

MIDNIGHT BURGER

Chapter 28: Pockets

By

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## Midnight Burger

### Chapter 28: Pockets.

A RADIO CLICKS ON AND GOES BACK AND FOURTH THROUGH THE DIAL  
SEARCHING FOR A STATION. FINALLY A VOICE COMES THROUGH.

RADIO REPORTER

Cathode Ray Tube Televisions, or CRT Televisions, or as my grandma called them "Bunny Ear Televisions" were all but extinct a year ago, but these days they may be the most prized possession in the world. When the first solar storm hit 8 months ago, everyone's big beautiful flat screen televisions went dark when the complicated technology inside them was scrambled by the sun's magnetic bombardment. The world suddenly went silent and television, in a instant, became a thing of the past. But in the past few months, things began to change. Breaking News America, a formerly fourth rate cable news station announced that they would begin broadcasting their usual nightly news show "Past Prologue". Using broadcasting methods from the early days of live television, BNA said that it would be able to provide a nightly, live news update to anyone who could get their hands on a Cathode Ray Tube television. Within days, thrift stores and vintage shops were completely cleared out of any CRT televisions. People seemed to be dying for at least something that reminded them of the world they lost 8 months ago. Now, as the world anxiously awaits the results of the "Hong Kong Experiment", watch parties have sprung up all over the city with large groups of people gathered around whatever Bunny Ear TV they can find.

THE RADIO CLICKS OFF. A NEEDLE IS DROPPED ON A RECORD PLAYER.

SONG:

THERE'S A KNOCK ON THE DOOR.

THOMAS

Come in.

DOOR OPENS.

SIOBHÁN

Hey.

THOMAS

Hey... Vinyl still works.

SIOBHÁN

I know.

THOMAS

I always warned you about all your stuff being digital.

SIOBHÁN

And look at me now.

THOMAS

Turns out all the things that made me intolerable, like collecting huge amounts of Vinyl, are now paying off.

SIOBHÁN

Maybe not all the things.

THOMAS

Any word on Hong Kong?

SIOBHÁN

I imagine I would say if I knew anything. It is the most important news in the world right now.

THOMAS

Right. Are Jeff and the kids still upstate?

SIOBHÁN

Yeah. The kids are still pretty freaked out. They started volunteering at a shelter up there, that's giving them some structure, but he has a hard time getting them to go to sleep at night.

THOMAS

Have you tried Bourbon?

SIOBHÁN

They're 7 and 9 years old.

THOMAS

I don't see how that's relevant.

SIOBHÁN

Anyway. They'll be fine. Better up there than in the city. In ANY city these days. How are things on Park Avenue?

THOMAS

Turns out I was the only one living on Park Avenue who didn't buy a place upstate. It's a ghost town over there, everyone's gone. I walk the streets like Omega Man.

SIOBHÁN

It's a little disturbing to me how well you've fared in this particular apocalypse we find ourselves in.

THOMAS

I think we've both fared pretty well.

SIOBHÁN

I think you've liked it just a little bit.

THOMAS

Siobhan, planes were falling from the sky.

SIOBHÁN

Not that part. The other parts. The "vinyl still works" parts.

THOMAS

We were about to go extinct, you and I. We were talking heads on television, nobody cared about talking heads on television anymore. But then this new dark age hit and... we're suddenly useful. It's a strange feeling, I never thought I'd be useful again. Have you heard about these watch parties? People gathered around antique televisions every night?

SIOBHÁN

I heard.

THOMAS

People went all-in on the internet, then the internet disappeared. Who do they turn to? A couple of dinosaurs like us.

SIOBHÁN

Don't call me a dinosaur.

THOMAS

We're dinosaurs, Siobhan. But it is very suddenly the time of the dinosaurs.

A KNOCK ON THE DOOR.

TANIA

Hey.

THOMAS

Tania, what's the word?

TANIA

Hong Kong failed. We're on in two minutes.

SIOBHÁN  
Shit.

