

**ACT I - "JUST GOING ALONG"**

EXT. MAGDUM HEIGHTS - DAY

Image of some nuclear power plant towers sitting quietly with steam rising from their cooling towers. LOU MATTERS (30) pulls up in a car, parks, and enters the plant.

INT./EXT. BAIN NEW CARLTON UNIVERSITY PARKING LOT - THAW'S TRUCK, PARKED - DAY

THEODORE HORATIO ALEXANDER WAMP (30s), prefers THAW, tall and fair-skinned with long dark hair is on his cellphone with NATALIE FLYNN (20s), highly educated, more city than country

NATALIE (V.O.)

Hello. Bain Planning Board. Natalie Flynn here.

THAW

Hello, Natalie. Thaw.

INT. BAIN - BAIN PLANNING DEPARTMENT - NATALIE'S OFFICE - SAME

Natalie on phone.

NATALIE

So, Thaw, you're coming to town?

INTERCUT - PARKING LOT AND OFFICE

Thaw and Natalie talk by phone.

THAW

I'm already in Bain. I'm working on a show at La Petite Galerie. Do you know it?

NATALIE

Yes. I've gone to a number of openings there.

Natalie moves some papers on her desk.

THAW

So you know Rory? The framer?

NATALIE  
They say his work is museum  
quality. Best in the area.

THAW  
He's framing 20 of my paintings. To  
show at the gallery.

Natalie plays with a lock of hair that falls on her shoulder.

NATALIE  
Wow. That should cost you a pretty  
penny. No?

THAW  
I suppose.  
(pauses)  
But not in comparison to what he  
thinks we'll bring in.

Natalie releases the lock of hair.

THAW  
Natalie, let's talk about us. I  
miss you. And I'm stabilizing my  
lifestyle to one your parents might  
approve. Could we meet for lunch or  
dinner?

NATALIE  
When?

THAW  
Be here through Saturday morning.  
Just picking out frames will take  
me into tomorrow afternoon at  
least.

NATALIE  
I don't know. I'm still thinking.  
When will your show open?

Somewhat bothered, Thaw looks out over the parking lot.

THAW  
(a breath.)  
We haven't set the date. Have to  
get the framing done first.

NATALIE  
Call me then. When you have the  
date.

THAW

That might not be for a couple of months, Nat.

NATALIE

(laughs)

Well, move it up then.

EXT. LOCHLEE - THAW'S CABIN - DAY

Stern DODY (70s) medium height Thaw's judgmental father, wears painters' overalls; clowns to be the center of attention; exhibits various tics, original observations that are not always on topic; a carpenter and handyman, rough spoken.

He peruses the cabin and surrounding area.

SUPER: "Early Fall, 2017"

INT. LOCHLEE - THAW'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

A large, rustic yet comfortable one room.

An easel cradles an in-progress landscape oil painting that shines in light from a skylight as Thaw adds finishing touches.

Shelves hold finished, vertically stacked paintings.

A Baggie of Pot and rolling papers evident on a shelf.

TUFTY, a black and white mixed breed English Setter, snoozes on a dog bed.

A KNOCK.

Thaw and Tufty welcome Dody.

Fake relaxed, Thaw's brow creases with a bit of dread.

THAW

Hey, Dad. C'mon in.

Tufty licks Dody's hand. He yanks it away.

THAW

Down. Dad doesn't like that, Tufty.

Tufty returns to her bed.

DODY  
How's civilian life? Like the  
cabin? You've done a lotta work.

THAW  
New wallboard and paint. Sealed  
around the skylight.

Dody pulls the corners of his mouth down.

He points his chin at Thaw's work.

DODY  
Still dabbling with color, huh.  
Nothing more reliable, eh?

Thaw's nod: grin 'n' bear it.

THAW  
Sorry to disappoint you, Dad.

Dody points to the rolling papers and Pot.

DODY  
What's this here?

THAW  
When I was stationed in the Middle  
East, some of us smoked hash. It's  
too much for here so I smoke weed.

DODY  
(scoffs )  
Thought the military would make a  
man of you. Not a pothead.

THAW  
C'mon, Dad. It's no big deal.

DODY  
It is to me!

THAW  
It's occasional...

DODY  
Yeah. Get your life in order.

Dody heads for the door.

As he leaves, over his shoulder,

DODY

Get a real job. And get your life  
in order. When you do, come see me.

Thaw quiet at the door as he watches his father drive off.

LATER

Thaw paints oils on a large canvas.

A KNOCK.

Thaw answers to find LEM (50s), a retired veteran who wears  
worn camo fatigues; informed on survival response.

THAW

Good morning, Lem. C'mon in.

Tufty wags her tail, circles Lem. Lem pets him.

LEM

Hey there, girl! Happy to see old  
Lem? Atta girl.

He lugs a large photo album.

Thaw nods his head at the album.

THAW

Whatcha' got there?

LEM

Brought you a present.

Lem offers the album to Thaw.

THAW

Wait 'til I clean my hands.

Thaw rinses away paint-tinted lather and dries his hands.

THAW

Can't wait.

Thaw accepts the album, pulls out a chair for himself, offers  
one to Lem.

THAW

Make yourself comfortable. Coffee?

LEM

Been up since six.

He opens the album, turns plastic-covered pages.

THAW  
Beautiful work, Lem. Just great!

LEM  
Figured if you're going pro, a  
quality portfolio might help.

Thaw closes the book and passes a hand across the cover.

THAW  
Wow. What a production.

Thaw looks to Lem.

THAW  
I thought you would do nice smaller  
ones. But eight by tens? Definitely  
makes my work shine!

LEM  
(broad smiles)  
I'd hoped you'd like them.

THAW  
Boy, do I ever.

Thaw peruses the album a second time.

THAW  
I think the framer, Rory, will be  
impressed. Must've taken you days.

LEM  
The toughest was the light and the  
exposure to stay true to the color.  
These are as close as I could get.

Thaw closes the book and the two stand as one.

He claps Lem on the shoulder.

THAW  
Here I thought I was going to get  
drugstore four by fives.

LEM  
When are you going into the city?

THAW  
Thinking about this Thursday.

LEM  
So soon. Lucky for you I work fast.

Lem and Thaw trade smiles.

THAW

Sure is. You gonna be around then?

Lem: as-far-as-I-know shrug.

THAW

I'd like to leave Tufty with you.  
Be back the latest Sunday evening,  
but most likely I'd be here Friday  
night.

Lem hunkers and pats his knee to call Tufty who comes.

LEM

That'd be fine. Right, girl? Tufty  
agrees, don't you, girl?

Tufty nuzzles Lem's knee.

THAW

When do you want me to pick up the  
paintings?

LEM

Anytime. Now. Later today?

Thaw nods toward the door.

THAW

I've got an idea for a painting. If  
I pick them up now, I can work the  
rest of the day.

LEM

Let's go.

THAW

But, first, let me square with you.

Lem holds the door open, waves Thaw ahead.

LEM

We're square. Except I'd enjoy a  
steak dinner at The Meat House.

They exit to --

EXT. LOCHLEE - THAW'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

THAW

C'mon, Lem. What do I owe you?

LEM  
Dinner at The Meat House.

Lem slaps his arm across Thaw's back.

THAW  
You're just going to give me these?

LEM  
Have I ever given you anything  
before?

THAW  
Well...

LEM  
Well. So I am now. What's not to  
enjoy?

Thaw throws his arm across his friend's shoulder with a bit  
of a squeeze as it lands.

EXT. LOCHLEE - MARTHA'S HOME - DAY

Dody and MARTHA (60s), a retired school librarian, new to  
town, wander around a drab and rundown Thirties Victorian.

