

Culled

There's no such thing as humanity. When push comes to shove, it's everyone for themselves. We learned that very early on. And it didn't take long. One minute it was the nine to five, the next it was 24/7 trying to stay alive. It hit so fast. So damn fast.

Sure, right at the beginning people pulled together but they dropped. They dropped like flies. There were so many you couldn't bury them. You didn't want to go near. Trouble was, right from the outset there was no indication, no symptoms at all. You'd be working alongside someone and they'd just drop. They'd just fall down dead. Stone dead. When people cottoned on that there was a problem it was already too late. Don't want to make light of it, but soon people was falling like skittles. Just going about their business and 'pfft', gone, just like that.

Nobody knew what it was. The best they could come up with at the start was what some TV reporter said when the stations were still running: DMWS - Dead Men Walking Syndrome. Some unknown virus or pathogen, who knows? All we did know was some people just didn't seem to be affected, but too few to make a difference and you didn't know whether they were carriers or simply immune. And you didn't know if you could dare to associate with anyone, there being no recognisable symptom. Best thing you could do was head for the hills, away from all the putrefaction. Stay apart, don't touch, don't talk, no hugs and hope period! Like I said, stay apart, don't touch, don't talk, no hugs and hope whatever it was called. This is not the complete story. To read further, please either register as a new reader or login now if already registered

And you didn't trust no-one. Right from the start you didn't trust a soul. Apart from your kith and kin (if they had survived, and very few did) you kept your distance. Word was, without any sort of justification at all, that it was any sort of bodily contact that spread it. So you kept your distance. There was a lot of people died that way, too. Starvation. Thievin'. Just plain fear you was goin' to catch somethin' from a survivor in the next valley and takin' a potshot before they took a shot at you. There was a lot of guns to start with but then the ammunition began to run out and no-one was about to head back down to the city to stock up.

I was lucky. I had my bows and arrows right from the start. I could see what was coming and they were the first things I grabbed. Them and my knives. Never did go much on guns. You can't readily make a bullet in the woods, but you can sure as hell make a shitload of arrows. And that's what I did just as soon as I had a place fixed up. Thing is, I knew where I was going. A lot of people was just runnin' blind and unprepared, but I already knew this cabin. Hunkered down there many a time on hunting trips. It wasn't much of a place. Two small rooms and a sleeping place up in the rafters. But it was dry and, more important, it was defensible. God knows who it belonged to but it was never locked up and the owner never showed up ever. Probably dead. Would have been if he had showed up anyway. It's a shock how soon you can revert to barbarity when stark reality faces you.