

A black and white photograph of a person standing in a dark room, viewed from behind. The person is silhouetted against a large, bright rectangular opening in the wall. The person's right arm is raised, touching the top edge of the opening. The overall mood is mysterious and dramatic.

Your Fool

a Zuniverse story

J. I. Jones

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A Z Universe Story

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Transmission - ██████████ to HQ.



Prologue

Transmission - ██████████ to HQ.

It has been done, the Senior Administrator of the Central Office of Information at Wellington House, has been bugged, I will be heading to his house so we know what's going on at his home.

Are you sure Harry is the one who can give us access to the emergency channels?

(Muffled voice) That's classified.

End Transmission.

London Daily Broadcast #180 - July 13, 1955:

London Daily Broadcast #180 - July 13, 1955:

"Good morning, London. Welcome to the London Daily, Jerry Matthews here with your morning update. We're looking at a partly cloudy day with mild temperatures. In the news, the government announces new initiatives to boost post-war economic recovery.

The Bank of England reports cautious optimism about economic growth. In international news, tensions continue to simmer in various colonial territories. On a lighter note, excitement builds for the upcoming cricket season.

Signing off, Jerry Matthews."



Chapter 1 : Beginnings

Pre Mosh - Harry Matthews Journal.

July 13th, 1955

The soft glow of the desk lamp illuminated the piles of documents scattered across my desk, casting shadows that stretched across the cluttered surface. The clock on the wall showed it was nearly 4:30 PM. London outside carried on with its usual rhythm, but within the confines of this office, it felt as if time had paused. The day's weight pressed down on me, made heavier by the secrets I was about to uncover.

A knock at the door broke the silence. I looked up to see Charles standing there, his face lined with a mix of worry and determination. We had known each other for years, and he'd always been a mentor, a reliable voice in the labyrinthine world of Wellington House. But today, his usual calm seemed frayed at the edges.

"Harry," he said, his voice low, "Can we talk?"

"Of course, Charles." I gestured toward the chair opposite me. "Come in."

He settled into the seat, the leather creaking under his

Chapter 1: Beginnings

weight. There was a tiredness in his eyes, deeper than I'd ever seen. "There's something I need to tell you," he began, his tone grave. "And it can't leave this room."

I leaned forward, suddenly more alert. "What is it?"

Charles sighed heavily, glancing at the door as if expecting someone to burst through at any moment. "There's a project—something called 'Terminus.' I've been hearing whispers about it for months. They're carrying out experiments, Harry—changing people in ways that go far beyond physical enhancements."

He paused, his gaze locking onto mine. "The word 'Mosh' keeps coming up in the reports, but no one will say what it actually means. Whatever it is, it's not just science. It's... darker. They're tampering with the very nature of humanity."

A chill ran through me as I listened.

"Why are you telling me this, Charles?"

"Because someone needs to know," he said, his voice trembling slightly. "Someone who might be able to do something when the time comes. And I trust you, Harry. God help me, but I trust you."

He left the office with a final, weary look, and I was left to sit there, the weight of his revelations settling heavily on my mind. I didn't know what to think, but I knew one thing for certain: my world had changed, and there would be no going back.

That night, unable to face the stillness of home, I made my way to The Midnight Club. Its art deco façade stood out against the bleakness of the city, a remnant of a more vibrant past. I hesitated at the entrance, then pushed through the heavy wooden doors, seeking solace in the dimly lit interior.

The air inside was thick with smoke and murmurs, the soft glow of chandeliers casting a golden hue over the room. On stage, the pianist played a haunting melody that filled the club with a melancholic warmth. I sank into a leather armchair at the edge of the room, ordering a whisky to settle my nerves.

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Graham, an old friend who had become a near-permanent fixture at the club, slumped into the seat beside me. His shirt was wrinkled, and his eyes had the glazed look of someone who had been drinking for far too long.

"You alright, mate?" I asked, taking a sip of my drink.

He let out a bitter laugh, shaking his head. "Surviving, I suppose," he muttered, his gaze fixed on the pianist. "You know who that is, don't you?"

I glanced at the stage. "The pianist?"

Graham nodded slowly, his eyes narrowing. "He's a Sarumite."

I frowned. "A what?"

"Sarumite," he repeated, leaning in closer, his breath heavy with whisky. "They're waiting for some king to return and fix everything that's gone wrong. Not Arthur, though. Someone much older. It's madness, but they believe it."

I studied the pianist more closely, watching his hands glide over the keys. At first, it looked like any other performance, but then I noticed something odd—subtle gestures with his left hand, movements that seemed out of place with the music.

"What's he doing?" I asked, my voice low. Graham's expression darkened.

"Sending messages," he said.

"They're all connected, Terminus, Mosh, the Sarumites. I don't just think they're waiting for this king to return; I think they're trying to bring him back. But it's not just that, from the stories I know about this so called King, he had no right to carry the title so when he died, those loyal to him saw the towns people leave and they felt like an act of betrayal and I hear they killed them all, so with the way those who don't believe, they consider them traitors too and they'll use any means necessary to avenge him."

A knot tightened in my stomach as I thought about what Charles had told me. I drained the last of my whisky and set the glass down with a hollow thud.

Chapter 1 : Beginnings

"I think you've had a bit too much to drink, Graham," I said, trying to keep my voice light. Even though outside I looked like this was a load of bullshit, inside my mind was starting to have some sort of fear brewing as I could see this happening.

"Maybe," he replied, his gaze drifted back to the stage.

"Anyway, it was nice visiting London, but I'm going back to Alton, I need to see Michelle, but just be careful, Harry. They're everywhere."

Without another word, he stood up and disappeared into the crowd, leaving me alone with the uneasy feeling that I had stumbled into something far darker than I could comprehend.

As I sat there, overwhelmed by the cacophony around me, the chair felt like it was pulling me deep down into it, even when Almora appeared on the stage and everyone rose to their feet, I felt trapped in this thought of everything we know as life could change very soon but then a sound cut through the overload of audio - the click of heels on marble floor, accompanied by the intoxicating scent of roses. A waitress appeared at my elbow, her presence a sudden oasis in the desert of my thoughts.

"Can I get you anything, sir?" she asked, her voice melodious and clear, rising above the background noise with effortless grace.

I looked up, and in that moment, the world seemed to stop.

She was a vision of beauty - long blonde hair cascaded over her shoulders in soft waves, framing a face that could have been carved by Michelangelo himself. Her eyes, a piercing blue, were accentuated by perfectly applied black winged eyeliner, giving her an air of mystery and allure. But it was her lips that truly captivated me - painted a deep, luscious red that reminded me of the ripest cherries in summer.

Struggling to find my voice, I requested another whisky. When she returned moments later, our fingers brushed as she handed me the glass. A jolt of electricity seemed to pass between us, and I found myself captivated by the small

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smile that played at the corners of her mouth.

For the remainder of the evening, I found my gaze continuously drawn to her. Our eyes would meet fleetingly across the room, only for me to break away, attempting to focus on the stage or my companions. Yet, time and again, I would find myself searching for her in the crowd, my heart leaping when I spotted her leaning against the wall, that same enigmatic smile on her lips as she watched the performance.

The night passed in a blur of music, whispered conversations, and stolen glances. When at last I stumbled out into the cool night air, my head was spinning - whether from the whisky or the evening's revelations, I could not say.

Upon returning home, I found my daughter Sarah peacefully asleep in her bed, her golden curls spread across the pillow like a halo. I stood in the doorway for a long moment, watching the rise and fall of her tiny chest, marvelling at her innocence and purity in a world that suddenly seemed so dark and complex.

In the sitting room, I found Anna dozing in her favourite armchair, an empty teacup by her side and a well-worn novel open on her lap. A pang of guilt shot through me as I gently woke her, helping her to her feet.

"How was the work meal?" she asked, her smile trusting and warm, her eyes heavy with sleep. I returned the smile, but my mind was filled with thoughts of secret societies, hidden projects, and a pair of ruby red lips.

Now, as I lie here in the dim coolness of our bedroom, staring at the ceiling, I find myself torn. The weight of the secrets I've learned presses down upon me, threatening to suffocate me with their implications. Yet it is the memory of that waitress that truly occupies my thoughts, her image burned into my mind's eye.

London Daily Broadcast #184 - July 18, 1955:

London Daily Broadcast #184 - July 18, 1955:

"Good morning, London. Jerry Matthews here with your early update. We're expecting a warm day with clear skies. In cultural news, a new exhibit on the Dead Sea Scrolls opens at the British Museum today.

The Ministry of Defence announces advancements in aviation technology, promising faster and more efficient air travel soon. Stay tuned for more after these messages...

Signing off, Jerry Matthews."



Chapter 2 : Deepening Shadows

Pre Mosh - Harry Matthews Journal.

Early Morning - July 18th, 1955

The shrill ring of the telephone pierces the silence of the night. My hand fumbles for the receiver, mind still clouded with sleep. "Williams residence," I mumble, glancing at the clock. 2:17 A.M.

"Harry? Harry, is that you?" The voice on the other end is barely recognizable, choked with emotion and tinged with hysteria. It takes me a moment to place it.

"Graham? What's wrong? It's the middle of the night..."

His words come in a rush, punctuated by sobs.

"She's dead, Harry. Oh God, she's dead. I found her in the woods... her body... I can't... I can't..."

A chill runs down my spine.

"Slow down, Graham. Who's dead? What happened?"

"Michelle," he manages between ragged breaths.

"My ex, Michelle. I found her in Alton Forest. She'd

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been... Oh, Christ, Harry, it was horrible. That bastard did it... I told her.... He was a psycho... he was one of them"

My mind races. Michelle - I vaguely recall Graham mentioning her, a relationship that had ended badly some months ago. But this... this is beyond anything I could have imagined.

"Graham, listen to me," I say, trying to keep my voice steady.

"Have you called the police?"

"No!" The vehemence in his voice startles me.

"No police. It was either that bastard she was seeing now or... or... **THEY GOT TO HER HARRY!!!**. The ones Charles warned us about. The ones behind all of this."

My blood runs cold. Could it be possible? Could the shadowy figures lurking in Charles's documents have reached out and struck.

"What do you need, Graham?" I ask, already dreading the answer.

"I need to disappear for a while," he says, his voice suddenly eerily calm. "I'm coming back to London. I need to find Engel. He's the only one who can help me now."

Engel. The name triggers a memory - a heavily redacted page in Charles's files, the name 'Engel' one of the few legible words amidst a sea of black ink.

"Graham, wait..." I start to say, but he cuts me off.

"I can't stay here, Harry. It's not safe. For any of us. Watch your back, old friend. And whatever you do, don't trust anyone. Not even those closest to you."

The line goes dead before I can respond

"Gray!!! Knight?!!! Are you there?!" but all was silence, leaving me standing in the dark hallway, the receiver clutched in my hand like a lifeline.

Sleep eluded me for the rest of the night, my mind a whirlwind of dark possibilities.

Early Morning - July 18th, 1955

[Newspaper Clipping from the London Evening
Standard, July 18, 1955]
YOUNG WOMAN FOUND DEAD IN ALTON

The body of a young woman was discovered in the forests outside of Alton early yesterday morning by a local dog walker. The victim, identified as Michelle Parker, 28, was found in a secluded area of the forest.

Detective Inspector Nathan Aldwych of the Metropolitan Police stated that the death is being treated as suspicious. "We are in the early stages of our investigation and are pursuing all lines of inquiry," DI Aldwych said in a brief statement.

Miss Parker, a secretary at a local law firm, was last seen leaving her place of work on Friday evening. Colleagues described her as "cheerful and full of life."

Anyone with information regarding Miss Parker's movements on Friday night or early Saturday morning is urged to contact the Metropolitan Police immediately.

The discovery has sent shock waves through the local community, with many residents expressing concern about safety in the area. Local councillor Margaret Holbrook has called for increased police patrols in and around the Forest.

