

Reminders

I guess you'd say that He "called me into his office." I remember the exact words out of His mouth were...

"I am frankly getting tired of this whole "kind and generous God" bit, Traith. I miss my old days. Well, it's not that I miss them, but my children are misled to a point that I fear will not be reversible."

The whole time He didn't look at me once. That is not like Him at all.

"I've made a mistake."

God told me that He made a mistake! Chills I had.

"It's time. I need you again."

My palms began to sweat.

The snow fell and the reminders marched.

"Rule number one, Playboy, when things get heavy my name ain't Tyrell anymore. My name ain't Ty. It's T. We ain't got no time to waste."

Benji looked sarcastically at his "buddy." "Dude, Ty and T have the same amount of syllables," he said brushing his black hair from his eyes.

"Man, do I look like I care? All I know is that Ty has two letters and T is a letter and I don't waste time in my life anymore. I would have you call me tuh, but you can't hear tuh too well can you?"

"Um...rule number two?"

"If we don't look out for each other, eventually, we're both gonna die. If I fall you risk your life to pick me up because...see rule number

two, you dig?"

The situation was simple. One day the TV's stopped. Water stopped running. The electricity ceased, and everyone stood astonished. All angels became earthbound to pass judgment on the damned. Some people ran and some people dropped to their knees. One man from Blackpool, England threw a toaster with bread still toasting inside at the angel.

An obese woman from Fargo, North Dakota, who disowned her son because he adopted a mixed child, waddled into her closet to get all of her religious pamphlets that were highlighted and tattered from overuse to show to the angel. The angel closed its eyes, the woman screamed, turned black, and died; so did every sinner on her block.

Benji was one of the reminders. He was in mid-prayer when the day of reckoning fell upon mankind. He couldn't recall what he was praying about when he was asked at the camp. All he remembered was that he was talking to a god of some sort, contemplating his faith. It wasn't that he didn't have faith, he just didn't know what to have faith in. Then he heard the ruckus of civilization being destroyed: cars crashing, fires, screams, all mixed with an eerie silence that hung in the background like fog.

Benji was running from a giant angel with an incredible wingspan when he came across a remainder camp. The brights of an SUV flashed on down the road twenty feet in front of him. Benji, knowing what was behind him and in front of him—but not really knowing at all—dove headfirst into a pile of snow. The great winged angel soared to the ground and landed gracefully on two feet stirring up swirls of glittering snow. The brights stayed on and there was silence. The angel thrust its wings out. To one of the men sneaking up behind it, its silhouette looked the size of a T-Rex skeleton he saw with his twelve year old daughter at a museum. The men pounced. They began to slice at the massive wings with knives and swords. One man used a Civil War saber that his grandfather gave him. One man used hedge clippers. The angel shrieked. One man was flung

into a tree and broke his back. Another man was flung into the air by one of the great wings. He smacked into the ground thirty seconds later three feet away from Benji. The angel finally shook off all the men and struggled to its feet. Its wings were frayed and leaking blood. A shot was fired. The angel dropped to one knee and fell over dead.

Benji and Tyrell walked on the hard packed snow. It had been nine days since Judgment Day, three days since the battle with the large-winged seraph, and two days since they had seen an angel of any sort.

Or a human.

Two things were decided amongst the group of remainders: one being that there was nowhere they could go that would be sage, and two, there had to be more people who survived the slaughter. Based on a "you can't hit a moving target" theory and a "strength in numbers" mentality, they were walking—thirteen of them—in the freezing temperatures, some talking, and some listening to the monotonous sound of snow crunching under their shoes. One very tall man named Gus and his very little wife named Caira walked in front of the remainders, hand in hand, both reading separate Bibles.

Benji noticed that Tyrell had been looking at the moon for a while. He thought of how moonlight can give any human face showing any human emotion a malevolent undertone. "What are you thinking about?" Benji asked.

Tyrell continued staring at the moon. "You wouldn't think that something so jacked up and so wrong would be so easy to accept would ya? I mean really, few things in life are as automatic, you know, instinctual as our need to survive. Think about that and then ask yourself this...why are we trying?"

Benji sighed. "Well, I don't wanna die—"

"Man, they're gonna get you," Tyrell was getting loud. "They gonna get all of us eventually. We all shoulda just taken our judgment like

big boys and girls."

"Ty, I've seen what happened to the people that just dropped to their knees and accepted the verdict," Benji snapped his fingers, "Dude, lights out."

"Yeah and I've read about what happens to fools like us when we take on God!"

A short man with a heavy Hispanic accent spoke deeply but quietly: "Young man, if hell awaits me, I want to do whatever I can do to keep it waiting."

Everybody stopped. Tyrell stared at the short man.

"You don't wanna go to hell?" Tyrell asked.

"No Sir, I do not."

"Well go there because I'm through messing with yall."

The man grunted very low in his throat, turned, and began walking, hands in his pockets, breathing smoke as white as the moon against the black sky.

It had gotten much colder.

"I done killed an angel of God already. I'm a damned man walkin." Tyrell walked towards the porch steps of a small yellow house. As he did, he pointed his finger high to the sky and then at himself. "Come get me."

Benji looked at everyone and they looked back at him; all except the short man. He and his buddy were gaining ground. "Go on," Benji said, "we'll catch up."

"You better catch up," one skinny woman with glasses said. The skinny woman's partner, an equally skinny man with a full beard,

pulled his knit cap down tight over his ears and said, "Everyone get your buds and lets keep moving."

The wind was picking up. It didn't feel like a natural wind to Benji at all. He ran towards Tyrell who was sitting on the porch in the snow smoking a cigarette. Benji's shadow fell over him.

"Cigarette?" Tyrell asked.

.Benji shook his head and put his hand on his buddy's shoulder "We gotta go man. Something ain't right in the wind."

Ty ashed his cigarette. "Naw man, I'm just gonna chill."

"Hey, Ty, this sucks I know, but you gotta suck it up and—"

"I'm just gonna chill."

Benji became angered. "Man what the hell happened to all this Rambo stick-with-me-I'll-stick-with-you bullshit? Are you just gonna leave me hanging like that?"

Tyrell dragged hard on his cigarette. "With me out that makes twelve...you'll have someone." All the fight drained out of Benji. "I pulled the trigger," Tyrell jabbed the remainder of his Camel into the snow. "I'm just gonna chill."

Benji shook his head. "I'll be damned." He turned and sprinted away to catch up with the group. He was alone and that was bad.

Tyrell looked up in time to see something pass in front of the moon.

"You already are, buddy."

By Aaron Knight