

Our Story

James and I are, well, were fraternal twins... We did everything together, swung on swings at the park, robbed candy stores, you know, the typical kid stuff. We were even on the same Debate Team in High School. 20 years later, James and I owned one of the most successful law firms on Wall Street. Life was good....

Z-Day Happened. We were both infected, but shared a bond too deep to be ripped apart merely because we became zombies(stage 1 zombies, this is pre-'lazarus zombies' [Jackals]). We survived countless close encounters and fed on many a'brains. We felt the need to share our kills with each other which led us to the eventual change. We weren't keeping track or anything but when we hit it, there must've been upwards of a thousand turned. We then began to feel an overwhelming power forming inside of us. Growing stronger than ever before we began a transformation into what would later be called... Harbingers. James let his newfound power consume him while I, on the other hand, chose everyday to fight because I knew what we were doing was wrong. Who am I to decide the people that live and die? I'm not... unfortunately we still had to feed.

Fast forward

It's summer of 2016.

Have you ever watched someone run in fear? No? Well I hated it. Everyday someone was either running from me or I was running from them, just trying to survive. After becoming Harbingers our thirst was even harder to quench; worse than soldiers in an Iraqi desert. It was feeding day and something happened: James and I decided to kill separately. This may have had to do with the fact that I could feel my power growing but didn't know what to make of it. At first he was okay with this since we spent every waking moment together.

It was a tuesday night and the air smelled like fresh rain, at least I think that's what it smells like. A small flash of red had just went by. What was that? Could it of been a bird? No, not in the big city, especially of that color. Then what? My instincts kicked in and I found myself in pursuit. Right turn. Left. I end up down an alley staring at a red umbrella. Underneath that was one of the most beautiful women I've ever seen. I couldn't be sure because it had been years since I was turned. What I did know was my chest was throbbing but my heart still wasn't beating.

Blonde hair and blue eyes. Sounds cliché because it is. Her skin was splattered with mud from the endless puddles and potholes in the city. Looking closer, she was wearing some type of combat vest with two M1911's dual holstered at her side. The oddest part of her attire, besides the weathered red umbrella, was she was wearing a camouflage skirt out of all things. She turned towards me and what I saw in her eyes wasn't fear or even anger, it was curiosity. Now why on this green earth would this woman who was staring a harbinger directly in the face keep such a calm composure? She looked at me and asked one question.

“So why haven't you attacked me yet? I was fully expecting to die tonight. I knew this day would come eventually.”

Since becoming a harbinger I was able to understand human speech but I could not yet speak. Instead I said, “Grah”

She approached me slowly and stuck out her hand. I was fighting every zombified urge to run and strike at this easy target but I couldn't. I fought with every bone in my body and I didn't understand why. What was this feeling? Was it a messed up version of attraction that my mind could understand but my body couldn't? All I knew was that whatever it was, I wanted more.

As her hand grew ever closer, mine became what I can only call nervous. She touched my almost petrified skin and for the first time since turning I felt the caring touch of a human.

Maybe with me being a harbinger has given me access to subliminal emotions.

She grabbed my hand and whispered to me,
“My name is Kara. I’m sure you can’t tell me yours, but that doesn’t matter.”

She started walking away and gestured for me to follow her. I did.

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My name is James. Ever since becoming a harbinger, I’ve had what I can only call immortality. I don’t feel pain and I have more strength than ever. This allows me to hunt better than any zombie, even my brother, Tanner.

You see, Tanner hasn’t seemed to enjoy killing as much lately. He’s been sluggish when he feeds and almost hesitant. I need to find out why.

Tuesday has always been my favorite day to hunt. It was the day Tanner and I became harbingers together; a truly spectacular moment. I’ve been hunting a particularly prime individual as of late. I’m able to track her because of

one trait, a red umbrella. Tonight is the night I go for the kill.

I left on an empty stomach as to fuel my primal urges I've tried so hard to enhance. Running at full speed, I jumped to a great height and landed on a roof with an 'oomph'. Below me I could see the entire city. Every nook, cranny and minor movement was available to my enhanced eyesight. I saw something, a flash of red and I knew it was her. Immediately I took off running, jumping from roof to roof like in one of those Marvel TV shows. It was so freeing.

As I felt the wind in my patchy and unkempt hair, I smelt something I was all too familiar with: the scent of rain approaching.

Tanner and I used to love walking through the city where it rained at least half the year. The smell of rain on the horizon was almost peaceful.

