

BURIED IN THE SNOW

written by

Anonymous

OVER BLACK:

A CACOPHONY OF NOISE.

Ambulance sirens WAILING. Panicked crying, SCREAMING.

Heart rate monitors slowly BEEPING... BEEPING... BEEPING...

Before FLATLINING...

TITLE CARD:

In the year 2031, doctors report the first cases of an aggressive auto-immune disease.

By the year 2059, the population has plummeted to less than one billion.

Attempts for a cure have proved futile.

FADE IN:

EXT. CEMETERY - MORNING

THOUSANDS OF MARKED GRAVES. Stretching out as far as the eye can see. Half-submerged in a few feet of snow.

EXT. INTERSTATE - MORNING

The highway is deserted. No signs of life or traffic. Stoplights repetitively flash red, out of service for who knows how long.

EXT. GAS STATION - MORNING

This place hasn't seen business in a long time. Windows boarded up, garbage bags covering the pumps.

EXT. CITY SQUARE - MORNING

A ghost town. Boarded up empty businesses with several broken windows. Trash and various debris strewn everywhere.

An ad for a HEALTHCARE CLINIC has been defaced with graffiti:

WE'RE ALL GONNA DIE ANYWAY!

EXT. CABIN - MORNING

An isolated shack surrounded by dense forest. Though old and worn, it looks maintained. Smoke billows from the chimney.

INT. CABIN - MORNING

A sparse interior. No sense of liveliness whatsoever. A box sits by the door, filled with dozens of picture frames, all face-down, obscuring the images.

Leaning against the wall beside the box: A SHOVEL.

HENRY, 40s, stands by the fireplace, zipping up his parka. He's pale, thin. Hollow cheeks, sunken eyes.

He stares absentmindedly into the fire, tears welling up in his eyes. They stream down his cheeks.

Henry pulls a pair of thick leather gloves from his coat pocket, shoves them on. Closes his eyes, taking a few deep, steady breaths.

He wipes the tears away, then gives one last look at the fire. Turns and heads for the door.

Henry stops by the door. Grabs the shovel.

His eyes can't help but glance at the box. He quickly looks away. Pained.

Henry opens the door and steps out into the snow.

EXT. CABIN - MORNING

Henry digs in a small clearing behind the cabin.

Off to his side: two bodies, one of an ADULT, one of a CHILD, wrapped in thick blankets.

Henry straightens, catching his breath. Leans against the shovel to steady himself.

Close to passing out.

Henry looks over at the bodies, sorrow etched on his face.

For a long beat, Henry doesn't take his eyes off the bodies. Almost as if he's frozen in time.

Finally, Henry snaps himself out of it, coming back to reality.

He takes another slow, steady breath, summoning whatever strength he has left. Gets back to work.

EXT. CABIN - AFTERNOON

It's snowing heavier now. Really coming down.

The adult grave finished, Henry stands several feet deep in the child's grave.

He's almost finished, but it's taken its toll. It's taking all he has to stand up.

Henry shovels the last pile of muddy earth over his shoulder. Stabs the shovel into ground beside the graves.

He scrambles out of the grave. Looks down at them. Turns and heads for the bodies.

Henry bends down, grabs the adult body. He hesitates for a moment, then straightens, using whatever strength he's got left.

He takes a couple steps towards the grave before STUMBLING and FALLING to his knees.

Henry looks down at the wrapped body in his arms. Emotion weighing heavy on his face.

Admitting defeat, Henry sits the body on the ground and gently slides it toward the grave.

He climbs down into the grave. Turns, grabs the body. Pulls it into the grave with him.

Exhausted, frustrated, weak, Henry places his head against the head of the body. Reverently.

Henry stands. Gets out of the grave, then makes his way over to the child's body.

He bends down, picks up the body, refusing to not carry this one.

Tears pouring down his face, Henry carries the child to the grave and lowers her into it.

Henry slumps to his knees, nearly all his energy gone. He COUGHS VIOLENTLY. Uncontrollably. Barely able to stop.

Henry composes himself. Crawls over to the shovel. Uses it to support his weight as he stands.

He looks down at the bodies resting in their graves. A lost, broken man.

Henry pulls the shovel from the ground and begins filling in the graves.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

It's dark now. The only light coming from a large FLOOD LIGHT on the back of the cabin.

The graves are completely filled in with mud and snow. A makeshift cross marks each grave, crudely made from sticks tied together.

Henry sits on the ground in front of the graves, arms resting on his knees. Completely devoid of the will to live.

Henry shakes his head, looking up at the sky.

He looks back down at the graves. Tears pouring down his face.

Another HORRIBLE COUGH hits him. He suppresses it the best he can.

Henry nearly collapses, braces himself with his arm as he falls sideways.

He COUGHS BLOOD onto the snow.

Henry looks down at the blood, not even phased by it anymore. He braces himself on all fours, then gets slowly and shakily to his feet.

He turns back to the graves, his face a mix of sorrow, longing, and maybe even a little envy.

Finally, Henry turns away and starts the trek through the snow back to the cabin.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Henry's parka and clothes from earlier hang from the back of wooden kitchen chairs, dripping water onto the wood floor as they dry.

Henry sits by the fire, wrapped in a thick blanket. He's eating his dinner -- a bowl of chicken noodle soup.

Or, rather, trying to. His hands are shaking so badly, it's all he can do to keep the food on the spoon.

Henry finishes spooning down a labored bite. Looks over his shoulder at the box by the door.

He quickly looks away -- it's too painful. He looks down at his soup.

Beat.

Henry picks at the soup with his spoon, but doesn't take another bite.

Finally, he sits the bowl down beside him.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

It's much later now. The cabin's completely dark. Deathly quiet.

Henry lies in bed, tosses and turning. Trying to get sleep. But rest won't come.

He rolls onto his back, looking up at the ceiling. Fighting off another coughing fit.

With the pace of an elderly man, Henry gets out of bed and crosses the main room of the cabin, heading for the box sitting by the door.

Henry stoops down beside the box. Rummages around inside it, looking for something particular.

He pulls a framed photo out of the box --

Henry, younger and healthy, with his WIFE and DAUGHTER. They're smiling from ear to ear. They look happy, carefree.

Henry breaks down, sobbing. Clutches the photo to his chest. Letting everything out.

Another COUGHING FIT hits him. Henry calms himself, slows his breathing.

Henry gets up and makes his way back to bed. He climbs in, covering himself with the blankets.

He looks down at the framed photo in his hands. Manages a smile.

It's faint, it's pained, but it's there.

Henry lays the photo on the pillow next to him. Rolls over to look at it.

He traces his wife and daughter's face with his finger, tears still streaming down his face.

Henry closes his eyes. Exhaustion taking over him.

As Henry finally drifts off to sleep, hand resting on the picture of his family --

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END.