THOMAS  
Fuck.

TANIA  
Yes. Agreed. Let's go.

ALL THREE OF THEM WALK DOWN THE HALLWAY. WE HEAR THE SOUND OF  
A BUSY TELEVISION STUDIO.

TANIA (CONT'D)  
We still don't have the prompter up and running so  
you're going to have to wing it.

SIOBHÁN  
That's fine.

THOMAS  
Getting used to it at this point.

TANIA  
There's bullet points on the desk. You go through  
the bullet points and then you're going to go live  
to the capitol, apparently the senate is going to  
vote on another aid package.

THOMAS  
Who's at the capitol?

TANIA  
Amanda Marie and Daniel. We've got the earpieces up  
and running again, so both of you be prepared to  
have me in your ear for the rest of the night.

SIOBHÁN  
How long are we going to go with this?

TANIA  
Giving them the bad news will take about two  
minutes, we're going to broadcast until I feel like  
people have calmed down a little bit. It'll take as  
long as it takes.

THOMAS  
Got it.

TANIA  
Get to places, I'm getting the control room set up.

TANIA WALKS THROUGH A DOOR INTO THE CONTROL ROOM. THE ROOM IS  
BUSY WITH TECHNICIANS. DANIEL IS ON THE PHONE.

DANIEL

They're called Image Orthocon Tubes. If I can get enough of those, I don't need the physical camera, I can make the camera myself... Okay, call me back, I'm in the control room.

HE HANGS UP.

TANIA

What's that about?

DANIEL

Spare parts. These cameras are going to fold on us any time, I'm trying to get backups.

TANIA

Did we try the Film and Television museum?

DANIEL

Where do you think I got our current ones from? I'm talking to guys at junkyards now.

TANIA

Is Amanda Marie in my headset yet?

DANIEL

It's not the greatest signal but it'll work.

TANIA

Okay. Amanda Marie are you there?

AMANDA MARIE

(In headset.)

I'm here. We're going to have to broadcast from the capitol steps, these old cameras don't travel well.

TANIA

That's fine.

AMANDA MARIE

(In headset.)

On the plus side we're the only TV news team in existence now so we don't have to fight for a good shot.

TANIA

Okay, hang tight, we're going to throw things to you in a few minutes.

DANIEL

Tania, Ryan's on the phone for you.

TANIA PICKS UP THE PHONE.

TANIA

What's up, Ryan... uh-huh... seriously? You're kidding me. Shit, that is hilarious. Okay, be ready when I throw to you.

SHE HANGS UP THE PHONE.

TANIA (CONT'D)

Everyone, listen up for a second...

THE ROOM QUIETS DOWN.

TANIA (CONT'D)

We are about to, once again, go on the air and report some bad news. I know we all wanted good news today but there's nothing we can do about that. Focus on the job right in front of you, get to the end of the day, then do it again tomorrow, okay? I know it's a tough world out there but at least we're a useful part of it. Tom, Siobhan, you two ready?

THOMAS

We're ready.

TANIA

One minute, people.  
(Into her headset.)  
Want to hear something ridiculous?

THOMAS

Of course we do.

TANIA

We're doing a weather report tonight.

SIOBHÁN

You're kidding.

TANIA

Ryan has a copy of the Farmer's Almanac and the phone number of every meteorologist in the Tri-state area and he is just going to dive in.

THOMAS

That is fucking ridiculous.

TANIA

Hey, we're here to do the news, right? Fifteen seconds.

WE MOVE TO THOMAS AND SIOBHAN ON SET.

SIOBHÁN

I think I'm going to open with a joke, what do you think?

THOMAS

Good idea. "Folks we'll get to the news of our impending doom in a minute, but first, have you heard the one about the armless hunchback?"

TANIA

(In earpiece.)  
And three, two, one...

