

PILOT: JOLT SAGA OF SURVIVAL SERIES

Written by

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Based on novels by Roberta M Roy

JOLT: A RURAL NOIR

TWO CLOSE: A STORY OF SURVIVAL

HOME AGAIN 2020

1-11760026251

**TEASE**

EXT. NEW YORK - LOWER MANHATTAN - DAY

September 11, 2001. Black, angry dust and debris blossoms from the collapse of the World Trade Center North Tower.

EXT. LOCHLEE - THAW'S CABIN - DAY

SUPER: "LOCHLEE VILLAGE, LATE 2019"

LEM (50s), a retired veteran in worn camo fatigues, towers over two Boys bearing backpacks. Tall, fair skinned, dark haired JASON MATTERS (14), and similar brother, MARTY (12).

The Boy's faces, grimy. Their clothes filthy and tattered.

LEM

So yer' tellin' me that since the Magdum Heights meltdown you've been on the road? No contact with your family? Two years?

JASON

Well, we did stay in a shelter in Bain.

MARTY

And for a while in an abandoned cabin in the woods.

LEM

And you came here from Bain by train?

MARTY

Yeah. Pretty cool.

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

CLICKITY-CLACK. The sound of a train speeding down tracks.

FULL SCREEN TITLE: "Jolt Saga of Survival"

ACT 1

FULL SCREEN TITLE: "Just Going Along"

EXT. RIVER - MAGDUM HEIGHTS NUCLEAR POWER PLANT - DAY

SUPER: "Early 2017" Sun glints on the plant's twin cooling towers on the opposite bank of a mighty waterway.

EXT. ARIANA - EAST CORDABAN - DAY

A sleepy, one-stoplight village of pretty yet modest homes.  
SUPER: "Ariana, East Cordoban" SUPER: "35 miles north of the Magdum Heights plant"

EXT. MATTERS' HOME - DAY

An Ariana School District school bus SQUEAKS to a stop. MARY MATTERS (30s) rakes around the front bushes. The bus deposits Jason (12), brown hair, and RICKY SOLER (11), black hair. Both heft backpacks.

JASON

Hey, Mom.

Jason kisses his mom and scoots up stairs to the home. En route, he waves back to his friend.

JASON (CONT'D)

See ya, Ricky.

RICKY

See ya, Jason. Tell Marty I said hi.

EXT. BAIN - DAY

A small town with a main drag lined by expensive shops.

SUPER: "Bain"

SUPER: "100 miles north of the Magdum Heights plant"

EXT. BAIN - MAIN STREET - DAY

THEODORE HORATIO ALEXANDER WAMP (30s), prefers THAW, is a tall and fair skinned man with long dark hair.

Thaw wears a heavy duty Army field jacket with WAMP name tag.

He window shops with girlfriend NATALIE FLYNN (late 20s). Auburn haired, highly educated. Used to taking charge. More city than country.

She pulls on Thaw's arm in front of Bain City Art Supplies.

NATALIE

Don't you need new brushes?

THAW

Yeah. I'm low on oils, too. Ochre, black, and white.

INT. BAIN CITY ART SUPPLIES - CONTINUOUS

Natalie gravitates to a display of water colors while Thaw inspects brushes.

NATALIE

Hey, Thaw. Water colors.

Thaw, intent on the brushes.

Natalie holds up a tray and tubes of water colors.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Which is better? Pans or tubes?

THAW

We always used pans. Either.

NATALIE

Maybe we could get some? And water color paper?

THAW

Taking up painting?

NATALIE

Beats oils. Water doesn't give off V-O-Cs.

THAW

Natalie the environmentalist. Not for me. I prefer the Volatile Organic Compounds.

NATALIE

And the smell?

Natalie shrugs, returns the water colors to their place.

EXT. LOCHLEE - PARALLEL ROADS - DAY

WEATHER BEATEN, ARROWED ROAD SIGN: "Lochlee Village, Canada  
121 Miles, Bain 111 Miles SUPER: "200 miles north of the  
Magdum Heights plant"

EXT. LOCHLEE - THAW'S CABIN - DAY

Thaw's stern father, DODY (70s), wears painters overalls. He  
peruses the cabin and surrounding area.

INT. 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. 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. Faking relaxed, Thaw's brow  
furrows with a bit of dread.

THAW  
Hey, Dad. C'mon in.

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

THAW (CONT'D)  
Okay, Tufty. Lie down.  
(pulls Tufty away)  
Dad doesn't like that. 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.  
Haven't found anything reliable?

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  
In the Middle East, we smoked hash.  
But here I smoke weed.

