

Family Matters

Written By
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Based on Jolt: A Rural Noir
A Novel By Roberta M Roy

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INT. LOCHLEE - THAW'S CABIN - DAY

THEODORE HORATIO ALEXANDER WAMP (30s), prefers THAW, tall and fair skinned with long dark hair paints as NATALIE FLYNN (20s), highly educated, more city than country watches from behind him.

NATALIE

Thaw, don't the oil paint fumes give you a headache?

THAW

Sorry, Nat. Too cold to open the windows.

NATALIE

Sorry, Thaw. The truth, I'm fed up. I can hardly breathe with those volatile organic compounds and chemicals, as you so delicately refer to them. Sick of the V-O-Cs!

With this, Natalie storms out of the cabin, slams the door behind her.

A BEAT

Natalie re-enters.

When he hears the door open Thaw turns from his painting.

Thaw places his hands on her shoulders.

She looks him in the eye.

THAW

Look, Nat. You're right. I've been thinking about it. During the winter I'll not use oils. I'll carve and when I paint, I'll use acrylics.

NATALIE

Really?

THAW

If I use high viscosity acrylics, I can get almost the same effect I get with oils. If I combine the use of higher and thinner viscosity acrylics, I create an appearance of both oil and watercolor in the same painting.

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

With TUFTY, a black and white mixed breed English Setter nearby, THEODORE HORATIO ALEXANDER WAMP (30s), prefers THAW, tall and fair skinned with long dark hair, talks with LEM (50s), a retired veteran who wears worn camo fatigues.

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. Forgot you're new to
the North Country.

INT. BAIN - NEW CARLTON UNIVERSITY - ART DEPT. - CHAIR'S

OFFICE - DAY

DR. MILFORD "MILFY" OWENS (60s) gestures to a chair for Thaw who accepts then opens his portfolio.

Milfy studies each for a few seconds, thumbs both forward and backward to make comparisons.

After the last picture, he leaves the book open on it.

MILFY

Mr. Wamp... do you prefer I call
you Mr. Wamp? Or Theodore?

THAW

Theodore is fine. Most people call
me Thaw.

MILFY

So, Thaw. How can I help you?

THAW

I'd like to teach. Oil painting or
sculpture.

MILFY

We don't have courses in sculpture.
Can you make jewelry?

Milfy leans back in his chair, sizing up Thaw as he does so.

THAW

It's not my strength but I can and have worked with silver a bit. But I don't think I have the knowledge and experience needed to teach it. But I think I do for oil painting. And of course, acrylics.

MILFY

How long have you been painting?

THAW

Since I was a teenager. It wasn't until after I was out of the service I began to explore and develop skills. It's pretty much all I've done for about ten years.

Milfy leans inward. More interested.

MILFY

You support yourself with your art?

THAW

More or less. When times get tough, I do carpentry and caricatures at flea markets and fairs.

MILFY

And now you want to teach.

THAW

Yes.

MILFY

What kind of degrees do you hold?

THAW

I don't have a degree. But I can paint. I've read and studied about many of the world's greatest artists. I think I have my own style and that one day my work will become well known.

Milfy leans back in his chair again.

MILFY

That's a pretty big mouthful you just said there. In the university art world we sometimes blink at the absence of a degree.

(MORE)

MILFY (CONT'D)

We don't really have a full-blown fine arts department. Our students take art as electives and for the fun of it. It's possible that we could hire you but only in a pinch. But how often do those situations arise? Not very often. Not often at all.

THAW

I thought I'd apply just in case.

Silent for a bit, Milfy thumbs through the portfolio.

MILFY

But your work has style. You clearly have a fine command of the media, color, balance, form, even content. Get me a copy of your resume, attach to it a few photos of your work, go home, don't wait for my call, get about your life, and put on as many shows as you can.

THAW

I'm looking forward to a show at La Petite Gallerie.

MILFY

If necessary, find an agent if you don't already have one and try for some shows in Aesopolis. You have talent. More talent than I've seen in long time.

Dr. Owens closes the album and passes it back, stands, and offers Thaw his hand.

MILFY (CONT'D)

I'll keep your resume. And keep up the fine work.

Delighted, Thaw smiles and shakes the hand.

THAW

Thank you, Dr. Owens. Thank you so much.

Dr. Owens watches Thaw as he leaves his office.

INT. LOCHLEE - THAW'S CABIN - DAY

Thaw paints a flower caught by sun and a tiny bird in flight.

Nearby complete paintings bring the eye to a focus on an animal, sparkling stream or delicate flower.

THAW

I'm getting the feel for acrylics.
Whaddayathink, Nat?

Natalie stretches out on a divan.

Out of sight behind him, bored Natalie.

NATALIE

Gosh, T-W, look at the quality
you've achieved despite the lack of
toxicity, and in spite of the
archival quality of your work.

Thaw pauses, turns to Natalie.

She wears only a towel as a turban and holds a bed sheet to cover her naked body.

THAW

Feeling neglected, Nat?

Caught by her availability, Thaw lays down his brush and moves to her.

He lifts Natalie in his arms and carries her to the loft.

THAW (CONT'D)

God, Natalie, I love your coloring.

INT. ARIANA - MATTERS' HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

MARY MATTERS (30s) lays an affectionate hand on the arm of husband LOU (30s).

MARY

Listen.

LOU

To what?

MARY

No ruckus. The house to ourself.

LOU

Nice that Jason and Marty are old
enough to go to a movie with pals.

Lou places his hand over Mary's but she pulls it away, clasps
both hands together.

MARY

I had an awful dream last night.

LOU

A meltdown. At the plant?

MARY

A green sticky goo spread from the
plant like lava and flowed to our
front door. It oozed under, across
the vestibule and down the stairs.
I woke up drenched in sweat.

LOU

Sounds terrible.

Mary rises to put the cream in the refrigerator.

MARY

Suppose you're at work? Or I have
to pass by on my way home?

LOU

The longer I work at Magdum, the
more you worry.

Mary turns and confronts Lou.

MARY

The plant is over 15 years old.
Given 9-11 and Fukishima, I can't
help it.

LOU

You want me to find another job?

MARY

Don't you think commuters from
Verde North share my concern about
the safety of the plant?

LOU

Doubt it. Trains run on
electricity, too.

MARY

You think they just see the plant
as essential? Safe and clean?

Lou nods to the side.

LOU

Yup. Sad and bitter as it may seem,
that's probably the truth of it.

MARY

I just can't figure it, Lou. How
could we ignore the fact that it
releases radioactive gases into the
air a few times each week? Wouldn't
we be aware of it even though it's
done in the dead of night?

Lou rises and approaches Mary.

LOU

Come on, Mare. You know how much
they advertise the importance of
the plant. How East Cordoban
Electricity is the cheapest,
cleanest, easiest and best way to
light and air condition Aesopolis,
Verde and expanding suburbs north
and east. Everyone knows the source
of that power is the Magdum Heights
Nuclear Power Plant.

MARY

Yeah. I suppose that as long as the
plant remains profitable nothing's
gonna change.

Mary, crestfallen.

LOU

Mary. What're you doing? Why do you
wear yourself out with this? Denial
is denial. The only thing for us to
do is to find a new job and move.

MARY

Would that be too much to ask, Lou?

LOU

Maybe it's time.

He takes her into his arms. Mary buries her face in his
chest.

INT. LOCHLEE - THAW'S CABIN - NIGHT

Snow frames the window panes.

SUPER: "A New Year, February, 2018"

Thaw is with his girlfriend, NATALIE FLYNN (20s), highly educated, more city than country, washes dishes.

Her long auburn hair messy, Natalie faces away from him.

A very relaxed Thaw admires her back.

NATALIE

We've got chemistry, Thaw.
Chemistry.

THAW

I'd say. Enjoyed our fun afternoon,
but Natalie... six years? There's
got to be more to it than that.

NATALIE

Like what?

THAW

You like talkin' to me.

NATALIE

I do.

Thaw rises and takes a step toward Natalie.

THAW

And walkin' with me?

NATALIE

Yeah, so?

THAW

And pullin' out fish with me?

NATALIE

So what?

Thaw approaches Natalie and puts his hand on her waist.

THAW

Don't those things mean something?

NATALIE

I suppose.

THAW

Then you agree. There's more to it than chemistry.