SIOBHÁN

... Good evening, This is Past Prologue, I'm Siobhán Delilah Rose here with Thomas Stolen. The Hong Kong Project that sought to create a new form of digital storage that would be immune to the sun's magnetic storms, has failed. The Project hoped to create a computer mainframe that used state of the art shielding to remain functional after a magnetic storm, but it appears now that the project's design team was too optimistic. We'll have more details on this story as it develops.

THOMAS

For eight months now, our sun, which for billions of years has fostered life on this planet now seems to be dead set on destroying it. Regular magnetic storms have swept across the globe at least twice a month since the storms began. They have fried everything but the most basic of circuit boards, and made all forms of digital storage impossible. We are now a modern world that can only use pre-war technology.

SIOBHÁN

As we speak, on Capitol Hill, the debate is raging on a new aid package to help those who are struggling the most with this new world we find ourselves in. No doubt, the failure of the Hong Kong Project will greatly inform the current debate. We now go live to Amanda Marie Kathrein on the steps of the capitol. Amanda, what's the atmosphere like right now?

WE MOVE TO THE STEPS OF THE CAPITOL.

AMANDA MARIE

Siobhan, as I'm sure you can imagine, the atmosphere has gone from tense to panicked.

(MORE)



AMANDA MARIE (CONT'D)

At the beginning of this crisis there was a large group of members of congress who believed that the troubles would pass and soon everything would get back to normal. But as the months have gone by, those members of congress have quickly been reduced to two senators and ten representatives, now jokingly referred to as "The Ostrich Caucus."

THOMAS

What are they voting on next?

AMANDA MARIE

Next up is a vote to establish a nationwide network of crisis centers where Americans will be able to receive services. That vote should be happening any minute now.

THOMAS

Okay, we will check back with you soon... Folks, this... well this is yet another day of bad news isn't it? I'm sure you're watching right now, and you're wondering "Why bother?" "Why am I sitting here watching this antique television, going out of my way to get even more bad news?" We hear you, and quite honestly, we don't know either. Not a lot of light at the end of the tunnel, is there?

TANIA

(In earpiece.)

Thomas, no French novels, please.

THOMAS

As you know, I'm Thomas Stolen. I'm here with my dear friend Siobhan. In the control room now, begging me to not be a depressing sot is our Producer Tania Ricardo. Right next to her is Daniel Kaprat, a man whose weirdly encyclopedic knowledge of mid-century live television made all of what you're seeing right now possible. At the capitol right now is our ONE correspondent Amanda Marie and her crew of ONE camera man, Sean Wright. We're not much to look at, but we're here. And we will continue to be. The world may fall apart completely, but you know what? In a few minutes Ryan Ortega is going to give us a weather report. You heard that right. Ryan has no DOPLAR, he has no satellites, nothing. But he's going to be on in a few minutes to tell us what the weather is going to be like. The world may be broken, but it spins regardless.

WE MOVE TO AMANDA MARIE AND SEAN AT THE CAPITOL.

SEAN

Okay, we're out, she'll give us a thirty second warning.

AMANDA MARIE

Thirty second warning would be nice. Yesterday when she threw to me I had half a sandwich in my hand...

SEAN

... You doing okay?

AMANDA MARIE

... Yeah. I figured Hong Kong was going to shit the bed, but there was this part of me that was really hoping we would catch a break.

SEAN

It was their first try, maybe they'll get their act together.

AMANDA MARIE

When?

SEAN

Fuck if I know.

AMANDA MARIE

... Police barricades everywhere, no food at the supermarket, London is flooded, I have to walk up 15 flights of stairs to get back to my apartment. We can't go on like this.

SEAN

It's a little funny you threw in 15 flights of stairs with those other things.

AMANDA MARIE

Because it's a tragedy, Sean.

SEAN

I hear you... Look I think we should remind ourselves that human beings existed a long time before circuit boards and hard drives did. I hate how much I sound like my dad when I say that but it's true.

AMANDA MARIE

What's that sound?

SEAN

What sound?

AMANDA MARIE

Listen...

WE ARE BACK IN THE CONTROL ROOM.