Jumping faster and farther, I spotted my target walking into an alley, but she wasn't alone. There was a zombie following her at full speed. This wasn't any regular zombie, this zombie was moving faster, it had to be stronger, it had to be a harbinger, it had to be Tanner. What was he doing with her? There's no way he didn't know I was stalking her. Now that I think of it, he has been distant lately. Maybe he really didn't know. Whatever. I'll follow him and see how this plays out.

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As I was fighting all of my urges and following Kara, my newly found interest, I couldn't help but feel mesmerized. We ended up at what I would call a human safe house, except it was too small to fit more than a few people comfortably. I had so many questions: Why would she bring me here? What was she doing out this late at night with a bright red umbrella? Most importantly, why would she bring me here alone?

"I know what you are", she said interrupting my thought process. "I know you're a harbinger and that you've killed over a thousand people. You're probably wondering why I'm not scared or why I brought you here. I'll tell you. I don't think you're like the others. I think you still have compassion behind all of those urges you're fighting right now. I want to help you."

I looked at her uniquely colored umbrella.

"Ah yes, you see I've had this umbrella since I was a little girl. My mother died when I was young and this belonged to her. I can't find myself ever getting rid of it. This red umbrella may be old and weathered but it is my most prized possession. It goes everywhere I do."

The boarded window exploded with almost firework intensity and inside someone came with. James.

“What are you doing here?” I yelled.

“Didn’t you know that I’ve been stalking this woman for the past week,” James shouted.

You see, one of the “perks” of being harbingers, was that James and I could communicate in our own language.

“James, I swear I didn’t but I need you to leave. Now.”

“You know I can’t do that. Why would demand such a thing?”

“JUST DO IT OKAY? I need you to do this one thing for me! I need to do something right now. Give me some time and you can kill her later, okay?”

“I don’t understand what you’re reasoning for this is but.. Fine. You better save her for me.”

He jumped out the window and was gone.

“What just happened!” Kara yelled in shock. “You saved me.”

Kara paced back and forth with a bewildered look on her face. That look soon turned into appreciation.

“You really aren’t like the others are you? I knew I was right about you,” she said with elation.

I felt something right then. I was intrigued and I wanted to learn more about her. That’s what I planned to do.

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I haven't seen Tanner in three days. Where could he possibly be? And when will I finally get kill the girl with the red umbrella?

I need to find him..

Smell is one of the most overlooked senses. It's also one of my best. That is how I will find him.

I start scanning the city to find any trace of him. He has one particular smell and it's hard to describe. The closest thing I can think of is the smell of a new deck of cards. That was one thing he loved before we turned. Cards. He would do magic tricks. So much time was spent practicing magic tricks.

Z-day. The day all of this started. When we were turned into zombies, we were working in our applied science division funded by our law firm. We were working on so many life changing things: cures for cancer, vaccines for every known disease, schrodingers Box, and even high-tech playing cards that could be used to store thousands of terabytes of data. Heh, Tanner just couldn't seem to build anything without incorporating some kind of playing card. That day I was working with a type of Schrodingers Box I had made, trying to figure out a way to be certain of what was happening inside even without any

instruments to measure it. Tanner? He was working with his “Tech Cards”.

There was a strange smell coming from the next room over where we were working on a solution that was going to extend human life by increasing the production of new cells and lengthening the time it took for individual ones to die.

We gave each other a look of panic and grabbed our gas masks to investigate. As we approached the touch panel controlled gate, we heard screaming and what we saw when we opened the door was horrifying. One of our scientists assigned to this solution, Harold Finnicks, was collapsed to the ground. His skin was almost melting, turning into some type of plastic substance all the while he was screaming for help. All around him was a bluish vapor that sizzled when it came into contact with Harold's skin.

After a couple seconds past he whispered with one last breath, “I promise I didn’t know...”

Tanner and I quickly closed the door and vomited on the other side of our lab.

“What the heck just happened in there?” I said, exasperated.

“I don’t know,” James responded. “It seems like the solution got mixed with the wrong proteins causing a violent reaction.” “Why would Harold even attempt that?” asked Tanner.

“I couldn’t explain it if I tried.” I sighed.

“Look, all I know is that we need to quarantine this area and disinfect ourselves. Maybe after we should stick to our work. You know that it distracts us from reality.” James explained.

“Yeah... That sounds reasonable.” I sighed rubbing my temples.

We continued experimenting and improving on our inventions to the best of our ability but it just wasn’t the same. What we saw the other day just wasn’t natural. Something like that just shouldn’t be seen by mortal eyes.

A loud crash. We simply just wrote it off as the clumsy clean-up crew, trying not to over analyze the situation. My computer came up with a reading that I couldn’t understand. It seemed like my Schrodingers Box was doing two opposite things simultaneously. How could that be possible?