DODY  
(scoffs )  
Pothead, eh? Thought the military  
would make a man of you.

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 (CONT'D)  
Get a real job. And get your life  
in order! Come see me then.

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

EXT. ARIANA, EAST CORDABAN - CREEKSIDE - DAY

Mary and hubby LOU (30s) picnic with Jason and Marty -- here 13 and 10.

Lunch finished, Lou and Mary remain at the table while the Boys quest for frogs.

CREEKSIDE

MARTY  
How about this one?

Jason wields a frog net on a long pole. He scoops it into the water but the quick frog leaps away.

MARTY (CONT'D)  
Too fast for you.

Marty lies on his stomach, hands in the water. Moving with deliberation, he clamps his fingers around the back legs of a swimming frog and scoops it from the water.

MARTY (CONT'D)  
Good one?

Jason drops the frog in a fishing creel. Marty rinses hands.

JASON  
Let's find it a cricket, a worm or something.

The boys search. Marty spots a fly but it eludes him.

PICNIC TABLE

Mary and Lou cuddle.

MARY  
Nice day, huh, Lou.

Lou smiles and kisses Mary on the cheek.

LOU  
Boys are having fun.

MARY  
You worry about terrorism?

LOU  
You have to let it go. 9-11 happened. It's done now. That's it.

Mary cuddles against Lou's chest.

MARY  
I hear you. But I can't help it.

LOU  
I don't think about terrorism.

MARY  
I do. I worry.

Lou moves Mary away from himself and arranges her face to face.

LOU

You worry about Magdum Heights.  
About a meltdown. My job is to  
maintain its safe operation. And  
like I said. We're safe here.

MARY

Yeah. Tell me about it. With 90  
plants in the U-S. And eight  
meltdowns.

LOU

Mary, we're more than 30 miles from  
Magdum. We would survive.

Mary looks toward their sons.

MARY

And the boys?

LOU

We would either shelter for 72  
hours or leave the area until the  
fallout dies down. They know the  
drill.

MARY

Lou, we need to move. You need to  
change jobs. Suppose it happens  
while you're at work?

Lou comforts Mary with an arm around her shoulder.

EXT. LOCHLEE - LEM'S HOME - DAY

LEM stands with Thaw on a road that rises past his home and  
Thaw's nearby cabin.

At Thaw's side, Tufty's tail wags.

LEM

What do you think? Light beige  
siding with dark brown trim?

THAW

That'd work. Good contrast. Lem  
pets Tufty's head and face.

LEM

Do I need measurements so they can  
figure out how much paint we need?



THAW  
My dad would know.

Lem shoots Thaw a skeptical look.

LEM  
I'll ask in Bain.

THAW  
(laughs)  
Didn't need him for the inside so  
why would we need him for the  
outside?

LEM  
Seems to me Natalie is itching for  
you to fix up your place, too. No?

Lem chucks a stick for Tufty to chase.

THAW  
Carpentry cuts into painting time.  
And keeping ahead of both, leaves  
little time to refinish.

LEM  
Suppose when we're done with my  
house, I give you a hand with  
yours. Maybe for a week or two you  
let the art work slip?

THAW  
Sculpting I can let go. But oil  
painting? Oh . . . let's do it. If  
not for me, then for Natalie.  
(laughs)  
The inside is pretty much done.  
Like with yours, the outside is  
rough.

INT. MATTERS' HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Marty and Jason 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.  
(to Marty)  
How's your day been?

MARTY  
Okay.

Mary waits for more.

MARTY (CONT'D)  
What's for dinner?

Marty opens a notebook.

MARY  
Turkey meatloaf.

MARTY  
Again?

Marty picks up a pencil and tackles long division.

MARY  
(turns to Jason)  
Jason likes it. I thought you did,  
too.

JASON  
(Changes topic)  
Scored a goal at soccer practice.

MARTY  
Yay, Jay!

JASON  
And you, Mom.

Mary holds up a large envelope.

MARY  
Got something in the mail.

JASON  
What?

Mary pulls out a packet of small white pills.

MARY  
Potassium Iodide. KI. For us. Just  
in case.

MARTY  
In case of what?

MARY  
In case of a meltdown. KI prevents  
absorbing radioactive iodine. Stops  
thyroid cancer.

Mary returns the packet to the envelope.

JASON  
Where'll you put'em?

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

EXT. LOCHLEE - MARTHA'S HOME - DAY

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

MARTHA  
My idea is to paint the siding gray  
and the trim two shades of maroon.

MARLENA, Martha's impetuous Airedale, licks Dody's hand. He  
jerks it away.

DODY  
Dang blast it!

