

"The World Awaits"

by Scott A. Madoulet

I pause at the threshold, looking into the World. Why do I hesitate? Why am I so afraid?

The skull carved into the rock to my left is a warning to all those who would leave this darkness. The rock and the dark may make this place seem confining, but it gets comfortable, too. It's safe in here with no temptations, no distractions, no one else to complicate things. I like the dark and the quiet, the hard floor, the hard walls, the hard bunk. Just me and my thoughts, alone with all the others here, we are all alone.

It feels like I am gazing up at the World from the bottom of a grave. Because in here, in the dark, I'm dead to the world. And sadly, I'm o.k. with it. We are the true Walking Dead. Forgotten, or seldom remembered, we trudge through our isolated lives in the dark and the rock. An occasional stray beam of light may deliver a letter or a package,

momentarily remembered (from guilt?), but soon the soothing darkness settles in, comforts again.

The owners of the rock which surrounds me, they have told me its time to leave. But I don't want to go. I'm afraid of going out into the world. It was so, so hard to get adjusted to the dark and the rock - the first time. If I make a mistake, if I fuck it up... I don't think I could take it again.

So I pause, one foot on the threshold, looking into myself, checking to see if I'm ready, if I'm worthy, to try life again.

END