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Over the past few days, Kara and I had been testing a special ability of mine, trying to refine it. You see, it had only manifested after I became a harbinger.

Eventually she asked me a question, “How did you get this power? ... Oh, right, I keep forgetting that you can’t respond.” She said looking meekly.

I wished I could've answered.

The truth is, I'm not exactly sure but I do have a theory.

My computer chip playing cards. They were my prized piece of work. They were going to revolutionize the tech industry all while being just a bit stylish in design. I was working out a bug with my cards that was blocking data entry through the triquetra port but couldn't seem to figure it out due to hardware malfunctions.

Z-Day. I hate thinking about it.

It was almost intriguing and terrifying at the same time having someone breathing down the back of your neck.

I still feel chills today.

Turning around, I saw what I can only describe as the grim melted face of Harold Finnick. With one quick blow, I was knocked to the ground and before I could fend off him off, I was bitten on the arm. I managed to fight off Harold and ran to the other side of the room. He charged at me but I grabbed a wrench and hit the side of his head. One blow and he was down. Catching my breath and panicking, I sat down and immediately treated my bite. After a few seconds I started to feel dizzy and collapsed to the ground. My eyes opened just a crack. I got to my feet as nothing had happened. Something did happen though. I looked down and was too in shock to comprehend what I

saw. My skin was grey and sagging and my feet started to move towards James' lab. He liked to work with headphones on listening to whatever it was that he listened to so he couldn't hear my approach. My feet felt like there were bionic implants in them controlling every movement. Slowly inching closer, I tried to fight. I couldn't. James' door opened and I charged. I.. I just don't know what was happening to me. I grabbed James and threw him to the ground. I jumped on top of him and he punched me looking mortified at what he was seeing. As he hit me I grabbed his arm and sunk my teeth into his arm. It happened. The same thing Harold did to me, I was doing to James. I got up and ran fighting unknown urges, never turning back.

Kara and I were still practicing honing my skills. When I was bitten, I think that somehow my playing card data chip infused with my bite. I can now manipulate and make playing cards appear out of thin air. To be honest, this is the best thing about being a harbinger.

We continued to practice all night. I still couldn't understand what Kara's fascination with me was. Did she think she could save me? Eventually Kara became hungry and said she was going to a store house to get food and I pushed her away.

"Naughhg" I groaned

I think she got the message that I was going to get food but definitely not from a store house.

As I was on my way to the store house I started to think about James. His power, well, he has been uneasy lately. I think he is starting to discover aspects of his powers. Since he was working on a version of Schrodingers Box, I believe that his power will work along the lines of manipulating states of limbo. I just hope that James isn't envious that mine are developing faster.

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The rooftops are where I am at my peak both literally and figuratively. I've been feeling different as of late. It feels like some kind of energy is growing inside of me but I can't seem to hone it. Time will only tell.

I smell something. I know what it is. The smell of a new deck of cards. Letting my instincts kick in, I bounded through the city eventually coming to a small hole in the wall building. It wasn't too dissimilar to the last place that I found Tanner at. This time I was going to have to use stealth to get what I wanted. There was a back alley with a rusted iron paneled door. To my luck it was slightly ajar. Just what I was looking for. Opening it, there was a creak like you'd hear in one of those old houses from the 1900s.

Across the room was a weathered cracked mirror. All around were cans of preserved food, half eaten. Strewn over the floor were playing cards. Tanner has been here, in fact he might still be here. I'm going to have to be careful. *Ching* It was the sound of a can falling to the ground. I turn around and standing there was the woman with the red umbrella. We locked eyes... Hers, fear. Mine, excitement. I lunged.

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I showed up at a store I frequently visited before the incident. It was called Earls' Convenience N' Stuff. What a name, right? Luckily this was one of the few hidden spots the survivors haven't gotten to. Breaking the lock on the door was easy, having to kill an innocent human who came in through the back, not so much.

I got the supplies I needed without too much physical effort. Mentally, I was starting to wane from having to turn innocent humans.

I started to run back to the hideout using my harbinger stamina when I caught a scent of something metallic. Blood. This can't be. Please God no. I sprinted and bounded back. Bursting through the door I am greeted with a scene out of a cheap horror movie.

Kara.

My Kara.

She was on the floor, dead. Breathing intensifying, if that's what you can even to call it, I look up and see James standing over her body with what I can only assume is brain tissue. He was grinning, a trickle of blood fell from the corner of his mouth.

Why..