Chapter 2 : Deepening Shadows

As the investigation continues, friends and family of Miss Thompson are left to grapple with their loss and the unsettling circumstances surrounding her death.

July 27th, 1955

A week has passed since Graham's call, and I find myself at Cardington, we were sent to oversee a new radio broadcasting system. The massive hangar looms before us, a cathedral of steel and canvas dedicated to the pursuit of aeronautical advancement. As we're escorted inside, I can't help but feel a sense of awe at the sheer scale of the facility and the aircraft within.

Our guide, a jovial engineer named Higgins, leads us on a tour of the facility, expounding on the technical marvels of the latest jet engines and experimental aircraft designs. I play my part, asking the right questions, making the appropriate noises of appreciation. But all the while, my eyes scan our surroundings, searching for... what? I'm not sure until I see it.

It's during a lull in the tour, as Higgins is engaged in a technical discussion with one of my colleagues. My gaze wanders to a stack of crates in a shadowy corner of the hangar. Most are unmarked, but one catches my attention. There, barely visible in the dim light, is a silhouette I recognize immediately – the outline of Old Sarum.

My breath catches in my throat. What is a crate bearing that distinctive shape doing here, of all places? The image of Sarum had been cropping up with alarming frequency in the documents Charles had given me, always in connection with the most disturbing aspects of the conspiracy.

I make as if to approach the crate, but a firm hand on my shoulder stops me. I turn to find a man I hadn't noticed before – tall, lean, with eyes that seem to bore right through me.

"I'm afraid that area is off-limits, Mr. Williams," he says, his voice low and even. "Classified materials. I'm sure you

July 27th, 1955

understand."

I nod, mumbling something about simply admiring the engineering, but my mind is racing. How does he know my name? And what classified materials could possibly be related to Old Sarum?

The rest of the tour passes in a blur. I go through the motions, but my thoughts keep returning to that crate and its enigmatic guardian. As we're leaving, I glance back one last time. The crate is gone, as is the man who stopped me.

On the journey back to London, I can't shake the feeling that I've stumbled upon something significant. The advanced aviation projects, Sarum, Michelle's death – could they all be connected? And if so, how?

As night falls and I return home, the weight of everything I've seen and heard presses down on me. The empty house echoes with unspoken questions. Whatever is happening, whatever dark design is unfolding, I'm now certain of one thing: I'm in the thick of it. And I may be the only one who can unravel this conspiracy before it's too late.

London Daily Broadcast #201 - August 3, 1955:

London Daily Broadcast #201 - August 3, 1955:

"Good morning, London. Jerry Matthews here with your morning update. We're in for a scorcher today, with temperatures expected to reach 28 C.

The government's new public health initiative continues to generate discussion.

In other news, Michelle Parker the tragic victim of the Alton slasher has been declared that they were carrying a unborn baby at the time, Graham Nightingale has been the prime suspect and is currently on the run. More on these stories coming up...

Signing off, Jerry Matthews."



Chapter 3 : Paper Trail

Pre Mosh - Harry Matthews Journal.

August 3, 1955

I return home to find a letter addressed to Anna and Sarah. As I read its contents, a chill runs down my spine despite the summer heat. The timing is too convenient, the specifics too perfect. I can't shake the feeling that this 'prize' is anything but innocent.

[Travel Agency Letter]

Sunray Travel & Leisure Ltd.

123 Piccadilly, London W1J 7PJ

August 3, 1955

Mrs. Anna Williams & Miss Sarah Williams

[REDACTED ADDRESS]

Dear Mrs. Williams and Miss Williams,
Congratulations! We are delighted to inform
you that you have been selected as the

Chapter 3 : Paper Trail

lucky winners of our Summer Seaside Sweepstakes! Your prize is an all-expenses-paid fortnight holiday in the picturesque coastal town of Dover.

Your prize package includes:

1. Two weeks' accommodation at the prestigious White Cliffs Hotel
2. Daily breakfast and dinner at the hotel's renowned restaurant
3. Complimentary tours of Dover Castle and the Secret Wartime Tunnels
4. A scenic boat trip along the famous White Cliffs

Your holiday is scheduled for August 15th to August 29th, 1955. All arrangements have been made, and you need only to arrive at the White Cliffs Hotel on the afternoon of the 15th. Transportation to and from Dover will be provided.

Please note that this prize is non-transferable and is specifically for Mrs. Anna Williams and Miss Sarah Williams. We regret that we cannot accommodate any additional guests or changes to the party. We look forward to providing you with an unforgettable seaside experience. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

August 3, 1955

Best regards,

Gerald Fitch

Customer Relations Manager
Sunray Travel & Leisure Ltd.

P.S. As part of our commitment to customer satisfaction, we kindly request that you refrain from discussing the details of this prize with others, as it may cause disappointment to those who did not win.

"Isn't it wonderful?" Anna beams, her eyes shining with excitement. But as I look at her, at Sarah, I can't shake the feeling of impending doom. As they pack, chattering happily about seaside adventures, I'm torn between relief at having space to investigate and a gnawing fear for their safety. But I say nothing, forcing a smile as I wave them off. The house feels emptier than ever as their taxi disappears around the corner. I'm left alone with my thoughts, my fears, and the growing certainty that I'm entangled in something far larger and more dangerous than I could have ever imagined.

No sooner have they left than I dive into my investigation. I spread out all the documents I've collected so far on my desk - Charles's files, my notes from Cardington, the holiday letter. As I pore over them, searching for connections, a folded piece of paper falls out from between the pages of one of Charles's folders.

It's a transcript of what appears to be a coded transmission:

[Coded Transmission Transcript]

URGENT

FROM: ROOK

TO: BISHOP

Chapter 3 : Paper Trail

RE: PROJECT TERMINUS

DATE: JANUARY 15 , 1955

PHASE ONE TRIALS SUCCESSFUL. MOSH FORMULA
REFINED AND READY FOR EXPANDED TESTING.
SARUM ARTIFACT SECURED. AWAITING TRANSPORT
TO SECURE FACILITY. RECOMMEND EXTREME
CAUTION IN HANDLING.

RECRUITMENT FOR PHASE TWO UNDERWAY. SUGGEST
IMPLEMENTATION OF "SUNRAY" COVER FOR
CIVILIAN EXTRACTION.

POTENTIAL COMPLICATIONS IN WELLINGTON
HOUSE. MONITOR ALL COMMUNICATIONS,
ESPECIALLY THOSE OF SENIOR STAFF.
RECOMMEND ACTIVATION OF SLEEPER ASSETS IN
PREPARATION FOR PUBLIC ROLLOUT.
AWAIT CONFIRMATION OF NEXT STEPS.

END TRANSMISSION

My breath catches as I read the transcript. This transmission, months old, seems to lay out the groundwork for everything that's been happening. The mention of Wellington House sends a chill down my spine - they've been watching us for months, maybe years.

The "Sunray" cover - could that be related to the Sunray Travel & Leisure Ltd. that sent the holiday letter to Anna and Sarah? And "civilian extraction" - the implications are too terrible to contemplate.

I think back to the crate I saw at Cardington, bearing the silhouette of Old Sarum . Could that be the "Sarum artifact" mentioned in the transmission? And "MOSH formula" - that must be related to the experiments Charles warned me about. As the gravity of the situation settles over me, I realize that I'm no longer just an observer in this conspiracy. I'm a player, whether I want to be or not. And the stakes are higher than I ever imagined.

August 3, 1955

The clock ticks steadily, marking the passage of time. Each second feels like another moment lost, another opportunity for this vast network of secrets to tighten its grip. But I'm not powerless. Not anymore.

With renewed determination, I turn back to the documents spread before me. Somewhere in this paper trail is the key to unraveling it all. And I will find it. I have to. Because now, it's not just about uncovering the truth – it's about protecting my family and perhaps even saving countless unsuspecting civilians from whatever nefarious plans are in motion.

As night falls, I find myself in my favorite chair, a strip of paper running through my fingers, I look at it and see a number, it's Carrie's. Reaching for the phone, my fingers hovering over the dial. I want to call Carrie, to hear her voice, to find some comfort in this increasingly dark world. But the transmission's warning about monitoring communications.

London Daily Broadcast #240 - September 15, 1955:

London Daily Broadcast #240 - September 15, 1955:

"Good morning, London. Jerry Matthews here with your early news. We're looking at overcast skies with a chance of rain later today.

The government's new public health initiative continues to generate buzz, with clinics reporting increased visits.

In other news reports are coming in from the outskirts of Cardington, as the town has been left in ruins with the embers still burning.

Signing off, Jerry Matthews."



Chapter 4 : Closing In

Pre Mosh - Harry Matthews Journal.

September 15, 1955

The house feels cavernous without them. Every creak of the floorboards, every tick of the clock echoes through the empty rooms, a constant reminder of their absence. It's been two weeks since Anna and Sarah left for Dover, their holiday now over, yet they haven't returned. The silence is oppressive, and my mind races with possibilities, each more terrifying than the last.

In their absence, I've found myself drawn more and more to Carrie. Our chance encounters have evolved into deliberate meetings, stolen moments of warmth in an increasingly cold world. There's a depth to her, an understanding that both comforts and unnerves me.

We're sitting in a small café, tucked away in a corner where we're less likely to be overheard. Carrie's fingers trace the rim of her coffee cup, her eyes fixed on mine with an intensity that makes my heart race.

"Be careful, Harry," she says, her voice barely above a whisper. "You're tugging at threads that some very powerful

Chapter 4 : Closing in

people would prefer stay knitted."

I lean in closer, the aroma of coffee and her subtle perfume mingling in the air between us. "What do you know about all this, Carrie? Sometimes I feel like you understand more than you're letting on."

A shadow passes over her face, gone so quickly I might have imagined it.

"I know enough to be worried about you," she replies, reaching out to squeeze my hand. "Promise me you'll watch your back."

Before I can press further, movement outside the window catches my eye. Two men in dark suits are walking past, their eyes scanning the street with predatory focus. My blood runs cold as I recognize one of them – the man from Cardington, the one who stopped me from investigating the crate.

"We need to go," I mutter, throwing some money on the table and guiding Carrie towards the back exit. We emerge into a narrow alley, the sounds of the busy street muffled by the high brick walls.

"Harry, what's going on?" Carrie asks, her voice tinged with worry.

"I think they've found me," I reply, peering cautiously around the corner.

"The men I told you about, the ones I think are involved in all this."

Suddenly, footsteps echo at the far end of the alley. Without thinking, I pull Carrie into a shadowy recess between two buildings. The space is tight, forcing us close together. I can feel the warmth of her body, hear the quickening of her breath. We stand there, barely daring to breathe, as the footsteps grow louder. Carrie's eyes are locked on mine, a mix of fear and something else – something electric – in her gaze. My heart pounds, and I'm not sure if it's from the danger or our proximity.

The footsteps pause at the entrance to our hiding spot. I instinctively pull Carrie closer, shielding her with my body. She doesn't resist, her hands gripping the front of my

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jacket. For a moment, the world narrows to just us – the softness of her body against mine, the faint scent of her perfume, the way her lips part slightly as she looks up at me.

The urge to kiss her is overwhelming. I can see the same desire reflected in her eyes. But we can't. Not here, not now. The danger is too real, too immediate.

After what feels like an eternity, the footsteps move on, fading into the distance. But neither of us moves. We stand there, hearts racing, bodies pressed together, teetering on the edge of something we both want but can't have.

Carrie breaks the silence.

"Harry," she whispers,

"We should go. It's not safe here."

I nod, reluctantly stepping back. The loss of contact is almost physical pain.

"Where can we go?" I asked, suddenly feeling lost.

Carrie takes a deep breath, composing herself.

"I know a place where we can talk. Somewhere they won't think to look for us."

