

Letting Off Steam

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I lean over the balcony and line up my shot before letting the glass ball slip through my fingers. I watch as the snow globe falls, rotating slowly until it makes contact and shatters, sending glitter-flecked water spraying across the ground.

'Shit! Missed.' I reach backwards without taking my eyes off the old man who'd been my intended target and who had unexpectedly shuffled to the left while the glass sphere was in free fall. 'Get me another one.'

I feel the weight in my hand as I'm passed the next one from the bag. My target is now looking down at the shards of glass scattered around his feet, seemingly wondering where they'd come from. A few others look round too, attracted by the noise of the breaking glass, but they all soon lose interest and go back to staring off into the distance. I line up the shot again and this time I get a direct hit. As before the snow globe shatters but so does the skull it just collided with and the spray of glitter and water is mixed with the red of blood, the cream of bone and the grey of brains.

Beside me Jan leans over the parapet, 'That was way cool!'

We look at each other and laugh; I offer her the next snow globe from the backpack we've lugged all the way up here, 'You want a go?'

'Nah. I don't mind watching, but this is your thing, not mine.'

I shrug and line up another shot, this time a young woman. I let the globe fall and again score a direct hit and I'm rewarded with another spray of glitter, blood, skull and brains. This will carry on until we run out of snow globes and I feel all the tension leave my body; only then will we sneak back to our safe house.

We've all got our favoured ways of working out whatever demons are haunting us at any given time, and sometimes I think it's the only thing which is keeping us sane. I mean, if we didn't let loose every once in a while, all we'd have is the daily struggle to survive and if that's all there is to live for we might as well give up like so many others have before us. For most of us, this involves killing zombies which now infest the world around us in a particularly gratuitous manner. When you're fighting for your very survival, you need to be quick and efficient, but when you're hunting them for fun, you have the upper hand and you can afford to be more inventive.

Jan likes mowing them down with whatever vehicle she can get hold of. Usually, this is a four by four of some kind or other, but on one memorable occasion she somehow managed to get her hands on a combine harvester. That day she came back so glowing with excitement she didn't need to do it again for almost six months. Max prefers a more explosive approach, specifically lobbing sticks of dynamite at them; Jamie likes to fry them to a crisp with her homemade flame-thrower; Mike jousts – running them through with long metal poles as he speeds towards them on a motorbike. It doesn't kill them, but they can't exactly move around with ten feet of steel sticking through their chests.

Me, I like dropping things on them from a great height. I'd started off with bricks and cinder blocks but then I moved onto bowling balls; it was only recently I'd got into snow globes, but I'd found the effect strangely addictive from the moment I'd seen the first one smash into a zombie's head – all that blood and glitter: it's just so incongruous. I know I'll run out of them soon, but for now it's the way I like to unwind when things are getting too much. After all, even in a zombie apocalypse you've got to find a way of letting off steam every now and then.