

# A POST- APOCALYPTIC CHRISTMAS!

EIGHT ILLUSTRATED + HORRIFYING HOLIDAY STORIES



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This anthology was created with the amazing support of viewers at the [ScottWritesStuff](#) creative writing livestream on Twitch. Huge thanks to everyone for coming up with some incredible stories, ranging from cute, to clever, to hilarious, to—*of course*—grimdark.

Cover/story illustrations were done by me, Scott. Enjoy the post-apocalyptic Christmas!

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# 'Twas a Post-Apocalyptic Christmas

3

By capricy • [Website](#) • [Twitter](#)

'Twas a post-apocalyptic Christmas  
And all through the bomb shelter,  
Not a person was at peace;  
We were all helter-skelter.

The explosives were hung outside in the air  
By incoming aircraft, then dropped without care.

Tucked away dark in our underground basement,  
We tried to forget our horrid displacement.  
Our children were nestled in a corner to rot,  
Their lives so fragile, their chances were shot.

And my wife in her radiation suit and I in my mask  
Had settled our brains for the arduous task  
Of staying down here till we died of starvation.  
I dreamed of food in my growing frustration.

When up on the surface there arose such a clatter,  
I jumped out of my skin when I heard pitter-patter.  
Away to the doorway I flew like an aircraft,  
Tore open the blast door, and crawled up the shaft.

The smog and debris from the air-raid patrols  
Made me tear at the sight of no living souls.  
When what to my wondering eyes did appear  
But a red-and-gold sleigh—and *eight yummy reindeer!*

With a rotund old driver so meaty and thick,  
I knew in a moment he must be St. Nick.  
He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,  
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot.

I jumped in a bush as he turned right around,  
And down the shaft St. Nicholas went with a bound.  
When he vanished underground into our asylum  
I called to the reindeer, hoping not to rile 'em.

"Here, Dasher! Here, Dancer!  
Here Prancer and Vixen!  
Come, Comet! Come, Cupid!  
Come, Donner and Blitzen!"

So tasty they looked, my stomach growled in glee.  
But the reindeer, they heard it, and then they did flee.  
I called after them as they flew from their plight:  
"Don't dash! Don't leave! I just want a small bite!"

Over the airplanes, the reindeer they flew  
With a sleigh full of toys—and my salvation too.



I returned underground, grieving my lost snack  
When I saw St. Nicholas opening his pack.

He was chubby and plump, a delicious old elf,  
And I salivated when I saw him, in spite of myself.  
He had a broad face and a little round belly  
That shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly.

His eyes were like blueberries, his skin white as dairy!  
His cheeks were dumplings, his nose like a cherry!  
In my hunger-crazed state my heart started to quicken  
As I saw myself snapping his head like a chicken.

I leaped on the man and twisted his head,  
And St. Nicholas fell to the ground, cold and dead.  
As my family screamed out horrified cries  
I looked at St. Nick with sobered-up eyes

I was suddenly hit with the grim realization  
That I'd killed our last hope with a head dislocation.  
His bag fell open, its contents released:  
Not toys nor presents, but a great Christmas feast.

A note was tied up on a mouth-watering goose:  
"Happy Christmas to all! Enjoy the chocolate mousse."

# No Crying on Christmas

By Scott • [Website](#) • [Twitter](#)

4

When I told my little brother we wouldn't have much of a Christmas, he didn't cry. I propped up some pine needles and sticks against the wall of our cave, pretending it was a beautiful tree, while the bombs outside kindled the night sky with frosted illuminations. I gave him a reassuring, big-sister smile and even put a gift underneath the sticks: my bar of chocolate, stolen from an abandoned gas station a week ago. It was the best I could do.

When I carried my brother up the mountain away from our smoldering, radiated town, he didn't cry. I'd filled my backpack with everything I could grab at the gas station, and to his credit his pockets were filled with bags of nuts, dried fruit, and even baby carrots—not a sugary snack in sight. I'd taken the chocolate bar as a secret treat, something to surprise him later and put a grin on his face.