Every thought of anger and violent action went through my head, with it pangs of violent sadness. Minimal in a human.

I attacked James with everything I had. Beating him over and over. With both of us being practically immortal, it was useless but I didn't care. I wanted revenge. James threw me back and ran out the door. Before leaving he said something to me.

"Never, get in my way."

Sitting there stunned, I cradled Kara in my arms. Her blood was flowing down my arm and I couldn't save her.

Wait.. maybe there was a way.

Before the accident, James and I were working in our applied sciences division. I was working on a way to extend human life but I was also working on a classified machine for the military. Time travel.

Right before Harold became whatever it is he became (Let's call him the OZ) I had just finished the machine. It had never been tested but it was supposedly operational.

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Kara. So that was her name. I had heard Tanner mumbling it as I left. How is it possible for him to feel... empathy? It seems he's turning humans separately because of her. Even more of a reason to take her out. If I can't have a relationship like that with him neither will she. I need him back.

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Before me stood K & L Premium Attorneys at Law. This use to be the finest law firm in the United States. Beneath the overgrown windows and cracked cement was Advanced Algorithms, our science division. The source. Down there was what I needed and nothing will stop me from getting it.

Skulking into the basement, I found something interesting. It was a picture of James and I standing in front of our newly built law firm. Memories... They won't stop me from going back. I moved on to a locked room

labeled storage. Heh. Perfect cover for something as important as a time machine.

Before I went in, I had to plan out what to do when I got to the past to make sure the future wasn't altered. The plan was to go back to just before the incident and take the nanochip that stimulates cell growth.

Kara will live again even if it kills me.

Since no one had touched the chip after the accident, it won't alter the future. I did have thoughts about going back to before James found Kara but there is the chance that I wouldn't meet her in the first place. I couldn't have that. I needed her in my life.

The door opened and what I saw was a relief. The time machine was right where I left it. A little dusty but in good condition. I initiated the boot sequence and entered the date and time before James and I were zombified. The machine got to full power and as I was stepping in to save my Kara, James' silhouette showed in the doorway.

He said four words that will haunt me to this day.

"I can fix her."

But it was too late. I stepped into the portal and was gone.

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Why Tanner? Why would you go back to who knows where? Did he think he could fix what happened? I didn't regret what I did, but seeing what it did to Tanner wasn't worth the reward or satisfaction. He is my brother and I can't have that change.

I tried the machine but it wouldn't power on. Out of all the times for technical difficulties, this had to be the one. There was no more going back.

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Time travel was not at all as you would expect from a Hollywood Blockbuster. You didn't go back through a timeline and witness so many events. You simply just appeared and didn't know where you were.

Luckily I appeared at the right time. I knew this because I heard the commotion of James and I becoming these ugly mutant beings, zombies. I snuck out the door labeled 'Storage' and did my best to hide amongst the commotion. Breaking into another part of the lab. I grabbed the nanochip and ran back to the time machine. I knew that this machine could only be used twice: Once here and once back. It was good enough.

I hopped back in the time machine and traveled back. Everything worked out just fine except for one thing that I couldn't explain. When traveling back to the present, it

was theorized from my research that there would be another version of you already there but there wasn't. I didn't have time to worry about the small details anymore. I had to try and save Kara.

Now the nanochip works by being implanted into the spinal cord of the patient. It stimulates cell growth and represses malfunctioning and dying cells. My hope was that by implanting it in Kara, that I would be able to bring her back to life with a defibrillator.

I sprinted with all my strength to the place of her death.

Haunted by her still dead body, it took a lot of courage to operate on her. Managing to get the nanochip into her spinal cord was the easy part. Her heart still needed to beat. It had to. I wouldn't have it any other way. I can't. There is a whirl of static electricity as the paddles make contact with her lifeless body. Once... thud. Twice... thud and nothing. Three times and still nothing. I'm starting to panic. I NEED THIS TO WORK.

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Tanner seems to have gone to an alternate time. Maybe somewhere in the past but no one can say for sure.

I think he wants to save Kara. I know he can't but why go?
Sigh

I need to continue with my plans...

When gathering an army, you have to be ever careful so that no one upsets the balance of power. They need to know that I'm in charge. Over the past few days I've been amassing as many followers as I can. It really is harder than it looks. Do you know how stubborn zombies can be? 10,000. That is the number I have gathered. I'm going to use them to raid the last large human settlement in the US: Logan, Utah out of all places. The place is heavily guarded and easily so. The valleys and tall mountains make it a perfect place for a stronghold.