Martha pulls the dog's collar,

MARTHA  
Marlena. Come here.

She leads Marlena into the house, closes the door.

MARTHA (CONT'D)  
Sorry, Dody. Where were we?

DODY  
Gray siding with trim two different  
shades of maroon.

MARTHA  
What do you think?

DODY

It'd make that fine Victorian trim pop. You can pick out the colors at Bixby Paint.

MARTHA

I'll run into Bixby tomorrow. Want to pick up the paint chips here or should I drop them by your house?

DODY

Around four tomorrow. That work?

She nods: that works.

They walk to the back of the house. Dody inspects split and rotted wood on the back porch.

DODY (CONT'D)

See this?

MARTHA

I was going to ask about that.

DODY

Looks like you need the porch decking and stair treads replaced.

Dody pulls on a loose spindle.

Maybe some of these spindles.

MARTHA

Could you do that?

DODY

Not me. My son Thaw can. He's a really fine carpenter. But only to support himself so he can paint pictures.

MARTHA

So your son's an artist?

Dody turns and looks at Martha.

DODY

Yeah. But he'll never make a living doing it. Never going to be able to support a family with it. Pig-headed.

MARTHA

Well, I'd like to meet him. Maybe  
he would fix the porch. Who knows?  
Maybe I could buy some of his art.  
Lots of wall space to fill.

The chimney catches Dody's attention. He gets a closer look.

DODY

I'll ask Thaw to stop by.

They continue their inspection tour.

**END ACT ONE**

ACT TWO

FULL SCREEN TITLE: "Where Are We?"

EXT. COUNTY ROAD - MAGDUM HEIGHTS NUCLEAR POWER PLANT - DAY  
 ROAD SIGN WITH TWO ARROWS: Ariana 36 Miles, the other points  
 the opposite direction to Aesopolis Center 22 Miles

INT. MAGDUM HEIGHTS POWER PLANT - CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS  
 Vertical panels and boards for monitoring plant operation.  
 Lou records readings from an alarm panel -- all green.

INT. SCHOOL - MARY'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

DOOR SIGN

"Mary Matters Speech Language Pathologist"

Mary meets with autistic ELIZABETH (14) who wears an  
 exaggerated tam bonnet so big it throws off her posture.

Fluent Elizabeth leads the conversation.

ELIZABETH

Did you know this tam was hand  
 knitted in Scotland. I think it  
 looks good on me. I like its style.

Elizabeth scans students' writing and drawings on the wall.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

The students who wrote these papers  
 lack intellectual capacity. The  
 writing is poor. There are  
 misspellings. This one cannot even  
 write in full sentences.

MARY

How about you? Have you made any  
 friends in school yet?

ELIZABETH

Sofie is the only one I talk to.

MARY

How about other students?

ELIZABETH

Most of them have learning disabilities. I prefer associating with adults.

INT. MATTERS' HOME - DINING ROOM - DAY

Mary, busy on a laptop. Jason and Marty buried in notebooks.

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.  
(laughs)

MARY

Well we all wash up when we come home from school.

MARTY

Yeah. We do.  
(pauses)  
But we don't all take a shower before hugging hello.

LOU

And since when can you see radioactivity?

INT. LEM'S HOME - DAY

Lem hosts a spaghetti and meatball dinner party.

Martha sets the table when Thaw and Natalie arrive.

THAW

Martha, I'd like you to meet my partner in crime, Natalie. So, Nat, I told you I was working on an old Victorian? It's Martha's.

Lem addresses Natalie.

LEM

Like me, Nat, Martha's a  
newcomer, too.

NATALIE

Nice to meet you, Martha. Thaw  
speaks highly of you. Likes your  
dog.

MARTHA

And Marlina likes him.

LEM

(addresses Martha)  
How's the job going?

MARTHA

Beautifully. His dad's moving ahead  
with the painting and Thaw is a  
whiz with a hammer and saw.

Brightening and addressing Martha directly.

NATALIE

Thaw'd do well in construction. He  
and Lem restored this place. You  
should've seen it before.

MARTHA

So you in cahoots with his dad?

NATALIE

Hardly ever see him. Why?

MARTHA

He suggested the same thing.

THAW

I'm just keeping food on the table.  
'Til I'm more established in my  
art.

Natalie raises an eyebrow,

NATALIE

And when will that be?

LEM

(interrupting)  
Okay, guys. Let's sit. Glass of  
wine, Natalie?



EXT. LOCHLEE - MARTHA'S HOME - BACK PORCH - DAY

Thaw drives the final nails of the rebuild. He steps back to Martha and they both admire the like-new porch.