As we carefully make our way out of the alley, I can't help but think about what just happened – or almost happened. The attraction between us is undeniable, but so is the danger we're in.

"Lead the way," I say, pushing aside my conflicting emotions. Right now, survival is what matters. But the memory of Carrie in my arms, the almost-kiss, lingers in my mind, a bright spot in the growing darkness.

September 20, 1955

The news from Cardington broke this morning. A "training exercise gone wrong," well that's what they're calling it. But I know better. The descriptions from eyewitnesses, the reports of chaos and violence – it all

Chapter 4 : Closing in

points to one thing: they've done it. They've activated the Mosh.

I sit in a small, nondescript room Carrie led me to, surrounded by newspapers, my hands shaking as I connect the dots. The crate I saw, the red-eyed man who chased me, the whispers of "test subjects" and "containment breaches" – it's all part of something bigger, something terrifying.

"Harry," Carrie's voice breaks through my spiralling thoughts. "There's something you need to see."

She hands me a folder, her face unreadable. Inside is a series of photographs – grainy, taken from a distance, but unmistakable. They show people being led into a facility, their movements jerky and unnatural. And their eyes – even in the poor-quality images, I can see the tell-tale ring of what looked like white rings around their irises.

"Where did you get these?" I ask, my mouth dry.

Carrie hesitates, then seems to come to a decision.

"I have... sources. People who are as concerned about what's happening as we are. Harry, this goes deeper than you know. The Mosh, Terminus – it's not just an experiment anymore. They're planning to roll it out on a massive scale."

The implications hit me like a physical blow. I think of Anna and Sarah, supposedly on holiday. Are they safe? Or have they already been exposed to whatever this is?

"We need to stop them," I say, surprised by the steel in my voice. Carrie nods, a fierce light in her eyes.

"Yes, we do. And I think I know where we need to start."

As she begins to outline a plan, I'm struck by the realization that there's no going back now. Whatever happens next, whatever dangers we face, we're in this together. The game has changed, and the stakes have never been higher.

The world outside continues its normal rhythm, oblivious to the storm that's brewing. But in this small room, with Carrie by my side, I feel a spark of hope. We may be outmatched and outgunned, but we have something they don't – the truth. And we'll use it to burn their whole

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conspiracy to the ground.

London Daily Broadcast #245 - September 25, 1955:

London Daily Broadcast #245 - September 25, 1955:

"Good morning, London. Jerry Matthews here with your early update. We're expecting a mild day with patchy sunshine.

The government continues to assure the public that the recent incident at Cardington was an isolated event with no cause for broader concern.

In economic news, the pound sterling shows signs of strengthening against the dollar.

Signing off, Jerry Matthews."



Chapter 5 : Unveiling Truths

Pre Mosh - Harry Matthews Journal.

September 25, 1955

The sound of a key turning in the lock jolts me from my restless sleep as I fell asleep in my chair. I'm on my feet in an instant, heart pounding, before I recognize the voices floating in from the hallway.

Anna and Sarah.

They're home.

Relief floods through me as I rush to greet them, but it's quickly tempered by a nagging sense of unease. They're two days late, with no word of explanation.

"Darling!" Anna exclaims as I appear in the doorway. Her smile is wide, perhaps too wide. "We've had the most wonderful time. Haven't we, Sarah?"

Sarah nods enthusiastically, but something about her movements seems... off. Too precise, almost mechanical.

"It was super, Daddy," she says, her voice pitched just a touch higher than normal.

Chapter 5 : Unveiling Truths

"We saw the castle and the cliffs and everything!"

I embrace them both, trying to ignore the stiffness I feel in their bodies. "I'm so glad you're home safe," I say, searching their faces for any clue to explain their delay.

"I was worried when you didn't return on schedule."

Anna waves a hand dismissively.

"Oh, we were having such a marvellous time, we decided to stay an extra day. I do hope you weren't too concerned."

The Anna I know would never have extended a trip without letting me know. She's always been meticulously considerate that way. I force a smile, not wanting to betray my growing suspicion.

"Not at all," I lie.

"I'm just happy you're back."

As they settle in, unpacking and chattering about their adventures, I observe them closely. Their movements are fluid enough, their conversation natural on the surface. But there are moments – fleeting, almost imperceptible – where they seem to hesitate, as if searching for the right reaction or response.

Sarah drops a book, and Anna moves to pick it up. For a split second, I see something flash in her eyes – a ring of white light around the iris, there and gone so quickly I can't be sure I didn't imagine it.

"Are you feeling alright, dear?" I ask Anna as she straightens up.

"Your eyes look a bit irritated."

She blinks rapidly, then smiles.

"Just tired from the journey, I expect. Nothing a good night's sleep won't cure."

That night, as we prepare for bed, I can't shake the feeling that something is terribly wrong. Anna's movements are too deliberate as she brushes her hair, her responses to my questions just a beat too slow.

September 25, 1955

"Anna," I say carefully, "did anything... unusual happen while you were away?"

She pauses, the brush hovering in mid-air. For a moment, I see confusion flicker across her face, quickly replaced by that too-bright smile. "Unusual? No, darling. Everything was perfectly lovely. Why do you ask?"

I shrug, trying to appear nonchalant.

"No reason. Just curious."

As we lay in bed, Anna fell asleep almost instantly – another oddity for my usually restless wife. I lie awake, staring at the ceiling, my mind racing. The Cardington incident, the Mosh formula, the changes in cellular structure Carrie and I had discovered... could it be possible? Could Anna and Sarah have been exposed to something during their trip?

The thought was too terrible to contemplate, but I can't push it away. Whatever happened in Dover, whatever was done to them, I swear I'll find out. And I'll find a way to reverse it, no matter the cost.

As the first light of dawn creeps through the curtains, I decided. I need to see Carrie. We need to accelerate our investigation, find concrete proof of what Terminus is doing. Because now, it's not just about uncovering a conspiracy. It's about saving my family.

I slip out of bed, careful not to wake Anna. As I dress, I catch a glimpse of myself in the mirror. The man staring back at me looks haunted, determined. I hardly recognize him. But then, nothing is as it seems anymore. Not even the people I love most in the world.

London Daily Broadcast #246 - September 26, 1955:

London Daily Broadcast #246 - September 26, 1955:

"Good morning, London. Jerry Matthews here with your early update. We're looking at a cloudy start to the day with a chance of rain later.

The Ministry of Health announces new initiatives to improve public well-being. In entertainment news, the BBC prepares for an exciting new lineup of autumn programming.

Signing off, Jerry Matthews."



Chapter 6 : Breaking Point

Pre Mosh - Harry Matthews Journal.

September 26, 1955

The call comes just as I'm preparing to leave for work, my mind still reeling from the unsettling observations of Anna and Sarah. It's Thompson from the office, his voice tight with stress.

"Williams, you need to get down here right away. It's Simeon. He's... well, you need to see for yourself!" I hung up and climbed into my car before fighting through traffic to get to the station every now and then I looked in my rear view mirror and see a black hearse appear but then within moments they would be gone.

When I arrived at the broadcasting station, I found it barely contained chaos. Staff members huddle in small groups, whispering urgently. The atmosphere is thick with tension. As I approached the main studio, I could hear it – Simeon's voice, usually so smooth and controlled, now raised in frustration.

"I'm not reading this crap! This isn't how I speak. It's not how anyone speaks!"

Chapter 6 : Breaking Point

I push through the gathered crowd to see Simeon, our lead announcer, standing defiantly in front of the microphone. He's clutching a script in his hands, gesturing with it as he argues with the producer.

"Simeon," I say, keeping my voice calm, "what's going on?"

He turns to face me, relief washing over his features. "Harry! Thank God you're here. You've got to back me up on this. These scripts – they're all wrong."

I approach him, genuinely curious. "What do you mean, 'wrong'?"

Simeon thrusts the papers at me. "Read it yourself. It's like... it's like it was written by a machine. The cadence, the word choice – it's all off. This isn't how I present the news. This isn't how I talk to our listeners!"

I take the script and scan it quickly. At first glance, it seems normal enough, but as I read more carefully, I start to see what Simeon means. There's an odd rhythm to the sentences, unusual word combinations that feel subtly wrong.

"He's been like this all morning," the producer says, exasperated. "We're due to go live in twenty minutes, and he's refusing to read anything we give him."

Simeon looks at me pleadingly. "You see it too, don't you, Harry? Tell them I'm not crazy. This isn't right."

I hesitate, torn between my growing suspicions and the need to keep the broadcast running smoothly. "Simeon, why don't we step into my office and talk about this?"

"No!" he exclaims, frustration evident in his voice. "There's no time. We can't keep feeding this... this unnatural language to our listeners. It's changing how people think, how they speak. Don't you see it happening all around us?"

His words hit too close to home, reminding me of the subtle changes I've noticed in Anna and Sarah. I feel a chill run down my spine.

"Alright, everyone, take five," I announce to the room. "Simeon, let's you and I work on this script together. See if we can't find a compromise."

September 26, 1955

As the staff files out, looking relieved at the break in tension, Simeon slumps into a chair. "Thank you, Harry," he says quietly.

"I thought I was losing my mind. But you see it too, don't you? Something's not right."

I nod slowly, my mind racing.

"I see it, Simeon. And I think it goes far beyond just these scripts."

As we begin to go through the text, making adjustments, I can't help but wonder: how deep does this go?

London Daily Broadcast #250 - September 30, 1955:

London Daily Broadcast #250 - September 30, 1955:

"Good morning, London. Jerry Matthews here with your early update.

The government has announced a groundbreaking new health initiative, promising 'unprecedented advancements in human potential.' Citizens are encouraged to visit local clinics for more information.

In other news, Alton has recently announced a new suspect, Leroy Hasketh.

Signing off, Jerry Matthews."



Chapter 7 : Point of No Return

Pre Mosh - Harry Matthews Journal.

September 30, 1955

The moment I step into the office, I know something is terribly wrong. There's a buzz in the air, an excitement that feels out of place given the tension of the past few days. Thompson intercepts me before I can reach my office, his face a mask of false cheer.

"Williams! Just the man I wanted to see. Have you heard the news? The Terminus Project has gone public!"

My blood runs cold.

"What are you talking about!?"

He thrusts a newspaper into my hands. The headline screams: **"BREAKTHROUGH IN HUMAN ENHANCEMENT: GOVERNMENT UNVEILS TERMINUS PROJECT"**

As I scan the article, my horror grows. It's all there – thinly veiled propaganda for the Mosh formula, promising increased strength, heightened senses, accelerated healing. Everything we've been investigating, everything we've

Chapter 7 : Point of No Return

feared, presented as a miracle cure for society's ills.

"This isn't possible," I mutter. "Who authorized this?"

Thompson's smile falters. "It came from the top, Williams. Direct orders. We've been broadcasting it all morning."

The realization hits me like a physical blow into the heart. They've done this behind my back, used our broadcasting station to spread their lies.

"You had no right," I say, my voice shaking with anger.

"This is – this is criminal!"

But my protests fall on deaf ears. Before I know it, I'm being escorted out of the building, my career in tatters. As I stood in the street, the weight of what's happened settling over me, I realize I'm not just unemployed – I'm in danger. They know I know too much. I need to warn Carrie, to figure out our next move. But as I turn to head towards her apartment, I see him – the man in a dark suit, moving through the crowd with unnatural grace. His eyes meet mine, and I see the flash of red.

I run.

It's all I could do. My feet carried me instinctively away from the busy streets, towards the quieter areas of the city. I can hear him behind me, his footsteps unnaturally fast, echoing off the buildings like the beating of a monstrous heart.

I turn into an alleyway, hoping to lose him, but it's a dead end. As I whirl around, I see him blocking the entrance, his silhouette menacing against the fading daylight. He steps forward, and I get my first clear look at a fully activated Mosh.