When Mom and Dad died, he didn't cry. All four of us were part of the mob raiding the grocery store, thousands of humans screaming and shoving and scraping for whatever they could claw. My parents had told me to leave him behind, that he would just slow us down. The monsters. They deserved the bags of potatoes ripped from their arms, and the kitchen knives shoved into their stomachs.

When we first stepped outside the rubble of our home and saw the destruction, he didn't cry. The skeleton of the mushroom cloud loomed far away, a man-made mountain screaming death. Dad's portable radio said something through the static about how our town was in the "lucky" area, not obliterated right away. I joked with my brother that we should've bought a lottery ticket. He didn't laugh.

When the shockwave from the blast tore through our house, he didn't cry. Hidden underground in our basement, just days away from Christmas, warning screeches blared on the radio instead of carols. Then the world convulsed. God grabbed

the Earth and shook it like a snow globe. I'd been cradling my brother in my arms, but I fell to the ground in shock, dropping him to the floor. A wooden panel in the ceiling came loose and cracked against his head, painting the carpet crimson. I screamed and dived and picked up his flaccid body, wiping the blood with my hands, vowing never to let go of him again.

And now we're here in our cave, safe from the end of the world outside. Our Christmas tree is next to us, and my brother is in my lap as I wrap him in my arms, protecting him like a big sister should. His pale neck dangles like a rubber hose over my arm, so I prop it up and flick away the flies crawling around his eyes. I whisper to him that everything will be okay. That I'm so proud of him for being brave.

Each step of the way, my brother never cried.

But I did.





## Holiday Subroutine

By C.R.

5



The snowstorm growled like an angry bear, its icy winds cutting at John's face as he stumbled blindly through it. The man's body grew numb and the angel-white ground was stained red in his wake—the last traces of warmth escaping his body through the gash in his chest.

John tripped over his numb feet and tumbled into the snow. He tried to push himself up, but he didn't have the strength.

From behind him came the metallic grinding of gears. John spun onto his back, his face slackening in horror. Two twin dots of glowing scarlet stared back at him, piercing through the storm's veil.

Wading through the path he had carved in the deep snow was the owner of those terrifying eyes—a machine. The form of a metal man stepped into view. The rubberized 'skin' of its face was disfigured, perhaps eroded by nature... or by the dying handiwork of its latest victim. Either way, the surviving half of its face remained expressionless as the machine's arm clicked and whirred, folding in on itself, twisting and contorting. Where there had been a hand, there was now a gun.

John took a deep breath to steady his nerves as he stared down the barrel. He thought of the three sick and starving children awaiting his return, along with all the food and medicine he was carrying. He couldn't afford to die here.

John raised his knife. The machines were relentless. He would collapse from blood loss well before escaping his pursuer. His only option was to fight.

But then the night lit up in an unexpected sea of green and red lights.

The machine's eyes dulled. Its face rearranged itself with eerie precision into an expression of overzealous cheer, and it spoke in a metallic voice.

"Holiday. Subroutine. Active."

Its gun transformed back into a hand, which it extended toward John in a friendly gesture.

Some unseen force swept the snowstorm away, allowing John to see everything clearly. He was in a street between two rows of buildings. Hung across the road above him was a web of countless wires strewn with festive lights. He heard more gears grinding behind him and turned to see a dozen more humanoid machines dancing around the city square. They circled around a massive pine tree in the center, twirling light-wires through its branches—*decorating* it.

Human survivors began to emerge from the surrounding buildings, hollering and cheering. The machines welcomed them warmly, offering gingersnap cookies and steaming cider.

"Ho ho ho..." came a booming voice from nearby. It belonged to a plump, jolly-looking man with a beard as thick and white as snow.

"It's exactly 12:00 AM, December 25th. Even machines aren't so heartless as to take lives *today*. Stubborn bit of old-world programming they can't rid themselves of, I suppose."

The stranger put a hand on John's shoulder, his belly heaving with a hearty laugh. "Merry Christmas to you, John... and to your three children, too!"

# Alex

By Fabio V.