HONK. Dody pulls up, eyes the work. Through the open window,

DODY

Looks good. Told you he'd make a great house builder.

Martha rolls her eyes.

MARTHA

C'mon, Dody. He's an artist. Carpentry is a second calling.

DODY

(suddenly distracted)

Dang! Reminds me I have to pick up some things at the lumber yard.

Without another word, Dody backs away and takes off just as Lem pulls in and parks. Lem lifts a cooler from the bed, carries it to the back porch.

MARTHA

Nice to see you, Lem.

LEM

Same here. Brought you some largemouths. Up to cooking them?

MARTHA

Sure thing. You two want to stay for dinner?

Enthusiastic and hungry nods yes from Lem and Thaw.

Lem ignores the renovated porch.

THAW

(re: cooler)

Here. I've got it.

LEM

Did Thaw tell you he's looking into a show at a gallery in Bain?

MARTHA

No, he didn't. Sounds like a great idea, though.

LEM  
I'm thinking of putting together  
pictures of his paintings in a  
portfolio for him.

MARTHA  
Oh, he has pictures?

Lem busies himself opening the cooler.

LEM  
No. I have to take them.

MARTHA  
You're a photographer?

LEM  
Play at it. Even do my own  
developing.

MARTHA  
Sounds good to me!

INT. THAW'S CABIN - NIGHT

Budding leaves SCRAPE the window.

Relaxed, Thaw admires Natalie's back as she washes dishes.  
Her long auburn hair disheveled, Natalie faces away from him.

NATALIE  
We've got chemistry, Thaw.  
Chemistry.

THAW  
It's more than chemistry.

NATALIE  
Like what?

Natalie glances toward Thaw.

THAW  
You like talkin' to me.

NATALIE  
I do.

THAW  
And walkin' with me?

NATALIE  
Yeah, so?

THAW

Then it's more than mere chemistry.

Natalie scrubs a stubborn spot on a pan. Her speech flattens.

NATALIE

There could be. Except it's tough  
to be serious about a man who  
supports himself house painting and  
only occasionally sells a canvas.

THAW

C'mon, we enjoy being together.  
Whaddayathink, Nat?

NATALIE

Don't get intense.

THAW

Never could talk sense to you...  
for all your college degrees and  
city ways.

Natalie scrubs the pan with more vigor.

Thaw crosses the room and snatches Natalie's 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)

Nat, listen. 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 looses a giggle of surprise and, without losing a  
beat, responds with a passionate kiss.

EXT. BAIN - LA PETITE GALLERIE - DAY

Thaw surveys paintings in the window then enters.

INT. LA PETITE GALLERIE - CONTINUOUS

RORY (30s), the gallery owner, medium height, auburn hair, wears informal jeans, tie, jacket and work boots.

He lifts on his toes and extends a hand to greet Thaw.

RORY

Hi. I'm Rory. Welcome to La Petite  
Gallerie.

Thaw returns Rory's handshake.

THAW

Nice to meet you, Rory. I'm Thaw.

RORY

How can I help you?

THAW

Well, I'm an artist.

RORY

We love artists. Need some framing?

Rory places his hand on a mounted display of corners that is on the counter.

THAW

Yes. But maybe more than framing.

RORY

Like a show?

Rory removes hand from corners.

THAW

Yeah. Exactly.

RORY

So, depends. First, I have to see  
your work and decide whether it  
would appeal to my clientele. Then  
we can talk about the framing.

THAW

How do you set prices.

RORY

One piece, it's standard pricing.  
If you bring in several pieces, we  
negotiate a price. If you bring in  
15 or 20 pieces, we negotiate  
further.

Thaw offers Rory his hand.

THAW  
Guess we'll be negotiating.

INT. MATTERS' HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mary smiles and lays an affectionate hand on Lou's arm.

MARY  
Listen.

LOU  
To what? I think the boys left for  
a movie.

MARY  
No ruckus. The house to ourselves.

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

MARY (CONT'D)  
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.

Lou looks at Mary and sips some coffee.

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  
The plant is over 15 years old.  
Given 9-11 and Three Mile Island,  
can you blame me?

INT. MARTHA'S HOME - KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Thaw, Lem, and Martha enjoy coffee.

LEM

Did you hear from Larry what's on the agenda for this month's town meeting?

MARTHA

I think we should ask the town to purchase some saplings for the garden club to plant along main street.

THAW

They would add warmth to it.

Lem offers his guests some biscotti.

LEM

And they should replace the village and town signs as they are in severe disrepair. They should be replaced.

THAW

And this winter when the snow melts and refreezes, instead of sand, we should get some salt to spread.

