

JOLT: A SAGA OF SURVIVAL

PART TWO: LOCHLEE RESPONDS

Written By

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Based on *Jolt: A Rural Noir*

A Novel By Roberta M Roy

INT. LEM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Lem, Natalie and Thaw shuffle in to find May and Judith rapt on the television.

They join them as all listen to the report.

INSERT - TV

MONTAGE - NEWS FOOTAGE

EXT. MAGDUM HEIGHTS - DAY

Total destruction.

Fires smolder. Buildings leveled. Bodies strewn like sticks.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

The area around Magdum Heights Power Plant is devastated between a radius of four to ten miles. Fires rage to about 16 miles. According to authorities, no terrorist group has yet claimed responsibility. A spontaneous meltdown has not been ruled out. Arson and dirty bombs are suspected as is the possibility of internal sabotage.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

The Injured hobble to the door. Guards hold them at bay.

A fleet of ambulances arrive to unload Patients.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

Hospitals are quickly reaching capacity.

EXT. LOCAL ROADS - DAY

A procession of People trudge along the roadside. They carry luggage, pull wagons full of belongings.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

Those who can should flee to outlying areas where residents need to prepare to accommodate the large number of forced refugees.

EXT. LOCAL ROADS / INTERSTATE - DAY

Miles and miles of bumper to bumper traffic.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

In an effort to keep the traffic on the roads as light as possible, those with cars are urged to ride four in a car.

INT./EXT. TRAIN STATIONS, BUS DEPOTS - DAY

Scores of People on platforms and at gates.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

Where available, use rail and bus transportation.

END MONTAGE

NEWS SET

The NEWS ANCHOR (50s) with ETHAN YOUNG (40s).

NEWS ANCHOR

I would like to introduce FEMA representative, Mr. Ethan Young. Can you fill us in on the details, Mr. Young.

MR. YOUNG

Good evening, everyone. FEMA is doing all we can to respond. However, our resources have limits. Currently, we're setting up emergency decon areas at a safe distance. We're in communication with the State Emergency Management Agencies here and in neighboring states.

NEWS ANCHOR

Do you have any recommendations for our viewers, Mr. Young.

MR. YOUNG

Persons in cars evacuating the area are advised to travel in any direction other than east. All vehicles leaving the area are required to carry at least four passengers. Keep windows closed and air conditioners off.

NEWS ANCHOR
Has martial law been declared?

MR. YOUNG
Yes. Martial law is in effect. All travelers are ordered to strip and decon immediately once they've reached a distance of at least 45 miles from the meltdown site. Directly affected communities in all three states are asked to be prepared to make accommodations ready as needed. Until the situation can be completely appraised, each community is asked to establish a communications center in one of the public buildings, preferably the firehouse if there is one, as fire personnel are trained in intercity and interstate communication systems.

TELEVISION REPORTER
Thank you, Mr. Young. And now...

BACK TO SCENE

Lem clicks off the television sound.

May moves to the kitchen.

LEM
Given the range of the fires, as well as a meltdown, arson and dirty bombs seem likely.

THAW
I doubt they have enough deputies to enforce Martial Law statewide. Setting up our own welcoming and monitoring committee has been wise.

LEM
Our Yellow Hats will have to serve as police at times.

MAY
I put out milk and cereal for anyone who's hungry, but I think the best thing for us to do is to go to bed. They'll begin to arrive tomorrow.

INT./EXT. LOCHLEE - LOCAL ST. - THAW'S TRUCK, TRAVELING - DAY
Chaos.

Too many cars on a too narrow roadway.

Residents attempt to direct Thaw around two cars out of gas.
The Families mill about their disabled vehicles.

Cars park helter-skelter wherever there are grassy stretches
beside the road.

A Disoriented Man walks along the yellow line.

In the back, Natalie peeks through the front seat gap.

NATALIE

Worse than I thought. It's a
catastrophe. We've got to do
something.

THAW

Easy to say, Nat. We're doing
everything we can.

NATALIE

We can do more. We need to deputize
police. We need zoning and parking
plans.

(to Lem)

What do you think, Lem?

LEM

I think we need to get these
Newcomers settled in before we take
in any more. That's what I think.

MAY

How? Everyone is pushed to their
limit already.

LEM

Prioritize.

MAY

Prioritize what?

LEM

First priority: limiting the number
of refugees.

MAY

Easier said than done. Especially
when they come by car.

LEM

We need to take Natalie's idea of deputizing citizens and expand it. We're under Martial Law. We expand the number of deputies and use them for more than limiting the number of people getting off the trains.

(pauses)

To do that, we'd deputize more than those who can handle a gun. Peacekeepers don't all need guns.

MAY

You can't have every Tom, Dick, and Harry running around with a gun. Who's to know who's a deputy and who's a thief?

LEM

Identifying badges and similar vests or yellow hats.

INT. TOWN HALL - COUNCIL CHAMBER - NIGHT

Town meeting.

At a long table, Natalie, Thaw, Larry, Lem and Martha.

A Secretary records minutes.

They face a sea of worried locals.

LARRY

The number of new arrivals is steadily increasing.

MARTHA

I met the train the first evening. Six people and one cat got off.

LARRY

Since?

MARTHA

About a hundred by train. A hundred fifty by car.

LEM

The village population is 1,025. That's an increase of 25 percent.

In the audience, Dody rises.

DODY

We collected beds, blankets, and sleeping bags. Twenty-five or so are sleepin' in the fire house, 20 at the church, 50 at the school. Those in the welcomin' committee have some in their homes.

MARTHA

Lochlee is not the train's last stop. I've noticed some families get off, look at the size of the crowd, and get back on. Maybe they decide to get off the line where the numbers have thinned.

NATALIE

We need to encourage more to move on to limit the number of persons we accept.

LARRY

How we do that? We're not likely to get any outside help anytime soon.

NATALIE

We could inform the Northern Line we'll be limiting the number of passengers who can get off. Their conductors make announcements. Keep it to 20 or in the morning, the same at night.

LEM

What about three or four men with weapons on the platform to monitor the situation.

NATALIE

Given the lack of a police, we should deputize 20 hunters, preferably ones with military training. They could line up on the platform as each train arrives.

MARTHA

If we deputize any, they should not be greeters. We need to have non-threatening, reasonable people at the station to explain to those who want to get off.

EXT. LOCHLEE - LAKESIDE - DAY

A disarray of cars, tents, trailers and ice fishing shanties that serve as temporary housing for Refugees.

Discarded clothing litters the area.

People line up to use two Porta-Potties.

Refugees gather around a fire where lunch simmers in a pot over it. A YOUNG MAN (20s) stirs the contents.

YOUNG MAN

(re: pot)

Heating soup's a challenge.

DODY

Only a coupla' Porta Potties, too.

LARRY

Can't wait until we get federal support from FEMA. Or the state.

DODY

Could certainly use the State Emergency Management Agency.

YOUNG MAN

Maybe we could hand out fishing poles. That'd help with food.

(to Larry)

Whadja think, Mayor?

LARRY

At least we're 200 miles from the meltdown. Most of the resettlement to escape radiation is south of us.

EXT. LOCHLEE - VOLUNTEER FIREHOUSE - DAY

SIGN: "Welcome Newcomers"

Makeshift showers hidden by a wood barrier await Refugees. People exit the shower to available towels.

People find clean clothes in boxes on a table.

A Child cries as he resists a shirt his Mother tries on him.

Lem, Thaw, Martha and Natalie sort clothes.

LEM

Thank goodness they accept the requirement to ditch their clothes and shower. No way to guess which of them is likely contaminated by fallout.

THAW

Pretty impressive how the villagers have come up with so much clothing.

NATALIE

Poor-fitting as it might be, I'm sure it comforts them.

EXT. LOCHLEE - TRAIN STATION - DAY

JOSETTE (20s), Mediterranean heritage, nestles a TODDLER (2). She and Martha wait a short distance from the platform.

The train arrives.

Passengers peer from car windows. Curious. Frightened.

ON THE PLATFORM

A number of Women in yellow neck scarves, and three Men in yellow hats and scarves who carry pistols on their waist.

Over 20 People of various ages descend from the cars; some in Family Groups.

The Women in yellow greet People, usher them to vehicles.

FROM MARTHA AND JOSETTE'S VANTAGE

JOSETTE

When is it going to stop? Do we just wait and see? Will we really be able to limit the number to be accepted?

Josette considers the People who climb into vehicles.

JOSETTE

Those with children are very worried.

MARTHA

It's hard to figure what's going to work, Josette. I'm worried, too. Times are difficult.

The Crowd thins.

As they move away, Martha takes the child into her arms.

INT. LEM'S HOUSE - DAY

May prepares breakfast for Lem and herself.

SUPER: "April 14, 2018"

MAY

Nice Dahl and Carrie are still asleep. Moving here from Bain with them was not easy. We were all exhausted from the trek.

LEM

And I'm sure it's been just as rough for Hannah and Judith.

Lem pours coffee and reaches over for May's hand. He gives her blister packs that hold pills.

LEM

Twelve pills. Three for you and four for each of your daughters.

Tears well in Lem's eyes.

MAY

What are they?

LEM

Potassium iodide.

Lem releases May's hand.

MAY

K-I?

LEM

Yes.

Lem sips coffee, wipes his eyes with the back of his hand.

LEM

You know me, May. Always be ready. It's my nature.

May nods in agreement.

LEM

Before I retired from the service, when Madeline and I were living in Waxton, I ordered two, two-week supplies of Potassium Iodide. Just in case. Even then I worried about Magdum Heights going down. Brought them with me when I moved here. Stuck 'em in the back of the medicine cabinet.

(pauses)

We can use them now.

May contemplates the packet.

MAY

Are they enough?

LEM

They recommend taking it daily for as long as there is exposure.

MAY

These won't even last a week.

LEM

Best I can do.

Tears in May's eyes now.

LEM

Chances are that the greatest amount of radioactive intake is early, right after the event. There is a good possibility the fallout had not even reached your area before you left. Probably Natalie's sister, Judith, and her daughter are at the greatest risk. They were in a mall near the first dirty bomb that went off in Aesopolis, and were on their way back when others went off along their route.

MAY

They were in the car. That should have provided some protection.

LEM

Yep. Some shelter. But you know the jig: time, distance and shelter. Luckily too soon for it to have entered the drinking water where they were. Hopefully they showered.

Lem gives his sister a hug.

LEM
Let's not get hung up worrying
about it. Most people who make it
through events like this go on
living. As we always said in the
service... if you can walk out,
you'll live.

May, inconsolable.

LEM
May. Calm yourself.

Lem pulls May to him, holds a clean handkerchief to her nose.

LEM
Blow.

May BLOWS and then laughs.

MAY
Sorry I'm such a big baby.
(thinks)
You want me to talk to them about
it?

LEM
I think we just keep it simple.
Tell them we're being overly
cautious and the pills will help in
case they have been exposed to any
radiation. If they ask if you think
they have, just tell them it's very
doubtful and let it go at that.

Lem sighs, leans his head against May's.

LEM
It's the best I can do, May... the
best I can do.

MAY
It's the best anyone could do. The
best anyone could do.

They stand in silence, hold one another until tears in May's
eyes well over. She wipes them away with Lem's handkerchief.

INT. TOWN HALL - NIGHT

Larry kicks off the town meeting.

Larry, Natalie, Lem, Martha and Thaw at the head table.

They face a growing audience of locals and Newcomers.

LARRY

Natalie serves on the Bain Planning Board. She'll address the need for the orderly assignment of temporary housing for Newcomers.

NATALIE

I'm impressed by the number of people who have already taken in Newcomers.

(applauds)

Many are living in their cars or ice-fishing shanties. Some brought tents and travel trailers. A few built lean tos.

LARRY

The lumber yard is running out of materials.

Dody rises from the crowd.

DODY

I been working among the Newcomers. A bunch have carpentry skills. We should pull them all together to help with a plan to build shelters.

LARRY

Dody, would you take on that job?

DODY

I can do that. There are a couple here right now who might be willing to help.

LARRY

Thank you. Please arrange for them to meet with us tomorrow evening.

Dody trades nods with a few Men in the audience.

NATALIE

The board drew a zoning map. The plan is to place temp dwellings in rows to form streets that we'll name. Then we'll number dwellings so each resident has an actual address.

LARRY

Cars will park in orderly fashion at the lakeside near the boathouse, in the church parking lot, and, if needed, on one side of secondary roads.

Larry finds Dody in the Crowd.

LARRY

Dody? Could a team of carpenters move poorly placed temporary housing to the lakeside.

DODY

We'll look into it, Lar.

NATALIE

We need an increased number and formalization of a deputized force.

LARRY

Regarding deputies, the Board has doubled the number of deputized peacekeepers -- I prefer we not call them police -- just as we have been doing. All wear similar yellow peaked hats and neck scarves.

(pauses)

The Peacekeepers will educate and guide Newcomers to areas where they might park their cars and establish temporary housing in orderly ways.

THAW

In time we might expect FEMA to provide trailers, tents, or prefabricated dwellings of some sort. However, for now, everyone has to make do.

LARRY

It's late, so let's call it a night. Anyone who hasn't been deputized and would like to serve as a Peacekeeper please see me before you leave. Not all Peacekeepers will be expected to carry a weapon.

INT. LEM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Larry, May and Thaw over coffee.

LARRY

I need to see it for myself, but
how's the communication center
coming along?

LEM

Good for local, but I haven't been
able to contact state or federal
services at SEMA or FEMA. Not by
phone or e-mail.

MAY

Probably overwhelmed.

LEM

I did get through to the Red Cross.
They'll send an E-R-V, Emergency
Response Vehicle. Problem is
they're all in use and cannot say
when one will be free.

THAW

I've seen 'em work. Hard to believe
how much food they serve in a day.

LEM

A two person team can distribute
about 1200 meals a day. Hot or
cold. Plus cleaning materials,
shovels and rakes.

LARRY

At least the communications center
works...

LEM

...to a degree.

INT. TOWN HALL - EVENING

Another town meeting underway.

DODY

Dang blast it! We got a real
problem with the shortage of
outside plumbing. Won't be long
before we're all sick from the
waste.

Relaxed FILMORE SMORE (40s) leans back and speaks.

FILMORE SMORE

Tell us about it. At my place near the lake the flies and smell are getting worse every day. They're using the woods behind my house. There are so many that when the wind changes, I have to close my windows. Pretty soon people are going to be getting sick. And it's not going to be from fallout.

DODY

What we need are some shovels.

FILMORE SMORE

You ain't gonna get me out there shoveling sand over other people's droppings.

DODY

Blast it! I'm not talking about covering it up. I'm talking about digging holes. Makin' privies.

FILMORE SMORE

Yeah, Mr. Know-it-all. And who's going to dig the holes? Dody Wamp? We got enough to do now.

DODY

Listen, Filmore. You're with us or agin us? We pass out shovels to the Newcomers. Those who can make boxes big enough to sit over the holes. With covers if possible. Where they can, families make outhouses for themselves. Then we find slaked lime and distribute it for them to put down the covered holes to reduce germs and odor buildup from the waste.

WILLIAM McCLEAN (40s) stands.

WILLIAM MCLEAN

When I was in Vermont one summer, I worked on the Appalachian Trail. They had moldering privies. They were environmentally safe. If we built that kind, we wouldn't have to worry about the lake.

DODY

I don't know a dang thing about molderin' privies. But I heard of 'em. Suppose we ain't got enough slaked lime? What then?

WILLIAM MCLEAN

Duff: decayed matter that covers the forest floor. You build a wood pyramid-shaped crib over the pit.

(scans audience)

Saves having to dig more than a few inches down.

(to Dody)

Then you fill the bottom and up the sides with eight inches of duff. You can also use pine shavings. Then ya' throw in a bunch of red worms to aid in compostin'. Has to be kept moist and mixed every so often to keep it going.

DODY

What do ya do when it fills?

WILLIAM MCLEAN

Move it. Cover over the spot with more duff to keep animals out.

DODY

May be easier to build and keep regular ones. May be better. You sure you know how to build one?

(looks around)

The way I'd build it, the stuff probably be runnin' out the sides.

(serious)

Don't laugh. That's what'd happen.

A few people laugh.

LARRY

Dody, why don't you and William come up with a plan that will work and get some of the Newcomers to join you in solving the problem.

Dody and William nod to each other.

INT. FIREHOUSE - DAY

The communication center: phones, computers, fax machines, a copier and TV.

Five desks with SIGNS: "SANITATION, HOUSING, WELCOME, FOOD, MEDICAL".

A walled-off sleep area offers a place for overnights and anyone in need of a power nap.

LARRY

Things are moving smoothly around the showers.

LEM

I think you know everyone here.

Those at the desks nod or wave a hello.

LEM

As coordinator, I'm supposed to handle FEMA and SEMA. Still no response.

LARRY

You have your work cut out for you.

The SANITATION COORDINATOR (40s) offers his hand to Larry.

SANITATION COORDINATOR

We all do. We're finding work on the step ups a bit bumpy. Got a few dug with bases finished. Just have to build privacy walls on the sides facing the settled areas.

The WELCOMING COORDINATOR (30s) joins them.

WELCOMING COORDINATOR

As for the showers, the men are comfortable with the firehouse outside showers, but the women and children prefer to use the school.

The HOUSING COORDINATOR (30s) reports.

HOUSING COORDINATOR

I'd say we've settled in 'bout 250 Newcomers. Most still stay in cars, vans, trucks, tents, trailers, lean tos, and ice shanties.

INT. MARTHA'S HOUSE - BACK DOOR - DAY

Martha welcomes Natalie and May.

MARTHA

So glad to see you. Rozlyn and
I need all the help we can get.

She leads them into the --

KITCHEN

where Rozlyn sorts clothing donations.

MAY

Nice to see you, Roz. Martha says
you've been a great help.

ROZLYN

She's not only taken in my girls
and me but my husband too. I do
whatever I can.

MAY

Where's Granny?

MARTHA

Working in the garden.

NATALIE

You have a garden now, Martha?

MARTHA

Granny does. Works on it every day.
Doing nicely. Does what she calls
intensive gardening. She plants
enough for a family of five in a 12
by six area by putting plants close
together.

NATALIE

That started with Hippies in the
Sixties. Less weeding to be done.

ROZLYN

And the amount of needed water.

MARTHA

But we have work to do.

MAY

I can't believe the quantity of
clothes you've received.

MARTHA

They're coming in by train not only
from the U-S but Canada. And for
all seasons.

NATALIE

What would you like us to do?

MARTHA

We're sorting things into men's, women's and children's for starters. Then by size and season.

MAY

Looks like over time we'll have plenty for all. My worry is food.

NATALIE

The Red Cross is supposed to send an E-R-V. No one knows when though.

ROZLYN

We need to follow Granny's lead.

NATALIE

And the needs of those closer to the meltdown to lessen. I hear the hospitals in Bain are overrun.

MARTHA

I can't imagine what it must be like downstate.
(laughs to herself)
Here, I guess we're the Red Cross.

EXT. LAKESIDE - TREELINE - DAY

Dody, William and Newcomers JIM and LUKE, both twenties, tote lumber and tools to build privies.

WILLIAM MCLEAN

This is a good spot. Soil's raised from the level of the beach and porous. We mark out the area to dig with a stake and connect them with the rope.

They go about the task.

Dody picks up a sledgehammer.

DODY

Okay, Will. Put 'er where you want it and I'll knock it in.

William places stakes that Dody hammers in.

LATER

The stakes in place.

WILLIAM
We'll dig then build a platform to
step up onto.

DODY
Why don't we each take a side and
meet in the middle?

JIM
Sounds good to me.

Dody moves a wheelbarrow.

DODY
If we put the barrow in the middle.
We could shovel into it, move it
away when full.

He places the wheelbarrow in the center of the staked square.

The Men each take a side and dig.

WILLIAM
Because of the shape, we used to
call 'em 'step ups'.

DODY
Step ups, eh? Sounds good to me!

JIM
Step ups.

LUKE
(laughs)
Step up it is. Kinda cute.

INT. THAW'S CABIN - DAY

Natalie and Thaw over dinner.

NATALIE
Nick-Sue closed? Any idea for how
long?

THAW
Long as they need it to house
Newcomers, I guess.

NATALIE

As for going in on an artists' loft there, I guess that's also off the table.

THAW

For now. I like runnin' art classes at Lochlee High. Just love it. And in the art room. Lucky they didn't use the art room for Newcomers.

(pauses)

Plus the food distribution takes organization.

NATALIE

The villagers are sponsoring collections from here to Canada.

THAW

I supervise the organization and distribution of what comes into the firehouse. How's zoning going?

NATALIE

We use all the locals we can get. The Peacekeepers have less traffic to supervise. Less congestion caused by people living in cars parked along the road. So now they have more time to work on the development of the lane plan and place numbering along the lake.

(laughs)

But no matter, it's a full day everyday.

Thaw puts his hands on her waist.

She responds with her hands on Thaw's shoulders.

NATALIE

You know the zoning map you drew? It's covered with sticky notes.

Natalie strokes Thaw's hair.

NATALIE

Have you seen the nice shelters your Dad and the Newcomers built?

THAW

I'd rather talk about us.

They kiss.

INT. LEM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Lem fiddles with the shortwave radio when May walks in.

He hands a piece of paper to May.

LEM

That was written by a woman who was
in Kiev when Chernobyl went down.

MAY

Hmm. "Terrorism Preparedness for
Nuclear Fallout."

May reads. At a point, aloud.

MAY

Listen to this. "But the
distribution had not been universal
and, as years passed, where people
received the drug, the incidence of
thyroid cancer did not increase.
However, in areas where K-I had not
been made available, previously
rare forms of juvenile thyroid
cancer began appearing in epidemic
proportions. By 1996 there were
1,200 identified cases. Further,
according to the author, the United
States did not take that lesson
seriously enough. While Europe
stockpiled K-I, the United States
stocked limited amounts.

LEM

Yeah.

May looks up from reading.

MAY

She says the fallout moves on
prevailing winds and any early
plume. Why don't we order more?

LEM

I'll give it a go online and if
that doesn't work, I'll pick up a
postal money order and overnight
the order. Enough to cover all of
us for two weeks. Maybe even buy it
in bulk.

MAY

Lem. You're a peach.

They hug.

Lem rises and heads to lie down on the couch.

LEM

May, I'm a little tired.

May covers his feet and then pats his shoulder.

MAY

Love ya

The only reply, a gentle snore.

INT. MARTHA'S HOME - MUD ROOM - DAY

Marlena wags her tail, BARKS.

Martha opens the door. Dody dances through.

DODY

Dang blast it, dog! Git! Git away!

MARTHA

Good morning, Dody. Marlena! Off!
Off!

DODY

Enough to turn your stomach.
Absolute mess. Whole camp looks
like a rag yard. Clothes here.
Clothes there. Some in large piles.
Shirts hanging from trees. Wet
socks plastered here and there.
Dogs digging through them, taking
one shoe here, another shoe there.
And getting worse.

MARTHA

It's very sad to look at, isn't it,
Dody?

DODY

Gotta' do somethin' about it. No
question. Problem is everyone is so
afraid of the stuff, no one wants
to touch it.

MARTHA

I think the fire department was
asked to do the cleanup because
they're trained to handle hazardous
materials.

(MORE)

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Their spouses wouldn't let them do it. Said it was the Newcomers' problem and they should handle it.

Rozlyn pads through, barefoot and half asleep.

ROZLYN

Good morning, Dody.

DODY

What? You just fallin' out?

Dody slaps an arm around Roz's shoulders.

She looks up at him with sleepy eyes. He lets her go.

DODY

What's with these young people, Martha? It's near 10:30.

Rozlyn drops shoulders, rolls her eyes at Martha then MOANS.

ROZLYN

Good morning, Martha.

MARTHA

Good morning, Roz. There's oatmeal on the stove. Still warm.

(to Dody)

We could bring it up at council tonight.

DODY

What's worse? Walking into discarded radioactive clothing wherever you turn or picking it up once and putting it someplace where people won't come in contact with it?

MARTHA

The thing is no one knows how radioactive anything is. Everything is treated as if it had the power to kill.

DODY

I've been thinking about it. We get a dump truck. Then we spread the risk around.

MARTHA

How do you suggest we do that?

DODY

We make long poles with hooks. Get the people to take turns picking up the stuff. As much as possible, the Newcomers. They drop it in the back of the dump truck. The driver dumps it somewhere we agree is far enough away from everyone. Then we secure the clothes in a pile to keep it from blowing all over like they are now.

MARTHA

Maybe the villagers could borrow dosimeters and sort them according to which are radioactive and which are not.

DODY

Dosimeter, smosimeter! Come on, Martha. Do you realize how much there is to pick up? And then the time involved in first checking then deciding whether to take it or leave it? And the discussion. With the way people are, there would be fights all over the place.

Dody exaggerates hand and body movements.

DODY

You can't take that. My husband loves that. I want that. Oh, good I can keep this, but she can't keep hers.

MARTHA

You have a point. How about to store them we use the old root cellar near where the old Matthews place burned down?

DODY

Didn't think 'a that.

MARTHA

I think it'd work. Once the doors are closed, kids and dogs wouldn't be able to get at the stuff.

DODY

Martha. You're a genius.

MARTHA

And you're not? Come on. Let me show you where I'd like you to put the shelves.

Martha turns and heads toward the front of the house.

MARTHA

With only two closets and six people, I definitely need' em.

INT. LEM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

May folds the blanket that Lem had over him.

MAY

Just in time for coffee.

Judith pads around in an oversized man's shirt and flip-flops. She juggles three bowls.

JUDITH

How about cereal for the kids?

MAY

Sounds good.

JUDITH

Should I move the K-I from the table?

MAY

Wait. When Natalie and Thaw arrive, we divvy them up. Four for each of the girls; three for each of the adults. Did you read the letter Lem has from the Chernobyl survivor?

JUDITH

I did. Pretty persuasive.

MAY

Lem's going to order a two week supply for each of us from a company in Florida. Just don't know how soon they'll get here.

LATER

Natalie and Thaw arrive as Judith and May clear the table.

Lem, Hannah, Dahlia and Carrie pet Tufty.

LEM

Just in time. I see you brought my favorite pup.

Lem moves to greet Thaw and Natalie.

LEM

So, guys. We've divvied up the K-I. Three pills for each of the adults and four for each of the girls.

Keeping three, May hands packages to everyone else.

LEM

Take one a day. I'm ordering more so we'll each have a two week supply.

JUDITH

Together Hannah and I have one week's worth? Do you think the order will arrive in a week?

LEM

We'll have to wait and see. These are just in case you were exposed downstate. I doubt winds brought any fallout here.

JUDITH

I'd rather Hannah took a week's worth.

NATALIE

You both need it.

Judith saves one pill and shoves Hannah's pills into her shirt pocket.

They all down a pill with water.

INT. TOWN HALL - EVENING

Dody squares off against feisty BEATRIZ (50s), a Newcomer.

BEATRIZ

You think we should be the one's to handle things that are possibly radioactive?

Dody spreads his arms, shrugs his shoulders.

DODY

You're the ones who brought' em
here.

Another Newcomer, PETE SANFORD (40s), rises.

PETE SANFORD

My name is Pete Sanford. I was
thinkin' we could use the village
sand truck. I'm new in town, but I
know the lake area. I'd be willing
to drive it mornings if someone
volunteers to drive it afternoons.

Newcomer MARCOS (30s) stands.

MARCOS

I'm Marcos. Pete, we live near each
other. You could drop it off to me
and I'll drive the afternoon shift.

LARRY

Thank you, Pete and Marcos. Pete,
do you think you can find Newcomers
to pick up items and put them in
the truck?

PETE SANFORD

We could do that. Whadayathink,
Marcos?

Marcos nods: sure thing.

LEM

The fire department has reach poles
with hooks on the ends to collect
the clothing.

DODY

Martha and I will talk with the
Matthews about using their root
cellar for storage.

LARRY

Nice proposal, guys. Thank you,
Pete and Marcos.

EXT. MATTHEWS' HOME - PORCH - DAY

MR. AND MRS. MATTHEWS (50s) at the front door.

Dody and Martha on the stoop.

MR. MATTHEWS

Look, Dody. We don't need any radioactivity around us. Ya' know?

DODY

You'd rather have all the kids in town playin' in it, eh?

MR. MATTHEWS

I ain't said that.

DODY

Well, that's what's happenin' now.

MRS. MATTHEWS

Let's talk about it. Can we do that?

DODY

That root cellar of yours is perfect. Underground with a door we can lock so no kids get into it. We gotta do what we gotta do. For the good of the community.

MRS. MATTHEWS

What do you think, Harold?

MR. MATTHEWS

Yeah, I suppose.

INT. THAW'S CABIN - LOFT - DAY

Thaw and Natalie lie in each other's arms.

NATALIE

One day my mom says my dad's better then the next she questions it and seems hopeless.

THAW

His radiation burns will get better. The key is to not become contaminated by a virus or germ with a compromised immune system.

NATALIE

I tell her that. Sometimes it helps and sometimes not.

THAW

He's in the hospital. He's being well cared for. He just needs time.

NATALIE

I tell her that, too. I think she wants me to spend time with her.

THAW

You're needed here. We don't even have a hospital. You know how important your work with the team is here. Look at how instrumental you've been setting up zoning, care centers, housing.

NATALIE

She worries about the fighting and looting they've had.

THAW

We've had it, too. The zoning and peacekeepers have really helped to keep it in check.

Thaw pulls Natalie close and kisses her.

EXT. LAKESIDE - DAY

William McClean and the Sanitation Coordinator converse with the shanty town behind them.

SANITATION COORDINATOR

We're exhausted. All of us. Now we're expected to dig graves and bury the dead. There are so many.

WILLIAM MCLEAN

We need to bring this up at the next town meeting.

(thinks)

We need masons to build crematoriums. Cremation is significantly less labor intensive.

SANITATION COORDINATOR

Never thought of that. But you're right.

INT. LOCHLEE - MAIN STREET - LEM'S VAN, TRAVELING - DAY

Packages of online order KI lie on the floor.

SUPER: "Two Weeks After The Meltdown"

They drive past lines of haggard and sick People waiting for their doses of KI.

MAY

The shipment came so fast. We only missed four days. With the SEMA two week supply, we should be out of the dust.

JUDITH

By the looks of some of those in line, we're the lucky ones.

LEM

We do what we can. In addition to the church and school, we're also parking the fire truck at different points for distribution.

JUDITH

Does it matter if they are locals or Newcomers?

LEM

Nope. Everybody's eligible.

MAY

They must have enough for everyone. Otherwise, I think they would give priority to Newcomers as they're more likely to have been exposed.

NATALIE

A lot in the line look like they have burns. Some have to lean on others. I saw a few with sores around their mouth.

THAW

That suggests a medium dose of radiation.

(pauses)

How patient they are. Despite the many who appear to be affected.

MAY

Martha told me there are many cases of burns and radiation sickness in sick bay.

NATALIE

I imagine the most severe stayed in Bixby.

LEM
Or aren't with us any more.

Lem parks.

They all exit to join the line.

INT. THAW'S CABIN - LOFT - NIGHT

Natalie sobs in the darkness.

THAW
Natalie. Natalie?

Thaw draws Natalie close. She buries her head in his chest.

NATALIE
It's so terrible. So many.
(sobs)
Did you see that little girl with
the blisters along her arms?

THAW
Shhh. Shhh. It's all right, Nat

NATALIE
That man whose kids had to pull him
away from the line. No one to help
them.

THAW
Calm down. It'll be better.

NATALIE
It won't be better!

Thaw kisses Natalie's hair and hugs her. He strokes her back
and wipes her eyes.

Natalie quiets.

THAW
I'll get you water. You need some
water. I'll get tissues, too.

Thaw heads downstairs.

NATALIE
Thanks, Thaw.

She sobs a last time, lies in the dark to stare the ceiling.

INT. TOWN HALL - NIGHT

Dody stands and looks around.

DODY

It took the Salvation Army three weeks to get us all them clothes. In the meantime...
(snickers)
...seein' someone runnin' around naked came to be old news.

NATALIE

With the clothing committee's goods dropped off at the firehouse, the best that can be said is we really needed all that underwear.

LARRY

Now we almost have too much. Well, maybe not. But getting it sorted and distributed makes it seem so.

NATALIE

Even the Newcomers are helping. A lot brought in donations. They've been leaving them at the firehouse where Lem or someone confirms they are radiation free before passing them on.

DODY

Those dosimeters sure are sweet. And useful.
(laughs)
But I still don't get why we have these poor people come to the firehouse to sort through things. Half of 'em are starving, half are sick. All of 'em plain exhausted. I can't figure why we don't pile the stuff into school buses and drive it around.

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Given schools are closed, I could ask the Board of Education if we could use one of our buses.

DODY

Maybe ask for three and label one men's clothing, one women's and one children's.

FEMALE NEWCOMER

That would help. Gives us more space. Makes it easier to sort by size.

MARTHA

We could put different sizes in different seats.

FEMALE NEWCOMER

Or shirts on one, shoes on another.

DODY

I think it'd be good to include cleaning supplies, too. Shovels.

(emphatic)

We gotta get workin' on step ups.

LARRY

Do you think the School Board would approve the use of three buses?

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

They might. I'll ask. Before I do, I'll stop by the communication center. They might also help us develop a plan with the proposal to provide essential contacts.

EXT. LAKESIDE - DAY

Makeshift dwellings all about.

Larry, Natalie, William and Dody take turns to address the group of Newcomers.

Shovels lean against a parked school bus.

LARRY

Thank you all for coming out to talk with us. To say the least, the situation is not the best. However, things are gradually improving. What I wanted to focus on today is improving sanitation by installing advanced versions of the outhouse.

NATALIE

What we hoped was by working together with your families and neighbors, every 200 feet or so along the tree line, you measure off a 12 foot by 12 foot square area and dig out the center of it so that the edges slope into it. To start, we add duff from the forest and a small box with a toilet seat.

LARRY

We've identified areas with soft dirt, good drainage and available duff. Whenever possible, we chose spots with natural cover, like low hanging limbs or large rocks nearby that can provide a degree of privacy without additional work.

WILLIAM MCLEAN

Over the next few days, the plan is to first dig and add duff in the areas marked off by four stakes. Meantime, Dody will work with the carpenters to build wood boxes on which to place toilet seats. These are placed on three foot high stages secured over open-slatted cribs. Leaving space between the slats permits air circulation in the area below the floor. That circulation encourages the growth of organisms that degrade the waste into a low to no odor compost.

LARRY

Where possible, the privies will be placed on high ground so liquids will drain from them into a ditch with a board crosswalk above it leading to the privy steps.

NATALIE

For children and nighttime use by adults, we recommend continuing to use buckets which can be emptied into the toilets in the morning.

Carpenters surround Dody.

DODY

It'd probably be best if all children younger than seven use 'em with an adult nearby. Meantime, once ya have a shovel, come talk to us builders and we'll each take a group to work one of the sites.

LARRY

Please help yourself to one from the bus.

FEMALE NEWCOMER

Okay if I take one for me and one for my husband?

LARRY

I forgot to say, one to a family. Shoveling's pretty grueling. Probably better to take turns.

The Woman nods a thank you.

The Group breaks up, chats with each other as they do.

INT. LEM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

The Crew gathers.

MAY

Stopped by the sick bay yesterday. Crowded. So many with radiation sickness.

LEM

At least it's not contagious. It makes volunteers more willing to help.

MAY

Keeping things sterile is even more of a challenge than if it were bacterial. Sanitation is key. Everyone masks and hand washes constantly. We pray no one becomes sick from an infection.

LEM

Distancing them from one another helps.

MAY

So far, so good. I was thinking.
They could use a few more places to
bed people down.

LEM

Oh?

MAY

And I was wondering if we really
need the air mattress now that me
and my girls have your room and
Judith and Hannah have their own
with you on the couch?

LEM

You wanna donate it?

MAY

Also Natalie mentioned Thaw has one
they don't use. Maybe we could
donate both.

LEM

Fine with me. As for Thaw, good
idea.

EXT. BRICK CREMATORIUM - DAY

Smoke curls from the chimney.

The UNDERTAKER (50s) and TWO ASSISTANTS (30s) tend the
makeshift structure.

UNDERTAKER

We don't have sophisticated
equipment needed to reduce the
ashes to a granular state. I'm
having the carpenters create ten by
ten inch boxes. We place remains in
plastic bags for the families to
pick up and disperse as they see
fit. Some bury them. Others take
them out to the middle of the lake
and disperse there.

FIRST ASSISTANT

Everyone understands we're doing
the best we can.

UNDERTAKER

They understand the need for smaller burial pits is better to handle the numbers who pass.

SECOND ASSISTANT

Not easy. Not easy for any of us. Can't imagine what it's like downstate. Closer to ground zero.

UNDERTAKER

I talked with nursing volunteers and thankfully they anticipate a higher survival rate among those they're treating now. Many with second degree burns seem to be healing well and those with shrapnel wounds don't seem to have radiation sickness. They're expected to survive.

FIRST ASSISTANT

Maybe by fall things will return to normal. You think?

UNDERTAKER

Maybe by fall.

EXT. MOUNTAIN STREAM - DAY

Natalie lolls on a blanket.

Thaw paints.

NATALIE

Can't believe how busy I am. It was hard enough working a reduced three day schedule in Bain from here and balancing my work with the Lochlee Council. Now that I've resigned my Bain job, I may be even busier.

Natalie laughs at the thought.

NATALIE

The Council turned me into a full time zoning guide, Town-Newcomer mediator, and ad hoc committee go-between.

(pauses)

My dad is doing better. And my mom seems to be settled in to caring for him.

Natalie observes Thaw's work for a bit.

He interrupts his strokes, stands back to view the work.

THAW

Whaddayathink, Nat?

Natalie slips her arm around Thaw's waist.

NATALIE

I like it. I like it a lot. More
upbeat than those you've been doing
of the Newcomers.

THAW

Thought I'd take a break from them.

Thaw turns to engage Natalie.

THAW

They do make touching subjects and
like being painted. Regardless
their condition.

NATALIE

I noticed. Definitely a change in
style. Like the one you did of the
mother laughing with her child
while a woebegone old man lies
against a car in the distance
behind them.

THAW

Or the mourners gathered around the
crematorium while birds fly among
the trees.

NATALIE

The teenage boy sitting, head and
shoulders slumped, gaunt and
lifeless, against a tree.

THAW

The family picnicking on the grass
with a moldering privy in the
background.

(pauses)

Still, my favorites are the ones I
do of you, Nat.

Thaw turns to Natalie, brush held at a distance.

He looks into her eyes.

THAW
Can't beat your coloring. Or your
lines.

EXT. THAW'S CABIN - DAY

Natalie dries her hair as Thaw paints.

NATALIE
Lem said fighting has been breaking
out in the camps. Blames it on the
hot weather.

THAW
Hmm.

NATALIE
Do you think we're going to have
problems with violence now?

THAW
Don't know.

NATALIE
Wonder what they're fighting over?

Thaw takes a step back to size up his work.

He shrugs: clueless.

NATALIE
Suppose things get out of hand. Lem
says every day squabbles and fights
increase. There's also been break-
ins in the village.

Natalie combs hair into place.

NATALIE
He thinks it's mostly bored
teenagers.

THAW
What do you think we should do?

NATALIE
Dunno.

Thaw works with a small brush to detail a child's face.

NATALIE
You know what I think?

Thaw shakes: no

NATALIE

I think we need to expand the role of our Peacekeepers to include maintaining peace among the Newcomers. Their presence in yellow hats adds to the calm along the roads. I think we're going to have to expand deputies' duties to making arrests if necessary. We don't have a jail for them to await trial. Even building holding pens would help especially if we made sure word spread about them being built.

THAW

Not a bad idea.

The child's face in his painting smiles at him.

NATALIE

You know, that's how places like New York City lowered their crime rate to the lowest in years. With understanding and sympathetic police who involved themselves in the community. We would just have to expand the presence of those deputized and keep a few out where the Newcomers have settlements on a daily basis.

Thaw cleans his brush -- done for the day.

THAW

Bring it up at the meeting. We could build a couple of holding pens in the firehouse to hold those arrested until State Troopers take them to the nearest working Court for a hearing.

INT. MARTHA'S HOUSE - MUD ROOM - DAY

Doing his best to avoid Marlana, Dody sidesteps into the mudroom through the back door.

DODY

Well, Martha. Seems those firehouse holdin' pens are helpin'.

MARTHA
Good morning, Dody.

DODY
Since the Yellow Hats picked up
those two boys for breakin' in, the
break-ins are down.

MARTHA
Really?

DODY
Yep. None in a week or more.

MARTHA
How about in the camps?

DODY
The Yellow Hats help. They've set up
card tables with games for the
teens to use and things are calmer.
Nobody's seen a fistfight in a
while, too.

MARTHA
Nice to hear.

DODY
Yep. The Yellow Hats in the camps carry
pistols in shoulder holsters hidden
under their jackets.

MARTHA
But everyone knows they're there.

DODY
Yup. Did you know some of them have
been hired for private duty at the
lumber yard?

MARTHA
No. I didn't.

EXT. LEM'S HOUSE - PORCH - DAY

Lem and May with Dahlia and Carrie who play with a Tree Frog.

May hands an empty mayonnaise jar to Carrie.

MAY
For any caterpillars or lizards you
find.

Carrie and Dahlia wander off.

MAY
They love it here, Lem. So relaxing
for them.

INT. LEM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Lem and May prepare lunch.

MAY
The girls are feeding the frog.
They call it Tony because it sounds
good with Toad. It amuses them now
that they have accepted it's really
a tree frog to still call him Tony.

LEM
Cute! Tony Frog.

May swings serious.

MAY
We have a problem, Lem.

LEM
Old one or new one?

MAY
New.

LEM
Fixable?

MAY
I don't know.

Lem puts his arm around May's shoulders.

LEM
Can you tell me in ten words or
less?

MAY
It could be serious.

LEM
Ten words or less.

Lem kisses May on the cheek, lets her go and sits.

MAY
Wild dogs.

LEM

That's ten words or less.

Lem, serious.

LEM

That's the problem?

MAY

About a dozen or so. Running in a pack. They were out there this morning going through the garbage. Carrie wanted to follow them to see where they were going. I asked if she would follow a wild bear. She said no, so I told her the same rule applies here. If she sees them again, she is to come in the house or climb a tree and wait for help or for the dogs to leave.

LEM

Good advice, May.

May, not reassured.

MAY

The problem is that while Dahlia understands the danger, I'm not sure Carrie does.

LEM

Hmm. That could be a problem.

(thinks)

Let's talk about it with them at lunch. For now, I think they should stay inside unless they're with an adult. An adult with a gun.

MAY

The dogs could be a danger to anyone. What are we going to do?

LEM

I don't know. I suppose I could build a fence of some kind. And then Thaw and I are supposed to hunt deer today. It's out of season, but the food shortage is so severe among the Newcomers, the town board has declared open season. There's a good chance we'll come across the pack.

(MORE)

LEM (CONT'D)

That'll give us a sense as to whether or not they're friendly. At least at this point, I think a lot will depend on how hungry they are.

MAY

I suppose.

LEM

At any rate, I'll bring it up at the meeting. It wouldn't hurt if you were to call Larry and leave a message about what you saw. Maybe you could call the communications center and get them to begin collecting information on sightings: when, where, how many, what kind, behavior, and so on.

MAY

I can do that.

INT. THAW'S CABIN - KITCHEN - DAY

Seated across from one another at the table for breakfast, Natalie reads notes.

NATALIE

I took notes on the decisions regarding dog control. The plan is to print out and display new regulations at the firehouse, at the school, churches, and stores.

Thaw sips coffee before he responds.

THAW

This is about the wild dogs.

NATALIE

Well, wild and not wild. On the loose.

THAW

Okay. What did they decide?

Natalie refers to her notes.

NATALIE

First, assess whether or not they pose a threat. If they seem vicious or run when people approach is one thing.

(MORE)

NATALIE (CONT'D)

But if they are tame and friendly, they're to be brought into the kennels being set up. But if they are aggressive, vicious, or run and are out of the view of children, they are to be shot.

THAW

Pretty strong line.

NATALIE

Apparently there is more than one pack of wild dogs. They've been coming into the village. Among the Newcomers. So far they've mostly been stealing garbage. But who knows?

THAW

There are a lot of singletons all over the place.

NATALIE

They're to be taken to the Lochlee Animal Rescue Center. Once at LARC, should their numbers rise to more than 20 and owners for them not found, after 48 hours, they are to be euthanized and cremated.

THAW

They must be worrying the whole community.

NATALIE

They are. Yes.

Natalie glances down at her notes.

NATALIE

Healthy, well-behaved dogs will be kept alive as a priority over sick or vicious ones.

THAW

Who decides?

NATALIE

Persons running LARC. If three people at LARC agree to the need to put down an animal, they can do it.

(MORE)

NATALIE (CONT'D)

And for each animal put down, a record will be kept describing the animal and, if possible, its breed and the reason for euthanizing it.

THAW

If Lem and Larry and I are all hunting together and we come across a dog pack, we put 'em down?

NATALIE

Yup. Gotta keep the community safe somehow.

INT. LEM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Dahlia looks out a window as May prepares breakfast.

A distant WHOOSH-WHOOSH of cut air by helicopter blades.

DAHLIA

Mums! Come quick!

MAY

What is it, Dahl?

DAHLIA

Look! I think it's coming down.

May joins Dahlia at the window.

POV - OUT THE WINDOW

An Army helicopter flies above treetops on course to Lochlee.

MAY

I think they're dropping off supplies, Dahl. It's the military. They're here to help.

DAHLIA

What kind of supplies, Mums?

MAY

Don't know. Maybe medical supplies. Maybe food.

DAHLIA

Let's follow it, Mums.

May smiles at her daughter's enthusiasm.

MAY
I suppose we could. Why not?

Dahlia bullets for the door.

DAHLIA
Come on, Mums. Let's go.

MAY
Let me call Uncle Lem first. He
might know something.

EXT. LOCHLEE - MAIN STREET - SAME TIME

The Helicopter hovers to secure a safe landing spot.

INT. LEM'S HOUSE - DAY

May hangs up the phone.

MAY
Uncle Lem says they're dropping
medical supplies and dehydrated
meals.

DAHLIA
What is that?

MAY
Dehydrated means dried. They do
that so they're lighter, take less
space and last longer.

DAHLIA
Are they going to land?

MAY
Already have. In the open area near
the church at the top of the hill.

She grabs her May's hand, looks up all smiles and expectant.

DAHLIA
Oh, Mums. Can we go see it?

May strokes her daughter's hair.

MAY
Let's go!

She gives Dahlia's hand a quick shake then pulls her toward
the door with the other hand.

INT. MARTHA'S HOUSE - MUDROOM - DAY

Hannah, Carrie, Juanita, and Rozlyn play a board game.

May and Dahlia enter.

MARTHA

Well. Well. Well. Look who's here.
The last of the four musketeers.
Dahlia.

DAHLIA

Guess what we did, Martha!

MARTHA

I can't guess. What?

Dahlia twirls into the room toward the Girls.

DAHLIA

We went down to see the helicopter
bring food and medicine for
everyone.

She looks from Martha to the Girls

CARRIE

Where? Where? Is it still there?

DAHLIA

I don't think so.

Martha, wide-eyed, engages Dahlia.

MARTHA

Where was it? How'd it happen?

DAHLIA

The Army sent it. They took
everything to the firehouse. And
now everyone is lined up to get
some.

The Girls separate from Adults and chatter with excitement.

MAY

It's a mix of mostly Newcomers and
locals. They've got the Yellows
there to maintain order, but the
line is long. I talked with Lem and
apparently the medical supplies go
to sickbay. The line is primarily
for food.

MARTHA

I can imagine the line. Not everyone has a garden like us. Or men with fishing poles or guns to hunt.

MAY

Did you know Lem and Thaw have been contributing to the food supply with fawns that either they or wild dogs brought down.

MARTHA

Oh, really?

MAY

Lem and I have revitalized an old potato patch that's by the house. As soon as the frost passes, we're going to plant peas, string beans, tomatoes and lettuce.

MARTHA

Now that the wild dog question seems to have been settled, even the girls can help with caring for it. They'd enjoy that.

MAY

I agree. I think they would.

MARTHA

Has Lem talked to you about the water supply for the Newcomers?

MAY

Yes. He told me there are two trucks. One near the lake and one by the firehouse. They're replenished as needed in Bain.

MARTHA

So much better. The Newcomers were challenged in their efforts to have clean drinking water. We had many come to our door asking to have bottles filled. Others boiled lake water. Except wood to burn was precious so some added bleach to the lake water and drank that.

MAY

As I came up your street, I saw you
and your neighbors put out pails
and ladles. Some had bottles near
them. Signs said, "Help yourself."

MARTHA

We all try to help.

MAY

Dahl saw Newcomers picnicking along
the way and thought it would be
nice if we picnicked too.

INT. MARTHA'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Granny, Rozlyn and Hannah busy with food prep.

Outside, Carolyn, Juanita and Marlena play Frisbee.

Granny watches them through a window.

GRANNY

Can't find a happier dog than
Marlena playing Frisbee.

Hannah joins her.

HANNAH

Carrie just loves Marlena.

Rozlyn peeks over Granny and Hannah's shoulders.

ROZLYN

Same with Juanita.

GRANNY

May and Dahlia should be here soon.
If Martha is not back from taking
Elaine to the doctor in the next
ten minutes, they'll eat later.

ROZLYN

What about my mom?

GRANNY

She said she would stay at the
sickbay through lunch and finish
cleaning around 2:30. We'll reheat
the soup when she gets here.

HANNAH

What's wrong with Elaine?

GRANNY

Nothing, really. She's going to have a baby and we want to be sure everything is okay.

HANNAH

Oh, wow. A baby. When?

GRANNY

Don't know the date. Hoping the doctor can help us on that.

HANNAH

Where's her husband?

ROZLYN

Sick. From the meltdown.

HANNAH

Did he get burned?

ROZLYN

I'm not sure. But he did get radiation sickness. Pretty bad. They took him to a hospital in Bain.

A KNOCK on the --

BACK DOOR

Rozlyn and Hannah find May and Dahlia there.

ROZLYN

Come in. Lunch is almost ready!

MAY

We didn't come for lunch. We came to pick up Hannah and Carrie.

KITCHEN

Granny wipes hands on her apron.

GRANNY

Just in time. Soup's ready. Lamb quarters, potatoes and fish in broth. Very tasty. Complements of the chefs.

Granny sweeps her hand to indicate Hannah and Rozlyn.

GRANNY

They'd be very disappointed if you didn't partake with us.

MAY

I don't want to be a bother.

HANNAH

Granny made scones with raisins.
Really yummy!

GRANNY

It'll just be you and me and the girls. Stay. Do stay. We're just about to set the table.

MAY

Is there anything I can do?

GRANNY

No. Thank you. Just sit. But Hannah, would you mind telling Carrie and Juanita to take Marlina to her kennel and come in and wash for lunch?

Hannah heads out the back door.

Rozlyn finishes setting the table.

GRANNY

(to May)

If you prefer, we have chopped venison your brother dropped off for us. We'll be having it for supper, but there's more than we need. Would you rather have a burger for lunch?

MAY

(confused)

Lem brought in a deer? He didn't tell me. But no. Soup's fine. I really came to see if Carrie is ready to come home.

GRANNY

She's having such a nice time with Juanita, why not let her stay? And Dahlia, too?

Shy Dahlia stays close to her mother.

MAY

What do you think, Dahl? Should we take Carrie back with us or would you like to stay? You could both stay. Lem will bring you back before supper.

DAHLIA

I'll go with you, Mums. I want to hear what Uncle Lem has to say about the helicopter.

MAY

Shall we take Carrie with us?

DAHLIA

If she wants.

GRANNY

Carrie, you'd like to stay, wouldn't you?

Dahlia looks down, moves closer to her mom.

As she places glasses on the table, Carrie pleads in a look.

CARRIE

Oh, Mom, please can I stay?

Juanita, Rozlyn, and Hannah take seats around the table.

MAY

Well, if Granny says it's okay, I suppose after lunch Dahl and I will leave and pick you up before dinner.

(to Granny)

Will that work, Granny?

Granny ladles soup.

GRANNY

Sounds good to me. If Dahl changes her mind, she can stay, too.

INT./EXT. COUNTY ROAD - MAY'S CAR, TRAVELING - DAY

May drives past the Newcomers' lakeside village.

A deer rotates on a spit over a fire.

Two dressed deer hang from trees.

Dahlia points to the deer on the spit.

DAHLIA

Mums, what do you think they're cooking?

MAY

Probably a deer. This year deer season is even in the summer.

DAHLIA

Why's that, Mums?

MAY

Well, that way there's more meat for the Newcomers. It's difficult finding enough food to feed them all.

DAHLIA

Oh, look, Mums. They have some hanging in the trees, too.

MAY

Waiting to be cooked.

DAHLIA

With any luck maybe Uncle Lem or Thaw will bring us one, too.

INT. LEM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

LEM arrives.

At the table, Dahlia draws.

Lem takes a peek.

LEM

Hey, there. Nice picture, Dahl. Hi, May.

Lem pats Dahlia on the head.

May hugs her brother.

MAY

Afternoon. No deer?

LEM

No deer.

DAHLIA

Mums and I saw three. They were cooking one. The other two were hanging in a tree.

May shoots Lem a questioning look.

MAY

Martha says there are a lot of fawn being brought down. And you brought her one. A really small one.

Lem shrugs shoulders, lowers the corners of his mouth.

LEM

Yeah. Brought him down when we were hunting the wild dogs. I think most of the dogs are gone now so we won't be out there as much.

MAY

Come fall, you can bring us pheasant.

LEM

Yep. Have you heard about Thaw?

MAY

No. Why?

LEM

When I was in Lochlee, I noticed Thaw's van. It was parked by the sickbay with a doe on the front of it. I wandered in to see what was goin' on. Thought maybe I could help.

MAY

And...?

LEM

And there was Thaw. In pretty bad shape. He'd lost a lot of blood.

MAY

How? What happened?

LEM

Well, Martha told me the story or what she understood about it. Seems she was there about the young girl living at her place.

MAY

(nods)

Granny told me she went down there.

LEM

Yeah. The young woman is pregnant, but she seems to be sicker with nausea than usual in pregnancy. It lasts all day. Nobody knows for sure at this point, but we're both thinking it might be the first signs of radiation sickness.

MAY

Oh, dear.

May's eyes well with tears.

MAY

Do you think so?

LEM

So, Martha was down there to see if she could get her some help. And there was Thaw, just coming through the door, arm wrapped in a bloody towel and leaning on the arm of a young man who he bumped into after he more or less fell out of his van in front of the sickbay.

MAY

Did Martha see Thaw before he came in?

LEM

I don't know, but she left the young woman in the waiting area and was with Thaw when I came in. It turned out that Thaw had come upon a bear cub feeding on a dead dog only to have the mother show up at the same time.

DAHLIA

Bears!?

May knees weaken.

She catches herself on the kitchen table to stay upright.

Lem draws a glass of water from the sink, passes it to May.

LEM

Seems he was looking at the cub when he heard a growl behind him. He turned to more or less look the mother bear in the eye. Then he began to back off slowly, but the mother bear just took a nice easy swat at him anyway and caught the muscle. It punctured but didn't tear the artery in his left arm.

MAY

The artery?!

May sits down.

Dahlia joins May at the table.

Lem fills a glass with water and takes a drink.

LEM

Then for one reason or another she let him escape backward into the woods. He was losing blood, so he just dropped down behind a tree with his back to both her and the cub. The tree was not far from her, but she had no further interest in him. She turned all her attention to the cub.

MAY

Can you believe it? He just sat down not far from her.

Len sits across from May.

LEM

Once the bear turned to leave, the first thing Thaw did was to raise his watch above the spot in the wrist where the artery had been punctured and tighten its leather band as tightly as he could. Then he pulled out one of his bootlaces and wrapped that around the arm. He used his good right arm and teeth to tighten that and tie it as tightly as he could.

MAY

Did it work?

LEM

Luckily, the truck wasn't far. He made it to it and managed to get in. As it happened, there was a good-sized metal bolt on his dashboard. As it turned out, he was able to totally stop the bleeding and was somehow able to drive down the hill to the sickbay. He said he used his thumb and forefinger to hold the tourniquet and drove with his knees and the other three fingers on his good hand when possible.

He sips water.

MAY

Good Lord!

LEM

Once at the sickbay, he opened the van door and practically fell into the arms of the young man who Martha found helping him in through the front door.

Lem sags with a bit with fatigue.

MAY

How bad is it?

LEM

He's a bit weak, but there was a doctor there who poured peroxide into the wound, cauterized it and stopped the bleeding. Then she stitched the arm shut.

Dahlia puts an arm around May.

MAY

What did the doctor say?

LEM

When I left, Thaw was resting with a freezer pack on his wrist and the doctor didn't want him moved for at least 48 hours -- not before she was sure the bleeding wouldn't start up again.

MAY

How did Thaw seem to you?

LEM

He looked a little pale and was just lying there but he could talk. Mostly he seemed to want to sleep. The doctor is sure he'll survive.

MAY

What about a transfusion?

LEM

She thinks he'll make it without one but they've got him on a bag of glucose. Apparently the helicopter dropped in antibiotics this morning, so she was able to add them to the drip. That should help. Oh, and a rabies shot.

MAY

Poor Thaw.

DAHLIA

Poor Thaw.

May quiets.

LEM

He said his tetanus shot is only a year or two old, so they figure he'll be all right without a new one. I did ask about how she thought he would heal.

MAY

What did she say?

LEM

She said the muscle and tendon were torn pretty badly and she had done the best she could but the tendon had been held only by a thread and to get it together she had to really grab into it. There's a good chance that arm will be a little tight and difficult to straighten out. But luckily it's his left. He uses his right hand for painting.

MAY

Natalie? Are you going to tell her or has someone already done that?

LEM

I told them I'd tell her. I was there. Thaw's my friend. I think I can answer her questions better. I just wanted to fill you in before I go to pick her up and take her down to see him.

MAY

Why don't I fix a sandwich for her to take along?

May hugs Dahlia.

MAY

You want to help me, Dahl?

LEM

Thaw said he'd left her in the cabin when he went to hunt with the promise he'd be back for lunch. Maybe fix one for Thaw, too. You never know.

INT. SCHOOL - GYM/SICK BAY - DAY

Full of beds, divided by a makeshift curtain.

Left arm bandaged and a drip bag attached to him, Thaw lies in an area of cribs and junior beds.

Lem leads Natalie to Thaw who lies quiet and awake.

Natalie runs her hand over Thaw's cheek.

She picks up and holds his right hand.

Tears run down her cheeks.

THAW

Don't cry, Nat. Please don't cry. You know I hate it when you cry.

NATALIE

Sometimes I can't help it, Thaw.

THAW

Try to help it, Nat. I'm going to be okay.

NATALIE

You sure?

THAW

I'm sure.

Natalie laughs and wipes away the tears.

NATALIE

I brought you a sandwich.

THAW

Not deer, I hope.

A hint of a smile lights his face.

NATALIE

Fish. May made it. One for me, too.

THAW

What about Lem?

Natalie unwraps the sandwiches, breaks off a piece for Thaw.

LEM

Don't worry about me. I've eaten.

(to Natalie)

What do you think? Want me to check back later? In case you're ready for a lift or need anything?

NATALIE

That'd be nice, Lem. Thank you.

Natalie pulls a chair to be near Thaw.

He takes a small bite of sandwich.

EXT. MARTHA'S HOME - FRONT YARD - DAY

Lem shows Granny a three-foot high chicken wire container for a mulch pile.

Beside the pile, a stack of storm windows.

LEM

Heard you keep a living stock pot, Granny. Starts out simple and over the week transforms into something dense and intense.

GRANNY

(laughs)

Soup mixins' have a life of their own. The more seasoned they become, the better the flavor.

LEM

I understand this composting bin of yours is ever hungry.

GRANNY

Thanks to you, nothing goes to waste. Since we got rid of that old washtub, can't tell you how this container you made for me helps.

LEM

Looks like everything but the kitchen sink in there.

GRANNY

Potato peels, onion skins, egg shells, coffee grounds, tea leaves. And when the lawn is mowed, we put the clippings in too. We stir them in to add nitrogen. Speeds curing the compost.

LEM

And what about those storm windows you have there? Planning something with them?

GRANNY

They came off Martha's house. I'd like to build a three by six foot green house with them to put at the bottom of the slope near the drive where the water downflow goes.

LEM

I know someone who might help you with this. A Newcomer named Jorge. He lives near the lake with his wife and children. Loves to garden. Has a small one. Maybe six by ten. Want me to ask him?

GRANNY

That'd be great. Tell him my plan is to do intensive gardening. You know about that?

LEM

Like your stock pot?

GRANNY

Not exactly. Back in the Seventies when I volunteered with the Ecology Action Group, we determined that if you did it right, you could grow vegetables for a family of four from a hundred square-foot plot. If you gardened biointensively.

LEM

What's biointensively.

GRANNY

Fertilized and watered with the plants close enough for roots to touch.

LEM

Really?

GRANNY

Saves on the need to weed.

Granny pauses as if to look into the past.

GRANNY

I think I still remember most of what I learned then. I need to plan a two hundred square foot plot to provide vegetables for eight. Enough for our household. Only thing I lack are flats.

LEM

Wha'cha need them for?

GRANNY

You put nice top soil in them and cast the seeds across them. As they root and become big enough, you transplant them into well-spaced rows in the garden.

LEM

How about I get you old wood cheese boxes to use as flats?

GRANNY

Where you gonna get them?

LEM

Not get. Got.

GRANNY

Got how?

LEM

Not how. Where?

GRANNY

Well, got where?

LEM

Got what?

They laugh.

GRANNY

You know what.

LEM

Well, what is where I saw them yesterday.

GRANNY

Where?

LEM

Ah, now, you come to me.

Lem waggles his index finger near Granny's nose.

LEM

In my shed.

Granny gives him a slap on the shoulder.

GRANNY

Course I want 'em. But they gotta be at least three inches deep.

LEM

They are. I bet they're 50 years old or older. Long wooden American cheese boxes. Maybe four inches across by ten inches long and about four inches high.

GRANNY

Ideal. When can I have them?

LEM

Lemme bring them up to you this evening.

GRANNY

If you wanna do that, don't expect
me to try and stop ya.

LEM

Deal.

GRANNY

Deal.

EXT. MARTHA'S HOME - FRONT YARD - DAY

JORGE (30s), Martha and Granny survey a possible garden site
near the drive.

MARTHA

Jorge, you say that you'd be
willing to mow the lawn and help
Granny with her garden in exchange
for the chance to also grow produce
for your family?

GRANNY

And you would grow biointensively
on a plot abutting mine and no
larger than mine will be?

JORGE

We both understand biointensive
gardening. Working with you would
not only be a pleasure, it would
keep my family healthy.

GRANNY

We would run our gardens along the
lowest level of land to lessen the
need for watering.

JORGE

Of course.

GRANNY

(to Martha)

Deal?

MARTHA

Deal.

All three shake on it.

EXT. MARTHA'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - GARDEN - DAY

In shorts, Martha pulls lettuce from the soil.

Dody pulls up in his truck.

DODY

Never saw such dang craziness. Just
crazy. That's what I call it...
crazy.

Martha stands silent, lettuce in hand.

DODY

Here's this ambulance trying to get
through with supplies and pick up
this guy who burned his hands and
face with lye he was usin' for some
privy he thinks he's an expert on.
Then there's this here homeless guy
with a shoppin' cart hangin' with
bulgin' plastic bags and full of
glass jars and catsup bottles. Not
the deposit kind. Every kind but.
And there he is just walkin' in the
middle of the road goin' about the
speed of a runny nose on a sub-zero
day in mid-winter.

He scratches and shakes his head.

DODY

Crazy is what it is. Just crazy.
And we're supposed to know what to
do when these things happen. Here I
am there, was there, saw it, saw it
not work, saw it work, and I
haven't got a clue.

Stops to catch a breath.

DODY

Got any cold water, Martha? Need a
drink. Need a big drink. Need a big
drink of cold water. Hot summer.

LATER

Jorge mows while Granny and Rozlyn weed the garden.

ROZLYN

Don't you think having the Red
Cross van nearby helps?

GRANNY

Cuts back on the number of hungry people. Which in turn has cut back on the number of robberies.

ROZLYN

Mom told me they no longer have guards at the lumber yard. Just leave the place well-lit at night.

GRANNY

Well, that's different. There's no longer any lumber to steal. Unless they begin to tear down the fence. Or the building.

ROZLYN

Now that summer's here, most of the Newcomers have a place to live -- tents or shanties built with two by fours and plywood. Some shanties are as big as two rooms long.

GRANNY

Amazing what people can do when they have to. Some even returned fishing shanties to their original owners.

ROZLYN

Jorge is not the only one down there with a garden. There are even a few with lawns.

Mowing done, Jorge moves to plant seeds in an egg carton.

A MAN ON A BIKE (20s) carries lengths of weathered barn wood.

He pulls up near Jorge.

MAN ON A BIKE

Good morning. Do you have any tomato plants you'd be willing to sell?

Jorge eyes the wood the Man totes.

JORGE

How many do you need?

MAN ON A BIKE

I'd like eight, but I'd settle for four if they're healthy.

JORGE
That'd be ten dollars.

MAN ON A BIKE
I've only got two.

JORGE
How about we make a trade?

MAN ON A BIKE
Trade what?

JORGE
Two pieces of wood for eight plants.

MAN ON A BIKE
For Real?

Jorge's head bobs up and down.

MAN ON A BIKE
No money?

JORGE
Keep your money.

MAN ON A BIKE
It's a deal.

He offers his hand which Jorge shakes.

Jorge selects eight healthy tomato plants he places in two paper bags.

The man swaps him the wood.

JORGE
Bring me two more boards like these
and you can have eight more plants
of anything you choose.

MAN ON A BIKE
Building a lean to?

JORGE
Expanding my greenhouse. I have the
windows for the top. Just need the
sides.

MAN ON A BIKE
Back before noon.

The Man peels off on his bike, whistles as he goes.

DOMINGO (20s) joins Jorge on the lawn.

Note: subtitled Spanish in italics.

JORGE

Buenos dias, Domingo. Dormir bien?

DOMINGO

Si. Si. Muy bien!

JORGE

Pretty wonderful the Red Cross was able to reunite you with Beatriz and Rozlyn!

DOMINGO

Gracias a Dios! Es como un sueno.

Jorge laughs and takes Domingo's hand.

JORGE

Except you're awake.

DOMINGO

Que estas haciendo?

JORGE

I grow vegetables for my family. What we don't use, I trade or sell to Newcomers.

DOMINGO

Buena!

He sweeps his hand over young plants.

JORGE

Many buy my plants to start their own gardens.

DOMINGO

Pueda ayudate?

JORGE

Si. Si. Ciertamente!

INT. EPISCOPAL CHURCH - MEETING ROOM - DAY

Adjacent to the kitchen, the room serves as a temporary infirmary with single beds.

Lem with two RED CROSS WORKERS in their forties.

LEM

It seems we share the task of distribution, by and large. You provide medical contacts and supplies. We facilitate conversations with SEMA, FEMA and local agencies, provide showers, clothes distribution and information on local services.

FIRST RED CROSS WORKER

I think that describes it. We both work closely with one another, referring people who do not see us as differing in our tasks as necessary.

LEM

We both provide 24-hour coverage and have computers, the internet and telephones. At the firehouse we have walkie-talkies and short wave.

SECOND RED CROSS WORKER

Deciding on how to respond is best seen as a joint effort in our hunt for services and supplies a local might know best.

FIRST RED CROSS WORKER

So far we've had victims of heat stroke, a number with malnutrition, two with heart failure, and a number of bizarre kinds of injuries caused by people using things they don't know how to use: guns, lye, tents, campfires.

SECOND RED CROSS WORKER

When we look for local treatment and support, you have all been really helpful. Especially use of the school sick bay. Cuts down on the need for ambulance transport.

LEM

The supplies the Red Cross provides for the sick bay have really increased its effectiveness. Like for snakebite. And improvement in sanitation. At least we no longer have to make our own soap.

FIRST RED CROSS WORKER
Thanks to good old Fels Naphtha.
We've ordered more gowns, gloves,
and masks for the staff there.

SECOND RED CROSS WORKER
We worry about the staff there.
They seem to be overworked,
stressed out, and at risk of
collapse themselves.

LEM
Things are getting better there.
Far fewer cases of radiation
sickness and malnutrition than
there have been.

INT. MARTHA'S HOME - DINING AREA - NIGHT

Rozlyn and Martha set the table.

Granny and Beatriz huddle by stove.

Juanita uses a knotted rope to play with Marlana.

GRANNY
Juanita.

She dials back the play with Marlana.

JUANITA
Yes, Granny?

GRANNY
Could you call Elaine and ask your
dad to come in for dinner. And when
you do so, ask Dody if he'd like to
join us.

Juanita rises and heads out the back door on task.

Elaine enters from the living room.

ELAINE
I heard you, Granny. I'm here.

Juanita returns with Domingo in tow.

JUANITA
Dody says not tonight but thanks
anyway.

Martha, Rozlyn, Beatriz and Granny place food on the table.

Everyone sits to eat.

MARTHA

Are you and Dody done with the closets now?

DOMINGO

Yes. It's all finished now.

MARTHA

Wonderful. So helpful to all of us.

ELAINE

I'm so happy to not be littering the living room as I used to do.

BEATRIZ

Very nice, Domingo.

DOMINGO

Gracias, a todos!

ROZLYN

Granny, this fish soup is muy buena.

GRANNY

Thanks to Lem. It was his catch. And Jorge... for his help in the garden.

MARTHA

Jorge is a great help. I understand he built a greenhouse by his lakeside shanty and trades plants with the other Newcomers from it.

GRANNY

He used those two storm windows you gave him and apparently bartered wood to build the sides.

JUANITA

(to Beatriz)

Mama. Did you see the scarves and mittens May knitted for Rozlyn and me for the winter?

BEATRIZ

Oh. Did she?

Juanita shows the mittens to her mother.

JUANITA

She dropped them off while you were at work at the sick bay today. Very nice. Soft. Warm.

INT. FIREHOUSE - DAY

Lem and Thaw, left arm braced and bandaged, move boxes of food stuffs from truck to a storeroom.

Two Helpers sort the food.

THAW

Nat and I were coming back from visiting her family Wednesday. It must have been almost midnight. Passed your house. No truck.

LEM

Yeah. The Communications Center... and Alba.

THAW

Isn't Alba that pretty little Puerto Rican woman from near where you used to live who lost her home in the fire?

LEM

Yes. And her husband at Magdum.

THAW

Sad.

LEM

Not easy for her.

THAW

I see her at the swap market on Thursdays. With a boy and a girl. Hers?

LEM

Oswaldo is 11. Elena is eight.

They place boxes on a table against the wall, exit to --

EXT. FIREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Lem and Thaw talk and walk.

THAW

Seems to me you're pretty informed on Alba and her kids. Anything I should know?

LEM

I met them when we were working on the outside privies. The three of them had set up in the fishing shanty that used to belong to old man Winters. They were digging a privy behind. Out of view from the path to the lake. Alba had a trowel and the kids had pan lids. I offered to help.

THAW

Nice of ya.

LEM

One thing led to another. Soon I was dropping off rabbits, fish, towels, and the likes.

THAW

So ya' just thought, lemme, huh?

Thaw laughs.

LEM

For a while now I've been going down almost every day. The kids miss their father. Alba needs a helpmate.

THAW

Anything smokin' of seriousness in this?

Lem reaches for a box in the truck bed.

LEM

We were thinking what with fall coming soon and winter not long after, they would all be better off with me.

Thaw, taken aback.

He stands still for Lem to continue.

THAW

Oh, really?

LEM

At first I couldn't figure out how to tell my sister but then she tells me her home is in the safe zone and she's been thinking about how she misses her church friends and the girls miss school friends.

THAW

I'm sure they do.

LEM

The end of the month May is moving out, and Alba and the children are moving in.

THAW

Ya don't say.

Lem turns to look at Thaw, dead serious.

LEM

Not immediately. As we only got our license.

Thaw keeps his voice level to hide surprise.

THAW

Yeah...?

Lem returns attention to the boxes, takes time to continue.

LEM

Yup. A license. Marriage license. Alba doesn't believe in living together outside of marriage.

Thaw's mouth drops. He closes it and adds a big smile.

THAW

You're kidding!?

Lem lifts boxes.

LEM

Not kidding. I know there's a difference in our ages. Almost 12 years. But she prefers older men.

Lem pulls two boxes to the truck gate.

He turns to Thaw, holds his gaze.

LEM

We were wondering if you would
stand up for us?

Thaw's face beams with delight.

He leans his face towards Lem.

THAW

Hey, Lem. Lemme tell you how happy
I am for you first. Then lemme say
of course I'll stand up for you.

Thaw shakes Lem's hand, hugs him hard.

INT. LEM'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Lem, May, Thaw, Natalie and Martha enjoy coffee together.

MARTHA

I think Beatriz and Domingo and
their daughters will return to
their downstate community. But
Granny, she's staying with me.
She's happy here. With her garden.
Cooking. She gets a kick out of
Dody's frequent drop-in, drop-out
ever entertaining visits to what he
terms...

(chuckles)

Martha's Mix!

MAY

Marlena and Prissy have become the
best of friends.

NATALIE

As my dad's better, Judith and
Hannah have already returned home.
But what about Elaine, Martha?

MARTHA

Apparently she's waiting for
Manfred to be released from the
hospital. They plan to move
downstate again.

MAY

Dahlia and I will be moving home
again, too.

LEM

As soon as Alba and I marry, she,
Oswaldo and Elena will move here.
Natalie? Given you're employed here
now, you'll be staying on, too, no?

Natalie shoots Thaw a look and laughs.

NATALIE

Unless I wear out my welcome.

Thaw hugs Natalie.

THAW

Not to worry, Nat. You're always
welcome.

A quiet moment as all contemplate their lives.

MARTHA

It's been quite a year.

THAW

We've all seen a lot.

MAY

Perhaps the most upsetting thing
was the baby Elaine lost.

MARTHA

Poor Elaine. Really upsetting for
Beatriz and the girls. So quick.
Fine one day -- except for mild
radiation sickness that made her
tired -- and then the next. Who'd
have guessed?

MAY

Granny's been great with her, don't
you think, Martha?

MARTHA

Oh, yes. Keeping her hydrated with
a mix of sugar and salt in water
that the doctor recommended.
Setting up the girls to coax her
out of the house for trumped-up
reasons. Bringing her special
treats. Showering her with love.

MAY

Even with her worries over Manfred
and the loss of their child, she
seems to have stabilized.

MARTHA

Her cheeks bloom a healthy pink.

MAY

But it was Marlana's antics and Dody's stories that caused her to smile and eventually laugh again.

LEM

Then there is the almost miraculous reunion of Domingo with Beatriz.

MARTHA

Those two! Cloud nine for both of them. And their daughters.

LEM

We can't forget Marlana. Calm and responsive to commands.

MARTHA

I think Rozlyn has done the most with her. In some ways, also with Elaine. I see them talking as they walk around. Their arms around each other's waists.

INT. TOWN HALL - NIGHT

Far fewer People in attendance.