NATALIE

You didn't ask me that.

Thaw give Natalie a small pull toward himself. Natalie does not turn toward him.

THAW

If I did?

NATALIE

If you did what?

Natalie is very intent on scrubbing a frying pan.

THAW

Come on, Natalie. If I asked you if we enjoy doing other things beside having sex, doesn't that mean there is more than, as you put it, just chemistry?

NATALIE

Well, you haven't asked me.

THAW

Natalie, you're getting to me. Come on. All right. I'll ask you. If we enjoy doing things other than making love, don't you think this suggests there must be more to us than just this chemistry you're always talking about?

NATALIE

Well, yes.

THAW

Sounds more like a question than an answer the way you put it.

Natalie is still scrubbing a stubborn spot on a pan. Her speech flattens.

NATALIE

I guess it is, 'cause I just can't see myself enjoying walking and fishing and talking about things like chemistry with someone with whom I just don't have any.

Natalie under Thaw's skin. His pitch rises.

THAW

Well, did it ever occur to you that the only reason we have any of the goddamn chemistry is exactly because you enjoy walking, talking, and being with me to begin with, Natalie?

Natalie does not turn but raises her sweet pitch in a question.

NATALIE

Thaw...?

THAW

(loud)
Yeah.

NATALIE

(sweet)
You're getting kind of loud now.

THAW

(aggravated)
I don't care. The noisiest woman I ever met, whether it's cooking, washing pots and pans or making love. I raise my voice two decibels and she tells me -- ME -- I'm getting loud. Never could talk sense to you... for all your college degrees and city ways.

Natalie scrubs the pan with more vigor.

NATALIE

Thaw, I don't like it when you yell. And I don't like it when you say things like that.

THAW

Well, it's true.

He drops his voice to a whisper, clenches teeth.

THAW (CONT'D)

So now I'm going to tell you something, woman, just in case you don't already know it.

Thaw reaches around Natalie and snatches her wrist. He tosses the scouring pad in the water.

When he pulls her around to face him, Natalie's eyes drop to the floor. Thaw's voice softens.

THAW (CONT'D)
Natalie. Listen to me. Look at me.
Please.

Thaw takes her other soapy hand and holds them both in his.

THAW (CONT'D)
Damn it, woman...

He draws her near then slips a hand around Natalie's waist. Thaw turns Natalie's chin to align her parted lips with his.

Natalie loses a giggle of surprise and, without losing a beat, responds with a passionate kiss.

INT. ARIANA - MATTERS' HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

MARTY (10 y.o.), flaxen blond hair. and JASON (13 y.o.) tall, blond, complete homework on the kitchen table.

Mary enters, leaves her briefcase in the living room.

She joins her Sons in the kitchen and washes her hands.

MARY
Hi, guys.

Mary hugs the Boys.

MARTY
Mom, can you help with my science project?

MARY
After dinner. How are you, Marty?

MARTY
Okay.

Mary waits for more.

MARTY (CONT'D)
Kara got a new pup. Marty opens a notebook.

MARTY (CONT'D)
She calls it Felicia. It's a French poodle. Black.

MARY
How old is it?

MARTY
Six weeks. I'll do math first.

Marty picks up a pencil and tackles long division.

MARTY (CONT'D)
Still needs a bottle.

Mary takes some food from the refrigerator and looks at Jason.

MARY
How about you, Jason?

JASON
Scored a goal at soccer practice.

MARY
Yay, Jay!

Mary ruffles Jason's hair. He looks at her.

JASON
How about you, Mom.

MARY
Somethin' came for us in the mail.

JASON
What?

MARY
Potassium Iodide. Just in case.

MARTY
In case of what?

Mary stops what she is doing in preparing the meal and looks at her sons.

MARY
In case of a meltdown. Iodide protects from absorbing radiation. It also stops thyroid cancer.

JASON
Where are they?

MARY
Cellar. With the dosimeter in the go-bag. In case of a meltdown.

MARTY
Cool, Mom. Leave it to you.

Lou enters, waves and heads to the bathroom.

LATER

Newly showered, Lou hugs and kisses Mary, gives Jason a pat on the shoulder and Marty a hug.

MARTY
What do you think, Mom?
(to Lou)
Cleanest guy in town.

MARY
Don't we all wash up when we come home from school?

MARTY
Well, yeah. We do. But we don't take a shower before hugging.

Lou laughs.

LOU
Since when can you see radioactivity?

MARY
Which of you sets the table tonight?

JASON
My turn. Marty clears.

MARTY
Hey, Dad. Mom got us some K-I to use in case there's a meltdown.

Mary busies with dinner.

Lou remains nonchalant.

LOU
Yeah. Never hurts to have some.

After a bit, he helps Marty with homework.

INT. LOCHLEE - THAW'S CABIN - DAY

A kettle of water steams on the wood stove.

SUPER: "March, 2018"

Thaw paints bold horizontal strokes with a broad brush.

In the loft, Natalie raises on one elbow to better observe him create a vivid landscape in greens, blues and purples.

NATALIE

Morning.

Thaw's below shoulder length hair hangs freshly washed and combed. He continues to paint.

THAW

Morning, Nat. Sleep well?

Natalie smiles at the back of Thaw's head.

NATALIE

Couldn't have slept better. How long have you been up?

THAW

Didn't check my watch.

The rhythm of Thaw's strokes remain constant.

NATALIE

You could turn and look at me when you talk to me.

THAW

Why?

(laughs)

Don't you think I know what you look like?

NATALIE

How can you have a wake-up conversation with a woman and not look at her.

Natalie stays quiet for a tick then bolts upright.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

All right. You win. It's more than chemistry.

Thaw paints.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

I'm 28 and not a smidgin of hope of us ever marrying let alone me becoming a mother when the man with whom I choose -- I use the term loosely -- I should say am driven to be with by the chemistry if nothing else, lives in a cabin heated by a wood stove and supports himself by selling fish, face painting and doing caricatures at flea markets and occasionally -- very occasionally I might add -- sells one of his works of art.

Tears trickle down Natalie's cheeks. Then she laughs and cries at the same time.

Thaw drops the brush, runs to the loft two steps at a time.

Natalie lies against Thaw.

THAW

Oh, baby. Don't cry. Please don't cry. I've never seen you cry. I hate to see you cry. How could I know? You never told me. Always flippant and sure. Always with a quick laugh and a quicker answer. I love you. If I thought marrying you would help, I'd do it in a minute. But what's a man to do? What's a man to do?

The sobs subside.

NATALIE

I don't know, Thaw. I don't know.

INT. ARIANA - MATTERS' HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Without a word and to avoid close contact, Lou presses past Marty and Jason.

Marty looks to his mother at the kitchen table.

He raises his arms in a broad shrug.

MARTY

Guess Dad's home?

MARY

You know how he is. Just wants to
decon before coming near.

MARTY

Wish he didn't work at Magdum
Heights.

MARY

Problem is the power plant pays
well and until he finds something
else...

MARTY

Imagine working somewhere where you
didn't worry about making your
family sick.

MARY

Imagine if I didn't wash my hands
after a day at school with the
kids.

OFFSCREEN: The SHOWER runs.

JASON

Come on, Mart. Let's go. Time to
go.

The family DOG rises and leans against Mary's legs.

She pats its head with an absent stare.

EXT. BAIN - LA PETITE GALLERIE - DAY

SUPER: "Thursday, April 12, 2018"

In suit and tie, Thaw pulls up to the curb, notes his watch
reads 11:18.

Thaw carries several large piece, four feet long by three
feet wide.

INT. BAIN - LA PETITE GALLERIE - CONTINUOUS

As Thaw opens the gallery's front door, the bell JINGLES.
RORY(30s), the gallery owner, medium height, auburn hair,
wears informal jeans, tie, jacket and work boots.

RORY (O.S.)

Be right with you. A second later
Rory appears.

RORY (CONT'D)
Theodore. Well if it isn't Theodore
Wamp in the flesh. I was wondering
when you were going to stop by.
How's it been going, man? Painting
up a storm? Whatcha got there?

Rory lifts the painting from Thaw's hands and lays it face up
on the counter before the frame samples.

RORY (CONT'D)
Nice. Very nice.

Rory positions frame samples beside the painting.

