

Chapter VI

*T*hese creatures around me jargle

incomprehensive words. Their eyes gleam with odd anticipation, as those of the fruit-selling man. Thoughts of escape and action streamline through my head. I am faced with a crucial decision, which could result in many harmed men. I have been trained to fight, as an apprentice of a knight, but I have never fought in an actual battle. Suddenly the figures stop moving. I almost stare in disbelief, but instead skirt around the many figures and run.

It is easy to run, since the small makeshift pack I carry is nearly empty, as I was hoping to refill on supplies at the last town. The village, Newport, which I am fleeing from, was near a seaside port, from which I there figured it would be easy to replenish my supplies. I will instead have to go on past Newport hoping that Greytown will have enough supplies, but I am not sure, as it is in the countryside.

I dart this way and that, moving left and right, passing decrepit figures that seem to have once been people, struggling to stand as they totter after me. I am convulsing with horror and shock, and my stomach lurches as though knocked down in a fencing match. I take off again blindly, tearing through the blackness of the night. I hear thundering footsteps, though I am not sure if it is my own

heart beating. I tear through the grass, having completely lost the path in the staggering darkness. Through the dark haze, I spot a tiny, shimmering light. Indecision breaches my core, but my shallow breaths take over my legs, and I hasten my pace. I seem to not be realizing where I am going and stumble and fall over. I hope this will not be my death, here in Newport, running from these horrible creatures. I scramble forward on my knees, making all possible effort, meanwhile, in the darkness and gloom, the package containing my dwindling supplies and belongings, gets lost in the haze. I realize only seconds afterwards, but is too late, there's no turning back. Instead, I rise until I am standing, and dash forward, not turning back to face the creatures, or the way they stagger, as if just returning from a bar. I continue forward, towards the white light, as if it is my last hope from heaven, which possibly, it could be. I tear through the dirt, hearing the sounds behind me growing closer, louder, the pants of the creatures and the thumps of their footsteps behind me. My energy is almost completely drained, and I am unsure how long I will be able to keep fleeing these beasts. Finally, I collapse, unable to continue, and in that moment, I am too weary to move again.

“Well, well, well, what have we here? One of those infected country boys, eh? I suppose we’ll have take this one in too, Marge? Marge! Come looky over ’ere. We got one o’ those country boys. Marge! Arghh, guess I’ll have to take ’im in by myself. Hmph. Hey, this one ain’t got anything with him. Wonder why that is.”

This strange Irishman carried the English Arthur Finnigan into his small house, grumbling all the while. This Irishman named Conall carried in the boy that would become one of the most well-known men in all of England, without knowing what the consequences of their friendship would form.