6

Alex never got to see a place like this. He never got to see the lights on the signs flashing red and green. The parking lot full of cars. The kids hurrying to get inside the store.

Race cars, action figures, bicycles, video games. More than anything he could imagine with his beautiful little mind.

For five years Alex saw nothing but miles of soot, fragments of cities, shadows burned into the streets. He could never imagine the long aisles stuffed full of gifts waiting to be given. The smell of new packaging waiting to be opened. The sound of plastic toy guns firing their electronic buzzes and whirs. The people dressed like Santa Claus and his elves.

Now everything's broken, gray ash dusting it all. The stench of mold and rot chokes the air. A dim light grazes at the dark edges. He never got to see a place like it.

Today will be your Christmas, Alex.

"Don't go too far," I say to him, searching the shelves, registers, counters, coolers, everywhere. I promised him I would find us something. Candies, gumballs, crackers, sodas, gummies, whatever. Something, please give us something. I promised him so many times.

He runs down an aisle bouncing a ball. He's laughing now. I haven't heard him laugh in so long. Nights and nights we'd spent huddled in blankets in the dark, him always asking if things would get better, dad. Him saying my belly hurts, dad. His stomach swelling from hunger with the earth no longer bearing anything but metal, concrete, and gray snow. We'd feed on whatever bits we could find. Flies. Maggots. So many bones, the little sips of marrow in them.

He asked, how did this happen, dad? I said, it's always been this way. Before your eyes even



opened to see light for the first time. If I could make it end, for you I'd make it end.

The laughter stops. Just the sound of winter howls through cracks in the doors and windows.

"Alex," I say. "Alex."

I stop and get up.

"Alex, talk to daddy."

I run through the aisles and catch flickers of him through shelves. His shoes pat, pat, pat against the floor, echo through the quiet.

"Alex, this isn't funny. Come here, sweetie."

I walk through the aisles yelling for him. On the floor I find an empty bag of graham crackers with one left inside. One left. My eyes well. All these years, and one is left for you, Alex. I pick it up off the floor, blow off the ash.

I open my backpack, pinch out the last little piece of Alex, and eat it. I swallow it down with the graham cracker and savor it for him.

I tried to be there for you, Alex. You were so hungry and so tired. We promised each other this is what we'd do if one of us went to sleep.

I told you I'd find something, Alex. And I did. Merry Christmas, Alex. Merry Christmas.



**And now for  
a brief image  
intermission.**



**Please be  
sure to take your  
government-mandated  
break before continuing.**

*Illustration by TotesCoax • [Twitter](#)*

*Totes  
Coax*



# Three Men By A Fire

By *xenonquark996*

8

In a snow-covered grove  
Covered with pines,  
A group of men roamed  
Through thorns and spines.

They spotted a clearing  
Free of man and machine,  
And set a bonfire  
With a bright orange sheen.

Grover, Manny and John  
Gathered 'round the warmth,  
Remembering the world long gone  
And telling stories thenceforth.

But Grover started ranting.  
He sounded quite pissed  
When he went on and on  
About the holiday he missed.

"Where are the gifts?" he inquired  
In a furious tone.  
"The old days have expired,"  
John explained with a groan.

"It's all washed away,  
All the cities and buildings.  
So shut the hell up,  
And lose those feelings!"

With each breath in passing  
Their bodies began swelling.  
Then Manny spoke up,  
his fury rather telling.

He said: "Stop fighting!"  
Or nobody will win.  
If we keep on shouting  
Christmas won't come again!"

As Manny continued,  
The other two stayed silent.  
They held their tongues tight  
And stopped acting violent.

"Christmas is about fraternity,  
Kindness, undying qualities!"  
He exclaimed very passionately,  
Intolerant of their disharmony.

"Withdraw your quarrels, comrades!  
We're in an era of need.  
Cordiality is our friend.  
That you recognize this, I plead!"

Grover and John glared at Manny,  
Seemingly still willing to bicker.  
But then they diffused,  
His speech having soothed them like liquor.

And thus joy returned,  
For the argument had adjourned.

They sat around the fireplace,  
Admiring the open space.