RORY (CONT'D)
Yes. Genuinely nice. Definitely
needs gold.

Rory lays out a small black corner.

RORY (CONT'D)
That would never do it justice. Too
small. Closes in the picture. What
you want is an openness. Something
that will complement not stop the
colors.

Rory tries a few more frames.

RORY (CONT'D)
Nope.

Rory returns to his original choice.

RORY (CONT'D)
Yup. That's it. What do you think?

THAW
Well, I like it. I like it very
much. But will I like the price?

RORY
Remember what I told you. Frame
cheap. Sell cheap. Frame well. Sell
high. If someone is going to invest
a thousand dollars in a picture
they might as well invest fifteen
hundred and go home happy. That's
my job. I frame. I sell. I send my
people home happy. Thaw, straight
to the point.

THAW

What's a job like this going to cost me?

RORY

That depends. How many do you have?

THAW

Suppose I bring you five?

RORY

About \$250.

Thaw picks up a corner from the display and inspects it.

THAW

Suppose I bring you ten?

RORY

Two twenty-five.

Thaw puts corner down and picks up another.

THAW

What about twenty?

RORY

Two fifteen. But no lower.

Thaw puts the corner down and considers a moment then looks at Rory.

THAW

Okay. Two fifteen. But you can't do them all the same.

RORY

I never do two the same unless they're a pair.

THAW

Some are smaller, and some are larger.

RORY

How much larger?

THAW

Five by seven feet.

RORY

We'll use cheaper framing lengths. Not so fancy.

Thaw moves to look at a piece on the wall.

THAW
What about if they're smaller?

RORY
How small?

THAW
Two feet by three feet.

RORY
We'll use fancy framing, or we'll
mat them and throw in a fillet.

Thaw turns toward Rory.

THAW
What's a fillet?

RORY
It's a tiny frame inset inside the
mat. Really rich. People go crazy
over pictures with fillets in them.

THAW
How about if you do them in batches
of five and I give you 500 down
toward materials each time you take
a set and pay you the rest when the
batch is done.

RORY
Deal.

THAW
Deal.

Thaw and Rory formalize in a handshake.

INT. LOCHLEE - THAW'S CABIN - DAY

Fall.

A sketch of Natalie asleep in a cloth-covered chair.
Natalie's hand lies on a nearby table to support her head.

Thaw paints. Thaw answers the telephone RING.

THAW
Hello. Thaw here.

RORY (V.O.)

Good morning, Theodore. Rory, here.
I have your next four pictures
framed. You can come see them or
pick them up any time.

THAW

Let's see.
(thinks)
How about Thursday?

RORY (V.O.)

Thursday's fine.

Thaw puts his brush down and sits.

THAW

By the way, my friend Lem really
likes your work, Rory. Said I was
lucky to have found you.

RORY (V.O.)

(laughs)
Lucky we found each other.

THAW

Said I needed a businessman as a
partner.

RORY (V.O.)

I like this Lem. So I figure you
should get around \$2,500 per
painting. That way selling two
would cover your costs for the
show.

Thaw rises and returns to his painting.

THAW

Sounds a little high to me.

RORY (V.O.)

You gotta think of it, man. These
are pretty work intensive. At \$250
per frame you'd need to spend
\$6,520 on framing alone. Then 20
percent commission or about \$13,000
to me. Then you have cost of
canvas, paint, transportation, and
your share of the advertising. When
all is said and done, you'd be
making at most about \$40,000 a
year... if you're lucky and sell a
painting every other week.

THAW

Not bad.

Thaw picks up his brush.

RORY (V.O.)

But if you finished and sold one painting every two weeks that would be about 25 paintings a year, with a gross of \$65,000.

THAW

(laughs)

Given my work at Nick-Sue, I'd be happy with \$30,000 a year.

RORY (V.O.)

That's the problem with artists. No business sense. That's why you need guys like me. Trust me. If you don't value your work, who will? I say \$2,500 a painting. And it's a bargain.

THAW

Some bargain.

RORY (V.O.)

Look, Thaw. Those rich gals need to be able to go to the hunt club and brag about the bargain they got. They can't go in and brag look at the bargain I got. \$250.00. No, they have to brag about bargains in thousands even millions. But you and I are doing the thousands. What do you say?

Thaw is back to painting.

THAW

Look, Rory. You're the businessman. I just paint.

RORY (V.O.)

Sure. What the heck. Why not give it a go?

THAW

All right. Twenty-five hundred. But some need to be less expensive.

RORY (V.O.)

And some need to be more expensive.

THAW
You're something.

RORY (V.O.)
Well?

Thaw laughs. Stands back to appraise his work.

RORY
Yeah. And some need to be more expensive. Now you're talking. So, Thursday. See you Thursday.

THAW
Thursday.

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

Thaw on his cellphone.

NATALIE (V.O.)
Good afternoon. Bain Planning Department. Natalie Flynn speaking.

THAW
Nat.

NATALIE (V.O.)
Thaw. Didn't I just talk to you? What's going on now?

THAW
But Nat...

NATALIE (V.O.)
Nat what?

THAW
I moved it up, Nat.

NATALIE (V.O.)
Moved what up? Oh, no. Not that.

THAW
You promised, Nat. You promised.

NATALIE (V.O.)
Oh, Thaw.

A smile creeps into her voice.

NATALIE (V.O.)
I guess I did.

THAW

The show will be in six weeks. Last week of April, first week of May. At Rory's gallery. Will you go with me?

NATALIE (V.O.)

Only if I can bring my sister. I need protection.

THAW

Bring your sister. Bring your boss. Bring the whole town. Just go with me.

NATALIE (V.O.)

Oh, okay.

THAW

And what about lunch tomorrow?

NATALIE (V.O.)

I don't know. I'm awful busy right now. The governor is planning for development of an inter-county planning board and I'm supposed to prepare Bain's recommendations for review by the County Legislature and present it at their regular meeting on Tuesday. And we're all caught up in a lawsuit involving the question of whether or not a toxic waste site was incorrectly zoned. It's crazy here right now. Just crazy.

THAW

But you gotta' eat, Nat. We can go next door to where you work. That little deli place... with the tables.

NATALIE (V.O.)

Oh, okay.

She sounds resentful, continues with a bit of snap.

NATALIE (V.O.)

But I'm going to Aesopolis with my sister for the weekend so no talk about Friday night or Saturday. Got it? I still need some time, so eating with you is not getting back with you. Got it?

THAW

Got it.

NATALIE (V.O.)

Good. Eleven forty-five. Before the crush. All right? I'll have about half an hour. No more.

THAW

Half an hour. No more. See ya', Nat.

NATALIE (V.O.)

See ya' then, Thaw.

THAW

And Nat?

NATALIE (V.O.)

What now, Thaw?

THAW

Thanks, Nat. Thanks.

INT. BAIN - LUNCHEONETTE - DAY

Natalie sweeps into the luncheonette, joins Thaw in a booth.

Thaw is delighted by Natalie's appearance.

THAW

Hey, Nat. Definitely looking tres belle!

Intense in elegant dress, she exudes an electric presence.

NATALIE

Thanks. Beats my usual weekend jeans.

(sigh)

What a day! The planning department is deeply engaged in a legislative fight to save the wetlands along the river just north and west of the city.

Natalie peruses a menu.

THAW

Sounds like a struggle you'd enjoy.

NATALIE

Just wish it were less intense.
 (on the menu)
 How are the preparations for your
 show going?

THAW

Just left Rory. Delivered the works
 I had in the Nick-Sue art show to
 him. Next week my show opens there.
 Ya' up for it?

NATALIE

I thought I might bring my sister,
 Judith.

THAW

You think she'd be interested?

Natalie holds Thaw's hand.

NATALIE

Definitely.

EXT./INT. ARIANA - MATTERS' HOME - GARAGE - DAY

SUPER: "Thursday, April 12, 2018"

Marty and Jason squat beside a rectangular terrarium in the
 corner of the garage.

MARTY

How'er yer nature studies goin'?

Jason looks up from the well kept terrarium.

JASON

Checking out taste preferences.
 When he sees a preferred food he
 darts his tongue in and out
 quicker.

Marty shakes his head with irony.

MARTY

Oh, yeah.

JASON

Yeah. When he pulls his tongue in,
 he pulls the scent from his prey in
 so he can appreciate it more.