DANIEL

Hey Tania?

TANIA

What?

DANIEL

Can you put your headset on? Amanda Marie's  
freaking out about something.

TANIA

Okay... Amanda, what's wrong?

AMANDA MARIE

(In the headset.)

PUT ME ON THE AIR RIGHT FUCKING NOW!

THE SOUND OF SPACE TIME RUSHING BY. LEIF AND CASPAR ARE ON  
THE ROOF. LEIF IS BUSY SETTING UP "THE ARSENAL". CASPAR  
LISTENS TO TAMARA'S VIDEO.

TAMARA

And that's a shame because I was just getting on  
the trail of my favorite one yet. Something about a  
man in Jerusalem in the 14th century. A man named  
Terric of York... I swear to God, I have found  
evidence of this man, Terric of York, over the last  
700 years. Same guy, 700 years... What the hell  
does that mean, y'all?! Is there another one?! The  
way people are migrating across the globe now, I  
may never know, I've lost track of him at this  
point!

LEIF

Why do you keep listening to that?

CASPAR

I'm trying to remember anything I know about  
Jerusalem in the 14th century.

LEIF

Just for fun?

CASPAR

This thing Tamara said, about this guy Terric of  
York. It's bugging me.

LEIF

Why?

CASPAR

She tracked Clementine through her entire planet's history, and then she got on the trail of this other guy. Apparently he pops up over the course of 700 years. You don't think that's weird?

LEIF

Of course I think that's weird, Caspar, everything is weird.

CASPAR

This seems especially weird.

LEIF

Caspar, we're floating in a ocean of doo doo right now and you're picking up one turd and saying "hey guys, isn't this weird?"

CASPAR

A 700 year old man is in a different category than the other stuff.

LEIF

Are you going to start an old dudes club? Play some golf, secretly influence world events?

CASPAR

Maybe... What's a British guy doing in Jerusalem in the 14th century?

LEIF

How do you know he's British?

CASPAR

Terric of York is a British name.

LEIF

Crusades?

CASPAR

Crusades were over.

LEIF

Maybe he was on a pilgrimage?

CASPAR

If he was a member of a religious order he probably would've changed his name to something biblical.

LEIF

I don't know what to tell you.

CASPAR

If there are two Clementines out there, we should know about it, right?

LEIF

Caspar, look at all this up here. I'm a little preoccupied with the one vengeful goddess that we DO know about.

CASPAR

Yeah, it's looking pretty crazy up here. What is all this?

LEIF

This is the plan. Using the new processor we stole, I've put together a smaller version of the Teds' wind chimes. When she gets here, she should, SHOULD be trapped here. While she's trapped here the diner gets to work trying to take away her powers. If it can.

CASPAR

And what about the part where she's psychotic and wants to kill us?

LEIF

That's where I come in. I'm basically going to throw everything I've got at her.

CASPAR

Which will just make her more mad.

LEIF

According to Zebulon, Clementine's on tilt right now. I need to keep her that way. Keep her off balance. If she can't focus I think I'll be able to keep us safe.

CASPAR

Okay. Hey, if you blow her up while she's riding away on horseback, don't forget to save the horse.

LEIF

Still?

CASPAR

Oh, yes. Still.

LEIF

John Wilkes Booth.

CASPAR

Still.

LEIF

I'm not going to argue about this anymore. Remind me to tell you about the Tower of Enlightenment on Moog sometime.

CASPAR

Fine. What's this big antenna?

LEIF

That's the Hail Mary pass.

CASPAR

People who are confident in their endeavors don't normally have a Hail Mary pass.

LEIF

Never know when you're going to need one.

CASPAR

Leif, is any of this going to work?

LEIF

It's the only play we've got.

DOWNSTAIRS IN THE DINER.

GLORIA

She said she couldn't get back to her people?

