

## Casey: One Dark Night

The rain continued to lash down, two days of relentless downfall had pretty much killed the excitement of finding and this small cottage a few days ago. Old friends reunited, a dry place to sleep and finding more people alive had lifted everybody's spirits for a while at least.

Most people had gone to bed, moving into one of the quiet rooms to try and get a few hours sleep, a few hours rest from being hungry, on edge and scared. The main room of the cottage was illuminated and warmed by a fire kept deliberately small, a fire that had caused almost as much drama as the end of the world! Full on arguments broke out, some people saying it would attract more of the walking dead, others saying they would risk that for warmth and hot food!

It was Casey who ended the argument by pointing out the entire worlds on fire right now, what harm would one more fire do! Before he'd even finished the sentence, he had lit the fire using a white sprit soaked rag... It was a risky move, but he hoped once people saw the fire, they would all agree. Fire meant life, it meant hope! But more importantly... Casey Really liked fire, and if it brought the odd Zombie to his location... Even better!

Since then, the fire had not been allowed to go out... even now Danny was sat next to it, moving damp sticks and bark closer to the heat to dry off, Over the last few days Danny had well and truly lived up to his nickname of Chef, somehow finding a way to keep everybody fed. Casey, who was perched on a window ledge, unable to get comfortable watched Danny, almost the same way a little brother watches his older siblings, it wasn't just the food, Danny was always thinking, always planning. He always saw the bigger picture, and he never let anything get to him. Casey, who at times struggled to see past the end of his fist, loved Danny for this... and for the way in the past he would always feed Skye, Casey's little girl when times were hard.

Scanning the rest of the room from his uncomfortable vantage point he took a head count of who was still awake.. Henry and Toby where in the far corner, you never really knew if they were asleep or just wasted... they seemed to have the ability to constantly find new supplies of narcotics, and following the recent discovery of horse tranquilisers they had both become even more withdrawn. Still nobody could argue if you or your electrical equipment needed fixing up or putting back together they were the boys you needed.

Ryan had somehow managed to land himself the big armchair and just a few moments ago was talking with purpose, laying out the facts that they had already stayed here to long, and needed to plan their next move. Discussing tactics in depth with Danny, and arranging people into teams with Casey and Gryth... Now, he was sunk in the chair, his eyes glazed over, as he had retreated into his own thoughts once again. Casey noticed him doing this more and more, but it was none of his business so he never bothered Ryan about it... a thought did cross Casey's mind that if he was going to go all emo tonight, he could at least go to bed and give up that chair!

Continuing to look around the room, trying to spot his opportunity he turned to the sofa, the small two seater was full, the side closest to the fire taken up by Gryth, Casey wasn't quite sure how Gryth knew Danny, but he knew he liked him! Ok he was a bit cold at times and he didn't half go on about his "True Love", but he was reliable, he would be the one person other than Ryan who would patrol in the rain with no complaints and would stay up all night on watch without falling asleep or "accidentally" waking up the next person early. He was also tough as hell and loved getting into a fight!

The other side of the really comfortable looking sofa was Simeon. Casey just couldn't work out Simeon, the guy was basically a dork... the sort of kid Casey would have got into a fight protecting from bullies at school, even at the end of the world... with the chance to re-invent yourself as anything you want to be, Simeon had failed to find his place. Sure he tried to get involved, he tried to help whenever things needing fixing, he loved to brandish his tool box and he always meant well.. .but the fact was, he just wasn't that good...at anything.

Except, man, could he tell a story! Either from his bible, or retelling old scenes from films or making things up as he went, he could deliver it with so much passion Casey found himself hooked on every word, even the bible verses made sense when Simeon read them out.

And then it happened... that moment Casey had been waiting for... his opening! Simeon looked over to Ryan, who's eyes had started to dart around the room, as if he was watching a movie in his own private theatre and stated loudly "Why don't I make us all a Brew" Casey who didn't drink tea or Coffee dived in "There's not much water in here, you might be better seeing what rain water we have collected?" Simeon nodded, and got up and headed for the back door...

Casey waited... Counting in his head..."One"... "Two"... "Three!" before leaping into the air, vaulting over the back on the sofa, and landing in the spot Simeon had been only seconds before shouting "THREE SECOND RULE!" Simeon turned around startled by the noise. Realising what happened he lowered his eyes to the floor and turned back around with a sigh. Ryan who had been brought back to reality by the shout was already on his feet, fists clenched starting at the man who had just tricked his friend starting him in the eyes. As Danny and Gryth both hold their breath not sure how this will play out.

Casey who seems almost unaware of the situation breaks the silence "What Bro? It's the three second rule. Just because the worlds gone to shit, don't mean we all become savages!"

Before Ryan can even reply a voice from the corner pipes up... "Yea man, three second rule! That's like the law!" Henry finishes his outburst, looks to his friend Toby who both, in unison attempt their best Judge Dredd voices and say "I am the Law!" before drifting back into their separate K holes. Even Ryan can't help but smirk at this, and knowing he's been beaten by some childhood rule he sits back down.

"Rains good for something!" Simeon says with a smile as he empties almost two full re-used bean cans full of water into Danny's pot. Turning to Ryan he smiles "fresh brew coming up!" He then sits on the cold hard floor missing his old sofa spot deeply, "Did you guys know the locks broke on the back door? I can't get it to budge" Casey tried to hide a laugh as he replied "Are you sure it wasn't just too heavy for you? We could ask the Nun to do it in the morning?" "I'm serious..." replied Simeon "It's damaged, like it been sabotaged"

"Alright...I'll check it out" Casey says as he stands up and heads towards the back of the cottage to the back door "I need a piss anyway" As he leaves the main room, past one of the rooms of sleeping bodies his eyes lock on to the back door... a shiver moves up his spine, and he tries to turn around.. but it's already too late... a scream comes from the main room... a sound that almost brakes Casey's heart..

"Three Second Rule!"