MARTY
Ya don't say.

Jason intent on his task.

JASON
He doesn't care if it's a fly or
spider, meat or a dead worm.

Marty shoots his brother a quizzical look and laughs

MARTY
Do ya' blame him?

Jason responds with a small push to Marty's shoulder.

Marty frowns, reaches to the floor to maintain balance.

JASON
Gimme a break. It's a snake. I'm
makin' a study.

Jason raises an eyebrow, exaggerates pride.

JASON (CONT'D)
That's why I keep changin' what I
giv'em to eat.

Marty tips his head forward to challenge Jason.

MARTY
You're not gonna give him any of
our frogs!

JASON
No, knucklehead. I wouldn't do
that.

Marty raises his brows and speaks with a threatening tone.

MARTY
Better not.
(then)
So, what're you using?

JASON
Different kinds of bugs, worms,
snails and maybe a tadpole or two.

MARTY
(firm)
No tadpoles.

Jason focuses on the snake.

JASON

Mostly bugs and worms. But I think it's time to return this guy to the stream.

Marty stands to leave.

PRISSY, their cat, rubs up against his legs. Marty pets her, holds the cat close to his face.

He puts Prissy on the floor.

MARTY

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jason smiles at Marty's response and shakes his head.

JASON

Never mind the yeah-yeahs.

He lifts the terrarium and readies to leave through the open garage door.

JASON (CONT'D)

I'm gonna take Rocky down and free him near the stream. Wanna come?

Prissy rubs against Jason's legs, purrs and half-meows.

She follows Jason out the garage door.

Marty leaves with Jason.

He closes the garage door behind them.

JASON (CONT'D)

When we get back, we can go bike riding. Mom's school has parent conferences so she may be home early. Around three.

INT. BAIN - LA PETITE GALLERIE - BACK ROOM - DAY

RORY and Thaw prepare for Thaw's opening.

RORY

Look, Thaw. If you don't value your works, others won't. Pricing the them between two and three thousand each will help.

THAW

If you think so.

THAW'S SHOW - LATER

People wander around the gallery, comment on the works.

Thaw and Natalie mingle.

ANEILDA (50s), the governor's will o'wisp wife approaches Thaw and Natalie.

ANEILDA

Goodness. Such a young man to have so much talent. What a delight.

She extends a hand to Natalie.

ANEILDA (CONT'D)

Wonderful work, don't you think?

No pause for Natalie's reply.

Instead, Aneilda turns to Thaw.

ANEILDA (CONT'D)

I apologize, but I am in a bit of a hurry. There is a rather large function at the Statehouse tonight. Sometimes I can't resist to take a peek.

She scans the works.

ANEILDA (CONT'D)

And so glad I did.

The Attendees and Members Of The Press gather round.

Aneilda raises her voice to be heard over the din.

ANEILDA (CONT'D)

In fact, the Governor and I were just talking last night about how it was time to change some of the art in the mansion. You see, we try to rotate works of local artists so that we and others have the chance to better appreciate their talents. Some of the work is brought in by the curator. Some the Governor selects. But the Governor and I have agreed that for the small inner room where we tend to entertain our friends most, I am given free reign over the selection of the works.

Aneilda pauses to let the facts settle in, raises her eyebrows and continues.

ANEILDA (CONT'D)

So, if you would be so kind, I should very much like to take on loan for one year the picture of the yearling that hangs near the entry door.

Aneilda walks to the painting and stops for a photo op.

The Press obliges.

Thaw follows Aneilda.

ANEILDA (CONT'D)

Do you think it would be possible for you to loan the Governor's Mansion the painting of the Fawn in Spring for a year? I promise you it will be handled in the most careful of fashions and that many art connoisseurs will sip tea beneath it.

Thaw needs only a moment to take in the proposal.

He offers his hand which she takes.

THAW

It would be an honor.

The Governor's Wife continues to walk and smile.

She talks over her shoulder, more to the Audience than Thaw.

ANEILDA

Then I'll let the press know now. I think it will be helpful to you. And I am sure the governor will love it. Thank you so much.

Adept at her role, Aneilda plays to the media.

ANEILDA (CONT'D)

Despite its gentle subject matter, the painting itself has a certain power to it. As it turns out, its colors would show particularly well in the soft light of my favorite room in the inner mansion where Governor Martin and I often entertain our closest friends.

Aneilda pauses for a gracious smile sent to Thaw.
The Press eats it up. Flashes burst light upon them.
Aneilda addresses her court.

ANEILDA (CONT'D)

As such, I am pleased to announce
that Professor Wamp and I have
talked and with his consent, I have
selected Fawn in Spring to be among
those to be hung in this coming
year.

A round of APPLAUSE and a few BRAVOS.

Natalie swept back to the role of just another Attendee that
gathers to hear the First Lady's comments.

With the last announcement, she fills with a sense of pride.

Natalie smiles broad, CLAPS with the others.

LATER

Only one guest left that Rory talks with.

Thaw and Natalie clear away the glasses and plates.

NATALIE

Isn't it wonderful? Two paintings
sold, one to go in the Governor's
Mansion. My family will be
impressed. I'm so sorry Judith
couldn't come. Her daughter,
Hannah, is sick and needed
attention.

THAW

Can't wait to tell Lem. Please tell
Judith I'm sorry she couldn't make
it. But she's welcome to stop by
anytime. Rory'd be most welcoming.

INT. ARIANA - MATTERS' HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Jason pours a glass of milk.

Marty runs a drink of tap water.

Jason makes and shares a PB & J.

When finished, Jason gives Marty a sideways nod and they both descend the stairs to the --

BASEMENT, WOOD ROOM

Jason scours for oil to lube his bike chain.

MARTY

Never liked it down here. Never liked the thought we might have to hunker down here. Hurricanes. Fallout. No windows.

JASON

It's for emergencies. See.

Jason ticks off items he points to.

JASON (CONT'D)

First aid supplies, canned food, bottles of water, plastic bags, sweatpants and sweatshirts, flip-flops. Dad's dosimeter.

Marty lifts a small box of Potassium Iodide.

MARTY

What's this? For pain?

JASON

No. That's K-I. In case the plant were to go down. It protects the thyroid.

Jason tightens his chain and prepares to oil it.

MARTY

Some wood room. Look at this. Travel games? But not for traveling?

Jason pulls down a can of axle grease.

JASON

Yup. This is what I need. Axle grease.

Jason swipes the can beneath Marty's nose.

Marty concurs.

MARTY

Yup. Axle grease.

JASON
Where did dad put those plastic
gloves?

Marty finds them on a shelf.

MARTY
Here they are.

The floor shakes beneath them.

Cans and tools on the shelf RATTLE. Some fall to the floor.

The lights go out.

The boys freeze.

Stock-still in the dim light of the cellar, they seek each
other's eyes.

JASON
Stay with me. Come on.

Jason leads the way with Marty close behind.

LIVING ROOM

A volunteer fire department siren BLASTS nearby. Marty and
Jason run upstairs from the cellar.

They see the distant red glare and smoke through the window.

JASON
Marty. It's the plant.

MARTY
Jason. Holy Moley.

EXT. BIG BOX STORE - DAY

Customers gape at the red glow of the distant fire and black
smoke that coils in the air.

The BLARE of a volunteer fire department siren.

People trip over each other in a race to their cars.

Multiple fender benders as they speed away helter skelter.

No one stops to trade insurance info.

Some abandon cars to run, eyes wide on the glow.

INT. ARIANA - MATTERS' HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A serious expression on his face, Jason cradles the landline.

JASON

No answer on Mom or Dad's cells or
work numbers.

MARTY

Are they okay?

Uncertain, Jason lies.

JASON

Of course. They'll be home soon.

MARTY

What do we do?

He takes his Brother by the shoulders.

JASON

What Mom and Dad taught us.
Remember the story?

Marty nods: I do. For a moment, they glance the distant glow
and smoke.

BASEMENT

Ready to go, the Boys stuff items in their backpacks.

Jason pockets cash from the 'For Emergencies Only' tin box.

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. LOCHLEE - LEM'S HOME - DAY

Thaw knocks on the front door of LEM (50s), a retired veteran who wears worn camo fatigues. Lem answers. Thaw is breathless.

THAW

You've heard?

LEM

Yeah. Listening on the radio.

Thaw enters. Very focused.

THAW

We need to make plans. 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. She's a quick learner. Her years as a librarian should put her in good stead to talk with the community and help with organizing.

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. They think arson, but as they're clearing the area, they have not addressed the cause. Dirty bombs are a possibility.

(MORE)

LEM (CONT'D)

When last I listened they had
identified six that were set off
between Aesopolis and Ariana.

THAW

So terrorism.

LEM

And panic on the roadways.
Gridlock. Chaos.

EXT. ARIANA - INTERSECTION - SECONDARY ROAD AND INTERSTATE -
DAY

Jason and Marty pedal to the intersection. Jason signals a
stop. They ditch bikes behind the trees.

JASON

(points)

There. Across the interstate. We
hitch north.

INTERSTATE SHOULDER - NORTHBOUND

The Boys walk backwards with thumbs out.

JASON

Mom said to get out of the area as
fast as possible. It's 20 minutes
since we saw the red glow. If we
catch a ride in the next five or
so, we're safe.

MARTY

In an hour we could be 75 miles
north of the plant. Right?

Proud of his Brother's keenness, Jason smiles and nods yes.

HANK (60s) pulls his battered pickup over. Jason and Marty
run to it.

Hank calls out through the open passenger window,

HANK

What are you up to, boys? Why ain't
you in school?

JASON

Parent-teacher conference day. We
need to get to Waxton.

Marty opens the passenger door, speaks through the opening.

MARTY

We're meeting our grandparents.

HANK

They tell you to hitchhike?

MARTY

Yeah. My dad's truck broke down near them.

Jason shows Hank his backpack.

JASON

I have spark plugs and jumpers.

MARTY

Yeah.

HANK

Hop in. I don't usually pick up hitchhikers, but I don't like to see kids on the interstate. It's dangerous. Got grandkids of my own.

Jason pushes past Marty and climbs in first. Marty follows. They lay the backpacks at their feet.

Marty closes the SQUEAKY door. It doesn't shut. Jason reaches over Marty, reopens and slams the door.

Gears GRIND as Hank forces the truck into first then goes.

Wires snake from a hole in the dash where a radio should be.

EXT. BOMB SITE - DAY

Emergency responders load injured People into ambulances.

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.

INT. LOCHLEE - LEM'S HOME - DAY

Thaw feeds and waters TUFTY.

Lem prepares vegetable soup.

THAW

How's your family doing, Lem?

LEM

My sister and her two kids are coming from Waxton.

(realizes)

Probably for the duration.

THAW

Natalie and her sister Judith and niece Hannah are also coming.

Lem puts out some bowls and soup spoons.

LEM

How are you going to put them up?

THAW

Air mattresses. Then I thought maybe until we get something better, I could borrow yours.

LEM

Sure. Maybe Natalie's sister and daughter should stay here instead. They could have one bedroom. My sister and her two daughters could take the one with the double bed and bunk beds. I take the couch.

THAW

Lem. It's too much.

Lem ladles some soup into the bowls.

LEM

Four of you in one room wouldn't be? How old is the daughter?

THAW

Around 12.

LEM

Come on now. Who's sleeping where? You taking the air mattress? Is Natalie?

THAW

Well, no...

LEM

Tell them they can sleep here. Let Natalie's sister decide which she thinks is better. Hell, I've slept on that couch many a night. And it wasn't even open.

THAW

(laughs)

I can guess which Natalie will choose.

Lem smiles at Thaw and sits down.

THAW (CONT'D)

We better call Martha about tonight.

LEM

Already did. She's coming over. Said she'd meet the 6:10 train and agreed we need a game plan. This is growing way too fast.

DINING AREA - LATER

Lem, on a laptop, as he meets with MARTHA (60's), retired librarian, and Thaw.

MARTHA

Guess we have our work cut out for us.

Martha places a notebook and pen on the table.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

I figured everybody in the town. Plus with your involvement in communications and the Internet, Lem, and both your and Thaw's military training and experience along with Larry's position as mayor and the little training I have in emergency response, we should be able to come up with an agenda for the town council.

LEM

Larry's got a town meeting called for 8:00 tonight to be followed by an open meeting at 9:00. He's put everyone in the town into action: churches, council and volunteer fire department. Be nice if we had a police department at this point if only to handle traffic, but with a population of around a thousand, even with a few hundred people coming in, I think we'll be fine without them. Hopefully, we'll just get a handful of emigrants.

MARTHA

It's hard to guess.

A KNOCK on the door.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Maybe Larry.

Tufty opens her eyes and raises her head as Lem opens the door to let in Larry. LARRY (40's) enters, smiles at everyone.

He places a daily planner and yellow pad on the table as he sits to join the group.

LARRY

Evening, Lem.

(pauses)

Really appreciate all your help. We need a well thought out agenda for tonight's meeting and the idea of doing it alone was a bit daunting.

LEM

Maybe I'll bring out my laptop. We might be needing the Internet for research and updates. If we run out of ideas, we can pull in the FEMA and SEMA sites and see what they recommend in accommodating forced emigrants.

Tufty lowers head and closes her eyes.

Larry gets comfortable.

LEM (CONT'D)

There are plans for responding to forced migrations caused by floods or hurricanes that could be put in place. And, of course, they would have information on responding to nuclear disasters. I've reviewed some of the applicable chapters from my old military handbooks. But they don't address dirty bombs as such, although we did talk about them in class. But for now, I think we just pool what we already know.

THAW

Lem, can I ladle up some of that soup for the bunch of us? I'm starving!

LEM

Good idea. Go to it.

LATER

Martha and Thaw clear away the bowls.

His laptop on the table, Lem lingers over his soup. Off and on he sips a spoonful.

MARTHA

Let's see. It's 4:30. If we meet for an hour, we should be able to bang out an agenda for tonight. That will bring us to 5:30. We'll still be able to hit the stores before they close at six and I can meet the 6:10 train in Lochlee to see what that brings. That will give us a sense as to how bad it's going to get.

LARRY

Sounds good, Martha. Now for the agenda.

LEM

Computer's ready.

LARRY

Where do we start?

LEM

Well, I think Thaw should call the hardware store. They don't close 'til six. See if they still have radiation measurement kits left over from the Cold War in the Sixties that they've had displayed. I looked at them not too long ago. They include a small dosimeter.

LARRY

We all agree the Point of Distribution will be the firehouse?

No one responds -- consensus.

Thaw picks up the landline.

THAW

I'll call now.

Thaw pulls to the side, listens to Lem.

LEM

If Annie answers tell her we need the fallout detection meter left over from the Cold War then tell her it's called a dosimeter, in case she's not familiar with what it is.

He dials, speaks into the phone then hangs up. Lem types on the laptop.

He sits back ready for input.

LARRY

Well, it happens that as a geologist, I have one. But we'll need more than one.

MARTHA

I heard on the radio that downstate they're setting up emergency showers outside to handle large numbers of people. The plan was that no one would enter the hospital before they had stripped and deconned after which they give them hospital gowns to wear.

THAW

I think showers should be high on the agenda.

(MORE)

THAW (CONT'D)

Maybe right after the need to establish a welcoming committee for newcomers.

Lem looks up from his work on the laptop.

LEM

We'll need people assigned to meet the incoming trains as well as a team for cars coming in on the highway.

MARTHA

As we don't have hospital gowns, we also need a clothing drive.

LARRY

Sounds good.

LEM

So, Larry, we'll need plumbers to add outside showers. When we call the hardware store, let's ask them if they have Hazmat stickers. We'll need large leaf bags that we can label Hazmat for people to put their clothes in. We'll need a dump truck to collect the bags and cart them off a safe distance from town for the state to handle later.

Lem types something more.

THAW

If we run out of clothes, we can use the leaf bags until we find some. Just cut holes in them for the neck and arms. I'll take care of the hardware store list. What else do we need.

Lem looks up from his typing.

LEM

How about Potassium Iodide? Except it's not likely that even the drugstore has it.

LARRY

But maybe you might talk to the supermarket about medical supplies in general as hightailing it now to the Ellensville drugstore is out of the question.

MARTHA

Larry, suppose I talk to the supermarket and we set up some kind of a system where authorized people pick up any medical supplies that are needed and they keep a tab for the town council to reimburse them later.