MARTHA  
The bathroom door needs...

MARLENA, Martha's impetuous Airedale, licks Dody's hand.

He jerks it away.

DODY  
Dang. God dang.

MARTHA  
Off. Marlena. Off

DODY  
Hate dogs! Dang blast it!  
(grabs ear)  
Ouch!

MARTHA  
Dody, what is it?

DODY  
Bee bite.

Dody lowers his hand to show her a swollen and red ear.

MARTHA  
Take anything for it?

DODY  
Owey. No. Why?

MARTHA  
Benadryl, Dody. Benadryl. Ask the  
druggist.

They continue around the home.

MARTHA  
Do you think it needs be hung. The  
bathroom door.

DODY  
That's why I'm here.

INT. BAIN - BAIN PLANNING DEPARTMENT - NATALIE'S OFFICE - DAY

At her desk, Natalie. Distracted. Then becomes active,  
perusing papers.

NATALIE  
(Talking to self)  
Meetings, dinners, presentations.  
City Planning not as creative as I  
imagined.

Picks up and peruses an Inter-County Planning brochure.

NATALIE  
Hopefully Inter-County Planning  
will make me an offer. Wetlands and  
open spaces. Much more interesting.

Puts brochure down and determinedly dials the phone.

NATALIE  
Thaw? It's me. Nat.

THAW (V.O.)  
Natalie. Glad to hear your voice.  
How are you?

NATALIE  
I've been thinking.

THAW (V.O.)  
Aren't you always?

NATALIE  
This time it's different.

THAW (V.O.)  
I'm listening.

NATALIE  
I think we need to stop seeing each other for a while.

A tick of silence.

THAW (V.O.)  
You do?

NATALIE  
I need to sort things out. Decide where I'm headed with my life. My friends may be right. Maybe I need a change.

THAW (V.O.)  
Is there someone else?

NATALIE  
No. No. There's no one. I need a change. Do you understand?

THAW (V.O.)  
Yes. And no.

NATALIE  
I don't really understand it myself. That's why I need time. I'll call when I've thought it through.

THAW (V.O.)  
How about if I call you?

NATALIE  
Please don't. I'll call you. It might be a while. But I'll be in touch.

THAW (V.O.)  
Okay, Nat. Love you. But okay.

When Natalie hangs up, she dabs tissue on tears that stream down her cheeks.

MONTAGE - NATALIE'S CAREER / SOCIAL LIFE

INT. BAIN - CITY HALL - PLANNING DEPARTMENT - DAY

Planners cram Natalie's office to confer with her they peruse a map on the wall.

NATALIE

Doesn't seem that complicated. All I see is a crossroad.

INT. BAIN - NATALIE'S HOME - NIGHT

Natalie hosts a lively gathering of friends over for drinks.

NATALIE

Yeah, SUSAN, here I am, a mature city woman involved with a drop dead handsome, financially strapped and probably commitment phobic, woodsman slash artist.

END MONTAGE

EXT. LOCHLEE - THAW'S CABIN - DAY

Thaw packs a spare pair of pants, backpack and portfolio into his truck.

He whistles Tufty onto the passenger seat, starts out.

EXT. LOCHLEE - LEM'S HOME - DAY

Thaw pulls up.

Lem greets him through the open passenger side window, spots the portfolio in the truck.

THAW

Can't wait to see them framed. Imagine a show at the gallery.

LEM

Lookin' forward to it.

THAW

With any luck I'll see you the latest Sunday. If things go well with Natalie.

LEM

Yeah. But what's it been? Three months?

Through the window, Lem pets Tufty who is on the passenger side seat.

Lem opens the door to let Tufty out.

THAW

I'll call her this morning. Hopeful  
she'll go to lunch with me.

Tufty licks Lem's hand. Lem closes the door and looks at Thaw.

LEM

(jokes)  
Who knows? Hopefully lunch will  
last through tomorrow.

Lem steps back from the truck, his hand holding Tufty by the collar.

Thaw waves and drives off.

INT. COUNTY ROAD - THAW'S TRUCK, TRAVELING - CONTINUOUS

Thaw, lost in his thoughts.

INT. BAIN - LUNCHEONETTE - DAY

Thaw settles into a table next to the window.

Natalie and Friends enter. She carries a large shoulder bag.

She spots Thaw, speaks to her friends and joins him.

Natalie bends to kiss him on the cheek and then slips into the seat opposite him.

NATALIE

You look great.  
(smiles)  
Sorry. Not much time. Have you  
ordered yet?

THAW

I'm up for a ham and cheese  
sandwich on whole wheat bread. You?

NATALIE

A small Greek salad and skim milk.

THAW

Watch my backpack.

He rises to put in the order.

LATER

Thaw and Natalie almost done with lunch.

He reaches for his backpack.

THAW

Look, Nat. I know we don't have  
much time, but I want to show you  
something Lem did.

Thaw unzips the backpack and hands the portfolio to her.

Natalie opens the first page.

She stops and looks Thaw in the eye then proceeds to review  
the full book.

She closes it and keeps her eyes fixed on the back cover.

Nothing. No comment at all.

Finally, she makes eye contact with Thaw.

THAW

What do you think, Nat?

Tears brim in Natalie's eyes and a few overflow.

She dives for a tissue in her bag, blows her nose.

Natalie pushes the book back to Thaw then stabs a last  
mouthful of salad, jabs it between her teeth and chews.

THAW

Natalie. Are you all right? Can I  
help? What's up? Is it something  
you can talk about?

Natalie laughs.

NATALIE

Wow! Lem did a great job! And your  
work is wonderful. If only it were  
to provide you a reliable income.

THAW

We'll see, Natalie. I just wanted  
you to know about it.

Natalie's eyes rise to meet his.

She reaches for her lipstick and follows the shape of her  
lips with its pink tip.

NATALIE

Gotta' go.

Natalie gathers her things and leaves, but not before a quick kiss to Thaw's cheek.

EXT. LOCHLEE - LEM'S HOME - DAY (FLASHBACK)

With Tufty nearby, Thaw talks with Lem.

SUPER: "Fall 2017"

THAW

An interview with Dr. Milford  
Owens. Milfy.  
(laughs)  
And me, teaching art at Nick-Sue.

LEM

New Carlton State University?

THAW

That's right. Nick-Sue. Forgot  
you're new to the North Country.

INT. BAIN - NATALIE'S HOME - NIGHT

Natalie wipes her eyes, blows her nose.

She thumbs through a stack of mail.

NATALIE

(Talking to self)  
Amnesty International. Electric  
bill. NARAL Environmental Defense  
Fund. Office of the Governor...  
Office of the Governor!?

Natalie tears open the letter.

VOICE OVER

NATALIE

Dear Ms. Flynn. In response to your  
application to join the Midstate  
Inter-County Planning Department,  
we would like to invite you to  
interview with us . .

Natalie is taken aback . . . Reaches for the phone.

INT. BAIN - NEW CARLTON UNIVERSITY - ART CLASSROOM - DAY

A bit nervous, Thaw prepares for his first students' arrival.

DR. MILFORD "MILFY" OWENS (60s), Art Department Chair enters and gestures at the room's expanse.

MILFY

Well, this is it. I'm sure you'll be fine, Theodore... Thaw. The students will help orient you.

THAW

(laughs)  
I'm sure I'll need their help.

MILFY

And Charles Martin across the hall or Mary Elaine Stewart next door. have offered to be there for you.

He pauses to look Thaw in the eye.

THAW

Thank you, Dr. Owens.

They shake hands and Milfy is off.

LATER

Thaw turns as SILVIA (20s) College art student, gentle, blond, enters, takes a seat at her easel.

The class fills as students arrange their stools and easels and prepare unfinished oils for painting.

THAW

Good morning, all.

A few mumbled good mornings.

THAW

This is Art 3-0-5, Intermediate Oil Painting. This week we're painting a monochromatic still life in oils.

Thaw pauses, scans the class and writes on the whiteboard.

THAW

My name is Theodore Horatio Alexander Wamp.

Turns back.

THAW  
You can call me Mr. Wamp. But my  
nickname is Thaw.

Thaw pauses, smiles.

THAW  
I think my mom had indigestion the  
night she named me.

A few appreciative smiles flit around the room.

THAW  
You can call me Thaw. Mr. Wamp or  
Thaw. Up to you.

Thaw lays down the marker.

THAW  
Belittle my name and you flunk the  
course.

He gives the class an easy smile, a few return it.

THAW  
That said, be happy to answer any  
questions you might have. I may  
share comment on your work. If you  
have questions, just fire away.

SILVIA  
Could you tell us about yourself?

THAW  
Mostly I do oils. No formal  
training. My portfolio landed me  
here. Spent time in the military.  
From the North Country.

SILVIA  
Interesting.

THAW  
Should you like to see my work,  
I'll be having an exhibit at La  
Petite Gallery in Bain.

LATER - STUDENTS PAINT

Thaw wanders. The students either smile or ignore him.

He peruses a Male's painting done in shades of orange.

THAW

Nice contrast in density and light.

The next -- a Female Student.

THAW

Is it your intent that only half  
the painting be realistic?

FEMALE STUDENT

No.

THAW

Perhaps it might make sense to  
lessen the realism throughout?

FEMALE STUDENT

But that would be the easy way out.

THAW

(smiles)

Art is finding the easy way out.  
Indeterminate choices mess up the  
process. Just go for it.

The Female Student smiles and blushes.

Two Students within earshot share smiles and shrug.

Thaw checks the clock.

THAW

Really enjoyed being greeted by  
such a mature, talented and  
hardworking group of students.

Thaw takes a beat.

THAW

Are you sure you need me here?

LATER

Milfy enters the empty class.

MILFY

Hey, Thaw. Thought I'd drop by to  
see how your first day went.

THAW

Nice students. Many quite talented.

MILFY

By the way. A few students from your classes stopped by. They had very positive comments about you.

THAW

Really? Well, that's certainly nice to hear. Thanks again.

MILFY

And thank you, Thaw. See you tomorrow at four.

INT. LOCHLEE - MARTHA'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Martha places a call.

MARTHA

Hello, Mrs. Wamp?

MRS. WAMP (V.O.)

Yes. Hello?

MARTHA

It's Martha. Is Dody there?

MRS. WAMP (V.O.)

Dody?

DODY (V.O.)

Hul-looo.

MARTHA

Dody, you sound terrible.

Martha sits down.

DODY (V.O.)

I have summthin' la-ik the flu. Feel terrrrrible.

MARTHA

Oh, Dody. I'm so sorry. I was wondering when you were going to finish painting the living room.

Dody clears his throat.

MARTHA

Call me back when you are better.

DODY (V.O.)  
 Look, I don't know when that'll be.  
 These HUD houses have me on a  
 September deadline.

MARTHA  
 Dody, you've done such beautiful  
 work.

Martha sips her coffee.

DODY (V.O.)  
 (mutters)  
 Lotta work!

MARTHA  
 I've ordered some new furniture for  
 the living room. Whaddaya think?  
 Could you squeeze it in?

DODY (V.O.)  
 I'll try.

INT. LOCHLEE - MARTHA'S HOME - MUDROOM - DAY

In her kennel outside, Marlena BARKS.

When Martha opens the back door, she finds Dody there.

MARTHA  
 Come in, Dody.

Dody enters without a word, heads for the --

LIVING ROOM

Martha follows.

MARTHA  
 Dody, I thought you were sick.

DODY  
 Am. Feel awful. Got this dang cold  
 sore.

MARTHA  
 Anbesol.

DODY  
 Anbesol? Bet you're one of those  
 people who is always worrying.

MARTHA

I'm not a worrier. I just like researching for answers.

Dody nods: okay.

MARTHA

I feel like I'm living on the open desert. No curtains. No shades. No furniture.

DODY

Mike said he ran out of paint.

MARTHA

Mike didn't run out of paint.

Martha indicates three cans of paint near the wall.

MARTHA

Ran out of drive. Didn't want to do the windows. Just took down the curtains and shades and stopped.

DODY

Maybe he's a little off course. Going off to college now.

Dody picks up one of the cans of paint and inspects it before putting it back down.

DODY

Well, listen. I'm gonna call up Mike to do whatever you want him to do today.

MARTHA

Just today?

DODY

I'll have him come back and finish up tomorrow.

INT. LOCHLEE - LEM'S HOME - DAY

With Tufty near, Thaw talks with Lem over coffee.

SUPER: "MARCH, 2018"

THAW

So guess what Milfy wants now?

LEM

For you to chair the department?

THAW

Good one.

(laughs)

For me to display my work in the departmental art show.

Lem sips his coffee.

THAW

I'll use the pieces I've had framed for the show at the La Petite Gallerie.

LEM

Things are going well then.

THAW

Can ya' believe almost the end of my second semester there?

INT. BAIN - NEW CARLTON UNIVERSITY - ART GALLERY - NIGHT

The Crowd mills about in no particular hurry.

They gather near Thaw's paintings or help themselves to punch, cheese and crackers.

MILFY

I especially like the depth of contrasts in his work.

NATALIE

It's just wonderful to see Thaw's work appreciated. And he likes the Nick-Sue environment, Dr. Owens.

Thaw joins Milfy and Natalie.

THAW

Show seems to be going well.

NATALIE

Very enjoyable, Thaw. Dr. Owens and I were just talking about the success of your painting style.

Silvia chats with Bernard near the refreshments table. She wears high heels and an understated black dress.

Natalie casts a jealous eye at Silvia.

NATALIE  
Silvia seems quite sweet.

THAW  
Very sweet. Helpful.

Thaw glances toward Silvia and then elsewhere.

A Male Faculty Member and his wife stop to shake Thaw's hand.

MALE FACULTY MEMBER  
Congratulations. Excellent show.

THAW  
Thanks for coming.

Thaw greets People who pass.

LATER

Thaw smiles at the refreshment table where Silvia returns an inviting smile.

She offers two cups of punch. He returns to Natalie.

THAW  
Here, Nat. Brought you some punch.

Natalie accepts the punch and takes a sip.

NATALIE  
I've really enjoyed this event,  
your art, meeting your colleagues.

THAW  
I know you have to go. But say. Can  
we plan a lunch together?

NATALIE  
(pauses, offers her hand)  
Sounds good.

INT. LOCHLEE - MARTHA'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The doorbell RINGS.

Martha answers to find painters JOE (30s) house painter - Italian descent, and NEVILLE (40s) house painter, with brushes in hand.

NEVILLE  
 G'mornin', Martha. I'm Neville.  
 This is Joe. Dody said you had some  
 paintin' ta do?

MARTHA  
 Welcome.

After they enter, Neville opens a can of paint by the stairs.  
 Joe opens one in the living room.

MARTHA  
 (to Neville)  
 You're the one who tiled the mud  
 room. Great job. I love it.

Neville smiles at the compliment.

NEVILLE  
 Yeah. House had a lot of work in  
 it.

MARTHA  
 Yeah, I guess you're right.

NEVILLE  
 So, what do you want done? I only  
 have t'day.

Martha indicate the area.

MARTHA  
 Living room and stairs, I guess. So  
 I can furnish it.

NEVILLE  
 Okay. I'll finish the stairs. Joe,  
 you can do the living room.

Martha seats herself in a folding chair near the front  
 hallway between the men and watches in silence for a bit.

Marlena noses around Joe's paint pan.

White paint highlights one ear and a spot on the side of her  
 wiry cinnamon coat.

Joe smiles but gives her a pat and a push to keep her where  
 she belongs.

MARTHA  
 My dog bothering you?

JOE

No problem. Used to dogs. Had a black lab. Nice dog. But wouldn't stay on the property. Had to go.

MARTHA

A wanderer, huh?

JOE

M' wife and me both work so even with three acres we couldn't take care of her. But I like dogs.

Marlena beats one of her rope toys to death on the floor.

MARTHA

Yeah. And very delicate.

Joe stops briefly to watch Marlena swing her head back and forth.

JOE

Yeah. Sure.

From around the corner the sound of quiet laughter.

NEVILLE

She's a real lady.

Joe gathers his paint can, brush and pan.

JOE

Well. Two-thirty. Gotta go.

Martha stands to face Joe, moves backward toward the door

She opens the door for him and on return, moves her chair closer to Neville, faces him.

NEVILLE

Do you want the risers painted all the way to the top.

Martha nods assent and watches for a bit.

MARTHA

Do you have any children, Neville?

NEVILLE

One. A little girl. Nine months old. And my wife has two daughters from her previous marriage.

MARTHA

Your wife's daughters by her first marriage?

Neville becomes more intent on his painting.

NEVILLE

Oh, them. He wanted them; he got 'em. But he can afford them, so he takes care of them.

MARTHA

Sorry, Neville.

NEVILLE

Not that my wife doesn't try to see them. And we buy them things.

MARTHA

How old are they?

NEVILLE

Twelve and 14. My wife talks to them whenever she can.

MARTHA

Oh?

NEVILLE

Nothing like Dody and his son. Dody never talks to Thaw. Nothing can get him to do it. His own son.

MARTHA

So you see your wife's daughters.

Neville again fixes on his brush strokes.

He avoids eye contact with Martha.

NEVILLE

Oh, yeah. My wife's not like that. How'd it feel if you had a parent and that parent refused to talk to you? Just because when you were in the military you used hash and stuff. I wouldn't care what my kid did. My kid would be my kid and I would talk to him. No matter what.

MARTHA

So you're talking about Dody?

NEVILLE

I mean maybe if Dody talked to Thaw, showed a little care, maybe he coulda helped him work through his problems. But Dody won't talk to Thaw.

MARTHA

Really?

NEVILLE

Refuses to see him. Doesn't talk about him. Doesn't want to hear about him.

MARTHA

How old's Thaw?

NEVILLE

In his thirties.

MARTHA

Still uses drugs?

NEVILLE

Dunno. Never seen 'em.

MARTHA

Lots of time young people stop using drugs as they get older.

Neville looks up to Martha.

NEVILLE

I don't know about Thaw. But Dody won't talk to him.

Neville, back to the brush.

Lost in thought -- half wait, half watch -- Martha does not move away.

NEVILLE

I'd talk to him though. If I were Dody I'd talk to him.

**ACT II "THE MELTDOWN"**

INT. LOCHLEE - MARTHA'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Neville works alongside Dody to pull up old shag carpet.

NEVILLE

Saw your son the other day.

Dody YELLS.

He shoves a finger into his mouth and talks around it.

DODY

Dang it all. Nicked my finger.

Dody pulls the bloody finger from his mouth and inspects it.

DODY

Blasted blade is dull.

Neville remains on task.

NEVILLE

All suited up. Like for a date.  
Getting gas up on 22. No sign of  
Tufty with him. In kind of a hurry.  
Probably headed to Bain. No place  
around here to get that dressed up  
for. 'Specially that early in the  
morning. Sure wasn't going fishing  
in those clothes.

DODY

Yeah fine, Neville. Where'd I leave  
those blades? Could've sworn I put  
them on the windowsill there.

Dody searches.

NEVILLE

They're there.  
(lifts Dody's gloves)  
Just gotta look. Your gloves were  
layin' on top.

Neville tosses Dody the box of blades.

Dody stands with the finger in his mouth, takes it out to  
look at it.

NEVILLE

Here. Why don't you put on your gloves. Protect you some.

DODY

Yeah. Guess I won't bleed to death.

Dody shoves his hands into the gloves.

NEVILLE

Never thought he owned such nice clothes. But there he was. Probably headed to Bain.

No response from Dody.

Neville continues to work on the carpet, comments without a look up.

NEVILLE

Dody, did you hear what I said about Thaw?

DODY

Yeah. I heard ya.

NEVILLE

Well, you didn't act like you did.

DODY

Well, I cut my finger.

NEVILLE

Yeah, sure. Last time I mentioned Thaw, you just remembered you'd forgot to turn the thermostat down.

DODY

Can't expect a man to be perfect. Everybody forgets things sometimes.

Neville stops his work to look at Dody.

NEVILLE

Time before that you remembered you'd forgot to pick up your wife.

Dody studies his injured finger.

DODY

Told ya I'm not perfect. Danged finger.

Dody pulls his hand from the glove, sucks on it then shoves the glove back on.

NEVILLE  
 (to himself)  
 I just don't get it.

Neville's words come out low.

Nothing wrong with Dody's hearing.

DODY  
 Get what? What's there to get? You  
 bring the news. I hear the news.

NEVILLE  
 Whatdja gettin' so excited about?  
 I'm not doing anything.

Dody intent on serious carpet cuts.

Neville pulls on a length of carpet as Dody counter-pulls.

NEVILLE  
 What didja just remember? You have  
 to go someplace?

Dody ignores the hint of sarcasm and irony from Neville.

CUTS and RIPS continue.

INT. LOCHLEE - MARTHA'S HOME- MUDROOM - DAY

Martha in the doorway between the kitchen and the mudroom

Dody in the mudroom.

DODY  
 So you'll pick up some bathroom  
 tile in Bain?

MARTHA  
 I'll pick it up tomorrow. When  
 might you start?

DODY  
 I got some slow time next week. We  
 could do it then.

MARTHA  
 Any day would be fine.

Marlena kick up a fuss, jumps around, BARKS out the window.

MARTHA

That must be Lem's truck. He brought me fresh lake trout this morning.

DODY

Gotta' go.

MARTHA

He and Thaw are going to join me for dinner tonight. . . along with Carol and her husband.

MUDROOM DOOR

Martha opens the door for Lem while Dody has headed to the far side of the kitchen.

MARTHA

Lem. Welcome. Come in. Dody and I were just finishing up some plans for tiling the upstairs bath.

Martha plants a welcome kiss on Lem's cheek, he hands her a bottle of wine.

They head to the --

KITCHEN

Lem reaches out his hand to shake Dody's.

LEM

Dody, I just want to tell you how much I enjoy your son.

DODY

(dry)  
Ya' don't say.

LEM

Yeah, we manage to get out fishing two or three times a month. Tufty loves the boat.

MARTHA

Lucky me!

LEM

Rare day we don't come back with two or three nights' supper. Sometimes even more. Right, Martha?

Martha gives Lem a hug. Lem remains with his arm around her. Smiles at her.

LEM

Yup. We have a deal. I bring fish for the bunch of us. Martha cooks and we all eat together. Fun.

Lem turns sideways and sees Martha just behind him.

LEM

We ought to get Dody to join us sometime. Yes, Martha?

MARTHA

How about tonight, Dody?

DODY

Thanks, but, well, I'm not a real fish eater. Never have been. Used to drive my dad crazy. He'd bring in a pile of fresh fish and I'd refuse to eat any. Couldn't stand the look of them, so to speak.

LEM

Maybe we can all get together for a few drinks. Nice young man, your son, Dody. I like him a lot.

Dody raises his hand and slaps an unseen bug that bites him on his right upper arm.

DODY

Dang mosquitoes. Never leave me alone. Wife says it's 'cause I'm so sweet. Must be that morning coffee.

Martha, wine bottle in hand, touches Lem's forearm.

MARTHA

Lem, why don't you open this wine? Dody, you can join us for a before dinner drink. What do you say?

DODY

Gave that stuff up years ago. And my wife's expectin' me for supper soon anyway. Thanks, but no thanks.

Marlena makes the rounds.

DODY

Get, Marlena. Get!

Dody's turn to have his fingers licked.

DODY  
Dang dog. Never gets the message.

LEM  
Don't like dogs, Dody?

DODY  
Hate 'em, Lem. Hate 'em all.

LEM  
Any special reason?

DODY  
Can't explain it. Just hate 'em.

MARTHA  
I'll put her out. Come on, Marlina.  
You can come back in after Dody  
leaves.

Marlina pads behind Martha as she leads her out the mud room.

Thaw pulls in.

He moves around the back of his truck toward the back door.

MARTHA  
Oh, Thaw. Here you are. Come on in.  
Lem's here. And your dad. But then  
you probably saw their trucks.

THAW  
Hi, Martha.

Thaw kisses Martha's cheek, enters the room, spots Lem and Dody.

THAW  
Good evenin', Lem. Hi, Dad.

Thaw registers surprise when Dody nods at him.

LEM  
I was just about to ask your dad if  
he saw Martha's latest acquisitions  
of your work.

MARTHA  
No, I don't think he's been in the  
living room since I hung them.

Martha turns to Dody who stands in the door frame between the kitchen and study.

MARTHA

Dody, have you been in to look around the living room lately?

DODY

Not since we brought in that desk.

MARTHA

I thought not.

(to Lem)

Dody rarely gets past the kitchen when he comes. Likes the back of the house more.

(to Thaw)

And don't we all? Easier to park.

Martha gives Dody a nod in the direction of the living room.

MARTHA

So come, Dody.

Martha, Dody and Lem move to the --

LIVING ROOM

Thaw's paintings hang on the wall behind Martha's desk.

MARTHA

Come take a look.

Thaw remains behind in the kitchen, lost in thought.

MARTHA (O.S.)

Aren't they just lovely?

LEM (O.S.)

I'm telling you, Dody, you're one lucky man having a son like Thaw.

Dody is distracted by something on his shirt.

LEM

One of these days we're going to see his works in the Aesopolis Museum of Art.

KITCHEN

Thaw's brow furrows, mortified as Lem continues.

LEM (O.S.)  
 Yes, he definitely has his own  
 style. And he's prolific.

MARTHA (O.S.)  
 So, what do you think, Dody?  
 (laughs)  
 First it was this one with the  
 Yellow Dog Tooth Violet. Then I  
 wanted the Jack-in-the-Pulpit.

LEM (O.S.)  
 Great colors and balance, don't you  
 think, Dody?

LIVING ROOM

Thaw joins the rest.

DODY  
 Well, I guess I gotta giv'im that.

Silence reigns for a moment or two but Dody hates silence.  
 The others have an air of expectation in their expressions.  
 Dody shrugs: what the hell, might as well go for it,

DODY  
 Thought for a long time he was  
 gonna' come to nothin' or at least  
 next ta it.

Dody steps toward a painting, focuses on it and continues.

DODY  
 Takin' off like he did ta fight  
 that war. An' against my wishes.

Thaw at the door between Martha's study and the living room.  
 Dody picks up a magazine from the table and flips through.  
 The conversation crashes to a stop.  
 Dody rekindles it,

DODY  
 Then comin' back and holin' up in  
 that cabin with the smell of god  
 knows what comin' out so strong, I  
 didn't have the courage ta knock.

Thaw in shock and not prepared as his dad lifts the curtain. Where is his father going with this?

Dody lays the magazine down and looks across the room to where Thaw stands in the doorway.

Dody's look, expectant.

Martha reads the room.

A slight rankle.

Thaw on the spot in her house.

MARTHA

But, Dody. Just look at how these paintings liven up the room. But what I am most happy about is this.

Martha reaches for the two-foot-high mother and fawn carving from atop of the mantelpiece.

She holds it out for Dody.

He accepts it yet broods a bit to himself.

Dody, not finished -- once the dam opens...

DODY

Felt like a failure as a father.  
Tried early on and just gave up.  
Thought he was as good as a goner.

Thaw considers his father with different eyes.

He can no more move across the room to where his father stands than he can change history.

Frozen to the spot, his words spill out -- unplanned,

THAW

Look, Dad. I'm sorry. I've tried to tell you that, but I guess I gave up, too.

Dody turns the statue over, examines it.

He crosses the room, hands it to Thaw who takes it.

Dody scratches his head and nods to the side -- near unseen.

DODY

Well, Son, maybe I gotta do some rethinkin' on it.

THAW

Yeah, Dad. Maybe we both do.

The front door OPENS and CLOSES.

Tension breaks.

MARTHA

Will you stay for supper with us?

Dody: a tiny shake of his head indicates he will not.

RICK (30s) looks like a former football player. Wife, CAROL (30s), slight, fair-skinned brown mouse of a woman, follows.

Rick shakes hands all around, kisses Martha on the cheek as he grasps her hand.

In the confusion of the moment, Dody waves a small hello and with a quick wave goodbye manages to snake his way into the --

KITCHEN

-- and out the back door before anyone can stop him.

Martha leads her dinner Guests to the --

KITCHEN

MARTHA

Might as well sit down. Everything is ready. Marlina's out. Lem brought us White Zinfandel.

In the kitchen, a familiar ritual. Carol passes wine glasses to Rick. He passes them on to others. The Men choose seats.

Carol waits for Martha's guidance about how she might help.

Martha and Carol put out the food while Rick pours the wine.

All seated, Lem raises his glass and looks around the table at the smiling faces before him.

A toast,

LEM

May the sun always shine on your face.

Outside, a small bird SINGS.

INT./EXT. COUNTY ROAD - THAW'S TRUCK, TRAVELING - DAY

Thaw drives home.

EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM TONES overcome COUNTRY WESTERN music on the truck radio.

At the same time, a WIRELESS EMERGENCY ALERT TONE shrieks from Thaw's phone

EAS ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Attention. Attention. At this time the governor of New Carlton has announced a state alert due to a meltdown that has occurred at the Magdum Heights Nuclear Power Plant near Aesopolis. As such, evacuation efforts are underway for a 35 mile radius around the plant. So, in particular, areas to the north and west of Aesopolis should anticipate an influx of forced refugees. All communities are asked to do all within their power to accommodate those who travel to their neighborhood or city.

EXT. LOCHLEE - LEM'S HOME - DAY

Thaw knocks on Lem's front door, Lem answers -- breathless.

THAW

You've heard?

LEM

Yeah. Listening on the radio.

Thaw enters. Very focused.

THAW

We need to make plans. For those fleeing. For the whole village.

LEM

Martha is expecting us for lunch. Think she'd mind if we invited the mayor to join us.

