

Operation Black Night

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1st Place Prize Winner of Inspired Works Contest

Prelude

I woke up to silence. The sound of my own breathing echoing off the bare walls. Nothing surrounded me but darkness and within the darkness was something watching me. Material things were not necessary anymore. Technology took over, replaced everything that once was and made it into intangible things. The only things that could be touched were people and even with that, there was something different than before. Being social didn't have the same definition anymore. What was once a "hello, hi, how are you" is now a quick glance upward and then a quick dart of the eyes to the ground. Technology changed us in more ways than one. Resources became scarce, dwindling down to almost nothing. This caused civil war, panic, and destruction. What were once tall, shining buildings in the city are now graffitied, dull structures full of overgrown weeds. What was once a blossoming country full of people wanting the American Dream is now a barren land full of hopelessness. People can't leave their homes without the worry that war will enter their lives more than it already has. War has entered my life and consumed it. I fight for the people, trying to get back what we once had.

I am a soldier. I do not fight for our country anymore, I fight for the people in it. The people are voiceless and I am their advocate.

Chapter 1

Cameras shift, following me as I walk down the sidewalks. The sidewalks are full of cracks and full of shadows of the memories they once held. Rusted bikes sit on the lawns of crumbled down houses. The rusted chains of swings creak as they are pushed by the invisible ghosts of the children that once were. I move my gaze to the one swing that decides to stand still, as if saying, I will not be forced to do something that I do not want to do. I walk over to it and run my hand down the chain turning my hand brown from the rust. Memories are filled in my head. I am one of the last people that remember what life was like before T. T is what we call Technology Day. T is what we call the government. T is what we call the end of our society. T is what we call a monster. T ruined our lives. In the end, I am the only one who can bring T down.

Imagine the perfect scene. Green grass on every lawn. Children running up and down the sidewalks. Adults talking on the stoops, coffee or tea in their hands. Dogs sitting next to their families, tongues hanging out of their mouths.

Now imagine the opposite. Brown weeds filling plots of land. The wind howling, replacing the sounds of children laughing. Doors swinging open and close on the stoops of barren houses. Malnourished dogs limping down the street, ribs showing as they breathe.

Imagine that change happening in one day. That is T.

The irony of all this is that we humans made T happen. We thought we were smart enough to avoid it. Scientists calculated every risk and made another plan to avoid it; thinking that taking another path would escape the fate. Every path leads to the same end, though. It's like walking in a forest. You can't avoid the hungry bear at the end of the path no matter how hard you try.

The date was October 21st, 2037. The air was crisp, the smell of pine trees lingering. The wind nipped at people's necks, but still they chose to be outside.

The world was still in a struggle. Some people attached to the hip to technology, others using what they needed while the rest used absolutely nothing of it. Scientists were on the verge of a new design. A device so useful that even the people who refused to have technology in their lives would cave. This device was known as T-02. The first prototype failed. It just couldn't take all the things it needed to do. It was too much at once and just

exploded on the spot. But T-02, they promised, would be new and improved and would change lives forever. Little did we know that the change would lead to this. T-02 was basically a modified robot. It could transform into whatever the user thought of, could do anything the user wanted and could act just like a human. This human like quality is what made T-02 so desirable. It was as if it hypnotized the buyer into needing it instead of wanting it.

T-02 was presented at 14:00 at the conference in Washington, D.C. The robot shook President Rancliff's hand on live news and all of a sudden everything went blank. Silence filled the air and the only thing that anyone could focus on was the blackness on the walls where the live picture of T-02 and the president once was. Static filled the silence, making people cover their ears. Then an explosion followed. It could be heard throughout the whole country. The explosion was like no other. It sent out a sonic boom. It spread throughout the entire country, destroying everything in its path. The only place that actually suffered the immediate impact of the explosion was the White House. The explosion instantly killed the president and whomever was near it. The rest of the country faced different fates, but still the same end. Whoever was outside was either knocked down or the only thing left of them was their shadow, forever imprinted into the ground.

No one understood why the explosion did what it did. Destroying buildings, but not causing fires. Killing people, but only hurting some. Annihilation in just a small area, but damage in the whole country. Scientists say every reason in the book to explain what happened. That there had to be an explanation to what happened. But most knew it was because we weren't meant to have this technology in our hands. This was a warning, the final outcome would come soon.

People were outraged. Families were torn apart. Fathers became rebels. Mothers became spies. Children became bandits. Others chose to live as if T never happened; trying to move on and live as normal a life as they possibly could. Most became so afraid of the outside world that they resorted to living out their days as hermits, either dying of starvation or of thirst. If they didn't die, they went mad and only caused more things to be afraid of in this world.

What was left of the government decided to put a start to a new plan of action: Operation T. Cameras were installed in every home, on every street, in every crevice of every alley. The government wanted to keep a close eye on the civilians to make sure no one would ever try to do something to cause more damage than what was already done. The funny part was that this was all the government's fault. They funded the money for T-01 and T-02. They gave the scientists the go to start the project.

They gave the materials and the time for this project to be completed. The government thought that Operation T would help win the people back. The people were already lost. The United States of America was no longer "united."

