

One Man Left Behind

By

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EXT. DERELICT CITY - NIGHT

An empty city. Buildings are crumbling and covered in dust. There is an uncanny silence, punctuated by scuttling noises. Things are moving.

INT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

The supermarket lies abandoned. The shelves are almost empty, with just a few cans of food left. Fruit and vegetables are decomposing at the front of the store.

A radio clicks into life, broadcasting an authoritative female voice.

RADIO  
(unclear)  
Dickinson ... Private Dickin ...  
Come in ... Please respond ...

The lights flicker and then die. After a second, the emergency lights kick in, giving the building a green glow.

RADIO  
(clearer)  
Private Dickinson, please  
respond. Dickinson, do you hear  
me? Please respond. Over.

A shadow moves past the window, lightning fast.

A man groans.

In the chilled aisle, all the doors are open. The chillers are almost empty, with bottles broken across the floor.

Lying in the corner, his back to a chiller, is PRIVATE DICKINSON. He is in his late twenties, with dark cropped hair and two day stubble. He wears an army uniform, but has no medals or ribbons past those given at basic training. His leg is bloody and lies at the wrong angle.

He moves.

RADIO  
Private Dickinson, this is your  
last call. Please respond.

Dickinson grabs the radio and moves it towards his mouth. It is obviously an effort.

PRIVATE DICKINSON  
I'm here.

RADIO  
 (relieved)  
 You gave us a scare Private. You missed your pick-up.

Dickinson peers at his leg. He tries to stand, but the pain is too much and he slumps back down. He flips the radio into two-way mode, so he can talk hands-free.

PRIVATE DICKINSON  
 Yeah, sorry. Looks like one of those things tried to make off with my leg.

RADIO  
 Can you make it to the extraction point?

PRIVATE DICKINSON  
 Did I say tried? I meant pretty much succeeded.

RADIO  
 I repeat, can you make it to the extraction point?

PRIVATE DICKINSON  
 (Chuckling)  
 Nope!

He reaches into the chiller, grabs a can of beer and opens it. He takes a swig and grins.

PRIVATE DICKINSON (CONT)  
 You'll have to come get me.

RADIO  
 That's not possible Private. Black Tide has been implemented. You have to make your way to the extraction point.

Dickinson tries to move again and quickly gives up. A look of panic forms across his face.

PRIVATE DICKINSON  
 That's not possible Command. Black Tide or no Black Tide, I'm not moving, so you're going to have to come and get me.

RADIO  
 Collection is not possible Private.

PRIVATE DICKINSON  
So what happens next?

Silence

RADIO  
Collection is not possible  
Private.

The gravity of the situation dawns on him. He lowers the beer to the floor and fiddles with the ring pull awkwardly.

PRIVATE DICKINSON  
So you're just gonna leave me  
here for the Tide?

RADIO  
If you cannot make it to the  
extraction point, then we have no  
choice. Black Tide is in  
operation, we cannot send in  
units. Collection ...

He throws the can across the aisle.

PRIVATE DICKINSON  
(Shouting)  
IS NOT POSSIBLE! YOU'VE ALREADY  
FUCKING SAID THAT! YOU'RE LEAVING  
ME HERE TO DIE!

RADIO  
You knew this was a possibility  
soldier. You know the procedure.  
We have no choice.  
(beat)  
We can talk you through this  
Private.

Dickinson bangs his head against the chiller and closes his eyes. He tries to calm himself down, breathing slowly.

PRIVATE DICKINSON  
You can talk me through it.  
You're going to abandon me, and  
all you can do is to fucking TALK  
ME THROUGH IT.

RADIO  
Dickinson...

He stops banging his head and wipes the sweat from his face. He talks quickly, angry at the situation.

PRIVATE DICKINSON  
Hey lady. What's your name?

RADIO  
Lieutenant Jeffries. 3rd  
Battalion.

PRIVATE DICKINSON  
I said your name, not your  
designation.

RADIO  
(pause)  
Carol.

PRIVATE DICKINSON  
Well, Carol Jeffries, 3rd  
Battalion. Do you know the  
Soldiers Creed? The one you  
recite at graduation?

RADIO  
Yes.

Dickinson brings his hand up into a salute and screws his  
face into an expression of sarcastic seriousness.

PRIVATE DICKINSON  
I will never accept defeat. I  
will never quit.

He lowers his salute and grabs the radio, holding it close  
to his mouth.

PRIVATE DICKINSON (CONT)  
I WILL NEVER LEAVE A FALLEN  
COMRADE!

Silence

PRIVATE DICKINSON (CONT)  
Do you hear me Carol! I WILL  
NEVER LEAVE A FALLEN COMRADE!

The silence continues. Dickinson throws the radio. It  
bounces off the chiller in front and skids to a stop by  
his injured leg.

The radio clicks back into action and Dickinson scrambles  
for it, hoping for a change of heart.

RADIO  
Black Tide begins in 5 minutes.

Dickinson looks at the clock on the wall. 23:55

RADIO (CONT)

Is there anybody you would like  
us to contact?

Dickinson sighs. He has given up any hope of rescue.

PRIVATE DICKINSON

What are you gonna do? Get my  
wife on the radio?

RADIO

That can be arranged.

Dickinson starts to cry.

PRIVATE DICKINSON

Don't bother. I said goodbye at  
the airfield. I don't want this  
to be her last memory of me.

RADIO

If you're sure ...

PRIVATE DICKINSON

(calmly)  
I'm sure.

RADIO

Is there anybody else?

PRIVATE DICKINSON

No.

(beat)

Lieutenant, if you don't mind, I  
think I'd just like to be left  
alone. I don't fancy the idea of  
strangers listening in on my  
final five minutes.

RADIO

If that's what you want.

PRIVATE DICKINSON

Yeah. Look, I'm sorry for losing  
my temper with you. This isn't  
your fault.

RADIO

It's OK. I understand.

The radio clicks off. The line is gone.

PRIVATE DICKINSON

No you don't.

Dickinson looks at the clock on the wall. 23:57

He fumbles with a pouch by his waist and produces his blaster. He holds it to his temple, closes his eyes, and pulls the trigger.

Nothing happens. He flips it over - the power pack is damaged. Resigned to his fate, he makes himself comfortable and closes his eyes.

EXT. SUPERMARKET CAR PARK - NIGHT

A loud grumbling shakes the ground. A creature is disturbed and runs to the shadows. A helicopter lands.

Three soldiers run out. They wear goggles and have weapons with mounted torches. Two carry a stretcher. They run into the supermarket.

SOLDIER

Dickinson! You in here Dickinson!

INT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

Dickinson opens his eyes.

PRIVATE DICKINSON

Here! Oh God, I'm over here!

The soldiers find him and prepare him for transport, moving quickly but gently to get him on the stretcher.

Dickinson closes his eyes, a smile across his face.

PRIVATE DICKINSON

Never leave a fallen ...

Everything freezes. Everything is silent.

A high pitched whistle begins.

INT. SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

Dickinson opens his eyes. He is sat against the chiller.

The clock clicks over to 00:00

The whistle gets louder. It shakes the floor until nothing is left standing. Dickinson shields himself from debris.

Ahead, everything is dark. The darkness creeps towards him, ripping apart every atom, leaving nothing but black. As the floor in front of him disintegrates, he steadies himself, closes his eyes, and prays.

FADE OUT: