

Pain. That was the only thing that was clear in this hazy world. Pain from hunger, pain from malnutrition, pain from lack of sleep; but mainly pain from what I had lost. I had it all, but then I gambled it away, and now I am left with nothing.

Jake

The lights reflect off the polished, crystal-like glass, showing me my disintegrating façade of a body and face. I am only 17, yet I have been in here for months now, and have grown to have a beard. All I can remember is that I woke up in this glass dome with glass all-round, blocking off any possible line of escape.

They can change the weather. The people, on the outside, they can change the weather. They can make it snow, or they can make it rain, or they can make it like a desert, or like an ocean. All they tell me is that they have to see how I react to the different environments, so they can change humanity for the better.

They watch while I eat, and sleep, and move around. They cannot help me, nor I them. They have to send small squirrels or vermin in, so that they can see how I react to their presence. I have to kill them to survive, or I would die of hunger. My source of water is the small, fresh-water stream that is the only thing remotely human in the room.

They have changed it to snow today, so I have to hide out in the shelter I have built in the trunk of a pine tree, which I have nicknamed Snowy, since all of its tendrils are covered in a soft sheet of snow. I don't really have much to do in here, but not dying is right up there on my list of things to do.

Lucy

Being an older person, I cannot move around quite as much as I would have hoped, but, still... I survive. All the time I have spent in this dome, and all I remember is waking up here, and the desperate battle to survive ever since.

The ocean is lapping at the sand, and even though I know it is an illusion, I fall in love with the view. I laze under the palm trees, until it gets dark, and then climb into a tree for the night. The darkness is bad for people like me...

Jake

The lights hurt my eyes, blinding me momentarily before my survival instinct kicks in, and I try to break free. Try. The bonds that hold me to the chair are leather, and appear to have no opening or release. I try to cry, but my mouth won't work.

A man walks in. He sits down next to me. He says: "You were a suitable Candidate."

Lucy

As I open my eyes I see him. My son. Jake