MARTHA

Well, let's bring those things up to board tonight.

INT. THAW'S CABIN - DAY

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, wavy 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? Chemistry?

**END ACT TWO**

ACT THREE

FULL SCREEN TITLE: "Future Portents"

INT. MARTHA'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Marlena BARKS in the backyard. It draws Martha's attention.  
She opens the back door to find Dody.

MARTHA  
Come in, Dody.

Dody enters without a word. Martha follows close on his heels  
as he beelines for the --

LIVING ROOM

MARTHA (CONT'D)  
Dody, I thought you were sick.

DODY  
(exaggerates )  
Am. Feel awful. Got this dang cold  
sore.

MARTHA  
Anbesol.

DODY  
Bet you're a worrier.

MARTHA  
No. I prefer researching the  
answers. To know as much common  
sense stuff as I can.

DODY  
Anbesol. I guess I could get some.  
(sudden wellness)  
Now what is it we're doing?

INT. BAIN - CITY HALL - PLANNING DEPARTMENT - DAY

Natalie at a desk with a Bixby area map on the wall behind  
her. Piled in front of her, plans and building proposals.

She CLACKS her computer keyboard but quits to dial a number.



NATALIE

Thaw. Glad I caught you. Hard to get bars up there. Glad I tried your landline.

(nods)

Glad it's Friday.

(smiles)

Should I pick up anything on my way?

The TINK of an e-mail notification. She types, listens.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

I'll drive straight through. Be there around 6:30. Looking forward to the weekend together.

A Messenger arrives with an architect's plan tube under his arm. She motions for him to lay it on the desk.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Sure. Love to go fishing with you.

Natalie signs the receipt the Messenger produces and rotates the tube to read the sender's name.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

See you later. And, yes. Dinner with Lem and Martha tomorrow at her place is fine. Love you.

INT. MARTHA'S HOME - GUEST ROOM - DAY

NEVILLE (30s), a lanky, dark-haired, fair-skinned man works with Dody to pull up old shag carpet.

NEVILLE

Saw your son the other day.

Dody YELLS. He shoves his left ring-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 (CONT'D)

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.

INT. LEM'S HOME - DINING ROOM - DAY

Thaw, Natalie, Martha and Lem share a meal.

THAW

Remains to be seen whether Rory  
likes my work, and if we can agree  
on price.

MARTHA

That's wonderful, Thaw. I'm sure  
Rory will love your work. What do  
you think, Natalie.

NATALIE

It is a nice gallery.

Lem raises a glass to toast Thaw. Glasses CLINK.

INT. BAIN - CITY HALL - PLANNING DEPARTMENT - DAY

At her desk, Natalie looks off. Distracted.

NATALIE (V.O.)

Meetings, dinners, presentations,  
but not much significant movement  
forward. City Planning is less  
idealistic than I envisioned. I  
want to cover wetlands and open  
spaces. Hopefully the Inter-County  
Planning Department will have an  
opening for me.

Natalie 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.

Pause.

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 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.

NATALIE( V.O.)

All I can see is a crossroad. What  
am I going to do now?

INT. NATALIE'S HOME - NIGHT

Natalie hosts a lively gathering of friends over for drinks.

NATALIE (V.O.)

I'm a mature city woman involved  
with a drop dead handsome,  
financially strapped and probable  
commitment phobe, woodsman slash  
artist. What's next?

END MONTAGE

INT. NATALIE'S HOME - NIGHT

Natalie wipes her eyes, blows her nose.

She thumbs through a stack of mail.

NATALIE

Amnesty International. Electric  
bill. NARAL Environmental Defense  
Fund. Office of the Governor...  
Office of the Governor!?

Natalie tears open the letter.

INT. SCHOOL - MARY'S OFFICE - DAY

SUPER: "Thursday, April 12, 2018" Autistic FINN (11) faces Mary. He does not engage her.

MARY  
Good morning, Finn.

Finn mumbles a good morning but does not look up.

MARY (CONT'D)  
How was the ride to school?

FINN  
We had to stop for a train. It was going south.

MARY  
Oh, really.

Finn, unresponsive. He looks straight ahead.

MARY (CONT'D)  
Trains are interesting. Where do you think that one was going?

FINN  
Aesopolis.

Finn aims a pointed look at Mary.

FINN (CONT'D)  
Can I go now?

MARY  
Yes. Let me take you to make sure you go directly to class.

Mary helps Finn gather his things then leads him out.