ZEBULON

While I do believe that everything must be done to stop her, it was a moment when I felt sympathy for her. I saw her wind the hands of time back and forth. I saw her erase a man only to make him somehow appear once again a moment later. Despite that, she appears unable to return to the home she is attempting to save.

AVA

She can't go back to her version of Earth and use her power to save it, so she's been trying to shift the timeline to give her version of Earth a better outcome.

GLORIA

If she can't get back to her home, how would she even know if it worked?

AVA

I don't think she would. It sounds like she's been opening every door she can, hoping that the next thing she does will lead her back to the home she wants to have.

GLORIA

And she doesn't know that everything she does just makes it worse. She doesn't realize that she's the thing that ruined it all for her version of Earth.

AVA

Which is a crazy bananas paradox that shouldn't be possible, but nobody told her it was impossible so... for her it is possible.

GLORIA

When she shows up again, we need to tell her what's happening. If she knows the destruction she's causing maybe she would stop.

ZEBULON

Effie and I have discussed this very thing, Gloria. We do not believe that Clementine should be told of the destruction she has caused her people.

GLORIA

You don't? Why?

EFFIE

We believe that Clementine is in the thrall of something. Call it what you like, call it the devil, call it hubris. Doesn't much matter what you call it. But she has been seduced into thinking that she has the power to steer the world as if it were a ship on the ocean. And if you were to tell her that her actions brought destruction to those she loves, there would be no repentance, there would be no reflection. There would only be the voice of that demon within her whispering in her ear: "You can change it all. You can erase your mistakes. The world is for you to shape." And while that voice has a hold of her, every attempt to reason with her will be dry branches on a bonfire.

ZEBULON

I'm afraid Clementine has become an abomination. A monster. And though there may be within her, a child, we will not save the child without first defeating the monster.

EFFIE

It's rare this is ever the case, Gloria. But the only solution now is an ass-whuppin'. Pardon my language.

GLORIA

I'm not sure Leif is equipped to whup the demon out of her, y'all.

EFFIE

I'd have a little more faith in that odd bird up on our roof, Gloria. I believe he's due to surprise us any time now.

AVA

Demons.

GLORIA

Ava?

AVA

...

GLORIA

Ava, you okay?

AVA

Demons.

GLORIA

Uh, what?

AVA

Goddamn demons.

GLORIA

Oh God, is it happening again?

AVA

Goddman. Motherfucking. Demons.

EFFIE

I agree with the sentiment Ava but-

AVA

I have to talk to Leif.

GLORIA

Okay.

BACK DOOR CLOSES.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

I guess we're going up on the roof. C'mon.

ZEBULON

I'm beginning to feel a bit guilty about being carried around by everyone.

EFFIE

I love it. I feel like the queen of Sheba.

UP ON THE ROOF. AVA IS CLIMBING THE LADDER.



AVA  
Leif!

LEIF  
What?

AVA  
Goddamn, this ladder is a tetanus festival.

LEIF  
What's going on?

AVA  
Leif. Listen. Maxwell's Demon.

LEIF  
Maxwell's Demon?

AVA  
Maxwell's Demon.

LEIF  
...

AVA  
Think about it.

LEIF  
... Maxwell's Demon.

AVA  
Maxwell's Demon.

GLORIA  
(Coming up the ladder.)  
What's happening?

CASPAR  
They keep saying Maxwell's Demon over and over  
again.

GLORIA  
What does that mean?

CASPAR  
How would I know?

LEIF  
Maxwell's Demon.

AVA  
Maxwell's Demon.

GLORIA

Are they actually communicating right now?

LEIF

Maxwell's Demon.

AVA

Maxwell's Demon.

GLORIA

How long do you think it's going to take before they talk to us?

CASPAR

They don't even know we're here right now.

EFFIE

Y'all if this predicament of ours involves demons do you understand the size of the apology I will be owed by every dang one of you?

CASPAR

I'll be first in line.

LEIF

We're not talking about thermodynamics.

AVA

No, expand the idea. Clementine would need a massive amount of energy to do what she does. Where's it coming from?