His skin was pale, almost translucent, with veins pulsing an unnatural red beneath the surface. He didn't look at me head-on; instead, he looked at me from under his brows, his gaze unblinking and hollow, yet somehow piercing. His pupils, dark and wide, seemed to drink in every flicker of movement, every sound but now the white rings of light were plain to see, the edge of their eyelids looked red too like the blood was ready to burst from them. Beneath his

September 30, 1955

translucent skin, red veins pulsed faintly, giving the disturbing impression of something waiting, coiled just beneath the surface.

He lunged at me with inhuman speed. I barely dodged him, feeling the rush of air as his fist graze my cheek. The brick wall behind me cracks where he strikes it, showering us both with dust and debris. I grab a nearby trash can lid, using it as a makeshift shield. The Mosh's next blow dents the metal as if it were tin foil. The impact reverberates through my arm, nearly causing me to drop my only defence.

He was relentless, each attack coming faster and stronger than the last. I was driven back, my feet scrabbling to get back up. In desperation, I flung the mangled lid at his face. It wasn't much, but it brought me a second of distraction. I use that moment to dive for a pile of discarded construction materials. My hand closes around a length of rusty rebar just as the Mosh recovers. He charges at me, his face contorted with inhuman rage.

Time had seemed to slow. I planted my feet, gripping the rebar with both hands. As he reached me, I pivoted, using his momentum against him. The rebar pierced his chest with a sickening crunch.

For a moment, everything was still. The Mosh looked down at the metal protruding from his body, with the expression of surprise on his face. Then, with a gurgling sound, he collapses. The light faded from his eyes, leaving them dull and lifeless.

I stood there, panting, my hands shaking. The alley was a scene of destruction—twisted metal, upturned rubbish, fractured bricks, and now, a body. I had to get out of there.

Injured and dazed, I made my way to the one place I knew I'd be safe—Carrie's flat. Each step was agony, my body screaming in protest, but I pushed on. The streets blurred around me, the faces of passers-by melting into an indistinct mass. I was running on pure adrenaline and fear.

When I finally reached her door, I could barely stand. I knocked weakly, praying she was home.

The door opened, and there she was. Carrie stood before me, a vision in a long black silk gown, a lacy nightdress

Chapter 7 : Point of No Return

visible beneath. For a moment, I forgot to breathe, forgot the pain, forgot everything but her.

“Harry?” she gasped, taking in my battered appearance.

“My God, what happened?”

I stumbled forward, and she caught me, her arms surprisingly strong.

“Mosh,” I managed to say.

“They’re... they’re real, Carrie. And they’re out there.”

She helped me inside, her face was a mask of concern.

“You’re safe now,” she said softly, leading me to her sofa. “Let’s get you cleaned up.”

As she tended to my wounds, I recounted what had happened—my dismissal, the chase, the fight. Carrie listened intently, her fingers gentle as she cleaned a cut on my forehead.

“You could have been killed,” she murmured, her voice barely above a whisper.

I caught her hand, pressing it to my cheek.

“I had to warn you. To see you.”

Our eyes met, and suddenly, the air between us was charged with electricity. Carrie leaned in, her lips brushing mine in a kiss that was both tender and desperate. It was a lifeline in a world gone mad, a reminder of what we were fighting for.

When we parted, Carrie’s eyes were shining with unshed tears.

“You need to rest,” she said, her voice husky.

“Come on.” She led me to her bedroom, helping me onto the soft mattress. As I sank into the pillows, the events of the day caught up with me all at once. My eyelids grew heavy, the pain in my body fading to a distant ache. Carrie slipped into bed beside me, her warmth a comfort in the encroaching darkness.

September 30, 1955

"Sleep," she murmured, her fingers gently stroking my hair.

"I'll be here when you wake up."

As I drifted off, Carrie's presence beside me, I knew that whatever came next, we'd face it together. The world had changed, and so had we. All we could do now was hold onto each other and hope that, somehow, against all odds, we could set things right.

London Daily Broadcast #251 - October 1, 1955:

London Daily Broadcast #251 - October 1, 1955:

"Good morning, London. Jerry Matthews here with your early update. The government's new health initiative continues to show promising results.

In other news, the town of Alton remains under strict quarantine due to an unspecified outbreak. Authorities urge calm and ask citizens to avoid travel to the area.

Signing off, Jerry Matthews."



Chapter 8 : The Morning After

Pre Mosh - Harry Matthews Journal.

October 1, 1955

The morning light filtering through Carrie's curtains was harsh and unforgiving. My body ached—a brutal reminder of yesterday's encounter with the Mosh. As the previous day's events flooded back, urgency gripped me; I needed to return home, to confront what my family had become.

Careful not to wake Carrie, I slipped out of bed. She stirred slightly, her face peaceful in sleep, and for a moment, I allowed myself the comfort of simply watching her. It was a moment of calm before the inevitable storm. Leaving a hastily scribbled note of thanks, I made my way out onto London's quiet streets. When I reached my house, I steeled myself for what awaited inside. What was once familiar now felt laced with dread.

I stepped through the front door cautiously, announcing my arrival with a neutral.

"I'm home."

Chapter 8 : The Morning After

Anna's voice drifted from the kitchen, unnaturally cheerful.

"Harry? Where have you been? We were worried!"

As I entered, there she was—my wife, and yet not quite her anymore. Standing at the stove, Anna's movements were too precise, her smile too wide.

"I was caught up with some old colleagues," I lied, watching her reaction closely.

"Lost track of time."

"You should have called," she replied, her tone devoid of true concern. .

"We missed you at dinner."

I forced a smile, suppressing a wave of nausea.

"Sorry about that. I'll go and change."

Climbing the stairs, I noticed the radio in our bedroom was playing. The announcer's voice, once a comforting background sound, now seemed to mock me:

"...and the government's health initiative continues to show remarkable results. The quarantine in Alton remains in effect, with no official word on the nature of the outbreak..."

I quickly changed, mind racing. How many others had gone through the process of conversion? What was happening in Alton?

Back downstairs, I found Sarah sitting cross-legged before the television. The screen flickered with a cheery advert—sleek lines, vibrant music. A man and woman, impossibly healthy and smiling, looked out as if to say: "Are you ready to become the best version of yourself? Visit your local clinic today!"

Sarah's eyes were glued to the screen, her face bright with unnatural excitement. She turned, and for a moment her expression was blank before a smile spread across her face.

October 1, 1955

"Daddy! You're home!"

It felt as though I were staring at a ghost. My daughter, Sarah, now a ticking time bomb, and Anna... both transformed into something I could scarcely recognise.

I forced myself to smile, ruffling her hair as I sat beside her.

"Yes, sweetheart. I'm home."

The rest of the day passed in a haze of forced normalcy. I interacted with Anna and Sarah, pretending, while my mind churned with plans and fears. They went about their routines with unsettling precision, never once mentioning the programme that had changed them so fundamentally.

As night fell, I kissed Anna goodnight, feigning a headache to excuse my early retirement. Lying in the dark, I listened to the rhythm of Anna's breathing, waiting until I was certain she was asleep. Then, I silently dressed and slipped out of the house.

The streets of London were eerily quiet as I made my way to Wellington House. Every shadow seemed to hide a threat; every distant sound made me jump. But I pressed on—I had to uncover the truth.

At last, I reached my office. The lock gave way more easily than expected, almost as if a part of me had hoped for resistance, an excuse to turn back. But there was no turning back. Inside, the office looked much as I'd left it, but an air of abandonment sent a chill through me. I rummaged through the filing cabinet, my fingers trembling as I sifted through the documents.

Initially, it seemed to be the usual bureaucratic detritus—budgets, staff memos. But patterns began to emerge. Coded references to "wellness initiatives," odd shipment logs to Alton, personnel transfers that didn't quite make sense.

And then, I found it. A manila folder unmarked save for a small red dot. Inside were reports on the effects of the Mosh formula, statistics on conversion rates, plans for nationwide implementation. My blood ran cold.

In a locked drawer, I found two tape reels, one labelled

Chapter 8 : The Morning After

“Clean Signal,” the other “Music Mask.” A letter beside them held chilling implications.

[Extract from the Tapes Document]

The tapes are to be mixed as per specified ratios. The signal must be masked within unique music compositions to ensure maximum efficacy and minimal detection. Initial tests show promising results. Proceed with caution.

At the bottom of the letter, scrawled in red ink, were the words: “For the King and for Sarum.”

My hands shook as I gathered the tapes and the letter. I needed to show these to Carrie—she would know what to do.

I barely registered the journey back to Carrie’s apartment. Every shadow seemed to hide a Mosh; every passing car could have been a pursuer. Carrie opened the door before I could knock, pulling me inside.

“Harry? What happened? Did you find something?” she asked.

Wordlessly, I handed her the tapes and the letter. She read quickly, her face growing pale.

“This is bigger than we thought,” she whispered.

Without hesitation, she handed me two identical-looking tapes. “You need to replace the ones you took with these. If they realise the originals are missing, they’ll know someone’s onto them.”

“How did you have these?” I began, but she cut me off. There was no time for questions.

As I made my way back to Wellington House, replacing the tapes felt like an ordeal in itself. Every creak of the floorboards sounded like a gunshot then at last, it was done. I froze when footsteps echoed down the hall—a security

October 1, 1955

guard with a telltale white ring of light in his eyes. I ducked into an alcove, scarcely daring to breathe. When he passed, I slipped out and made my way back to Carrie's.

"It's done," I gasped.

"But I saw... the guard. His eyes..."

Carrie nodded grimly.

"They're everywhere, Harry."

And for the first time, I looked at her and wondered how much she truly knew. She took a deep breath, meeting my gaze.

"It's time you knew everything."

Her revelation was staggering. She'd been involved in this from the start, working with a group against the Terminus Programme. Meeting me had been coincidence, but it might be what tipped the scales in their favour.

We spoke through the dawn, forming plans. Finally, I had a chance to fight back. But as I returned home and reached for the door handle, I knew one thing for certain: nothing would ever be the same. The morning light filtering through Carrie's curtains was harsh and unforgiving. My body ached—a brutal reminder of yesterday's encounter with the Mosh. As the previous day's events flooded back, urgency gripped me; I needed to return home, to confront what my family had become.

London Daily Broadcast #795 - February 2, 1957:

London Daily Broadcast #795 - February 2, 1957:

"Good morning, London. Jerry Matthews here with your early update. The city is abuzz with preparations for Her Majesty's Jubilee. Expect increased traffic and crowds in central areas as decorations go up. In health news, the government reports continued success with its nationwide wellness programme.

In a shocking development, authorities have named Graham Nightingale and Henry Langham as persons of interest in connection with the Alton incident. Both men are former government employees and are now wanted for questioning.

The public is advised to report any sightings but not to approach these individuals as they may be dangerous. And now, a word from our sponsors...

Signing off, Jerry Matthews."



Chapter 9 : Jubilee and Reckoning

Pre Mosh - Harry Matthews Journal.

February 2, 1957

The radio's cheerful tones felt like a mockery this morning, especially after that final announcement. Graham and Henry, framed for Alton? My God, what have they done? Two years have passed since that night with Carrie—two years of silence and guilt. The world's moved on, seemingly oblivious to the dark undercurrents I know are swirling beneath the surface.

As I walked to work, the streets of London were buzzed with excitement. Union Jack bunting adorned the shop fronts, and there was a palpable sense of anticipation in the air. But to me, the festivities felt like a hollow facade. I had thrown myself into my work at a smaller broadcasting company, all the while keeping a wary eye on Anna and Sarah. They still seemed... normal. The unnatural precision in their movements has faded, or perhaps I've simply grown accustomed to it. The guilt of my inaction gnaws at me constantly.

That night, sleep eluded me. When it finally came, it brought a vision I know will haunt me for days to come.