Larry stands to address those left.

SUPER: "Fall 2018"

LARRY

Since the meltdown last April, we've come a long way in learning to respond as a community. And to problems we never anticipated. A massive onslaught of forced refugees. Figuring out how to cleanse, clothe, and house them. How to feed and provide water for them. How to provide for their medical needs. How to integrate them into our community. How to facilitate working with them. Especially before help arrived. Before the Red Cross. Before SEMA and FEMA. So first of all, I want to thank you all. Every one of you. For your patience.

(MORE)

LARRY (CONT'D)
For your creativity. For your
generosity. And most of all for
your humanity. Thank you all.

Members of the Board APPLAUD.

Community Members join in a rousing hand for Larry.

LARRY
Okay. To start with, I'll ask Dody
Wamp to report on sanitation
progress.

Larry yields the floor.

Dody looks official with pencil behind his ear and clipboard
in hand.

DODY
As of tonight, thanks to the work
of the Newcomers, we've got ten
step ups completely finished, with
privacy walls on at least one side
of each. And ten more in process.
Thanks to FEMA, we also have sum'
20 outhouses spread throughout the
community. Not to mention the
number of locals who welcomed a
Newcomer or two into their homes.
In terms of showers, we've added a
number of 'em along the lake front
with shower curtains. Not enough
maybe, but sure better than how we
started.

Finished, he drops to his seat.

LARRY
Thank you, Dody. And thank you for
your leadership in involving the
Newcomers in this achievement.

Dody pays no mind. He writes on his clipboard.

LARRY
Our next topic is housing. As
winter is coming, we're hoping SEMA
and FEMA will be providing us with
enough prefab housing and trailers
to permit everyone to be housed and
kept warm. That, however, remains
to be seen.

(MORE)

LARRY (CONT'D)

The best that can be said is that we have made it through the summer and that in doing so we managed enough tents, ice fishing shanties, trailers, and local home sharing to have made it through. The good news is our population is shrinking as many of the Newcomers are finding accommodations elsewhere. With relatives, rentals, and, for the lucky many, the opportunity to return to their homes.

Jim Sanders takes to his feet.

JIM SANDERS

My family and I are here for the duration. We were on vacation when the plant went down but our home is too close to Magdum Heights to ever be livable again. I'm worried about food this winter. We have a garden, but that won't help us in the snow. The deer have been hunted down. I'm not sure how available the fish in the lake will be. I was wondering if there is any word of more outside help?

He remains on his feet.

LARRY

Lem, can you speak to that?

LEM

We're hopeful all your needs will be met. We Already have the two Red Cross trucks that bring 1200 meals daily. But we are also talking with SEMA and FEMA. They say they will have dehydrated meals sufficient to feed the community. The food is not here yet. However, I think there's good reason to believe it will be.

Satisfied, Jim sits.

FIRST RED CROSS WORKER

Perhaps I'm familiar to many of you. I work with the Red Cross at the church and with the food trucks.

(MORE)

FIRST RED CROSS WORKER (CONT'D)

I'd like to share with you that the number of persons being treated for radiation burns and sickness has reduced and while it's true some passed away, a much larger number have recuperated and returned to their families.

INT. MARTHA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

A Group shares coffee.

SUPER: "WINTER 2018"

BEATRIZ

Well, here we are. About to bear a child.

ELAINE

Both of us reunited with our men.

GRANNY

Guess it was meant to be. Domingo here and working. Manfred over his radiation sickness.

ELAINE

You both know Manfred and I plan to move back home.

GRANNY

(hugs Elaine)

Yes. We'll miss you.

BEATRIZ

Yes. We will.

GRANNY

What about you and Domingo, Beatriz?

BEATRIZ

Domingo's plan is for us to buy land and build a house on it. Carpenters are in high demand now.

GRANNY

I understand newlyweds Lem and Alba hired him to put a two room addition onto Lem's house. So the kids can each have a room.

ELAINE

I like Alba. She and Lem get along well.

BEATRIZ

Yes, they do. Sweet kids, too.

GRANNY

Whipper-snapper smart. Both of them. Polite.

BEATRIZ

Now that the school is open half days, it can accommodate Newcomers' and local children. They'll be fine.

EXT. THAW'S CABIN - DAY

Marty spies an open window. He hitches himself up and drops out of sight into the cabin just as Jason appears.

SUPER: "SPRING 2019"

Jason swings a big stick at the dog.

He reaches into his pocket for the last bite of a sandwich. Jason throws it. The Dog chomps it down, quiets.

Jason tosses a small stick,

JASON

Fetch!

The Dog runs for the stick, brings it to Jason. He pets him and tosses the stick.

JASON

Fetch!

Jason moves closer to the window.

Lem pulls up, stops and descends from a truck.

He carries a loaded shotgun.

LEM

Mornin'. How you boys doin'?

JASON

Pretty good.

Lem offers a hand to Jason.

LEM

I'm Lem.

Jason shakes back.

JASON

Jason. Nice to meet you, Lem.

Lem nods his head toward the open window.

LEM

Jason, think you could get your friend out here?

JASON

Yeah. Sure.

(yells)

Hey, Marty. You can come out now.

Marty pokes his head out the window.

LEM

Whatcha' doin' there, Marty?

MARTY

Cleaning.

LEM

Cleaning? You mean cleaning out the refrigerator?

MARTY

Yeah. Something like that.

LEM

Well, Marty, before you come out, suppose you put back whatever stuff you have to where you got it. My friend would miss it when he got back if you don't.

Marty disappears back inside.

The Dog approaches Lem, dances around Jason to restart the game of fetch.

JASON

What's his name?

LEM

That's Tufty.

JASON

Fetch, Tufty.

Jason chucks the stick.

JASON

I'd better go help Marty. Make it faster.

LEM

No. You stay right there. You got the benefit of the doubt this time. But not that much. I figure you and your friend are hungry kids looking for a handout.

Marty climbs out, joins Lem and Jason.

LEM

You can stand there and think about how you're going to explain to me that you were an accomplice in breaking and entering into my best friend's home. And how as the older one you set your younger friend up to become a thief.

MARTY

I'm not a friend. I'm his brother.

LEM

That so.

JASON

We're sorry, Lem. We've been on the road since the meltdown.

MARTY

We haven't been able to talk to our parents.

LEM

You boys are telling me since the meltdown you've been on the road? No contact with your family?

JASON

We stayed in a shelter in Bain for a while.

MARTY

We had our own cabin in the woods, too.

LEM

How did you get here from Bain. Train?

MARTY
Yeah. Pretty cool.

Marty pushes his hands out, thumbs up, and moves them with the rhythm of a train on the rails.

JASON
Whatcha' gonna do with us?

LEM
First I'm gonna' to take you to my house and give you each a bowl of soup. Second, I'm gonna' take you to the Red Cross station so they can arrange for you to get your next meal.

Tufty drops the stick at Jason's feet.

Jason looks up to Lem as he pets Tufty. Relief on his face.

INT. LEM'S HOME - DINING ROOM - DAY

With Tufty near, Jason and Marty share a meal with Lem.

LEM
Assuming it's as you tell it, you two lived a real odyssey.

MARTY
Don't know what I would've done without Jason. I don't even think I would've realized there was a meltdown until it was too late.

LEM
I'm sure it took the two of you. Very resourceful. Both of you. Brave. And responsible.

JASON
My dad taught us well. And my mom. We just wish we knew where they are. And how they are.

LEM
The Red Cross may be able to locate them. How'd ya find livin' in the shelter?

JASON
It wasn't bad. Marty's cot was next to mine.

(MORE)

JASON (CONT'D)
Close enough to be sure he was
safe. We were company for each
other.

MARTY
Jason found ways to earn money.

JASON
Some of the kids were a little
rough. Into stealing. I decided it
was time we left. Before one of us
got into trouble.

Marty bends over with head down, pets Tufty.

MARTY
Come on, Jason. It was the gang I
was with. Nothing to do with you.

INT. THAW'S CABIN - DAY

Morning sun lights the room.

Natalie wakes and stretches, a smile plays about the corners
of her lips.

She rolls over to lean on her elbow to watch Thaw paint.

NATALIE
Mornin', Thaw.

THAW
Mornin', Nat.

Thaw does not turn, continues to daub and paint.

THAW
Love ya, Nat.

Natalie takes stock then speaks.

NATALIE
My apartment lease is up, Thaw.

THAW
Yah.

NATALIE
Well, I have to decide whether or
not to renew it.

THAW
What's to decide?

NATALIE

Whether or not to renew my lease
now that my dad is better and my
sister left it.

THAW

What do you want a lease for?

NATALIE

Well, so I know where I live.

THAW

Natalie, you live here. You've been
living here for almost a year. This
is where you live.

NATALIE

I know, Thaw. But we've never
really talked about giving up my
apartment.

THAW

So what's there to talk about?

NATALIE

My living here.

Thaw paints, his voice firm and even.

THAW

Natalie. You live here. I want you
here. You belong here. You don't
work in Bain. You work here. Why
would you want to renew your lease?

Natalie smiles at the back of Thaw's head, lies back down.

THAW

Given your cut in pay, I've been
thinking it would be better if we
decided to pool our money and live
as man and wife?

NATALIE

Isn't that what we're already
doing?

Thaw leans into the painting, adds small detail.

THAW

I was thinking more along the lines
of us getting married.

Natalie shakes her head, smiles and closes her eyes.

She raises herself up.

NATALIE

Theodore Horatio Alexander Wamp,
are you asking me to marry you?

THAW

Somethin' like that.

NATALIE

Oh, yeah? Then turn around right
this minute and get your sweet
bottom up here before you change
your mind and gather sufficient
strength to bolt. I need to think
about this before we go looking for
the Town Justice. And I need you to
help me.

Thaw lays brushes down and smiles up at her.

THAW

You gonna meet me half way, or not?

Natalie darts from the bed and into his arms.

The two of them fall in a heap on the carpet, giggle and
laugh. It becomes rapid-fire kissing and heats to lovemaking.

THAW

I love you, Nat.

NATALIE

Darling.

THAW

I love you madly... forever.

INT. BAIN - JUDITH'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Judith on the phone with Natalie.

JUDITH

I was getting ready for dinner when
I found a lump on my thyroid and
when I went to the doctor he said
there was a good chance it might be
cancerous.

(listens)

I did take the K-I. I might have
missed a few days. The problem was,
I was so close.

(MORE)

JUDITH (CONT'D)

After radiation exposure, it's more common in children. Look, Nat. The doctor says we caught it early.

(listens)

Probably a thyroidectomy.

(listens)

Levothyroxin. The rest of my life.

(listens)

Don't worry. I'll be fine. Talk to you soon. Love ya, Nat.

She hangs up as Hannah walks into the room.

Hannah spins around to showcase her garb.

HANNAH

Don't you think I look great in this one?

JUDITH

Sweetheart, you'd be beautiful in rags. But yes. That's a lovely one.

THE END

PART TWO