LEIF

Hm.

AVA

Uh huh.

GLORIA

I miss having a phone in these moments because I would just check Instagram until they were done.

CASPAR

Who'd you follow on Instagram?

GLORIA

Bakers mostly.

CASPAR

Nice.

LEIF

But if she's running an entropic deficit, where is she making up for the deficit?

AVA  
Think about Silagadze.

LEIF  
Silagadze.

AVA  
Yes.

CASPAR  
I keep forgetting to tell you, I really like what you did with your room.

GLORIA  
Thank you.

CASPAR  
It's very cozy.

GLORIA  
I need more pictures, I usually have a lot of pictures hanging.

CASPAR  
You'll get there.

LEIF  
You're saying she gets her energy from mirror particles.

AVA  
Such as?

LEIF  
Dark matter.

AVA  
Dark matter.

LEIF  
She's fueled by dark matter.

AVA  
Yes!

LEIF  
Holy shit.

CASPAR  
"My Darling Annabelle, it has been three weeks since Leif and Ava started talking and I fear there is no end in sight."

LEIF

Clementine has a power source.

GLORIA

Yes, pure evil.

LEIF

Dark matter. She uses dark matter as fuel to do all the things she does.

CASPAR

How?

AVA

No idea.

LEIF

But it means there are rules she has to follow. And if she has rules to follow, that means we can use them against her.

CASPAR

What are you going to do?

LEIF STARTS TYPING FURIOUSLY ON A KEYBOARD.

LEIF

I need to reroute a few things. If Ava's right, when she shows up, she'll be pulling errant dark matter from her surroundings. But if I'm pulling dark matter out of the environment too, it might limit her powers.

GLORIA

By how much?

LEIF

No idea. But it might be enough. This might not be a suicide mission anymore.

GLORIA

It was a suicide mission before?

LEIF

Oh yeah, absolutely.

CASPAR

Would've liked that information.

GLORIA

You're going to be able to take her powers away?

LEIF

I seriously doubt it, but if I can siphon enough energy off her I may be able to shave off 25 percent? 30? That may make all the difference.

GLORIA

Okay. While Leif's doing that, we've been talking. We're not going to tell Clementine that she was the one who destroyed her planet.

CASPAR

We're not? Why?

GLORIA

Because if we do it might push her over the edge. And when someone that powerful goes over the edge who knows what could happen?

CASPAR

If you were causing that much destruction, wouldn't you want to know about it?

GLORIA

Honestly. I don't know.

AVA

Here we go.

THE DINER SETS DOWN ON THE STEPS OF THE CAPITOL BUILDING.

CASPAR

Uhh.

AVA

This is... a bit conspicuous.

GLORIA

Are we... on the steps of the fucking Capitol Building?

CASPAR

I feel like people are going to notice that a diner just appeared outside of congress.

AVA

Where is everyone, though? There's police barricades everywhere. Leif, where are we?

LEIF

Hang on... this Earth looks pretty screwed up but we're not in Clementine's timeline. Maybe the diner took us to neutral territory. This is someplace new... weird.

(MORE)

LEIF (CONT'D)

This looks like a fairly modern Earth but...  
there's no data networks... no satellites either,  
something strange is going on here.

GLORIA

Where is everybody? There should be tourists,  
reporters.

CASPAR

I see a news camera. Right over there. Look at the  
correspondent, she's freaking out. Weird day for  
her.

AVA

Um... Does she look a little familiar to anyone?

GLORIA

What the hell?

EFFIE

Oh, my lord.

WE MOVE BACK TO THE NEWSROOM.

THOMAS

We're going to have to cut in here, Amanda Marie at  
the Capitol has something for us. Amanda, what have  
you got for us?

AMANDA MARIE

Uhhh...

THOMAS

Amanda?

AMANDA MARIE

There is... Just a few seconds ago a uh... well, a  
diner has appeared on the steps of the Capitol.

THOMAS

...