Chapter 9: Jubilee and Reckoning

I was in a corridor. The walls pulsed a deep red, and thick smoke curled around my feet. At the far end stood Carrie, her blonde hair gleaming in the eerie light. But this wasn't the Carrie I remembered. Her face was contorted with anger, her eyes boring into me with an intensity that made my heart race. I tried to call out to her, to apologies, to explain, but no sound came from my lips. Carrie's mouth moved, but I couldn't hear her words. The smoke thickened, obscuring her from view.

Then, piercing through the silence of the dream, came two sharp cracks—gunshots I spun round and saw Anna and Sarah standing there as living corpses before they went to grab me.

I jerked awake, my heart pounding, sweat beading on my forehead. Anna stirred beside me.

"Harry? Are you alright?" Her voice was tinged with concern, but it lacked the warmth I once knew so well.

"Just a bad dream," I muttered, swinging my legs over the side of the bed.

"I'm going to get some water."

Standing in the kitchen, glass in hand, I stared out at the night-shrouded street. The dream clung to me, refusing to fade like most nightmares do. I could still see Carrie's face, could still feel the weight of her anger. And now, with the news about Graham and Henry, everything feels more urgent, more dangerous.

Two years of silence. Two years of pretending. Two years of wondering what might have been if I'd had the courage to act. And now, it seems, the consequences of our inaction are catching up to us all.

As the first light of dawn crept over the horizon, I made the decision. I can't keep living like this, trapped between the facade of normalcy and the knowledge of what lurks beneath. It's time to find Carrie, to finish what we started. And now, I need to find out what's happened to Graham and Henry. Are they truly responsible for Alton, or is this just another move in the grand chess game we've been unwittingly playing?

February 2, 1957

The jubilee celebrations can wait. I have a world to save, and a redemption to seek.

But where do I even begin? Carrie vanished without a trace after that night. The tapes we switched—did they have any effect? And what of Dr. Engel and his counter-signal? And now, with Graham and Henry in the wind, who can I trust?

So many questions, and the answers feel further away than ever. But I know I can't give up. The dream felt like more than just a nightmare—it felt like a warning. Something is coming, and I fear we may be running out of time.

Tomorrow, I'll start my search. I'll retrace our steps, revisit old haunts. Someone, somewhere, must know something about Carrie's whereabouts. And perhaps, in the process, I'll uncover some clue about Graham and Henry's involvement in all of this.

And if I find them... what then? Will they even want to see me after all this time? After I abandoned our cause out of fear and guilt? Will they trust me, or see me as a potential threat?

I don't know. But I have to try. For Carrie, for my family, for everyone affected by Terminus and the Mosh. It's time to finish what we started, whatever the cost.

The jubilee bells will soon be ringing out across London. For me, they'll sound like a call to action—a reminder that time is running out, and that the fate of countless lives may rest on what I do next.

London Daily Broadcast #796 - February 3, 1957:

London Daily Broadcast #796 - February 3, 1957:

"Good morning, London! Jerry Matthews here with a special Jubilee broadcast.

The streets are alive with celebration as we honour Her Majesty's 5 years on the throne. We'll be bringing you live coverage of the festivities throughout the day.

And now, to get us in the spirit, here's a special musical selection..."



Chapter 10 : The Nightmare

Pre Mosh - Harry Matthews Journal.

February 2, 1957

The dream was a warning. I see that now, as I sit here, my hands shaking, my world shattered. How quickly joy can turn to ashes. How swiftly celebration can become nightmare.

It started as a day of celebration. The streets of London were awash with red, white, and blue. Laughter and cheers echoed from every corner. But I couldn't shake the unease that had settled over me since that dream. Carrie's anger, the gunshots - they haunted me still.

Anna and Sarah were caught up in the excitement, their eyes shining with an enthusiasm I hadn't seen in years. For a moment, I allowed myself to hope. Perhaps the effects of the Mosh were wearing off. Perhaps we could be a family again. We gathered in the kitchen, the radio playing softly in the background. The girls were chattering about the parade, about the Queen. I was just about to suggest we head out to join the celebrations when it happened.

The music on the radio changed. A subtle shift, almost

Chapter 10 : The Nightmare

imperceptible. But the effect was immediate and terrifying.

Anna and Sarah stopped mid-sentence. Their bodies went rigid, faces blank. Slowly, mechanically, they turned their faces upward, staring at the ceiling with unseeing eyes.

"Anna," they said in unison, voices flat. "Sarah. Anna. Sarah."

Over and over, they repeated their names. My blood ran cold. This was it. The activation. The very thing we had feared and fought against for so long.

"Anna? Sarah?" I called, my voice breaking. "Can you hear me?"

They gave no sign of recognition. Just those names, over and over.

I ran. Up the stairs, to our bedroom. My hands trembled as I opened the locked box at the back of the wardrobe. Inside lay my old service revolver, untouched since the war. I never thought I'd need it again. How wrong I was. The weight of it in my hand brought back memories of another time, another fight. But this... this was unthinkable.

As I descended the stairs, I heard a change. The repetition of names had stopped. Instead, a single word echoed through the house:

"Harry."

They were at the bottom of the stairs. Anna and Sarah, my wife and daughter. But not them. Not anymore. Their eyes glowed with that telltale red ring. Their faces were contorted in feral snarls.

"Harry," they growled in unison, and lunged.

"Please," I begged, backing away.

"Anna, Sarah, please. It's me. It's Harry. Your husband. Your father. Please."

But there was no recognition in those glowing eyes.

No humanity left.

They came at me again, faster this time. Inhumanly

February 2, 1957

fast. I raised the revolver, my vision blurred with tears.

"I'm sorry," I whispered.

"God forgive me, I'm sorry."

Three shots rang out. The first went wide, shattering a window. The second and third...

I can't write it.

I can't bear to put into words what I've done.

My Anna.

My Sarah.

Gone.

By my own hand.

The silence in the house was absolute, but outside... outside, the world had gone mad.

The cheerful sounds of celebration have given way to screams and chaos.

The signal.

It was broadcasting across the city. God knows how many others have been affected.

I don't know how long I had been sitting there, numb, the revolver was still warm in my hand. The tea I was drinking lay spilled across the floor, mingling with... I can't bring myself to name it.

Slowly, mechanically, I rose to my feet. My legs felt like lead as I made my way back to the kitchen. And there they were.

Anna. Sarah.

My wife. My daughter.

Lying still on the floor where they fell.

I collapsed to my knees beside them, the weight of what I had done crushing down on me. Their unseeing eyes staring up at the ceiling, already glazing over. The light

Chapter 10 : The Nightmare

that had consumed them is gone now, leaving only emptiness behind.

"I'm sorry," I whisper, my voice breaking.

"I'm so, so sorry!"

But sorry wasn't enough.

It will never be enough.

I've killed them.

My family.

The very people I was trying to protect.

And for what? To save them from a fate that's now consuming the entire city?

Through the window, I could see people running in the streets. Some are like Anna and Sarah were - eyes glowing red, movements jerky and inhuman. Others are fleeing in terror. In the distance, smoke rises from several points in the city. The sounds of breaking glass and distant explosions punctuate the air.

The revolver felt heavy in my hand.

Three bullets left. It would be so easy.

To join them.

To end this nightmare once and for all.

I raise the gun, pressing the cold metal against my temple.

My finger tightens on the trigger.

This is it.

This is how it ends.

I close my eyes.

Take a deep breath.

February 2, 1957

And then...

ENCRYPTED TRANSMISSION:

FROM: VORTIGERN

TO: MORRIGAN

DATE: FEBRUARY 3, 1957

TIME: 14:30 GMT

SUBJECT: OPERATION JUBILEE - GLOBAL STATUS UPDATE

==BEGIN TRANSMISSION==

Morrigan,

Your task is complete. The signal has been broadcast successfully worldwide. Global chaos reigns, providing the perfect cover for our next phase.

Reports confirm activation in all major cities across continents. New York, Moscow, Paris, Tokyo, and countless others are in turmoil. The simultaneous nature of the event exceeds our most optimistic projections.

The cover story is in full effect globally. Media outlets worldwide are reporting on a "mass hysteria" event of unknown origin. Theories of tainted water supplies, airborne contaminants, and even solar flare activity are circulating. This confusion serves our purposes well.

Be advised: Simeon is to be the scapegoat for the UK operation. His refusal to read our prepared scripts has made him a liability. Harry Williams is also to be implicated. Their alleged involvement will divert local attention from our true purposes.

A team is enroute to deal with Simeon. Ensure all traces leading back to us are eliminated.

As for Harry Williams, his actions today have sealed his fate. He's now a hunted man, which serves our purpose well. Let him run. His desperation will only lend credibility to his perceived guilt in the UK incident.

Similar scapegoats are being set up in other key locations to fragment any potential unified response.

Proceed to Phase Two of the operation. With the world in disarray, the future we've worked towards is within our grasp.

For the King and for Sarum.

==END TRANSMISSION==

DESTROY AFTER READING



Chapter 11 : The World Burns

Mosh Outbreak - Carrie's Journal.

February 3, 1957

The streets of London have become hell on earth. The Jubilee decorations, once so cheerful, now hang in tatters, stained with blood and ash. I'm running, my lungs burning, my heart pounding against my ribs like it might burst.

Red eyes everywhere. Not people anymore. They're tearing into anyone they can reach, ripping flesh from bone. A businessman in a once-pristine suit lunges at a young mother, his teeth sinking into her throat. Her scream cuts off abruptly. I force myself to keep moving.

Can't help.

Must reach Harry.

The sky... dear God, the sky is on fire. Planes spiral out of control, leaving trails of black smoke. Airships, their envelopes punctured and burning, crash into buildings. I watch in horror as bodies fall from the sky like grotesque rain. A man in a pilot's uniform plummets past me, his eyes wide with terror. The sound when he hits the ground... I'll

February 3, 1957

never forget it.

Dodging debris, I duck into an alley. The acrid smell of smoke burns my nostrils. From a shattered shop window, a radio crackles with frantic broadcasts in a dozen languages.

This isn't just London.

It's everywhere.

New York, Paris, Moscow, Tokyo—all falling to chaos.

The whole damn world's gone mad in the span of hours.

I emerge onto Harry's street, and for a moment, I freeze. Cars have smashed into buildings, their twisted metal glowing in the fires that burn unchecked. Those things, they're here too, prowling among the wreckage. I see Mr. Simmons from the bakery, his kindly face now a mask of savage anger, tearing into something I refuse to identify.

Harry's house looms before me, a beacon of hope in this nightmare. The door hangs open.

Please, God, let him be alive.

Let me not be too late.

I rush inside, the silence a stark contrast to the hell outside.

"Harry!" I call out. No answer. The quiet is oppressive, broken only by the distant sounds of destruction filtering through the broken windows.

Then I see him. In the kitchen. Kneeling beside two bodies. Anna and Sarah... Oh God, no. What happened here?

He doesn't seem to hear me approach. He's raising a gun to his head, his finger tightening on the trigger.

No.

No, I can't lose him.

Not now.

Not after everything I've been through to get here.

Not after everything we've been through together.

Chapter 11 : The World Burns

My heart stops. Time slows to a crawl. I lunge forward, every fibre of my being focused on reaching him, stopping him, and saving him.



Chapter 12 : A Damaged Man

Mosh Outbreak - Harry Matthews Journal.

February 3, 1957

"NO!!!"

The scream rips through the air, shattering the silence.

My finger freezes on the trigger, a hair's breadth from oblivion.

For a moment, I'm certain it's just my mind fracturing, one last desperate attempt to cling to a life I no longer want.

A hand grasps my arm, warm, desperate, undeniably real. My eyes snap open, the world rushing back in a blur of colour and sound.

Carrie.

