

Cryptsville USA

by Oliver Hunt

Spotlights ascended and orbited the night sky- mimicking and mocking anything spiritual- then dipped to roam the trash-strewn streets. The buildings were tombs, empty and crumbling. We were among ghosts, some of them still living.

We snapped pictures, looted stores and dug through piles of litter, looking for our little treasures. We found a stack of old maps, a gold straight razor spotted rust-brown, a toolbox, a Monopoly board, pornographic bookmarks, an old Erector Set. We set up shop and squatted in a fire gutted old hotel. It was boarded up, but we found entrance through a hole blown out by the loading dock. We christened it The Broken Inn.

We already knew nothing was ever safe. You could live in a gated community, shut out from the outside world, but there are things no wall can protect you from. Internal things, the person you are, the things that make you a target. So you might as well get out in the ultimate shit, surround yourself with it, look for opportunity in catastrophe. Safety is a lie.

Thing is, we weren't alone. We never were. I learned that a straight razor makes a faulty but functional scalpel, and dental floss can be used to suture, but I still had to get us out of there- into real civilization- before bacteria and infection set in. I learned that, in the shit, you can't just go along for the ride. Sometimes you have to take the wheel and plow your people out.

