

James stopped walking abruptly. The line in front of him had halted, a long streak of torches stretching far away into the blackness of the train tunnel. People were peering over each other's shoulders, squinting too see through the gloom and find out what had stopped the line. "What's the hold up?" asked a squat man a couple of spaces down from James. His sister Lily clung onto his legs as she always did when she sensed unease. She was only three but she could always tell when the grown-ups were worried. James was only sixteen himself, but he was very tall for his age. He had untrimmed dark hair pulled back into a ponytail and large green eyes lined with dark, aching bags. He wore a tattered hoodie and too-short jeans with some threadbare trainers at the bottom. That was all he had. He had been acting as the parent of Lily ever since the raid of the town where he had once lived. The drones had come and destroyed their houses. They took all of the people they could reach. James' parents had been among them.

James was mostly quiet. He tried his best to keep interaction with other people as low as possible. He constantly feared the possibility that Lily might be taken away from him. That was why he had decided to join the mass of survivors attempting to make their way to a safer place across the English Channel to France. France was the only country that was clear of danger. The tunnel they were traipsing through was the Eurostar. It was the only train that was still active in the entire of Europe, but it was the only route to safety. The actual train was run by machines to carry prisoners to the Gigamax prison out in the middle of the North Sea. This was the place where they kept all of the people the drones captured and it was engineered to hold the entire European population, or so the rumours said. Several years ago, the governments of Europe had decided to order a purge. They thought the best way to do it was not to kill everyone, but to capture and hold them until they saw fit to release them. They were doing this to try and help the earth recover from pollution.

Many people had sat down to rest. They were all clearly under the impression that it was a sleep break after the many hours of walking. Some lay with their heads on their rucksacks. Others leant against the tunnel wall. Blank expressions. Staring on listlessly into the darkness. A low rumble began to build beneath James' feet. Hardly noticeable, but enough to awaken that familiar feeling, terror. People were looking left and right in curiosity and fear. White noise echoed up and down the tunnel, bouncing off the walls and escalating in the enclosed space. A volley of cries was travelling like a wave towards him. The rumble actually made it difficult for James to stay on his feet. People were stumbling in their haste to get up around him. Lily was still clinging on to his shins and crying now. All the yells mingled together to form the single word "TRAIN!".

There was a great, panicked surge of movement. James picked Lily up and sprinted with everyone else towards the edge of the tunnel wall. They pressed themselves as hard as they could against the unforgiving concrete surface, praying that it would be enough. Lily was in a ball in James' arms with her hands clamped over her ears, screaming. The tracks were visibly vibrating with the speed of the weight moving closer towards them. The torrent of noise peaked as the train reached them. A wind strong enough to pull you over started. Millions of blurred flashing lights passed before James' eyes. Endless. He couldn't hear himself scream. The roar of the wind and the engine and the wheels on the tracks deafened him. Noise and light and gale. All mingling together and passing too quickly to focus on. He jammed his eyes shut and clutched his sister so tightly he knew it must hurt. Then with one last almighty boom of sound, it began to die away. The wind slowed. The tracks settled. The terror stopped.

Everyone fell forward and crumpled into a heap. Everyone was sobbing. Children continued screaming, utterly disoriented. You could still hear the furious reverberation of the train in the distance growing fainter every second. James looked to his left and saw the remanence of the squat man. A mangled head and a pile of mush. He pulled Lily's shaking head into his chest so she wouldn't have to see the similar scenes of gore dotted around the tunnel. He and his sister had been lucky. Others had not. After some time, the message reached them from the front of the line that they were to get going again. Everyone was still shaking as they got up, picked up their children and rucksacks, formed a line again and walked on. Deeper into the gloom of the tunnel.