

In what remains among the mountains near Salt Lake City is a really old dude. He is around six feet tall, covered in mottled green, yellow, and tan skin with the occasional patch of his natural, dark brown pigmentation. His patchy grey and white hair is naturally somewhat curly however he regularly shaves it with the exception of his scrubby beard. He almost appears to be a man in a preserved state of decomposition, like poorly cured leather come to life. This mutation of his skin goes deeper. His internal organs have also adapted to the background radiation of his homeland. He suspects this is why he has lived to be as old as he is. He appears to be physically fit but not a paragon of athletic achievement. He is neither portly nor emaciated, though parts of his body do seem somewhat abnormally proportioned due to his rough, uneven skin. A robotic eye is in place of where his left eye should be, a glint of red light occasionally projecting from it like a robot from science-fiction. He is an Australian man who is 187 years old yet hasn't seen his homeland for 153 of those years. For good reason since most of it is an irradiated wasteland. His accent is all but lost. His mother and father were raised in the generation following that great calamity which annihilated so much of the world's population. This man's parents were passed down stories of the world before, a place they would never understand. He never met his grandparents. They didn't survive too long after the catastrophe. He was born in what was once known as the state of South Australia, inland as was traditional of his people the aboriginal Australians. Being from a sparsely populated area, his home was not a direct recipient of destruction. He was raised by his parents in the fallout.

There is not much this man remembers about his life, even his name. The locals in Salt Lake City call him, "Old Man." It's not very creative, but it's better than, "Hey you." He was born with one eye that much he can remember. He fixed that issue before he left his homeland. He modified one of the village's few smartphones to interface with his brain in a rudimentary fashion. He scavenged the hardware over the course of years, and with the village's blessing, scrapped the smartphone for use as a cybernetic eye. After that, much of his history is hazy. It is almost like he can only remember the beginnings of his life with any clarity. He knows he went on many adventures as captain of a small trading vessel. He kept some notes of his life saved inside his eye. Photos, short video logs, and text do not make lasting memories for him however. Not even the myriad esoteric trinkets which dot his small room spark any memories without him having to look them up in his eye. And now he finds himself in Salt Lake City in a sort of retirement. His body is not tired, but his mind is weary, looking for some peace after what was assuredly a life of excitement if only he could remember.

Old Man now lives in the second story of a blown out bar called The Queen Bee. Instead of making stories through travels, he is content to collect them from passersby and bar patrons. Though the old, brown brick building is in a state of disrepair, Old Man takes pride that he is open every night besides Sunday due to the faithful's laws. The land used to be called Utah, part of the United States. But much like his homeland, the region suffered from nuclear holocaust. It is now called Deseret, apparently like it was once called in days long since passed. Of the many

factions in the area, the Mormons remain one of the most powerful. Their laws are a bit strict for Old Man, but he abides all the same. There is strength in their numbers, and there is relative peace by the Great Salt Lake. The few times he and some of his friends have gone down to Moab, however, tells a whole different story. Each time they have visited down there, a different gang has run the show, with different tolls, and progressively more hostile intentions. Now he just stays at his bar, occasionally working on his wooden rowboat, and taking it out on the lake.

Besides Old Man, there are five other tenants in his bar. For quite modest rent, they keep him company and help out around the bar when needed. His eldest tenant, Beatrice Collins, has lived less than half the life of Old Man at the ripe old age of 64. Her son Tom, 42, and his son Travis, just turned 18, both live with her. Tom Collins (a name which Old Man enjoys given his bartending profession) lost his wife to raiders down in Provo awhile back; he doesn't talk about it much. Poor Travis hardly remembers his mother. All members of the Collins family have the same ruddy brown hair, tan skin, and blue eyes. Beatrice's genetics are strong, apparently. Old Man's fourth resident April O'Hara is an immigrant to the city like Old Man. She is a young, pale woman of 27 with radiant strawberry blonde hair and green eyes. She has a boyfriend, Chad, who lives down the street. Old Man has an eye on her, always concerned. He knows Chad hits her sometimes, but April is always insistent that Old Man stay out of it. His fifth and final tenant is a young woman named Nasira Kang, 19 years of age. Her skin is a pale tan, indicative of her Arab-Asian biracial heritage, eyes a deep brown, and her natural hair color is black though she frequently dyes it many rebellious neon colors. She is an outcast to her family; apparently they live near the east coast. She treats herself to the isolation, embraces it. Old Man considers her like a daughter and kindred spirit. More than April, he has taken her under his wing. He approves of the awkwardly budding romance between her and Travis Collins unlike Travis' grandmother. Beatrice and Old Man often gossip about it after hours.