Larry looks up from his computer.

LARRY

Good idea, Martha. We can do the same with the hardware store.

MARTHA

We can't have the whole world running around in leaf bags. So, we need clothes. We need flip-flops. Inexpensive sweat suits. Inexpensive bathing suits. Also, inexpensive housedresses. We need to establish a tab with the clothing store as well as the supermarket.

LARRY

Good idea.

LEM

Let's talk to Dody...

(to Larry)

... Thaw's dad about helping with the showers and sanitation issues. He knows everybody who's anybody in the plumbing business around here.

THAW

We can also use the school or the church for decon. The school has showers in the gym and we could collect air mattresses and the like for sleeping accommodations.

MARTHA

Maybe we should call Doc Evans to help us set up a sickbay in the school. There are bound to be some with radiation sickness.

LARRY

Good idea, Martha. Could you call Doc Evans? So, let's see. Thaw you have the shopping list.

(MORE)

LARRY (CONT'D)

Martha you have the to-do list. And Lem, you have the agenda and highlights to be discussed. Yes?

Lem indicates his laptop.

LEM

I'll get everyone a printout of my notes which includes the agenda.

THAW

Larry, maybe Lem should reach out to the State Emergency Medical Agency and the Red Cross. They're probably overwhelmed at this time, however they might have Potassium Iodide we could use. And FEMA. Just on the odd chance.

EXT. LOCAL ROADS - DAY

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

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

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

EXT. LOCAL ROADS / INTERSTATE - DAY

Miles and miles of bumper to bumper traffic.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

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

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

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

A fleet of ambulances arrive to unload Patients.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

Hospitals are quickly reaching capacity.

INT./EXT. TRAIN STATIONS, BUS DEPOTS - DAY
Scores of People on platforms and at gates.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)
Where available, use rail and bus
transportation.

END MONTAGE

INT. LOCHLEE - LEM'S HOME - NIGHT

Lem's sister, MAY (40S) and her two daughters, DAHLIA (7) and
CAROLINE (10), arrive.

LEM
So glad you're here, May. But first
shed your clothes into this bag and
shower. After, Dahlia and Caroline
and you can each put on one of
these tees.

Lem holds a large garbage bag for their clothes.

MAY
Okay, girls, into the shower.
Clothes in this bag.

He gives May t-shirts and jeans to distribute.

LATER

May, Dahlia, and Caroline all in Tees. May wears men's shorts
held up by an extra long belt.

Lem hands May some bills.

MAY
Okay. So use these two fifties to
pick up three pairs of flip-flops
and underpants for us all.

Lem indicates a large green garbage bag.

LEM
Meantime, I'll get these clothes
locked in the shed.

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. LEM'S HOME - DAY

May prepares breakfast for Lem and herself.

SUPER: "April 14, 2018"

MAY

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

LEM

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

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

LEM (CONT'D)

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

Tears well in Lem's eyes.

MAY

What are they?

LEM

Potassium iodide.

Lem releases May's hand.

MAY

K-I?

LEM

Yes.

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

LEM (CONT'D)

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

May nods in agreement.

LEM (CONT'D)

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

(pauses)

We can use them now.

May contemplates the packet.

MAY

Are they enough?

LEM

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

MAY

These won't even last a week.

LEM

Best I can do.

Tears in May's eyes now.

LEM (CONT'D)

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

MAY

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

LEM

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

Lem gives his sister a hug.

LEM (CONT'D)

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

May, inconsolable.

LEM (CONT'D)
May. Calm yourself.

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

LEM (CONT'D)
Blow.

May BLOWS and then laughs.

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

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

Lem sighs, leans his head against May's.

LEM (CONT'D)
It's the best I can do, May... the
best I can do.

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

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

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

Good. Now, two things. First there is a Village Council meeting in just 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. They've been settled. Lem has two bedrooms. I just have the loft. So, Natalie, you stay with me, and Judith and Hannah, you stay with Lem. Also staying there will be Lem's sister, May, and her two daughters, Dahlia and Caroline. As for Lem, he'll be sleeping either on the futon in his living room or at the firehouse which we're setting up as a Point of Distribution.

INT. LEM'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Natalie's sister, Judith and her daughter Hannah have come over and are in the house.

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.

(MORE)

MAY (CONT'D)

Four for each of the girls; three for each of the adults. Did you read the letter Lem has from the Chernobyl survivor?

JUDITH

I did. Pretty persuasive.

MAY

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

LATER

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

Lem, Hannah, Dahlia and Carrie pet Tufty.

LEM

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

Lem moves to greet Thaw and Natalie.

LEM (CONT'D)

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

Keeping three, May hands packages to everyone else.

LEM (CONT'D)

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

JUDITH

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

LEM

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

JUDITH

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

NATALIE

You both need it.

Judith saves one pill and shoves Hannah's pills into her shirt pocket. They all down a pill with water.

EXT. MARTHA'S HOME - FRONT YARD - DAY

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

MARTHA

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

GRANNY

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

JORGE

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

Granny indicates the land closer to the road.

GRANNY

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

JORGE

Of course.

GRANNY

(to Martha)
Deal?

MARTHA

Deal.

All three shake on it.

EXT. LOCHLEE - MAIN STREET - SAME TIME

The Helicopter hovers to secure a safe landing spot.

INT. LEM'S HOME - DAY

May hangs up the phone.

MAY

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

DAHLIA

What is that?

MAY

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

DAHLIA

Are they going to land?

MAY

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

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

DAHLIA

Oh, Mums. Can we go see it?

May strokes her daughter's hair.

MAY

Let's go!

She gives Dahlia's hand a quick shake then pulls her toward the door with the other hand. Afternoon. No deer?

LEM

No deer.

DAHLIA

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

May shoots Lem a questioning look.

MAY

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

Lem shrugs shoulders, lowers the corners of his mouth.

LEM

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

MAY

Come fall, you can bring us pheasant.

INT. BAIN - DISASTER RELIEF CENTER - DORMITORY - DAY

Jason and Marty in jackets with packed backpacks in hand.

JASON

We have half an hour to catch the train to Lochlee.

MARTY

No prob.

JASON

You say.

MARTY

I say.

Jason turns to face Marty.

JASON

Gosh, Marty. This is serious. To keep you on the straight and narrow we have to leave the safety of this center for disaster relief and take off for lands unknown.

MARTY

No prob. Everyone there speaks English, no?

JASON

Oh. For you, it's all a joke.

Marty drops his backpack, looks directly at Jason, takes a moment.

MARTY

Look, Jason. I understand we're doing this to separate me from the shoplifting petty thieves I fell in with. And if I didn't think it was serious, I wouldn't be doing it. My bad.

Jason puts his arm around his brother.

JASON

I understand, Mart. Funny times.
Mom and Dad not to be found. You
and me on the road. But we'll get
through this. Some how.

Jason picks up his backpack. Marty follows suit and they head out.

MARTY

Somehow.

INT. EPISCOPAL CHURCH - MEETING ROOM - DAY

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

Lem stands with two RED CROSS WORKERS in their forties.

LEM

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

FIRST RED CROSS WORKER

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

LEM

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

SECOND RED CROSS WORKER

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

They move to a sitting area and sit.

FIRST RED CROSS WORKER

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

SECOND RED CROSS WORKER

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

LEM

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

Lem rises, preparing to leave. First Red Cross Worker also rises.

FIRST RED CROSS WORKER

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

SECOND RED CROSS WORKER

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

LEM

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

INT. TRAIN - NORTHBOUND TRAIN - DAY

Jason and Marty in jackets placing backpacks in overhead compartments.

JASON

(laughs)

Well, we made it.

Marty seats himself by the west window. Jason slips in beside him.

MARTY
Told you we would.

JASON
No idea what we'll find in Lochlee.

MARTY
Maybe they have a Red Cross station that can help us. Or a refugee camp.

JASON
I don't know, Mart. It's just a little village.

MARTY
Maybe we can get a job on a farm.

JASON
I don't know if they have farms. Used to be a mining town.

MARTY
Well, you said it was by a lake. Maybe fishing?

JASON
Well, for now, we'll just relax. Nothing to do but wait and see.

Marty looks out the window. The train begins to move.

MARTY
Yup. Wait and see.