THAW

Don't think so. And a good idea. He's ex-military, and can facilitate setting up a POD.

LEM

We can use Martha's people skills.  
Her years as a librarian should  
help her talk with the community.

THAW

I dropped the fish we caught at  
Martha's last night. So let's just  
head over.

Lem picks up his jacket in preparation to leave.

LEM

You know, I think in addition to  
the meltdown there must have been  
dirty bombs. Something about a  
development of newly built and  
mostly uninhabited larger homes  
just south of Ariana going up in  
flames.

THAW

So arson?

LEM

Possibly six dirty bombs between  
Aesopolis and Ariana.

THAW

So terrorism.

LEM

Clearing the area and haven't  
addressed the cause. Panic on the  
roadways. Gridlock. Chaos.

INT. LOCHLEE - MARTHA'S HOME - KITCHEN- NIGHT

The remains of a fish dinner before Martha, Thaw, Lem and  
LARRY (30s), very dapper young, village mayor and Chair of  
the Lochlee Town Council; a geologist.

MARTHA

When can we expect refugees?

LEM

Some on the six o'clock train.  
Those coming by car, tomorrow. The  
day after.

LARRY

The traffic downstate is bumper to bumper for miles. That'll slow things a little.

LEM

Few have military emergency response training. That puts them at heightened risk.

LARRY

Those with training will figure Bain or Bixby are about 100 miles from the plant.

THAW

But if they're informed, they'll prefer a 200 mile buffer. That means us -- Lochlee.

LEM

And the train from Bain stops here.

Martha has risen and is pouring coffee.

MARTHA

On the radio they said they're setting up road blocks to prevent people from approaching the plant.

THAW

And for those 35 or more miles from the plant to hunker down for 72 hours.

MARTHA

They want them to go to their cellars or basements and to stay away from the windows. Not drink or eat anything that is not bottled or canned.

LEM

Yeah. Because of the potential for radioactive contamination. But the grid is down around the meltdown so Messaging in and out is difficult.

THAW

Lem and I think we'll set up a POD, a Point of Distribution in the firehouse.

LEM

In case they have radioactive material on them, they can shower and change their clothes there.

Martha seats herself again.

MARTHA

I can get the women in the garden club to collect clothes, shoes and soap and towels.

LARRY

Where are we going to put them up?

MARTHA

The school gym, for starters. The church?

Thaw leaps up and pulls out his cell phone.

THAW

Natalie. Cheesum.

He heads for Martha's living room.

Lem rises and pulls out his cell phone.

LEM

Waxton. I've got to call my sister.

Lem heads for Martha's porch.

LIVING ROOM

Thaw on the phone.

NATALIE (V.O.)

Bain County Planning Department.

THAW

Natalie? Thaw.

NATALIE (V.O.)

Thank God.

THAW

You've heard.

NATALIE (V.O.)

The sirens haven't stopped. We're just trying to sort out details. It's all very large and unclear.

THAW

You have to leave and come here.  
You're only 100 miles from there.

NATALIE (V.O.)

Thaw, a hundred miles is safe.

THAW

Maybe. But they're evacuating  
everyone for 35 miles. Bain will be  
inundated with forced refugees.

NATALIE (V.O.)

No!

(then)

My parents. My sister. My niece.

THAW

Look. I'm at Martha's. I'm going  
home. If you can't get through on  
the phone, just come.

DINING ROOM

Thaw joins Martha and Larry.

THAW

The next train into Lochlee arrives  
at 6:10. We need to meet it so we  
can get a sense as to just how bad  
it's gonna' be.

The screen door BANGS behind Thaw as he rushes out.

MONTAGE - THE AFTERMATH

EXT. LOCAL / INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS - DAY

Bumper to bumper HONKING traffic moves at a crawl.

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

Doctors and Nurses triage a massive influx of Injured who  
overwhelm the facility.

EXT. COUNTY ROAD - DAY

A steady stream of Families heft backpacks and pull wagons  
piled with belongings.

EXT. LOCHLEE - NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Refugees knock on doors, look for help. Residents welcome them into their homes.

END MONTAGE

INT./EXT. COUNTY ROAD - THAW'S TRUCK, TRAVELING - DAY

Thaw answers his cellphone's RING.

NATALIE (V.O.)

Thaw. Natalie. Listen. There have been two more dirty bombs reported. One in northern Aesopolis. One in Waxton.

INT. BAIN - BAIN PLANNING DEPARTMENT - NATALIE'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

NATALIE

My family lives just north of Ariana. About 40 miles from the meltdown. They're heading to Bain.

INTERCUT - THAW'S TRUCK / BAIN PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Natalie stands near her desk.

NATALIE

I told them to take the secondary roads as the main ones are sure to be jammed. I'm meeting them at the intersection of Six and Three-N.

THAW

And then they'll follow you?

NATALIE

No. They are coming to Bain for, "just a little while." I don't think they really get it.

THAW

No.

NATALIE

At any rate they'll be better off in Bain than Ariana. They'll have their car and can stay here.

THAW

And your sister?

NATALIE

I want to bring them up with me. My sister is afraid of the nuclear fallout for her daughter.

THAW

So you won't be alone.

(sigh of relief)

But with only three in the car, you may be stopped. If you have to pick up a fourth, do it.

NATALIE

Where will we sleep?

THAW

We can use my air mattress and a second one that's Lem's.

NATALIE

Oh, the air mattresses'll be fine. Is there anything I can do while I wait?

Thaw thinks a beat.

THAW

Yeah. Go shopping. Fill up the cart with staples. Anything medical. See if you can find Potassium Iodide.

NATALIE

Potassium iodide?

THAW

Yes. K-I. It prevents the thyroid from taking up radioactive iodine.

THAW

And get as much as you can. It comes in two-week supplies. We need one pack for every one of us.

NATALIE

I'll have to see what's open. What they have. If I can, I'll pick up some for Lem, too.

THAW

Look, Nat, don't try to do too much. Just do what you can. And come as soon as possible.

NATALIE

I will, Thaw.

THAW

Hopefully, the wind will remain calm and westerly. That would give you a couple of hours.

They both pause to collect themselves.

THAW

Natalie, I love you, darling.

A TRAIN WHISTLE sounds in the distance.

NATALIE

I love you, too.

THAW

See you. Stay safe.

EXT. LOCHLEE - TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

Martha greets:

GRANNY (70s) who totes a cat carrier.

MANFRED (20s) and pregnant girlfriend, ELAINE (20s).

A Mexican woman, GISELE (30s), with teenage daughters, JUANITA (13) and ROZLYN (15).

Martha leads them to her --

CAR

They squeeze in for transport to her house for decon and fresh clothing.

MARTHA

Well, Manfred, suppose you sit in the middle of the back seat and hold the cat on your lap.

ELAINE

It's better if I hold the carrier. Manfred is allergic to cats.

MARTHA

Okay. Manfred, you sit in the front. Elaine will hold the cat in the back. Juanita, sit on Rozlyn's lap. Granny, you on Gisele's.

Everyone settles in.

MARTHA

Granny, you'll have to sleep on the couch in the living room so I can give one of spare bedrooms to Manfred and Elaine and one to Beatriz and her daughters.

Martha starts the car.

MARTHA

And you will all have to decon.

INT. LEM'S HOME- NIGHT

Lem, Natalie and Thaw sit rapt by 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 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 can be, people 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.

END MONTAGE

INT. LEM'S HOME- LIVING ROOM AREA

Lem's sister, MAY (40s) and her two daughters, DAHLIA (7) and CAROLINE (10), have arrived. May and Lem watch the news as the girls color.