Nasira spends a lot of her days alone, scrapping out in the desert. Sometimes she will be going for days. Old Man doesn't worry about her when she's on long trips. He knows she is more than capable of handling herself. After all, she ran away from home on foot further than anyone he can remember (or has recorded). Nasira Kang is willpower personified; never stubborn but always insistent on fighting for her beliefs. Old Man respects that. It reminds him of his younger years when he wasn't so world weary, well as much as he can remember. She came all the way to the middle of the desert to escape her family. She doesn't talk about them much, she would rather forget about them. From what he's gleaned, Old Man thinks Nasira might come from a political family or maybe military. She has a rebellious streak indicative of a strict upbringing, always having to pretend to be someone she wasn't. Old Man gets that. When she returns with a haul, she'll give some interesting parts to his tinkering...for a fair price. If the faithful ever caught him giving her bottles of tequila it'd be game over for The Queen Bee. The rest of her scrap she sells to the junk traders, somewhat unsavory characters found on the

perimeter of town. They give her decent money, but she still takes a couple shifts a week at the bar. It gives her time to catch up with Old Man, and time to make eyes at Travis.

Travis, the youngest member of the Collins family, is the sole recipient of Nasira's affection. Old Man feels deep sadness when he thinks about the life Travis has led. Tom, the boy's father, did not keep himself together after his wife was murdered. Travis began to burden himself with the emotional weight of the family. It's like he sucked up the grief of his father like a sponge, bearing it himself. Tom is mostly reticent, but he's a good man, does his best. Travis, however, looks like a perpetually injured animal. The boy needs to enjoy life more, like his grandmother. Beatrice is a no nonsense woman and a shrewd manipulator of local politics. She and Old Man occasionally trade verbal blows, but she is generally congenial (if only for her own purposes). She pushes Travis outside his comfort zone, most times failing. The boy is drowning in the sorrow of his father's tragedy. Beatrice and Old Man are at a loss at what to do, trying the intermittent effort together like a buddy cop film. Old Man is beginning to think Travis may be a lost cause if Tom doesn't step up and do something.

Besides his tenants, a young boy no older than 10 often stops by begging for food scraps and blankets. Against Old Man's overtures that the boy stay with him and his ragtag family, the young one always refuses. He has gleaned that the boy is named Jeb and is most likely one of the many homeless faithful who lost his parents. Old Man wishes he could convince Jeb and any of his remaining family to live in one of the spare rooms left in the second floor of the bar. Besides one of the street facing rooms which has a demolished exterior wall facing outward (which the occupants use as a communal living room), there are three rooms left unoccupied.

The most recent gossip Old Man has received from Beatrice is that April will soon be leaving with Chad down to Moab. Beatrice is a bit of a woman about town, always on the hunt for information. She enjoys playing her games of city politics in the relative (physical) safety of her older age. Nobody wants the social stigma of being the one responsible for beating a grandma. Old Man knows this isn't what April wants (she has frequently told him how dangerous Moab is and to stop his own visits), and maybe now is the time for him to do something about it. His knives are sharpened, his guns oiled, and his sidekick Nasira is ready to go. Within a week's time April will be moving out with Chad. Perhaps a bit of intimidation will get the idiotic meathead to leave April alone. Hopefully Old Man's throbbing headache and pain in his right eye will assuage by then, but for now his one good eye is killing him.