They all laughed together,  
Tolerating the cold weather.

And around the flames,  
Whiskey was drunk with games.

But all the while, surrounding their metropolis,  
The flooded world was still a necropolis.





# The Christmas Illness

By Ducktoot

9



I stared at my lap to avoid the gaunt faces of my cousins. Aunt Cindy and Dad were attempting to keep Christmastime jolly, purposefully singing out of tune in hopes of getting the children to smile. But nothing could mask the groans of pain that echoed from the other side of the locked door.

Dad led the goofy spectacle with a terrible rendition of "Baby it's Cold Outside," but it only resurfaced bittersweet memories of when Uncle Ernie and Dad used to sing the duet together. With so many family members gone, now we could all easily fit on the couch with room to spare. Too many had fallen ill.

Another muffled groan came from the other side of the locked door.

"Come on Brit," my dad coaxed, raising his voice over the horrible noise. "Why don't you unwrap the first present?"

A small parcel was placed in my shaking hands. I fumbled with the ribbon before setting it down on my lap.

I shook my head. "Let Will or Mikey go first."

My words caught the attention of my younger cousins who snapped out of their joyless stupor. They eagerly lunged for the two biggest gifts under the tree and ripped off the wrapping paper with beaming smiles. It was the first time I had seen them smile since their dad had become afflicted with the Christmas illness.

*BOOM!*

The house shook and a series of loud, inhuman moans came from behind the locked door. Everyone backed away and my cousins ran behind their aunt, fistfuls of wrapping paper still clutched in their tiny hands. I locked eyes with my dad and we both raised our shirts to cover our mouths and noses in a swift, practiced maneuver. The rest of the family followed suit.

Immediately tears welled in our eyes and fits of coughing rippled through the living room. My youngest cousin Mikey didn't cover his face in time and crawled underneath the coffee table, puking on the rug. Everyone, even Mikey's mother, stepped dubiously away from the newly-sickened child. Even though I had faced the toxic fumes before, my head still felt like it would implode.

A blur of motion through my watery eyes showed my worst fear unfold. Dad was walking toward the door—unarmed.

"Dad, no!" I spluttered in a wheezing fit. "Stop!"

Determined, he didn't look back, nor did he cower from the pained grunts and wet splatting sounds coming from the end of the hallway. Instead his hands formed into two tight fists and he banged forcefully on the door.

"ERNIE, FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, I'M SORRY I MADE ENCHILADAS FOR CHRISTMAS DINNER! BUT IF YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE A DUMP IN OUR BATHROOM, AT LEAST TURN THE FAN ON LIKE EVERYONE ELSE!"

# Christmas Blues

By MookieMC

10

Under stress my mind wanders to strange places.

It wandered back to when the world shook on Christmas Day.

Mom and Dad had gone looking for my older sister just as everything fell apart. Sirens sliced the air, alerts blared on the radio, TV reporters were more tongue tied and panicked than informed.

Alone in the living room, the Christmas gifts comforted me. The walls were blue—my favorite color.

Then came the sirens and automated texts commanding everyone to take shelter.

Still, I resisted. Until I heard the explosion. The shockwave blasted out our windows, made the house tremble, and knocked over the Christmas tree and me along with it. It was the first time I'd heard screams outside—*real* screams.

Under stress, my mind wanders to strange places. Every Christmas, Mom and Dad would set aside a special gift for me to open last. It was always the one wrapped in blue. And now, lying on the floor, I could see it. The other presents were crushed by the tree, but somehow the blue gift had survived.

I pushed myself up, snatched the gift, and hobbled down to the shelter. Dad called it a basement for the basement. A steel door set into a cinder block wall. Behind it was a short tunnel—a dark journey that we'd practiced many times as a family.

Dad always said to go when the official order arrived, even if I was alone.

I was alone.

We never closed the doors behind us during the drills. The first one was steel and slammed shut with a deep, rusted clank. I held my phone out for light. It shook along with me as I made my way through the narrow passage.



The second door was concrete, like the entrance to a tomb. I opened it and air rushed around me as I crossed the threshold and stepped inside. The door secured behind me with a thud, sealing my fate.