My powers haven't manifested yet and I'm starting to go crazy about it. I know that we were working on a cell regeneration nanochip. With my luck Tanner already has it. Maybe it will help me activate my powers. If that happens, the humans have no chance.

Tomorrow we march.

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For the first time in my immortal life I am feeling something: grief. I just lost someone that I had only know

for less than a week but meant more to me than most. She's gone and not coming back. The microchip didn't work. It just didn't WORK! Cans of old food and workbench parts hit the wall as I take my anger out on all that is left. The last things she ate. The last things she touched. I will avenge her death even if it means taking down my own brother.

After failing to revive Kara, it's been 4 days since I've installed the nanochip into my spinal cord. I can now speak. I can now feel a full range of human emotions. I don't fully understand the extent of what this chip has done to me but I know one thing. There has to be some way I can get the humans to trust me. With the installation of this chip I will be able to lead the humans against James... if only I can get them to trust me. I will avenge her.

I have arrived at a valley in Utah. It's home to a city called Logan. I feel as if I don't have much time left. Something in my gut is telling me that James will strike here.

Upon arriving here in Logan, it's spring time. The one thing that coexists with spring is rain. Rain is the one thing that still reminds me of my previous life. Dew. The

sunshine after the storm. Seems fitting for an upcoming battle.

Getting past the guards in the canyon was no small feat but with my chip implant, it was possible. I need to find someone. If I remember right his name is The Hatter and he can be a bit of an insanity case but is incredibly smart and if there is anyone I can convince to trust me, it will be him. I have intel that he is hiding out at Utah State University. Heh, just my luck. It just so happens to be the humans prime stronghold.

In my travels through the valley I've seen many beautiful things. This world may be in ruins but some beauty is left. Fields of Sunflowers as far as the eyes can see. The mountains still have white caps from the previous snowfall that has all but melted in the valley. There are various wild and farm animals that still manage to survive without human assistance.

Arriving at one of the local black markets, I find someone who is selling makeup. After the rise of the zombies, most of the local students of the arts open this as a means of continuing their trade. I think this is going to be the only way to sufficiently disguise myself. Let's hope it works..

Turns out getting into Fort Logan is a lot harder than you'd think. Great. You need a recommendation and an appointment. This may sound crazy but I think I have an

idea that might just work. Long before the so called 'apocalypse' there was a method of delivering messages by carrier pigeon. I'm not going to go into detail of how I was able to tame a pigeon but I will say it was very difficult and I got a lot of help by watching local psychology students in action.

Just as I am sending my message, I see a glint of metal. Was that a.. shield? Are you kidding me? Is that seriously Captain America at the Logan Stronghold? No, that would be crazy. It seems like this guy is a local leader of sorts with eccentric costume taste.

"Hey! I need some help" said CA confidently. "I need directions to Fort Logan."

"Um.. Idk if I can help you" I almost whisper.

"Why not son? Also you should speak up so people can hear you."

"Okay.. Come with me. I need to show you something."

As we walk for at least a mile, Captain America is starting to get impatient.

"Will you please tell me what is going on?" He sighed. "I really don't have much time."

"Please, patience."

We approached a hill that overlooked the valley. I took off my hood and revealed my sickly face to him.

“Ho.. How are you here? This place is guarded from head to toe. What I’m more shocked about is how are you able to talk? You look to be one of those zombies I have been fighting for the past few months. Now I have to kill you and ruin my day.”

He was prepared to attack and I contemplated letting him. I really didn’t want hurt him though what with my newfound card abilities.

“Please, just give me a chance to explain myself. My name is Tanner and it has taken me a long time to get here. I have to show you something that I think could help the humans.”

I proceed to generate my playing cards out of thin air and throw them at a tree. Moments later they explode and the tree falls.

I explain the rest to CA, “I’m here to help. You see, someone I cared about deeply was murdered by my own brother. I tried to save her but it didn’t work. Instead I implanted myself with this nanochip to help my recovery back to my human self. Sadly this is as far as my transformation will go.”

“I thought zombies couldn’t feel emotions?” Captain said bewildered

“To be completely honest, I don’t fully understand it either. I had this small feeling that I couldn’t explain until I got a hold of this nanochip,” I rambled.

“So let me get this straight, you got this nanochip that increases your cell regeneration just enough to develop powers and learn how to speak?”

“That just about sums it up.” I say meekly.

“Okay, well I think I should be able to explain this to the leader of the Logan Stronghold.”

And off we went, able to reach the weathered black gate where I was greeted by none other than The Hatter himself.

“Welcome to Fort Logan, It seems like we have a lot to talk about.” he said