NEWS SET

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

NEWS ANCHOR  
With me is FEMA representative, Mr. Ethan Young. Can you fill us in on the details, Mr. Young.

MR. YOUNG

Good evening. 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 rises from the couch and 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

Cereal's out for anyone who's hungry. Best thing for us to do is to get to bed so we're ready for 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.

Thaw drives. Lem is in the front passenger seat. In the back, Natalie and May. 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.

THAW

Yeah. Given we're under Martial Law, maybe we expand the number of deputies and use them for more than limiting the number of people getting off the trains.

LEM

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

MAY

Yes. 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.

LEM

And those on the welcomin' committee have some in their homes.

MARTHA

Lochlee's not the train's last stop. I've noticed some families get off, look at the size of the crowd, and get back on.

THAW

Maybe they decided to get off the line where the numbers have thinned.

NATALIE

We need 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.

THAW

Maybe keep it to 20 or fewer 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.

THAW

Maybe they could line up on the platform as each train arrives.

MARTHA

If we deputize any, they should not be greeters.

NATALIE

We need to have non-threatening people at the station to talk to those who want to get off.

EXT. LOCHLEE - THAW'S CABIN - NIGHT

Thaw hugs Natalie and her sister JUDITH (30s) then shakes hands with her daughter HANNAH (12).

THAW

So glad to see you all. Any problems on the trip?

NATALIE

No. More traffic than usual but came straight through.

THAW

Two things. One, there is a Village Council meeting in a little. You can attend it or not as you wish.

NATALIE

I'd like to go.

Thaw looks at Judith who closes her eyes and shakes a small negative nod.

THAW

Okay. Second, as far as sleeping arrangements. Lem has two bedrooms. I just have the loft. So, Natalie, you stay with me, and Judith and Hannah, you stay with Lem.

LEM

Also my sister, May, and her two daughters, Dahlia and Caroline will be staying with me.

THAW

Yes, so Lem'll sleep on the futon in his living room or at the firehouse where we're setting up a POD or Point of Distribution.

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 are all willing  
to ditch their clothes and shower.  
Can't tell who is or is not  
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 will it 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. 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 from the Bain Planning  
Board will now talk about 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 bin' working with the Newcomers. A bunch have carpentry skills. We can pull them all together to help with a plan to build shelters.

LARRY

Dody, would you take on that job?

DODY

Yup. 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 dwellings in rows to form streets that we'll name. Then we'll number dwellings so a resident has an actual address.

LARRY

Cars will park in orderly fashion at the lakeside near the boathouse, in the church parking lot, and on a 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 HOME - NIGHT

Larry, May and Thaw over coffee.

LARRY

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

LEM

Using short wave. 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 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 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.

FILMORE SMORE

One for each family?

DODY

Where they can, families make outhouses for themselves. Then we find slaked lime and distribute it for them to put down the holes to reduce germs and odor buildup from the waste.

WILLIAM McCLEAN (40s) stands.

WILLIAM MCLEAN

In Vermont, I worked on the Appalachian Trail. They had moldering privies. They were environmentally safe.

DODY

I don't know a dang thing about molderin' privies, 'cept they need slaked lime. 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. Or we can 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.

**ACT III "IT TAKES A VILLAGE"**

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 overnigheters 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've tried reaching FEMA and SEMA. Still no response.

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

SANITATION COORDINATOR

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 HOME - BACK DOOR - DAY

Martha welcomes Natalie and May.

MARTHA

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

She leads them into the --

KITCHEN

where GISELE (30's) Puerto Rican forced migrant sorts  
clothing donations.

MAY

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

GISELE

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.

NATALIE

Intensive gardening?

MARTHA

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.

GISELE

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.

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

My worry is food.

NATALIE

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

GISELE

We need to follow Granny's lead.

NATALIE

I hear Bain hospitals 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. LOCHLEE - 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 stakes 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 MCLEAN  
 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 MCLEAN  
 Because of the shape, we used to  
 call 'em 'step ups'.

DODY  
 Step ups, eh? Sounds good to me!

INT. THAW'S CABIN - DAY

Natalie and Thaw over dinner.

NATALIE  
 Nick-Sue closed? Any idea for how  
 long the college will be closed?

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

NATALIE

How are the art classes going at  
Lochlee High.

THAW

Love'em. And in the art room. Lucky  
they didn't use it for Newcomers.

Natalie rises and begins to clear the table

THAW

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.

THAW

So fewer needed?

NATALIE

No. 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 rises and puts his hands on Natalie's 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 HOME - 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.

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.

MAY

How much?

LEM

Enough to cover all of us for two weeks.

They hug.

Lem rises and heads to lie down on the couch.

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!

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 closes the door.

DODY

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

MARTHA

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

DODY

And?

MARTHA

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

JUANITA (12yo) Gisele's daughter, pads through, barefoot and  
 half asleep.

MARTHA

Good morning, Juanita. 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 near it?

MARTHA

As 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?

Martha takes some milk from the refrigerator and pours it over Juanita's oatmeal.

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.

MARTHA

Then what?

DODY

The driver dumps it somewhere we agree is far enough away from all.

MARTHA

But what about the wind? The dogs?

DODY

Then we secure the clothes in a pile to keep it from blowing all over like they are now.

MARTHA

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

DODY

Dosimeter, smosimeter! Come on, Martha. There's so much!

(MORE)

DODY (CONT'D)  
 And the time involved in first  
 checking then deciding whether to  
 take it or leave it? We'd have  
 fights all over the place!

Martha returns the milk to the refrigerator and turns toward  
 Dody.

MARTHA  
 You have a point.  
 (pauses to think)  
 How about we store them in 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.

Martha turns and heads toward the front of the house. Dody  
 follows.

INT. LEM'S HOME - 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.

JUDITH

I read the letter Lem has from the Chernobyl survivor Pretty persuasive.

MAY

Lem's ordering a two week supply for each of us from a company in Florida. Not sure when they'll arrive.

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, 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

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 ones to handle things that are possibly radioactive?

Dody spreads his arms, shrugs his shoulders.

DODY

You're the ones who brought' em.

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.

EXT. LOCHLEE - LAKESIDE - DAY

Makeshift dwellings all about.

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

Shovels lean against a parked school bus.

LARRY

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.

DODY

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.

NATALIE

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.

DODY

Meantime, I'll work with the carpenters to build wood boxes on which to place toilet seats.

WILLIAM MCLEAN

The boxes will be placed on three foot high stages secured over open-slatted cribs.

DODY

Leaving space between the slats permits air to circulate in the area below the floor.

WILLIAM MCLEAN

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.

Dody stands a bit to the side, surrounded by carpenters, some with tools in hand.

WILLIAM MCLEAN

It'd probably be best if all children younger than seven use 'em with an adult nearby.

DODY

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. And please. Just one per family.

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

INT. LEM'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

May and Lem are busy cleaning up the kitchen. May is rinsing plates. Lem is putting things away.

MAY

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

LEM

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

MAY

Keeping things sterile is even more  
of a challenge than if it were  
bacterial. Sanitation is key.

LEM

Not easy.

MAY

Everyone masks and hand washes  
constantly. We pray no one becomes  
sick from an infection.

LEM

Distancing them from one another  
helps.

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. We place  
remains in plastic bags for the  
families to pick up and disperse as  
they see fit.

FIRST ASSISTANT

And that works?

UNDERTAKER

Some bury them. Others take them  
out to the middle of the lake and  
disperse there.

Undertaker opens the crematorium door, inspects fire, closes door.