She's here, kneeling beside me, in the ruins of my kitchen. Her clothes are torn, face streaked with blood and grime. Her blonde hair, once so meticulously styled, is a

Chapter 12 : A Damaged Man

wild tangle. But her eyes... God, her eyes are the same. Wild, determined, filled with a desperate plea that cuts straight through me.

"Harry," she gasps, her voice raw and broken.

"Don't. Please, don't do this."

The gun slips from my grasp, suddenly too heavy to hold. It clatters to the floor, the sound echoing in the deathly quiet of the house. I stare at Carrie, unable to comprehend her presence. After two years, after everything that's happened, she's here.

In my kitchen. Surrounded by the evidence of my failure, my shame.

"Carrie?" I manage to whisper.

"Are you... are you scared of me? Are you the person that you use to be? Are you a liar? Are you just like me?"

She doesn't answer immediately. Instead, she pulls me into her arms, holding me tight. I can feel her body shaking with sobs, or maybe it's my own. I'm not sure anymore.

When she finally speaks, her voice is soft but steady.

"I'm not scared of you, Harry. I'm scared for you."

I pull back slightly, looking into her eyes. "I'm not the person I used to be, Carrie. I'm... damaged. A liar. A killer." My voice breaks.

"Take me as I am, I'm not scared of death. I'm afraid of living."

Her hand cups my cheek, gentle yet firm. "We're all damaged now, Harry. We're all liars in our own way. But we're still here. Still fighting."

"Fighting for what?" I ask, bitterness seeping into my voice.

"For a world that's burning? For a life that feels like nothing but a pit of misery?"

Carrie's eyes soften, a mix of determination and something else - something I dare not name - shining in

February 3, 1957

them.

"Fighting for each other. For a chance to make things right. To be better than we were."

I grasp her hand, holding it tight.

"How can you look at me and see anything worth saving? I'm not the man you knew. I'm... I'm..."

"A damaged man," she finishes for me.

"I know. So am I. We all are. But that doesn't mean we're beyond redemption."

Her words hit me like a physical blow. I feel something inside me crack, a dam of emotion I've been holding back for too long.

"I don't know if I can face this world we've woken up to. Not alone. Promise me you'll never leave my side."

Carrie's grip on my hand tightens.

"I promise, Harry," she says softly.

"No matter what happens, we're in this together. Till the very end. Damaged, afraid, but alive. And where there's life, there's hope."

I nod, feeling a spark of... something.

Not quite hope, not yet. But perhaps a reason to keep going. To face whatever comes next.

As we kneel there, surrounded by the remnants of my old life and the echoes of a world in chaos, I realize that everything has changed. Nothing will ever be the same again.

But Carrie's here. She sees me for who I am - damaged, afraid, but still fighting. And for now, that has to be enough.

Together, we stand. Ready to face the burning world outside. Ready to confront the monsters we've become and the ones we've yet to face.

I am a damaged man. I'm afraid of living.



Chapter 13 : Secrets and Tapes

Mosh Outbreak - Harry Matthews Journal.

February 4, 1957

We decided to go to the main building where the signal was being broadcasted, The BBC Headquarters and when we saw it in the distance, an island of eerie quiet in the chaos-torn London. As we step inside, the silence was suffocating, broken only by our cautious footsteps.

When we arrived outside the broadcasting room. Dear God, the smell. Blood, decay, and something I can't name. Then we saw him. Simeon. What they've done to him...

Crucified. His own ligaments used as the cross. A grotesque display that turns my stomach. A sign hangs from his torso: "Crucify the liar."

What did you know, Simeon?

What truths did you die for?

Carrie's face is ashen, but her eyes are steel. "We need to search the room," she says. "There might be some answers here!"

February 4, 1957

We split up. As I sift through the debris, my mind reels. Who could do this? Why? Then I see it. A small, leather-bound book. Simeon's journal. A note falls out:

"Harry, don't let Carrie see this. - S"

My blood runs cold. Why keep secrets from Carrie? Without thinking, I tuck the journal into my jacket. Its weight felt like an act of betrayal.

"Harry!" Carrie's voice cuts through my guilt. She's holding a tape reel labelled "S. Engel."

Engel. The name sends a shiver down my spine. Memories of that night two years ago flood back. We find a working player and listen. Engel's voice is tense, frightened:

"June 1, 1957. The situation has escalated. The Mosh formula... subjects are becoming aggressive, harder to contain."

He mentioned others. Mr. D. Someone called LO who terrifies him. What kind of monsters are we dealing with?

As the tape ends, Carrie pulls out a crumpled note. An assignment sheet for someone named Jennifer Parker. But at the bottom, there's a handwritten note in blue ink:

"I need to find him. He's of some use to me. - J.P."

"Him?" I ask.

"Graham," Carrie says, her voice tight. "The assignment is to locate Graham Nightingale."

The realization hits me like a punch to the gut. "Carrie, if all the Mosh are activated... that means Graham is too, doesn't it?"

She nods, face grim. "But why would this Jennifer want to find him, especially in that state?"

As we continue our search, Carrie uncovers one last, chilling piece of evidence. A list of names. Graham's on it. So is Henry Langham, the journalist who's been digging into this mess. And... oh God, my name's there too.

"We need to get out of here," Carrie says, her voice urgent. "We've found enough. Any longer and we risk being

Chapter 13 : Secrets and Tapes

caught."

She's right, of course. But as we gather what evidence we could, I can't shake the feeling that we're still missing something crucial. Some key that would make sense of all this madness.

As we prepare to leave, I cast one last glance at Simeon's body. "I'm sorry, old friend," I whispered.

"We'll find who did this. We'll stop whatever they're planning. I promise."

The journal in my jacket seemed to burn against my chest. Soon, I told myself. Soon I'll read it and know why Simeon wanted to keep it from Carrie. But not here. Not now.

"We need to focus on stopping this broadcast," I said as we make our way out. "That map you found, with the transmission towers marked for tomorrow - that's got to be our priority."

Carrie nods. "You're right. If we can shut down the Cannon, maybe we can prevent more people from being activated."

"And after that, we need to find somewhere safe," I add.

"That list with our names on it... whoever's behind all this, they're going to be coming for us."

"But where can we go?" Carrie asks, her voice barely above a whisper. "If this is as big as it seems, nowhere in London might be safe."

I take a deep breath, trying to think through the fog of fear and exhaustion. "I don't know yet. But we'll figure it out. For now, let's focus on the Cannon. One step at a time."

As we slip out of the BBC building, back into the chaos of a city torn apart by the Mosh, I can't help but wonder: in this world of shadows and conspiracies, who can I really trust? And what other secrets are waiting to be uncovered?

The weight of Simeon's journal reminds me that some of those secrets might be closer than I think. I just pray I'm strong enough to face them when the time comes.



Chapter 14 : Grim

Mosh Outbreak - Harry Matthews Journal.

February 4, 1957

There was no going back to my place. The ashes of my home, of my past life, were still smouldering somewhere in London. Carrie's apartment was our only sanctuary now. After everything we'd been through, after the promise we'd made to each other, being here with her felt right. It felt like the only thing that made sense in this world gone mad.

We didn't talk much that night. What was there to say? The weight of everything we'd discovered at the BBC hung heavy between us. Simeon's body, the tapes, that damning list with our names on it. And all the while, Simeon's journal burned a hole in my pocket. We barricaded ourselves inside, we cooked and drank.

We lay in bed, our hands intertwined, drawing strength from each other's presence. Sleep came in fits and starts, nightmares of the rings of light and crucified bodies jolting me awake. Each time, Carrie was there, her touch grounding me, reminding me of our promise. No words were needed, just the comfort of knowing we were in this together.

Chapter 14 : Grim

Morning came too soon.

We dressed quickly, gathering what little evidence we'd managed to salvage from the BBC. As we prepared to leave, Carrie hesitated at the door.

"Harry," she said, her voice low. "Whatever happens... we're in this together, right?"

I nodded, pushing down the guilt about Simeon's journal. "Together," I affirmed.

We made our way through the streets cautiously. The city seemed quieter than yesterday, an uneasy calm settling over London. Were people buying the government's story? Or was something else at play? We decided to investigate one of the sites marked on the map we'd found. It was a risk, but we needed answers.

The location turned out to be an old warehouse on the outskirts of the city. As we approached, something felt off. No guards, no security of any kind. Just... silence.

"Be careful," Carrie whispered as we slipped inside.

Nothing could have prepared us for what we found.

Bodies. Dozens of them. Men and women in lab coats and military uniforms, sprawled across the floor. No signs of struggle, no blood. Just vacant eyes staring at nothing.

"They're covering their tracks," Carrie said, her voice shaking. "Eliminating everyone involved."

I nodded, unable to speak. The scale of what we were up against hit me anew. This wasn't just about London anymore. This was bigger than we could have imagined.

As we carefully made our way through the carnage, looking for any clues, any explanation, I couldn't shake a terrifying thought: we were in way over our heads.

And somewhere out there, Graham was still missing. Jennifer Parker was still searching for him. And the rest of the world thought we were terrorists.

What the hell were we going to do now?

As we left the warehouse, carefully avoiding the

February 4, 1957

bodies, Carrie and I exchanged a look of grim determination. We had a week, maybe less, before whatever grand plan this was would fully unfold. A week to investigate, to uncover the truth, to find a way to stop this madness. Every fibre of my being screamed to read Simeon's journal, to uncover whatever secrets he'd deemed too dangerous for Carrie to know. But not yet. I couldn't shake the feeling that once I opened that journal, everything would change. So I'd wait, focusing on our investigation, on following the threads we'd uncovered. For now, Carrie and I were a team, united against this nightmare. I just hoped that when I finally did read Simeon's words, that unity wouldn't shatter.



Chapter 15 : The Airship

Mosh Outbreak - Harry Matthews Journal.

February 10, 1957

A week had passed when we intercepted broadcasts about an airship set to dock for resupply, offering shelter and extraction to any survivors. Suspecting they might be affiliated with the malevolent Cannon, we decided it would be prudent to investigate by joining the voyage. As we prepared for this journey, a mix of hope and trepidation filled the air. This could be our chance to uncover the truth behind the Cannon's sinister operations or possibly align ourselves with allies equally determined to bring them down. With every step towards the airship, our resolve strengthened, knowing that this was not only a quest for survival but a mission to expose and dismantle the evil that had taken root in our world.

Carrie clung to my arm as we navigated the crumbling streets, the air heavy with the ash of a city falling apart. Her grip was tight, like she was holding on to the last bit of hope left in this world.

We reached the airfield just as the last light of day faded behind a blanket of thick clouds. The airship loomed ahead,

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a colossal silhouette against the dark sky, its engines thrumming in a deep, steady rhythm. I guided her to the gangway, urging her to climb, to get on board, and to be safe. She hesitated, her eyes searching mine, silently begging me to come with her.

“Go, Carrie,” I told her. “You need to be on that ship. You’ll be safe up there.”

“Come with me, Harry,” she pleaded, her voice trembling. “Please, let’s just leave this all behind.”

But I couldn’t. There was too much left to unravel, too many wrongs to set right. So, I shook my head and told her I’d follow later. It was a lie, one we both knew. She finally started up the gangway, casting one last glance over her shoulder as if she knew I’d stay behind.

And then I heard it—an awful, guttural growl that seemed to rise from the depths of hell itself. Emerging from the darkness at the edge of the airfield came the Mosh, their glowing red eyes piercing through the gloom. There had to be at least a dozen of them, each one twisted and wrong, closing in with that jerky, inhuman speed.

“Harry!” Carrie’s voice cut through the roar of the engines. She was at the top of the gangway now, turning back to me as the mosque closed in. “Harry, get on the ship!”

But it was too late for that. I could see it clearly; the distance was too great, the ship was already lifting, the gangway retracting. I’d never make it. “You’re safe up there!” I shouted, my voice raw and breaking. “Go! Just go!”