SIOBHÁN

A... diner?

AMANDA MARIE

We have a live shot here, are you seeing it? Sean  
can you get closer in?

THOMAS

That's... a diner.

SIOBHÁN

Amanda, how long has it been there?

AMANDA MARIE

Siobhan it... it just showed up.

SIOBHÁN

I don't understand.

AMANDA MARIE

I don't understand.

THOMAS

Amanda you're saying that a... diner, has just appeared on the steps of the capitol building.

AMANDA MARIE

I'm having a hard time saying those words Tom, because they sound like crazy words.

SIOBHÁN

Amanda, there appears to be people on the roof, can you get a closer shot?

AMANDA MARIE

Sean can you get a closer shot of the roof?... Okay... Okay there we can see the people on the roof and... um, that's...

SIOBHÁN

That's...

THOMAS

Am I seeing what everyone else is seeing?

TANIA

(In earpiece.)  
Is that... me?

DANIEL

(In earpiece.)  
What the fuck?!

BACK ON THE ROOF.

GLORIA

That's totally Effie in front of the camera.

CASPAR

Is it really?

GLORIA

Yeah.

CASPAR

That's what Effie looks like?

GLORIA

It is.

CASPAR

Effie you look great, that's a very sharp pantsuit you're wearing.

EFFIE

It is a fine look, I don't mind saying, but what in all heck is going on?

AVA

Zebulon's behind the camera!

GLORIA

Oh shit!

CASPAR

And that's what Zebulon looks like?

ZEBULON

I feel that I'm not properly dressed for a work day.

GLORIA

What does this mean?

ALERTS START BLARING ON LEIF'S COMMAND CENTER.

LEIF

We're going to have to figure this out later, people... We've got incoming.

GLORIA

Shit. Here we go.

CLEMENTINE MATERIALIZES IN THE PARKING LOT.

CLEMENTINE

Knock knock. Y'all open?

CASPAR

Good luck, Leif.

LEIF

... Showtime.

LEIF THROWS A SWITCH AND A FORCE FIELD POPS INTO EXISTENCE AROUND THE DINER.

GLORIA

Whoa.



AVA

Cool.

CASPAR

Oh shit, did we just put our shields up?

LEIF

How you doing, Clementine?

CLEMENTINE

The fuck is this force field, Leif?

LEIF

Additional security measures. I don't know if you heard but there's a fucking insane person out there trying to kill us.

CLEMENTINE

You realize I'm just going to teleport inside your little bubble, right?

LEIF

The thought had occurred to me. Give it a shot.

CLEMENTINE

Jesus Christ. Fine.

CLEMENTINE TELEPORTS AGAIN BUT IS INSTANTLY SPIT BACK OUT AND TUMBLES ACROSS THE PARKING LOT.

CASPAR

Oh shit, Leif.

AVA

Denied.

EFFIE

That was very gratifying.

CLEMENTINE

What the hell was that?

LEIF

Pretty great, right? It's called Meesock's Tabernacle. It's not really a force field, it just looks like it.

CLEMENTINE REELS BACK AND PUNCHES THE FORCE FIELD. IT ECHOS LIKE AN EMPTY STEEL DRUM.

LEIF (CONT'D)

There's this dwarf planet near the center of Triangulum. It was totally deserted but a surveying team found a workshop there.

(MORE)

LEIF (CONT'D)

Covered in dust and rubble. The only thing left inside was a skeleton, and volume after volume of engineering schematics. Wild stuff, things nobody had seen before. All of it designed by a being named Meesock who'd died a Millenia ago. Nobody knows who he was. All we have are his designs. Meesock's Chariot, Meesock's Onager, Meesock's Astrolabe. And of course, Meesock's Tabernacle. A force field that isn't really a force field.

CLEMENTINE PUNCHES THE FORCE FIELD THREE TIMES.