Then the Earth cried out and the *real* rumble hit. Earthquakes, eruptions, explosions. They all paled in comparison. Especially to the silence afterward.

The texts, alerts, and warnings all stopped. The phone connection was gone. Only the sound of my heartbeat and breathing remained.

The emergency shelter could hold a family of four for a year. It had to. Once the second door closed, it would not open for 365 days.

Then, a knock—or more like a thud—at the concrete door. I could hear my dad's voice on the other side. He was screaming in agony. Pleading.

His cries melded with Mom and my sister. They were mad that I'd gone without them.

I looked down at the gift I'd brought. I unwrapped it. Inside was a small can of paint and a brush. A hint from Dad. We'd been planning a project together. I wanted blue bedroom walls.

Under stress, my mind wanders to strange places. The screaming continued, and I wondered if the shelter walls would look better in blue.



# The Three Wise Zombies

By Abbey

11

Three zombies—Bal, Mel, and Gasp—were dawdling about the barren wasteland of Ohio, bickering under the moonlight about where to find their next meal.

"I know!" Bal said with a crusty grin. "We should look for humans at Cedar Point. They love cotton candy and snow cones, especially the fat ones."

Mel looked up from his book, brushing his long, dead hair from his shrunken eyes. "Dude, that's like, an hour's walk. Let's just, like, wait for some kid to come by and scoop out his brains."

"Yeah, I don't want to go either," Gasp said. His teeth chattered loose in his mouth, like sugar cubes dangling from strings. They were riddled with holes and bacteria except for one shining gold incisor. "Abandoned amusement parks give me the creeps."

Bal glared at them. "You lazy bones! If it wasn't for me, you would've turned to dust long ago. Who was the one who found that guy Murphy with the little appetizer dog last week? Me! And I say we should—"

At that moment, one of the stars in the sky burned brighter than the rest, flaming like a torch in the darkness of night.

"Holy cranium!" Bal said. "It's a sign from Zod!"

"Oh don't start going on about Zod again," Mel droned.

"Yeah, Zombie God freaks me out," Gasp said.

Bal turned to them, his decrepit, peeling face festering with resolution.

"Come on, you zom-babies! It's a mission from Zod. If anyone can lead us to the tastiest, moistest brains, then it's him up there in Zeaven."

Mel groaned and closed his book. "Ugh, fine. But only if it's less than an hour's walk."

Gasp shivered so hard his arms popped off and fell to the dusty ground. "I dunno, zombie heaven gives me the creeps."

"Shut up, Gasp!" Mel yelled. "Pick up your arms and let's go!"



The three zombies trekked across the Ohio desert, with nothing more than the Star of Zod to guide them, and their three gifts: Gasp's gold tooth, Mel's moldy copy of *Frankenstein*, and Bal's decaying head of some guy named Murphy. Seven days and nights they shambled and moaned, until the Star of Zod disappeared.

"Medulla oblongata!" Bal shouted.

"I knew this was a waste of time," Mel mumbled.

"The brightest flame burns quickest," Gasp whispered.

"Shut up, Gasp!" Bal yelled. "It's another sign from Zod. Look!"

Before them stood a shining building spared by the apocalypse. Rich yellow light flowed from the windows. The hum of generators buzzed in the air.

On the building was a sign: Michigan Institute of Cryonics.

Mel's shrunken eyes grew three times their size. "Cryonics means frozen bodies."

"Which means people-popsicles!" Gasp said, teeth chattering with glee.

"Exactly!" Bal said. "Now, let's give Zod thanks for this meal."

The three of them placed down their gifts of gold tooth, *Frankenstein*, and Murphy. Smacking their scabby hands together, Bal led them in an ancient prayer.

"Rub a dub dub, thanks for the grub!"



**Thanks for reading!**

If you liked what you read here and want to be a part of the madness we create every stream, then feel free to join us sometime at the [ScottWritesStuff Twitch channel](#).

Hope to see you soon,  
and Happy ~~Half-Life~~  
Holidays!