She kept calling my name as the airship rose higher, but I was already moving, sprinting away from the ship as the Mosh lunged at the spot I had just occupied. I didn’t look back. I couldn’t. I forced my legs to carry me faster, up the fire escape of a nearby building, feeling the burn in my lungs and the weight of exhaustion pressing down on me.

I reached the rooftop, breathless and trembling, just in time to see the aeroplane disappear into the clouds. Carrie’s voice was gone, swallowed by the wind and the chaos below. I collapsed onto my knees, my eyes stinging with more than just sweat. She was gone. Safe, I told myself. But why didn’t it feel like a victory?

Chapter 15 : The Airship

As I kneeled there, I reached into my coat and pulled out Simeon's journal. The worn leather was cool under my fingers, a small anchor in a world that had spun wildly out of control. I flipped it open, desperate for anything that could give meaning to all of this, some clue that might make sense of the madness.

And then I found it—a passage I hadn't seen before, hidden between the lines of chaos and cryptic notes:

"Carrie knew. She was the one who arranged for Anna and Sarah to be sent on that 'holiday'. She knew it was a front for the conversions. She played her part perfectly, and now she has Harry wrapped around her finger, blinded by guilt and desperation. He'll never see it coming.

The words seemed to dance on the page, taunting me. Carrie knew. She was the one who arranged it—Anna and Sarah's "holiday", the conversion, all of it. I felt a cold, hollow rage fill me, spreading through my veins like ice. I had trusted her, fought for her, and she had been lying to me from the start. She led my family to their fate, and I had let her go, disappearing into the sky while I was left here, drowning in the ruins of my life.

I dropped the journal, letting it fall to the ground as I stood. The rooftop felt like a desolate place, far above the world, and yet more suffocating than the streets below. I had fallen for her lies. I had let myself believe in her, and now I was paying the price.

I stared at the clouds where the aircraft had vanished, my breath coming in ragged bursts. She was gone, and I was a fool—a fool who had lost everything. And now, all that was left was the anger, burning away whatever remained of the man I used to be. It was the need to see this through, or perhaps the desperate hope that I could still save at least one person. Carrie clung to my arm as we navigated the

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crumbling streets, the air heavy with the ash of a city falling apart. Her grip was tight, like she was holding on to the last bit of hope left in this world.

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Chapter 15 : The Airship

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And then I found it—a passage I hadn't seen before, hidden between the lines of chaos and cryptic notes:

-- [Extract from Simeon's Journal] --

Carrie knew. She was the one who arranged for Anna and Sarah to be sent on that 'holiday.' She knew it was a front for the conversions. She played her part perfectly, and now she has Harry wrapped around her finger, blinded by guilt and desperation. He'll never see it coming..

The words seemed to dance on the page, taunting me. Carrie knew. She was the one who arranged it—Anna and Sarah's "holiday," the conversion, all of it. I felt a cold, hollow rage fill me, spreading through my veins like ice. I had trusted her, fought for her, and she had been lying to me from the start. As I turned the page, I found a folded letter, it was a submission document, for both Anna and Sarah

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signed by her, She led my family to their fate, and I had let her go, disappearing into the sky while I was left here, drowning in the ruins of my life.

I dropped the journal, letting it fall to the ground as I stood. The rooftop felt like a desolate place, far above the world, and yet more suffocating than the streets below. I had fallen for her lies. I had let myself believe in her, and now I was paying the price.

I stared at the clouds where the airship had vanished, my breath coming in ragged bursts. She was gone, and I was a fool—a fool who had lost everything. And now, all that was left was the anger, burning away whatever remained of the man I used to be.

Chapter 15 : The Airship

London Daily Broadcast #796 - February 24, 1957:

Welcome back to the London Daily.

I never thought I was going to have to say this, but this will
be our last transmission.

It has been three weeks without contact from The Middle, and
we are left with no food and a polluted water supply.

static

For now either stay here and starve to death or we'll open the
front door barricade and defend ourselves as best as possible.

If my wife Elenor is listening, then please remember.

I'll love you into forever.

The last quote from the government's defence calls to stay
inside, and re-barricade as much as possible.

It, however, isn't working and so the only thing I have left.
Is to say goodbye.

If anybody is still listening.

Thank you for everything.

Signing out for the last time.

Jerry Matthew



Chapter 16 : Dead London

Post Mosh Outbreak - Harry Matthews Journal.

February 24, 1957

It had been days since the world fell apart, and I wandered through London as though in a waking nightmare. The city lay draped in silence, the streets barren and grey, choked with ash and debris. The air felt heavy, oppressive, as if it had forgotten how to carry sound. The houses and shops were nothing more than tombstones now, marking the death of a place I had once called home.

I walked without purpose, letting my feet take me wherever they pleased. My thoughts drifted, unfocused, until I heard the crackle of static. It drew me in, my steps quickening as I rounded the corner and saw it—a radio, half-buried in the rubble of an old newsstand. Its speaker crackled to life with a distorted voice:

"Any members of the Cannon who need evacuated, please head to these coordinates. Repeat, any members of the Cannon..."

The voice repeated itself over and over, each broadcast sounding more desperate than the last. I shook my head and

Chapter 16 : Dead London

turned away. Whatever the Cannon was up to, it was no longer my concern. I was a man without allegiance, without a cause. Nothing left to fight for except my own survival—and even that had lost its meaning.

The following night, I found myself wandering the streets again, though I could not have said what I was searching for. I walked until my legs ached and my breath came ragged and harsh, and yet I pressed on, as though some unseen force were drawing me forward.

When I finally stopped, I realised where I was—back outside The Midnight Club. The art deco façade loomed before me, its familiar brass fixtures tarnished and dull, the windows darkened like the hollow eyes of a corpse. It felt as though the building itself was mocking me, challenging me to face the memories I had tried so hard to bury.

I tried to avoid the place, but something kept drawing me to the place, yet every time I realised where I was, I'd retreat. But this time I stood there for what felt like ages, the cold night air biting at my skin. I would not turn away. I couldn't. Something inside me—some stubborn spark of defiance—compelled me to push open the doors and squeeze through the gap and stepped inside.

The club was empty, the chandeliers casting faint, ghostly light over the dust-covered tables and faded carpets. I took a few hesitant steps into the room, my eyes scanning the space as though I expected to see the past lingering there, waiting to ambush me.

And then I saw it. The darkness fade to bright light, the laughter, the warmth filled the room like it had on that night so long ago. I saw myself, younger, happier, and there beside me was Carrie. We were at the bar, laughing at some shared joke, our heads close together. I watched the way I looked at her, the softness in my eyes, and the way she smiled at me as though I was the only man in the world. There was a lightness between us, a familiarity that had felt so effortless then.

But as I watched the scene unfold, anger welled up inside me. The laughter seemed to echo mockingly in the empty club, and I felt the bitterness rise like bile in my throat. It wasn't real. It was a memory, nothing more—a memory that had no right to haunt me in this dead city.

February 24, 1957

"GET OUT OF MY HEAD NOW!" I roared, my voice tearing through the silence.

I grabbed the nearest bottle and hurled it at the wall. It shattered, shards of glass glittering like fragments of a broken dream, and the laughter stopped. The vision faded, leaving only the empty bar and the dim light reflecting off the dust. My breath came in ragged gasps, my hands shaking.

I staggered toward the bar, my anger ebbing into a hollow despair. I caught a glimpse of my reflection in the mirror behind the shelves of liquor—a man with haunted eyes and a face that had aged far too much. I had fallen from grace, and I was a fucking disgrace.

With a trembling hand, I reached for a bottle of Jack and knocked it back, the burn of the whisky doing little to numb the shame coursing through me. I drank deeply, until the world around me began to blur, and I could no longer see the broken man staring back from the mirror.

The rest of the night dissolved into a haze—flashes of dim light, the clink of glass, the feeling of the floor shifting beneath my feet. The club became a swirl of darkness and noise, and I let myself sink into it, losing myself in the blur until even the pain faded to nothing.



Chapter 17 : Look Down and Find Me.

Post Mosh Outbreak - Carrie's Journal.

February 25, 1957

I was aboard the airship, but my mind remained tethered to him. As we climbed higher, leaving the sprawling city far behind, memories of Harry tugged at me, faint yet persistent like distant echoes in a vast canyon. The horizon was a misted veil, and I kept glancing out over it, knowing he was somewhere below—out there in the world I'd abandoned, a world we'd both inadvertently helped shatter.

Vortigern sat across from me, silent at first. He always possessed that uncanny ability, as if he were dissecting your very soul with nothing more than a penetrating gaze. The air between us felt thick, heavy with the weight of unspoken words and unresolved tensions. It was as though the space was compressed by the gravity of our shared history, pressing down on us until it seemed unbearable. At last, he broke the silence, his voice measured and devoid of emotion.

"Harry cared about you, didn't he?" he asked, his tone low and steady. I didn't answer him right away. What was I supposed to convey? That I never desired things to escalate to this point? That I never envisaged us reaching such a

February 25, 1957

precipice? Or should I fabricate indifference—that leaving Harry behind was the sole rational choice? The truth was a tangled web, woven from a thousand betrayals and half-hearted promises that neither of us had the courage to fully confront.

“He did,” I finally responded, my voice barely above a whisper. “After losing his family, he clung to me like I was his only anchor” I shook my head, a gesture of futile resistance.

“But that was never his place. He was always looking for a way down to find me, thinking he could save me, even from myself.”

Harry had always believed that if he could stop the mosh, if he could contain the chaos that threatened to consume us all, we could reclaim our lives together. It was a noble thought, one born from desperation and unwavering love. But in his quest to protect me, he had inadvertently become part of the very turmoil we sought to quell. His hope was a fragile beacon in the darkness, illuminating a path that I couldn't follow, not without further sinking into the abyss of my own making.

Vortigern's gaze remained unwavering, his expression unreadable.

“And did you ever want him to succeed?”

The question hung in the air, a stark reminder of the choices we'd made and the lives we'd altered. I felt the words catch in my throat, choking back the turmoil within. Harry had this light about him, a stubborn hope that burned brightly even in the darkest moments. Being near him was like standing in the sun after years of shadows, a stark contrast to the gloom that enveloped me. But I didn't know if that light ever truly reached me. It was always just a little too far away, just out of my grasp, obscured by the very darkness I sought to keep at bay.

“He loved me,” I said quietly, staring out the window once more, the cityscape below now a mere smudge against the canvas of clouds.

“And I used him.” The confession stung, a bitter truth that I couldn't deny any longer.

Chapter 17 : Look down and Find Me

“I used that light inside him to keep my own darkness at bay, but it was never enough. It was never enough.”

Harry's love had been both his greatest strength and his most tragic flaw. In trying to shield me from the encroaching chaos, he had isolated himself, bearing the burden of our fractured lives alone. His efforts to stop the mosh weren't just about containing a threat—they were about preserving the remnants of our shattered relationship, holding onto a semblance of the life we once dreamed of together.

The airship rocked slightly as we climbed higher, the city below now a blurred grey patch shrinking into the distance. I could still picture Harry down there, his silhouette framed against the rooftops as he sought one final glimpse of me before I disappeared into the mist. Perhaps I was imagining it, but I could almost feel his eyes following us as we vanished into the clouds. How did it feel to be the one up here, looking down on him? There was no comfort in this view, no sense of triumph in rising above the city that had broken us both. It felt more like an escape than a rescue, and I wondered if Harry had known that all along. Did he see me for what I truly was, or did he keep looking at the version of me he wanted to believe in? I suppose I'd never know now. Perhaps it didn't even matter.

“He'll come after us, you know,” Vortigern interjected, cutting through my reverie. “If he discovers the truth—about the conversions, the holiday—he won't stop.”

“I know,” I replied, my voice flat, betraying none of the turmoil inside.