Chapter 2

The world turned their backs on us. No matter how many times we were there for them, they decided to have no part in helping us. The countless times that we risked the lives of our men and women, the countless times that we gave them resources for their dying country, the countless times that we overspent money to get them back on their feet did not matter. The world was a selfish place. If we saw that earlier, maybe we would have something left. A little money, a little food, a little bit of resource just to get ourselves back up. A starting step back to learning how to walk on our own again. But, we were left with nothing. Hope left us. Pride left us. The American spirit left us. We were just hollow bodies, pale and dead inside. The actual living dead. It was as if every video game based on apocalypses came true. Every color gone and replaced with shades of grey. Every sound deafened and replaced with shrills of the wind. Every movement stopped and replaced with scattering objects. Everything changed, not one thing remained the same. Someone just couldn't look at the

object and look at it the same way as it once was. Everything had a new definition.

My knife was the only possession I had left. The clothes on my back were full of tears, dirt, and fades of color. My hair tickled at my eyelashes. It grew since the start of this all. What started as a buzz cut was now a shaggy hair style, dirty and full of grease. A good shower was hard to come by. A haircutter was even harder. So many times I wished that I could just cut it all off, get new clothes, see my family again. But then I was reminded that that was all in the past. No longer could I look into my mother's eyes and see the love she had for me. No longer could I shake my father's hand when I came back from school every day. No longer could I pick up my little sister and spin her around, and hear her giggles fill the air. They were all gone. Shadows on the ground. The outlines of those shadows lay forever on the sidewalk in front of 48 Starlight Avenue. The house where every adult wanted to be and every kid never wanted to leave. Twenty seven shadows lay outside that house. Twenty seven people that are forever lost. Twenty seven people that will never see this world again. But, twenty seven people who are in a better place now. Sometimes I wish I made that number twenty eight. Sometimes I wish I was home that day. But then I wouldn't be able to fight for the others. I wouldn't be able to fight with my new brothers and sisters. I wouldn't be a Trebel.

"Trey, why are you so late?"

I jumped into our hideout: a shed that sunk into the ground.

"Sorry man, saw a kid outside. Had to get him to shelter. I didn't want him out when our plan goes down."

The man nodded at me.

"Good thinking, kid."

He wrapped his arm around my shoulders and nodded at the rest of the eighteen guys to come around. This man was like a father to me. He found me when I was lost and gave me a purpose to live on. He believed in a cause and helped me believe in it too.

"So we all remember the plan, right?"

We all nodded. The plan was called Operation Black Night. We wanted to cut off all the cameras in the country and make our way to the government's office. We wanted to take over and take back what we once had. We wanted to give this country a new start. No more technology and no more hiding. Rename the country and replace everything. Start over just like our ancestors once did. If they could do it, so could we. Their blood was in us.

We all departed to gather our weapons. The sound of reloading guns and sharpening knives filled the air.

"Hey, Austin?"

The man who wrapped his arm around me turned around.

"Hm?"

"Think we can do it?"

A smirk appeared on Austin's face.

"Oorah."

Not every battlefield is the same. Each is at a different location. Each filled with different scenery. Each has its own purpose behind it. Every plan, every action is thought out. Every move, every whisper has a plan behind it. The only thing that remains the same in every war is that the people fighting are family. And no one gets left behind.

This was a one sided battle. The only thing the government had to protect them was their view from the cameras. They had a look on the inside, without those cameras they would be blind. The main access to the

camera wiring was in a cable box right outside the office building. It was still old school, not updated with the times. Whatever technology was left was from 2013, a time where things were simpler.

Austin sat on top of the building adjacent to the cable box. He lined his scope up with it and pulled the trigger. The box exploded and inside the government's office building shouting could be heard. Austin gave a head nod to say that Operation Black Night was now a go.

Nineteen men headed towards the building. Nineteen men stormed inside it and killed whoever crossed their path. Seventeen men made it to the control room. Fifteen men made it past that into the room where the so-called leader was. Ten men made it past those guards. I was part of that ten.

Austin followed soon behind us.

"Good work, men."

He looked past him at the dead bodies. Bodies of the men he thought of as his family. And then there were the bodies of the men who tried to keep this world the same. He took off his hat to the bodies he thought of as family. He spat on the ones who didn't do anything but watch.

The leader of our land was a senator who survived the explosion. He was the only one out of all the government who had the guts to try to lead. All his hair was gone from the aftermath of the explosion. He wore a suit that was faded, but barely had any holes. He looked decent compared to the rest of the world. He lived his life safe and sound while the rest suffered. The leader called himself Richard Hengry.

Two of our men held Richard down. He struggled, but then I reloaded my gun. Once he heard that sound, he was still. He looked like he just saw a ghost. Austin walked up to him and thrust his gun point into Richard's chest.

"You sir, have a lot on your plate. You call yourself a leader? Watching behind closed doors on cameras is not leading. Living life like nothing ever happened is not leading. Doing nothing for your people is not leading. You were the one who brought upon this mess. Bringing T-02 into our lives. You were responsible for this all. Why let the people suffer when all they did was live?"

Richard stuttered.

"No, no it wasn't my idea! I swear! I was just doing my job!"

"And we are just doing ours."

And with that Austin pulled the trigger, firing into his chest. Richard went limp, the two men dropping him to the ground.

"Want to do the honor, kid?" Austin said, handing me the microphone to the PA system.

I grabbed the microphone from him and held it firm within my hand. I nodded and he flipped the switch so the whole land could hear what I had to say.

"Hello, my name is Trey Robbins. Today we start anew."