INT. MATTERS' HOME - KITCHEN- DAY

Jason places the empty creel on the counter. He motions to Marty and they descend to --

THE BASEMENT

In the center, shelves of survival supplies: sleeping bags, water jugs, canned food, tin box with LABEL: "For Emergencies Only" and a plastic box with LABEL: "Potassium Iodide". Marty scrutinizes items and opens the TIN BOX.

Inside, a wad of hundred dollar bills. He fans the cash like a Vegas high roller then replaces it.

MARTY

This place is creepy. Never liked the thought of having to hunker down here . . . from tornadoes . . . or fallout. With no windows.

JASON

It's good to be ready for emergencies.

Marty opens the Potassium Iodide plastic box.

JASON (CONT'D)

That's the K-I. In case the plant goes down. It protects the thyroid.

Marty nods, clueless. What's a thyroid?

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

ROAD SIGN: "Magdum Heights Power Plant 12 miles"

Mary rolls down the driver side window, dials Lou.

MARY

Hi, Hun. How are you? I'm on my way to our lunch date. Meet you outside the gate. About 20 minutes. Love ya! See ya soon.

She lays her phone down next to a container of wet wipes and continues to the rendezvous with left arm out the window.

POPULATION CENTER

Mary tools past K through 12 schools, dozens of commuter apartment buildings and major rail hub.

A van SQUEALS over double yellow to pass then cuts Mary off.

MARY

Lunatic!

The van SCREECHES to a halt just past Mary. It explodes before the front entrance of a large building.

Residue from the explosion sprays toward Mary's car.

A dusky soup of smoke and dust swirls around the car and through Mary's open driver's side window.

MARY (V.O.)  
Dirty bomb?

Her view obscured, she manages to pull over a half mile on. Mary swabs her left arm with wet wipes.

Smaller pieces of debris rain down.

Mary leaps from the vehicle and disrobes. She tosses the clothes to the side of the road.

She pops the trunk, dons a sweat suit and flip flops. Mary mounts the car, rolls up the window. She peels a U-turn.

MARY (V.O.)  
Lou. Jason. Marty.

SCREAMS rise in the black smoke.

EXT. MAGDUM HEIGHTS NUCLEAR POWER PLANT - SAME TIME

LOU MATTERS (30s) strolls past the security shack. A friendly wave to the Guard and one back. Lou checks his watch.

As he waits, a LOW RUMBLE from the plant. Lou spins and looks upward to see water vapor reach skyward from one of the cooling towers.

A van barrels down the driveway, crashes through the barrier arm next to the shack.

The Guard fires his weapon, hits the van Driver. The van skids toward the side of the building and detonates.

The force throws Lou head first into a light pole.

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 their cars to run, eyes wide on the glow.

INT. MATTERS' HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

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 living room window.

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

LENORE (40s), Ricky's mother, drives south. She tilts her head, perplexed by the unusual, heavy northbound traffic.

EXT. SANDRA'S HOME - DAY

Baby sitter SANDRA (28) meets Lenore at the door. Ricky and brother STEVEN (8) ready; jackets on, backpacks in hand.

LENORE  
Hi, Sandra. Boys, ready?

They both nod yes.

SANDRA  
It's terrorism, Lenore.

LENORE  
What are you talking about?

Sandra pushes Ricky forward with her left and grasps Lenore's left hand tightly in her right. She holds Lenore's eyes.

Ricky has a tight grip on Steven's hand.

SANDRA  
Terrorism!

LENORE  
Sandra, calm down. Where? What?

SANDRA  
Call Carlos. The plant is down.

LENORE  
What!?

SANDRA  
A lot of power lines are down. The area around the plant for 5 to 15 miles is likely affected.

LENORE  
The electricity is out?



She nods an emphatic yes.

SANDRA

Try your cell phone. I think it's gone. But Carlos's is in Bain, no? Maybe you can reach him.

As Lenore reaches for her cell phone, it rings.

LENORE

Carlos. Yes. I'm picking them up now.

(nods)

Yes. We'll go directly to the downstairs bathroom. I'll take a cooler, can opener, canned food, bread, bottled water, milk.

(listens)

Pillows and sleeping bags. I'm sure the boys will help.

(listens)

We'll stay away from the windows and where the walls are thickest. Hurry home.

Her Sons fidget, a little frightened.

LENORE (CONT'D)

Carlos says radioactivity from a meltdown can spread ten to 30 miles.

SANDRA

We're almost 40 here.

LENORE

Falling ash can make an area radioactive for 72 hours.

SANDRA

Best stay here.

LENORE

It's a half hour to our house, and too soon for fallout.

INT. 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 the cash from the 'For Emergencies Only' tin box.

EXT. LOCHLEE - LEM'S HOME - FRONT DOOR - DAY

Thaw knocks, Lem answers -- Thaw is a bit breathless.