The truth about Anna and Sarah was the final knife I had twisted in his back. I'd convinced myself it was necessary, that I was protecting a greater plan, but now, sitting in the cold metal of the airship, all I felt was the crushing weight of my own guilt pressing down like chains. “But what's done is done. He'll have to live with the ghosts I left him.”

And I would have to live with the emptiness inside me, this hollow victory that tasted like ash. I looked at Vortigern, then back to the clouds outside, my mind racing with questions and fears. If Harry could still see us, if he looked up and saw this ship disappearing into the sky, would he even understand? If a rope could only reach me, would

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he climb down here and pull me back one last time? Would I even let him?

Harry's unwavering light never ceased to burn, no matter how much I tried to extinguish it with lies and half-truths. But I didn't deserve to bask in that light anymore. I'd left him down there, chained to the ruins of a life we both had a hand in destroying. And for what? So I could sit here, higher than ever but more lost than I'd ever been?

"How does it feel to rise above it all? To look down and know that you're the one who put him there, left him staring up at the sky, chasing a shadow that's already slipped away?"

"It feels like falling, even though I'm still climbing higher. It feels like I'm losing him all over again, and this time, there's no turning back."

No, I wasn't over him just yet. I didn't know if I ever would be.

As the airship continued its ascent, the city below became a distant memory, fading into the annals of time like the remnants of a dream upon waking. The reality of our fractured lives pressed down on me, the choices I'd made echoing in the hollow chambers of my heart. Harry had believed that stopping the mosh was the key to saving us both, to reclaiming the love that had been buried beneath layers of deceit and regret. But in his pursuit to protect me, he had lost himself, and I had lost him.

Vortigern's presence was a constant reminder of the path I'd chosen, a path that led away from redemption and deeper into despair. His questions were sharp, cutting through the façade I'd meticulously constructed, forcing me to confront the darkness I'd allowed to consume me. I couldn't escape the truth any longer—Harry's love was genuine, but my betrayal had torn us apart, leaving nothing but the ghost of what we once were.

As the airship sailed into the clouds, I vowed to carry this burden alone, to bear the weight of my actions in silence. But even as I clung to this resolve, a part of me longed for the warmth of Harry's hope, the stubborn belief that we could overcome the chaos together. It was a futile hope, one that had led us both to ruin, but it was a hope that still lingered in the recesses of my shattered heart.

Chapter 17 : Look down and Find Me

The journey ahead was uncertain, fraught with shadows and echoes of a love that had been lost to time and circumstance. But as the clouds enveloped us, obscuring the world below, I couldn't help but wonder if there was still a chance to find my way back to him. To forgive myself for the betrayals and the darkness, and to perhaps, in some elusive way, find redemption.

For now, all I could do was hold onto the memory of Harry's unwavering light, a beacon that had once guided me and had now been extinguished by my own hand. And in that memory, amidst the shadows and regrets, I found a flicker of something resembling hope—a hope that perhaps, one day, I could rise above the darkness and find peace with the ghosts I had left behind.



Chapter 18 : Victimised

Post Mosh Outbreak - Harry Matthews Journal.

February 25, 1957

I stirred from my slumber, a dull ache throbbing behind my eyes. The warm light of the sun breached the thin curtains, spilling into the room in thin, golden rays. It felt like a mockery of normalcy, a reminder of mornings that used to mean something. For a moment, as I lay there, I could hear her sighing, calling my name softly like she always did when she woke before me. It was enough to make my heart quicken with a fleeting hope that maybe I wasn't alone.

But reality crashed back as my eyes shot open and I sat up, blinking against the light. The bed beside me was empty, and the room wasn't my own. Somehow, in my drunken haze, I'd managed to stumble up to the apartment above The Midnight Club. The old place was a mess—dust thick on the furniture, the faint smell of stale alcohol and decay hanging in the air. I dragged myself out of the bed, feeling the stiffness in my limbs as I struggled to find my balance.

I staggered over to the window and pulled back the curtain. Outside, the sky burned with a fierce red glow, as

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it—a briefcase tucked beneath the counter, almost hidden behind a stack of dusty papers and an old coat. I leaned over the bar and pulled it out, setting it on the counter with a soft thud. The case was plain, black leather worn at the edges. I hesitated for a moment before popping open the latches.

Inside, nestled in the foam lining, was a peculiar device—something that looked like a cross between a phone and a radio. It had a rotary dial on the front, a small display screen, and a row of unlabelled buttons. I turned the dial slowly, watching as a green light flickered to life on the screen. The faint glow seemed to pulse with an almost mechanical heartbeat, as though the device were waiting for me.

I set the dial to frequency 22 and pressed the button marked "D". For a moment, there was nothing but static, and then I heard it—a voice, faint and crackling, like it was being dragged across miles of shattered airwaves.

"Harry..."

I froze, my breath catching in my throat. The voice was unmistakable—soft and familiar, carrying a tremor that I could feel in the pit of my stomach.

It was her.

It was Carrie.

"Harry, can you hear me?" she continued, her voice wavering, as though she were speaking from the other side of a dream.

"Please... I don't know if this will reach you, but I need you to listen."

The room seemed to close in around me, the walls pressing inward as the sound of her voice filled the air. I gripped the edge of the bar, my knuckles turning white as a surge of emotions crashed over me—relief, anger, confusion, and a desperate, aching hope. I didn't know whether to shout at her or fall to my knees and listen. All I could do was lean closer to the receiver, my heart pounding in my ears, as the words I never thought I'd hear again came pouring through the static.

Chapter 18 : Victimised

And then she spoke again, her voice barely more than a whisper.

“Harry, there’s something you need to know...”

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Transcript: Carrie Ann Parker to Harry Matthews.

Carrie: "Harry? Harry, are you there? Please... say something."

Harry: *[voice trembling with rage]* "I'm here... You've got some nerve, Carrie, reaching out to me now."

Carrie: *[pleading]* "Harry, please, I didn't have a choice. I didn't want any of this to happen—"

Harry: "Didn't have a choice? You cost me everything! My wife, my daughter... they're dead because of you! Because of your lies!" *[voice rising to a shout]* "Do you understand that? Do you know what it's like to hold your own family in your arms after—" *[his voice cracks]* "I had to... I had to put them down like animals!"

Carrie: *[voice breaking]* "I'm so, so sorry, Harry. I never meant for this to happen. I was trapped, manipulated. I—"

Harry: *[cutting her off]* "Don't give me excuses, Carrie! You could have warned me, you could have told me what was coming, but instead you kept me in the dark! What was I to you, huh? Just some pawn? Another piece in your family's twisted game?"

Carrie: "No! It wasn't like that. You were the only real thing in my life. I was trying to protect you."

Harry: *[bitterly]* "Well, you failed, didn't you? You failed spectacularly. Now I've got nothing left. My whole world burned down because of YOU!!!!"

Carrie: *[voice trembling]* "I know. I can never make it right, but we can still run. It's not too late. Go to the cliffs of Dover by Monday, and we can leave all of this behind. Together."

[A long silence follows as Harry struggles with the weight of his grief and anger. The static hums, filling the gap between them.]

Harry: *[voice low, almost a whisper]* "And what makes you think I'd ever want to see you again? After everything... why would I ever trust you?"

Carrie: "Because I'm the only one who knows what's really happening. The only one who can help you understand. Please, Harry... just be there. You'll see that I'm telling the truth."

Harry: "You're right about one thing... I've got nothing left to lose."

CLICK

Carrie: "Harry, wait!!! Are you there?!"



Chapter 19 : That's Ok with Me

Post Mosh Outbreak - Harry Matthews Journal.

February 25, 1957

The night stretches on as I wait for darkness to fully envelop the city. It's safer this way. Safer to slip away unnoticed, with the rain masking the sound of my footsteps as I move through the empty streets. Each raindrop on the pavement seems to echo, but the storm helps conceal my presence. I'm grateful for that small mercy.

Finding a car to break into isn't too difficult; the streets were littered with abandoned vehicles. I pick one that looks sturdy enough for the journey. A few moments of fiddling, and the engine roars to life.

The roads were quiet, but not empty. The Mosh appear now and then, standing motionless by the roadside, their pale forms barely visible in the darkness. Each time I see one, a hot surge of rage grips me, and I put the pedal to the floor. The car lurches forward, the impact shaking the frame as I plough through the Mosh. The satisfying thud of bodies hitting metal offers a grim catharsis, an outlet for the anger that festers inside me. They're already dead, or worse—nothing left of the people they once were.

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The drive takes two hours. Time seems to blur, but the sky starts to lighten with the first streaks of dawn as I near the coast. The sea air reaches me, cold and salty, filling my lungs as I step out of the car. The cliffs loom ahead, their white chalk edges glowing faintly in the half-light. It feels almost surreal to see them like this, as if the world isn't crumbling around us. But the rising sun casts a red hue across the sky, an omen I can't ignore. I made my way up the hill, the path winding towards Dover Castle. It's a fortress of stone, silent and imposing, overlooking the cliffs. The castle's towers and battlements rise against the morning sky, and below, the waves crash against the rocks. I push forward, needing to find what Carrie promised—or prove that it was all another lie.

The castle grounds are eerily quiet, but I notice signs of recent activity: scattered supplies, discarded equipment. I follow a narrow path that leads me to the tunnels. The entrance is dark and unwelcoming, but I force myself to go in. The tunnel walls are cold, the air heavy with dampness. As I descend, the passage twists and curves, winding deeper into the earth.

It's then that I see them. Hundreds of Mosh, standing motionless in the gloom, their bodies draped in sheets that cover their forms like burial shrouds. It's like a macabre gallery of death. I feel my stomach twist, my breath catches in my throat. I take a step back, careful not to make a sound, and retreat slowly. I can't fight them, not here, not now.

I stumble into a small office tucked away in the tunnel network. Papers are scattered across the desk, and maps and notes are pinned to the walls. One document catches my eye—it speaks of a "Second Wave," a plan to unleash more Mosh across the world. The words make my blood run cold.

It's not over.

The chaos is only just beginning.

I stuff the papers into my coat pocket and leave the office, retracing my steps through the tunnels. I need to get out before the Mosh awaken, if that's even what they do. When I reach the surface again, I find a hiding place within the castle's crumbling walls. From there, I can see the cliffs and the sea beyond. I can wait and watch, but for what, I'm

not sure.

Carrie said to be here by Monday.

She never said what would happen next.

February 26, 1957

Monday. The day Carrie said to be here. I've been waiting for what feels like a lifetime, hiding in the shadows of this crumbling castle, eyes always watching the horizon. Exhaustion pulls at me, and I must have dozed off because the next thing I know, I'm jolted awake by the low rumble of engines.

The sound stirs something deep inside me—hope, dread—I don't know which. I scramble to my feet, half-dazed, as I race down to the cliffs. The sky is still streaked with the faint colours of dawn, and the sea roars below, its salty mist rising up from the rocks.

And then I see it.

An airship, floating just beyond the edge of the cliffs, its engines cutting through the silence. It hovers there, like a massive, otherworldly creature, and as I watch, a platform begins to extend from the side of the vessel. The metal groans as it unfolds, bridging the gap between the airship and the cliffs where I stand.

The platform stops just short of the edge, leaving a narrow space between it and solid ground. The light spills out onto the platform, and there, standing in the glow.

"She's here."

Epilogue - Come Find You.

*Michelle,
It's the 22nd of July.
Today would have been our wedding anniversary.
I hope, wherever you are.*

*You're happy now.
This world has taken from me all that I once
hoped.*

*I'm so sorry, my darling.
I cannot continue this another day.
I see your face—it always surrounds me.*

I see your face.

I see your face.

What a fool

Thank you, Engel, for leaving these files here, they'll help me get the man who damaged me, your old friend, Henry Langham.

We're going to come find you, Henry,

WE'RE GOING TO COME FIND YOU!!!

Love makes us fools of us all