EXT. MATTHEWS' HOME - PORCH - DAY

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

Thaw's father, DODY (60's) and Martha on the stoop.

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

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

MR. MATTHEWS

I ain't said that.

DODY

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

MRS. MATTHEWS

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

DODY

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

Mrs. Matthew thinks a beat.

MRS. MATTHEWS

What do you think, Harold?

MR. MATTHEWS

Yeah, I suppose.

INT. THAW'S CABIN - LOFT - DAY

With Thaw's arm around her, Natalie lies beside him.

NATALIE

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

THAW

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

NATALIE

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

THAW

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

NATALIE

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

Thaw draws Natalie closer.

THAW

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

NATALIE

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

THAW

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

Thaw puts his other arm around Natalie and kisses her.

EXT. LOCHLEE - LAKESIDE - DAY

WILLIAM MCCLEAN (30-40's) and the Sanitation Coordinator converse with the shanty town behind them.

SANITATION COORDINATOR

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

WILLIAM MCLEAN

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

(thinks)

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

SANITATION COORDINATOR

Never thought of that. But you're right.

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

Packages of online order KI lie on the floor.

SUPER: "Two Weeks After The Meltdown"

Lem drives with May, Judith, and Natalie in back and Thaw in the front passenger's seat. They pass lines of haggard and sick People waiting for their doses of KI.

MAY

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

JUDITH

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

LEM

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

JUDITH

Does it matter if they are locals or Newcomers?

LEM

Nope. Everybody's eligible.

MAY

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

NATALIE

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

THAW

That suggests a medium dose of radiation.

(pauses)

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

MAY

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

NATALIE

I imagine the most severe stayed in Bixby.

LEM

Or aren't with us any more.

Lem parks.

They all exit to join the line.

INT. THAW'S CABIN - LOFT - NIGHT

Natalie sobs in the darkness.

THAW

Natalie. Natalie?

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

NATALIE

It's so terrible. So many.

(sobs)

Did you see that little girl with
the blisters along her arms?

THAW

Shhh. Shhh. It's all right, Nat

NATALIE

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

THAW

Calm down. It'll be better.

NATALIE

It won't be better!

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

Natalie quiets.

THAW

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

Thaw heads downstairs.

NATALIE

Thanks, Thaw.

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

INT. TOWN HALL - NIGHT

Board Members sit at a table facing the gathering. In the audience, Dody stands and looks around.

DODY

It took the Salvation Army three weeks to get us all them clothes. In the meantime...

(snickers)

...seein' someone runnin' around naked came to be old news.

Natalie and Larry speak from the front table.

NATALIE

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

LARRY

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

NATALIE

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

DODY

Those dosimeters sure are sweet. And useful.

(laughs)

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

Dody remains standing. School principal stands and remains standing.

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

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

DODY

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

Female Newcomer rises halfway to speak and then quickly sits again.

FEMALE NEWCOMER

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

MARTHA

We could put different sizes in different seats.

From seated position.

FEMALE NEWCOMER

Or shirts on one, shoes on another.

DODY

I think it'd be good to include cleaning supplies, too. Shovels.
(emphatic)
We gotta get workin' on step ups.

LARRY

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

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

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

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

May drives past the Newcomers' lakeside village.

A deer rotates on a spit over a fire.

Two dressed deer hang from trees.

Dahlia points to the deer on the spit.

DAHLIA

Mums, what do you think they're cooking?

MAY

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

DAHLIA

Why's that, Mums?

MAY

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

DAHLIA

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

MAY

Waiting to be cooked.

DAHLIA

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

INT. EPISCOPAL CHURCH - MEETING ROOM - DAY

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

Lem stands with two RED CROSS WORKERS in their forties.

LEM

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

FIRST RED CROSS WORKER

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

LEM

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

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

They move to a sitting area and sit.

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

SECOND RED CROSS WORKER
When we look for local treatment
and support, you have all been
really helpful. Especially use of
the school sick bay. Cuts down on
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LEM
The supplies the Red Cross provides
for the sick bay have really
increased its effectiveness. Like
for snakebite. And improvement in
sanitation. At least we no longer
have to make our own soap.

Lem rises, preparing to leave. First Red Cross Worker also
rises.

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

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

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

EXT. LOCKLEE TRAIN DEPOT- TRAIN PLATFORM - DAY

Jason and Marty in jackets with backpacks.

JASON

Guess we'll head up toward the main road. Yes.

MARTY

Sounds like a plan.

JASON

Kind of mountainous here. I think we can forget the farm idea.

MARTY

Let's find a neighborhood deli where we can eat and listen to people.

JASON

And ask a few questions. Maybe pick up a local paper.

MARTY

Good we have sleeping bags.

JASON

That's what we could ask. If their is a local camping ground.

MARTY

Yeah. Maybe lakeside.

The two walk along a country road beside which are unfarmed small open fields and small groups of trees. No farms.

MARTY (CONT'D)

Doesn't look like farm country.

JASON

Nope. Nor fishing.

MARTY

Suppose we stash our backpacks before heading into town.

JASON

Good idea.

The two come to a small uphill road that leads to the properties of Lem and Thaw.

They pass their houses and head for the woods behind them where they find a comfortable spot out of the view of the houses, drop their backpacks and settle in beneath a tree.

MARTY

Let's hope we find an abandoned shed. Yes?

Jason puts his arm around Marty's shoulders and looks off into the distance.

JASON

Well. We can hope.

INT. LEM'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

LEM arrives.

At the table, Dahlia draws.

Lem takes a peek.

LEM

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

Lem pats Dahlia on the head.

May hugs her brother.

MAY

Afternoon. No deer?

LEM

No deer.

DAHLIA

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

May shoots Lem a questioning look.

MAY

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

Lem shrugs shoulders, lowers the corners of his mouth.

LEM

Yeah. Brought him down when we were hunting the wild dogs.

(MORE)

LEM (CONT'D)

I think most of the dogs are gone now so we won't be out there as much.

MAY

Come fall, you can bring us pheasant.

Lem pulls May to the side. Speaks softly.

LEM

Yep. Have you heard about Thaw?

MAY

No. Why?

LEM

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

MAY

And...?

LEM

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

MAY

How? What happened?

LEM

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

MAY

(nods)

Granny told me she went down there.

LEM

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

MAY

Oh, dear.

May's eyes well with tears.

MAY (CONT'D)

Do you think so?

LEM

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

MAY

Did Martha see Thaw before he came in?

LEM

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

DAHLIA

Bears!?

May's knees weaken.

She catches herself on the kitchen table to stay upright.

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

LEM

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

MAY

The artery?!

May sits down.

Dahlia joins May at the table.

Lem fills a glass with water and takes a drink.

LEM

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

MAY

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

Len sits across from May.

LEM

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

MAY

Did it work?

LEM

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

He sips water.

MAY

Good Lord!

LEM

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

Lem sags with a bit with fatigue.

MAY

How bad is it?

LEM

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

Dahlia puts an arm around May.

MAY

What did the doctor say?

LEM

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

MAY

How did Thaw seem to you?

LEM

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

MAY

What about a transfusion?

LEM

She thinks he'll make it without one but they've got him on a bag of glucose.

(MORE)

LEM (CONT'D)

Apparently the helicopter dropped in antibiotics this morning, so she was able to add them to the drip. That should help. Oh, and a rabies shot.

MAY

Poor Thaw.

DAHLIA

Poor Thaw.

May quiets.

LEM

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

MAY

What did she say?

LEM

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

MAY

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

LEM

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

MAY

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

May hugs Dahlia.

MAY (CONT'D)

You want to help me, Dahl?

LEM

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

INT. SCHOOL - GYM/SICK BAY - DAY

Full of beds, divided by a makeshift curtain.

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

Lem leads Natalie to Thaw who lies quiet and awake.

Natalie runs her hand over Thaw's cheek.

She picks up and holds his right hand.

Tears run down her cheeks.

THAW

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

NATALIE

Sometimes I can't help it, Thaw.

THAW

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

NATALIE

You sure?

THAW

I'm sure.

Natalie laughs and wipes away the tears.

NATALIE

I brought you a sandwich.

THAW

Not deer, I hope.

A hint of a smile lights his face.

NATALIE

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

THAW

What about Lem?

