining the name and the female demographic.

² Chili soup is very similar to Chili, with one main difference. Chili is, as a general rule, cooked without beans. Chili soup on the other hand, is cooked with beans. In my opinion, Chili soup is better, but it's truly personal preference.

INCLUDE: PALE, ALMOST ROTTEN SKIN, WHITENED EYES, AND, MOST OF ALL, A THIRST FOR BLOOD. THOSE INFECTED WILL NOT STOP AT ANYTHING TO GET TO ITS TARGET, UNLESS DISTRACTED BY ANOTHER. IN SHORT, SHOOT FOR THE HEAD.” Alice breathes heavily, unsure of what to do. She thinks out loud” Is this some sort of prank, or is it real? “ She ran down to her father, who, coincidentally, happened to be an expert on the subject. He heard the entire radio broadcast again, and began his muttering. See, whenever he thinks really hard, he starts pacing, muttering, and looking around with furrowed brows.” Rotten flesh, whitened eyes, thirst for blood..... No, it couldn't be. Could it?” Finally he came to a conclusion. “ It’s zombies.” Obviously, Alice and her mother were taken aback, because they had just found out the dead were walking, a seemingly impossible feat of nature. However, as it was a seemingly impossible feat of nature, there was some doubt. Alice says, ”There’s no way..... Those are only in movies and comic books!”. Her mom, similarly disbelieving, concurs. So, he had to show them.” Let’s take a drive, shall we? They all piled into the family car, but then Alice’s father got out. He said,” We better not take that, just to be safe. We’ll take this instead.” He presses a button on the keys to reveal a conveniently placed Hummer, of which there was no previous knowledge.

“Wowww, so shiny!” Alice says. So, they all pile into the conveniently placed Hummer, and drive into what used to be a very normal town.

As they near the square, the sounds, sights, and smell of devastation runs rampant. The old movie theater sign, which has hung for all of Alice’s life, has fallen to the pavement. Betty Boops, the local sandwich shop, has broken windows, and the courthouse, in the center of the square, is burning down in front of their eyes. Yet no fire fighters, no police officers, no ambulances have shown up. A clue as to why may lay in the smell. Overlaying all of Crockett TX was the smell of rotting meat wafting throughout. As they drove past Lee’s China Inn³, she saw her. Melissa. However, what Alice didn’t know was that Melissa was a zombie. So, she jumped out of the conveniently placed Hummer to the previously normal street towards a previously normal friend. It was quite a surprise to Alice, that, when she touched Melissa’s shoulder, it squished far more than it should. Another surprise came when Melissa turned around. SHE WAS MISSING HER JAW! Alice backpedaled, screaming explicatives the entire way to the conveniently placed Hummer, zombie Melissa staring dumbfounded at the piece of meat that just touched her shoulder and ran away screaming. “Let’s get the (CENSORED) out of here!” Alice yelled! Her father yelled back “Language!” And just like that, they sped away in their conveniently placed Hummer, in their previously normal town, to their extremely reinforced house.

³ How may I help you?(inside joke)