FIRST ASSISTANT

I talked with nursing volunteers and thankfully they anticipate a higher survival rate among those they're treating now.

UNDERTAKER

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.

SECOND ASSISTANT

Do you think maybe by fall things will return to normal?

EXT. MOUNTAIN STREAM - DAY

Natalie lolls on a blanket.

Thaw paints.

NATALIE

Can't believe how busy I am.  
And now that I've resigned my Bain job, its no better.  
(laughs)

Thaw continues to paint.

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 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

Like the one you did of the mother laughing with her child while a weebegone old man lies against a car in the distance behind them.

Thaw returns to his painting.

NATALIE

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

Thaw turns to Natalie, brush held at a distance.

THAW

(pauses)

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

He looks into her eyes.

THAW

Can't beat your coloring. Or lines.

Thaw puts down his brush and they embrace.

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 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?

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

NATALIE

You know what I think?

Thaw shakes: no

NATALIE

We need to expand the role of our Peacekeepers to include maintaining peace among the Newcomers.

The child's face in Thaw's 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.

Thaw cleans his brush -- done for the day.

THAW

Bring it up at the meeting.

INT. MARTHA'S HOME- 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?

Martha leads the way to the kitchen.

DODY

Yep. None in a week or more.

MARTHA

How about in the camps?

DODY

The Yellows help. They've set up card tables with games for the teens to use. Things are calmer. And no fistfights in a while.

MARTHA

Really?

Martha leads the way to the front room.

EXT. LEM'S HOME - 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 HOME- KITCHEN - DAY

Lem and May prepare lunch.

MAY  
The girls are feeding the frog. It  
amuses them now that they have  
accepted it's a tree frog not a  
toad, they 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  
Just 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.

LEM

Good advice, May.

MAY

If she sees them again, she is to come in the house or climb a tree and wait for the dogs to leave.

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)  
For now, I think they should stay inside unless they're with an adult. An adult with a gun.

May sits facing Lem.

MAY

The dogs could be a danger to anyone. What are we going to do? Let's talk about it at lunch.

LEM

I suppose I could build a fence of some kind. And Thaw and I are going 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. Good chance we'll come across the pack.

MAY

Maybe that'll give you a sense as to whether or not they're friendly.

LEM

I'll bring it up at the meeting and I'd call Larry about what you saw. Maybe the communications center could begin collecting info on sightings: when, where, how many, what kind, behavior, and such.

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. We will post regulations at the firehouse, at the school, churches, and stores.

Thaw sips coffee before he responds.

THAW

This is about the wild dogs?

NATALIE

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. Tame ones are to be brought into the kennels being set up. Aggressive, vicious ones and out of the view of children, are to be shot.

THAW

Pretty strong line.

NATALIE

Apparently there is more than one pack of wild dogs. They come in among the Newcomers. So far they've just been stealing garbage. But who knows?

Natalie sips her coffee.

THAW

There are a lot of singletons all  
over the place.

Natalie refers to her notes.

NATALIE

They're to be taken to the Lochlee  
Animal Rescue Center . . . or LARC.  
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.

Natalie glances down at her notes.

THAW

Who decides?

NATALIE

Persons running LARC.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

Thaw and Lem are hunting deer, when a pack of wild dogs  
appears.

LEM

Not good.

THAW

Not good. Whadawedo?

LEM

What else is there to do?

THAW

Yeah?

LEM

We just kill two birds with one  
stone. So to speak.

THAW

I don't read you.

LEM

We take'em out, remove their heads  
and tails, skin'em, and bring'em in  
as baby deer.

THAW

Rough!

LEM

The times are rough! Food  
insufficiencies. Attack dogs.

THAW

Guess we gotta do what we gotta do.

Lem picks up his rifle, aims and fires. Thaw follows suit.

INT. LEM'S HOME - 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.

INT. MARTHA'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Granny, Gisele 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 can eat later.

ROZLYN  
What about my mom?

GRANNY  
She said she would stay at the  
sickbay and finish cleaning. We'll  
reheat the soup when she gets here.

HANNAH  
What's wrong with Elaine?

Granny turns from the window. Hannah follows her.

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. 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. Hannah, would you mind telling Carrie and Juanita to come in 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. We'll be having it for supper, but there's more than we need.

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?

Shy Dahlia stays close to her mother.

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  
will pick you up before dinner.

Granny ladles soup.

GRANNY

Sounds good to me.

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

In shorts, Martha pulls lettuce from the soil.

JORGE (30's) bilingual Spanish/English, mows while Granny and Gisele weed the garden.

GISELE

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.

GISELE

Summer's here and most of the  
Newcomers have a place to live --  
tents or shanties built with two by  
fours and plywood.

GRANNY

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

GISELE

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 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 (50s) husband to Beatriz, 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 your wife and Juanita 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!*

EXT. MARTHA'S HOME - DAY

Lem pulls up in his SUV, opens the back door, and pulls out several large meat-packing wrapped packages. Heads for the house. Knocks on the door. Granny opens it. Lem hands Granny a package. Follows her in with the other two.

LEM  
 Broughtcha' some butchered deer.  
 Figure can't have too much.

GRANNY  
 Nice of you. And already butchered.  
 Will you join us when we have it?

LEM  
 Absolutely. Just let me know when.

GRANNY  
 And Thaw?

LEM  
 Sure. Why not?

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.  
 (pauses, looks around)  
 Especially before help arrived.  
 Before the Red Cross. Before SEMA  
 and FEMA. So I want to thank you  
 all. Every one of you. For your  
 patience. For your creativity. For  
 your generosity. And most of all  
 for your humanity.

Members of the Board APPLAUD.

Community Members join in a rousing hand for Larry.

LARRY

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. Thanks to FEMA, we also have sum' 20 outhouses spread throughout the community. And we've added a number of showers along the lake front. Not enough, but sure better than at the start.

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. The best that can be said is that we have managed enough tents, ice fishing shanties, trailers, and local home sharing to have made it through the summer. Also, many of the Newcomers are finding accommodations with relatives, rentals, and, for the lucky, they are returning home.

JIM SANDERS (40's) Newcomer, takes to his feet.

LEM

Also, we do have the two Red Cross trucks that bring 1200 meals daily. And we are talking with SEMA and FEMA.

FIRST RED CROSS WORKER  
I work with the Red Cross, and the  
number of persons being treated for  
radiation burns and sickness has  
reduced.

An older woman wearing a stylish straw hat and carrying a  
large purse stands.

MRS. LILY  
I have a concern. A grave concern.  
It has come to my attention that  
some of the deer meat supply being  
provided to the Newcomers is deer  
meat in name only.

LEM  
And how do you know this?

MRS. LILY  
My husband and I have inspected it.

LEM  
Yes?

MRS. LILY  
And we suspect that some of it is  
composed of dog remains.

LEM  
Really?

MRS. LILY  
Yes. Really.

LEM  
Have you contacted animal control  
about it?

MRS. LILY  
No. We have not.

LEM  
Perhaps you should.

INT. MARTHA'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

A Group shares coffee.

SUPER: "WINTER 2018"

GISELE

Well, here I am. About to bear a child.

ELAINE

And 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.

GISELE

Yes. We will.

Granny sits near Beatriz.

GRANNY

What about you and Domingo, Beatriz?

GISELE

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.

GISELE

Yes, they do. Sweet kids, too.

GRANNY

Whipper-snapper smart. Both of them. Polite.

GISELE

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

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 over 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 work here.

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

THAW

And 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.

Thaw lays brushes down and smiles up at her.

THAW

You gonna meet me halfway, or not?

Natalie leaves the bed for his arms.

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. 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