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

LEM

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

(to Natalie)

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

NATALIE

That'd be nice, Lem. Thank you.

Natalie pulls a chair to be near Thaw.

He takes a small bite of sandwich.

INT. FIREHOUSE - DAY

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

Two Helpers sort the food.

THAW

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

LEM

Yeah. The Communications Center... and Alba.

THAW

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

LEM

Yes. And her husband at Magdum.

THAW

Sad.

LEM

Not easy for her.

THAW

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

LEM

Oswaldo is eleven. Elena is eight.

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

INT. LEM'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

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

MARTHA

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

(chuckles)

Martha's Mix!

MAY

Marlena and Prissy have become the
best of friends.

May offers Natalie some coffee.

NATALIE

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

MARTHA

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

MAY

Dahlia and I will be moving home
again, too.

LEM

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

Natalie shoots Thaw a look and laughs.

NATALIE

Unless I wear out my welcome.

Thaw hugs Natalie.

THAW

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

A quiet moment as all contemplate their lives.

MARTHA

It's been quite a year.

THAW

We've all seen a lot.

MAY

Perhaps the most upsetting thing was the baby Elaine lost.

MARTHA

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

May rises to get something from the kitchen area.

MAY

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

MARTHA

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

MAY

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

MARTHA

Her cheeks bloom a healthy pink.

MAY

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

They all smile in agreement.

LEM

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

MARTHA

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

LEM

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

MARTHA

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

EXT. THAW'S CABIN - DAY

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

Jason swings a big stick at the dog.

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

Jason tosses a small stick,

JASON

Fetch!

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

JASON (CONT'D)

Fetch!

Jason moves closer to the window.

Lem pulls up, stops and descends from a truck.

He carries a loaded shotgun.

LEM
Mornin'. How you boys doin'?

JASON
Pretty good.

Lem offers a hand to Jason.

LEM
I'm Lem.

Jason shakes back.

JASON
Jason. Nice to meet you, Lem.

Lem nods his head toward the open window.

LEM
Jason, think you could get your
friend out here?

JASON
Yeah. Sure.
(yells)
Hey, Marty. You can come out now.

Marty pokes his head out the window.

LEM
Whatcha' doin' there, Marty?

MARTY
Cleaning.

LEM
Cleaning? You mean cleaning out the
refrigerator?

MARTY
Yeah. Something like that.

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

Marty disappears back inside.

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

JASON
What's his name?

LEM
That's Tufty.

JASON
Fetch, Tufty.

Jason chucks the stick.

JASON (CONT'D)
I'd better go help Marty. Make it faster.

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

Marty climbs out, joins Lem and Jason.

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

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

LEM
That so.

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

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

Lem thinks for a bit.

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

JASON

We stayed in a shelter in Bain for a while.

MARTY

We had our own cabin in the woods, too.

LEM

How did you get here from Bain. Train?

MARTY

Yeah. Pretty cool.

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

JASON

Whatcha' gonna do with us?

LEM

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

Tufty drops the stick at Jason's feet.

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

INT. LEM'S HOME - DINING ROOM - DAY

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

LEM

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

MARTY

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

LEM

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

JASON

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

Lem passes a plate to Marty.

LEM

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

JASON

It wasn't bad. Marty's cot was next
to mine. Close enough to be sure he
was safe. We were company for each
other.

MARTY

Jason found ways to earn money.

JASON

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

Marty bends over with head down, pets Tufty.

MARTY

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

INT. - LEM'S HOME - DAY

The front door opens and May and Dahlia enter.

MAY

Well. Company. And who are these
two young men, Lem?

LEM

Meet Jason and Marty. They were
wandering by so I invited them in
for a bite to eat.

MAY

Nice to meet you, Jason. And you,
Marty. Did I get it right. Jason?
Marty?

JASON

Yes. I'm Jason and this is my brother, Marty.

DAHLIA

Hi, Jason. Hi, Marty.

MAY

And this is Dahlia.

JASON

Hello, Dahlia.

MARTY

Hi, Dahlia

DAHLIA

We just saw them cooking a deer!

LEM

Really?

DAHLIA

Over a fire. Just a little one.

LEM

Yeah. Some are really small now.

May, changing the subject.

MAY

So are you boys from around here?

MARTY

Not yet. So to speak.

LEM

Yeah. And I thought I might help them.

MAY

What do you mean, Lem?

LEM

It seems these guys have been on the road for a while. Ever since the meltdown.

MARTY

Stayed a while in an abandoned cabin.

JASON

Then lived in a shelter in Bain.

MAY

And your parents?

LEM

That was the problem. After they took to the road to escape the fallout, first the phones were down, and then no one answered when they called home.

JASON

So we're not sure where they are. And we're not sure that we can return home.

MAY

(aghast)

So you've been fending for yourselves? Since the meltdown?

Jason and Marty look at one another, nod yes.

LEM

That being the case, after they've eaten, I'm going to take them to the Red Cross station where they can stay.

MAY

But what about their family?

LEM

I don't think there is anyone better to search for them than the Red Cross.

(looks at the boys)

Come to think of it, you must have some relatives who might know something about your parents. No?

JASON

We do. My mom's sister is in Ohio.

MARTY

But she is so far away, I'm not sure she would know anymore than we do.

LEM

Maybe the Red Cross can talk to your aunt. And maybe she has some information. Or an idea.

MARTY

Come to think of it, maybe you're right.

EXT. MARTHA'S HOME - FRONT YARD - DAY

Lem shows GRANNY (60's) a three-foot high chicken wire container for a mulch pile.

Beside the pile, a stack of storm windows.

LEM

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

GRANNY

(laughs)

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

LEM

I understand this composting bin of yours is ever hungry.

GRANNY

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

Lem leans over to peer into the composting bin.

LEM

Looks like everything but the kitchen sink in there.

GRANNY

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

Lem points his chin toward a pile of storm windows.

LEM

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

GRANNY

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

LEM

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

GRANNY

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

Lem laughs.

LEM

Like your stock pot?

GRANNY

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

LEM

What's biointensively.

GRANNY

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

LEM

Really?

GRANNY

Saves on the need to weed.

Granny pauses as if to look into the past.

GRANNY (CONT'D)

I think I still remember most of what I learned then.

(MORE)

GRANNY (CONT'D)

I need to plan a two hundred square foot plot to provide vegetables for eight. Enough for our household. Only thing I lack are flats.

LEM

Wha'cha need them for?

GRANNY

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

LEM

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

GRANNY

Where you gonna get them?

Lem laughs playfully.

LEM

Not get. Got.

GRANNY

Got how?

LEM

Not how. Where?

GRANNY

Well, got where?

LEM

Got what?

They both laugh.

GRANNY

You know what.

LEM

Well, what is where I saw them yesterday.

GRANNY

Where?

LEM

Ah, now, you come to me.

Lem waggles his index finger near Granny's nose.

LEM (CONT'D)

In my shed.

Granny gives him a slap on the shoulder.

GRANNY

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

LEM

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

GRANNY

Ideal. When can I have them?

LEM

Lemme bring them up to you this evening.

GRANNY

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

LEM

Deal.

GRANNY

Deal.

EXT. FIREHOUSE - DAY

Lem and Thaw talk and walk.

THAW

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

LEM

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

(MORE)

LEM (CONT'D)

Alba had a trowel and the kids had pan lids. I offered to help.

THAW

Nice of ya.

LEM

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

THAW

So ya' just thought, lemme, huh?

Thaw laughs.

LEM

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

THAW

Anything smokin' of seriousness in this?

Lem reaches for a box in the truck bed.

LEM

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

Thaw, taken aback.

He stands still for Lem to continue.

THAW

Oh, really?

LEM

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

THAW

I'm sure they do.

LEM

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

THAW

Ya don't say.

Lem turns to look at Thaw, dead serious.

LEM

Not immediately. As we only got our license.

Thaw keeps his voice level to hide surprise.

THAW

Yeah...?

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

LEM

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

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

THAW

You're kidding!?

Lem lifts boxes.

LEM

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

Lem pulls two boxes to the truck gate.

He turns to Thaw, holds his gaze.

LEM (CONT'D)

We were wondering if you would stand up for us?

Thaw's face beams with delight.

He leans his face towards Lem.

THAW

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

Thaw shakes Lem's hand, hugs him hard.

INT. 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