THAW  
You've heard?

LEM  
Yeah. Listening on the radio.

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. He's ex-military,  
and can facilitate setting up a  
Point of Distribution. A POD.

Lem reaches for his jacket.

LEM

We can use Martha's people skills.

THAW

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

LEM

Lots of rumors and chaos, but in addition to the meltdown there may have been dirty bombs. They're calling it arson, but the area is being cleared. They're not saying why. I heard six between Aesopolis and Ariana.

THAW

So, definitely terrorism.

EXT. 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. BIXBY - LOCAL ROAD - GAS STATION - DAY

ROAD SIGN: "BIXBY"

Hank turns in.

HANK

This is as far as I go. My house is down the next street. You can use my phone to reach your dad. Or there's a pay phone here.

JASON  
Thanks, Hank. We'll use this one.  
C'mon, Marty. Open the door.

Marty swings the door open.

MARTY  
Thanks a lot for the lift, Hank.

HANK  
You're welcome, Marty.

Jason offers his hand to Hank.

JASON  
Yeah. Thanks so much, Hank.

HANK  
If you need me, number ten. Down  
that street.

JASON AND MARTY  
Thanks, Hank.

Jason slams the door with force. It SQUEAKS and BANGS.

Hank GRINDS gears and drives off. He calls to the boys  
through the open window.

HANK  
See ya.

JASON AND MARTY  
(both wave)  
See ya!

The Brothers survey the area and trade 'what now?' looks.

**END ACT THREE**

**ACT FOUR**

FULL SCREEN TITLE: "Ready, Get Set..."

INT. MARTHA'S HOME - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

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

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. I think they'd head  
there. 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 rises to pick up the coffee pot from which non-verbal queries Lem and Larry by raising her eyebrows in question after which each nods yes and she then fills their cups as she speaks.

MARTHA

People either want to get away or  
get home. Radio said there are road  
blocks preventing people from  
approaching the plant, and for  
those 35 or more miles away to lay  
low for 72 hours.

(MORE)

MARTHA (CONT'D)

There's a warning not to drink or eat anything not bottled or canned due to possible contamination.

LEM

The electric grid is down around the plant. They're having difficulty getting messages out.

INT. LEM'S HOME - DAY

SUPER: "Two days after the Magdum Heights meltdown"

As Thaw feeds and waters Tufty, Lem rifles through cabinets.

THAW

How's your family doing, Lem?

Lem sorts canned goods into groups on the countertop.

LEM

My sister and her two kids are coming from Waxton.

(realizes)

Probably for the duration.

THAW

Natalie and her sister Judith with Hannah are also coming.

Lem stops and looks at Thaw.

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 returns to his work on the cabinets.

LEM

Sure. Except 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 get the couch.

THAW

Lem. It's too much.

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

THAW  
 Around 12.

Lem closes the cabinet doors and looks at Thaw.

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.

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 much too fast.

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.



## PLATFORM

A number of Women in yellow neck scarves. Three Men in yellow hats and scarves carry pistols on their waists.

Over twenty People of various ages descend from open doors; some in Family Groups.

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

## FROM THEIR VANTAGE

JOSETTE

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

Josette considers the People climbing in vehicles.

JOSETTE (CONT'D)

Those with children are very worried.

MARTHA

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

## INT. BAIN - TOWN HALL - COUNCIL ROOM - NIGHT

Larry, Natalie, Lem, Martha and Thaw at the head table. They face an anxious audience of Townies and Newbies.

LARRY

Natalie serves on the Bain Planning Board. I've asked her to address the need for the orderly assignment of temporary housing for Newbies.

NATALIE

I'm impressed by the number of villagers who have already taken in Newbies.

(applauds)

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

LARRY

The lumber yard is running out of materials.

Dody rises from the crowd.

DODY

I been working among the Newcomers, and a bunch have carpentry skills. I think we should pull them all together to help with a plan to build shelters.

LARRY

Dody, would you take on that job?

DODY

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

LARRY

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

Dody sits and trades nods with a few Men in the audience.

NATALIE

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

LARRY

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

Larry finds Dody in the Crowd.

LARRY (CONT'D)

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

DODY

We'll look into it, Lar.

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.

EXT. SOLERS' HOME - FRONT DOOR - DAY

SUPER: "Three days after the Magdum Heights meltdown" Mary, weak and tired, climbs the front stairs and rings the bell. Ricky opens the door.

RICKY

Hello, Mrs. Matters. You okay?

MARY

Hi, Ricky. Not really. Is your mother in?

Lenore at the door.

LENORE

Mary! How are you?

MARY

No one else is home. Three days ago I was near a dirty bomb that went off. And radioactive dust from it landed on my arm.

LENORE

Come in. Come in.

Lenore steers Mary into --

INT. SOLERS' HOME - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

MARY

I'm clean, but not feeling well.

LENORE

Mary, I'm so sorry.

MARY

I'll go home, but can you bring me food and water until it passes? The main thing is to keep clean and hydrated.

Lenore reaches for Mary's arm and directs her inward.

LENORE  
You can't go home.

MARY  
I'm pretty low on energy. I'm not  
sure the worst has hit.

LENORE  
What about the boys?

Lenore guides Mary to the couch where she sits.

MARY  
If they followed our plan, they  
went north.

LENORE  
Stay here. I can't let you go home.

MARY  
My immune defenses will be low. I  
need to be kept clean.

LENORE  
And away from people.

MARY  
Yes. Radiation exposure makes one  
vulnerable.

Lenore sits on the couch a bit away from Mary.

LENORE  
Stay in the guest room. We'll sort  
everything out. I didn't see Lou's  
car, so I figured you all took off  
after the meltdown. I didn't know  
you were home. Where's Lou?

MARY  
(sobs)  
I don't know.

LENORE  
Oh, Mary.

Lenore reaches to put her arms around Mary but Mary pushes  
her away.

MARY  
I may be contaminated. I don't  
think so but best to stay away.

Carlos joins them.

CARLOS

Mary. Good to see you. I've been worried about all of you.

MARY

Hello, Carlos.

CARLOS

Is there anything I can do?

LENORE

We're okay. Mary's not feeling well. Please check Steven. He's a little freaked out.

EXT. LOCHLEE - LEM'S HOME - NIGHT

Lem lends a hand as his sister, MAY (30s), and her two daughters, DAHLIA (6) and CARRIE (8) lift totes, suitcases and backpacks from their car.

EXT. COUNTY ROADS - INTERSECTION - DAY

In a fast food restaurant parking lot, Natalie picks up sister JUDITH (30s) and her niece HANNAH (12).

They all wave goodbye to Judith's Parents and waste no time climbing into Natalie's car.

INT. HOSPITAL - SEMI-PRIVATE ROOM - DAY

A NURSE (40s) checks Lou's drip.

Bandages surround his head.

The Nurse starts when she sees Lou gaping at her.

NURSE

Hello. Are you awake?

Lou blinks in response.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Can you talk?

He blinks again. The Nurse pats Lou's arm.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Be right back.

Lou looks a little lost as he scans the room.

The Nurse returns with tall, dignified DR. GEORGE (50s) and CONNIE WILLIAMS (30s), a speech pathologist.

Lou looks each in the eye. He blinks twice at each after reading their badges. Dr. George offers a handshake to Lou.

DR. GEORGE  
I'm Martin George, your doctor.  
You've had a pretty severe injury  
to your head.

Blink.

Connie holds cards with pictures, words and phrases.

CONNIE  
I'm Connie Williams, a speech  
language pathologist.

Lou blinks.

CONNIE (CONT'D)  
Is speaking difficult for you?

He blinks an answer.

CONNIE (CONT'D)  
Yes. Let's try yes-no questions.

A slight nod from Lou.

CONNIE (CONT'D)  
One blink for yes and two for no.  
Do you understand me?

A blink.

CONNIE (CONT'D)  
Good. Can you read this card?

Yes.

CONNIE (CONT'D)  
Do you know your name?

Two blinks.

"IN THE WOODS - APRIL 11 - OCTOBER 17, 2018"

EXT. IN THE WOODS -

Hank leaves Jason and Marty on the road; behind a GAS STATION is a stretch of wooded area; Jason needs time to think.

JASON AND MARTY  
(both wave)  
See ya!

The Brothers survey the area and trade 'what now?' looks.

JASON  
We're about 45 miles from home. Dad  
put around 1500 dollars in cash for  
emergencies.

Jason pats his pocket.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Let's see if we can get some food  
in here, Marty.

LATER

Marty and Jason exit the gas station with bags of groceries. They enter woods until they no longer see the road. Jason sits at the base of a tree. Marty plops next to him.

JASON  
Chow down time.

The Brothers eat in silence, finish sodas.

JASON (CONT'D)  
Okay, Marty. Ever onward.

They walk deeper into the woods and find --

AN ABANDONED HOUSE

Small, paintless. Windows and door intact. Porch, rotted and missing boards. Jason treads across the porch. It holds. He tries the door. It swings open with a CREAK.

**END PILOT**