LEIF (CONT'D)

The problem with Meesock's designs is that they're so complicated and so elegant that they can't be scaled and they can't be mass produced. And in a system where everything's a volume business, there was just no place for them. Sad, really. So, Meesock's designs became an oddity, something weird that had no place in the world. Kind of like the knuckleball: weird, strangely effective, but there were really just five of six people in the game that knew how to pull it off. Not to toot my own horn but uh, toot toot, I'm one of those people.

CLEMENTINE

So you're just going to hide in your little bubble is that it?

LEIF

It's working so far.

CLEMENTINE

Fine. Suit yourself. I'll just put you and your diner *and* your bubble into an even deeper hole than the one I put you in last time, see you soon... What's.... Rrrrg, MOVE... What the fuck, why aren't you moving?

LEIF

(Under his breath.)  
Holy shit, Maxwell's Demon.

AVA

Yessssss.

LEIF

You having a little trouble there, Clementine?

CLEMENTINE

Why won't you go away?!

LEIF

Clementine, if I had a beer for every time someone said that to me I'd be shitfaced right now.

CLEMENTINE

What are you doing?!

LEIF

Clementine. You're out of your league. How about you give this up now before it gets worse?

CLEMENTINE

Out of my league? I could destroy this whole city if I wanted to, out of my league?!

LEIF

Yeah, we've all heard the stories of how powerful you are Clementine, that's not why you're out of your league. You're out of your league because of this: Tell me how electricity works.

CLEMENTINE

... What?

LEIF

Electricity. You flick a switch, a light comes on. How does it work?

CLEMENTINE

Wh... I don't know.

LEIF

Right. And I do. And so does this one.

AVA

Yeah.

LEIF

Maybe not these two so much.

CASPAR

I feel like I could know it.

GLORIA

I've just never taken the time.

LEIF

I know what I'm meant to do. Who I'm supposed to be. It took a long time figure it out but I know now. But you, flailing around the cosmos, you have no idea what you're doing. And that makes your power irrelevant.

CLEMENTINE

Take down this force field, I'll show you how irrelevant it is.

LEIF

You ever watch Penelope Pitstop?

CLEMENTINE

What?

LEIF

I never watched TV when I was a kid. We didn't have one. But once I left Earth I was constantly on a lot of very long flights. Lot of time to catch up on everything I missed. There was this one old cartoon that caught my attention. Penelope Pitstop is a wealthy heiress, and the bad guy is always trying to steal her riches through these ridiculous plots. Always trying to keep her safe is the Ant Hill Mob, this group of short little gangsters who all had their own gimmick. Lots of allusions to Snow White. Dum Dum was the dumb one, Snoozy was always asleep, you get it. One member of the Ant Hill Gang was Pockets. Pockets could always reach into his pockets and pull out whatever they needed to get out of a jam, defying all laws of physics. He pulled a suspension bridge out of his pocket one time. I loved that guy. A criminal, a guy who could make things, and a guy who wanted to defend something beautiful. Anyway, I'm sure you can see where I'm going with this...

SOMETHING BEGINS TO POWER UP. THE POWER CONTINUES TO INCREASE EXPONENTIALLY AND A HUGE CANON DEPLOYS ON THE ROOF.

CASPAR

What the fuck?

LEIF

I'm Pockets.

LEIF'S CANNON UNLEASHES A MASSIVE BEAM OF ENERGY ONTO CLEMENTINE, DRIVING HER INTO THE GROUND. THE CANON POWERS DOWN AND THERE'S A MOMENT OF SILENCE.

CASPAR

Jesus Christ, did you just vaporize her?

LEIF

No.

CLEMENTINE PULLS HERSELF FROM THE RUBBLE CREATED BY LEIF'S CANON.

CLEMENTINE  
Fucking asshole.

LEIF  
Pretty fun, right? Who doesn't love a good particle canon?

CLEMENTINE  
Yeah... Yeah, that does look like fun... I think I'll give it a try.

CLEMENTINE UNLEASHES THE SAME BEAMS OF ENERGY FROM HER OWN HANDS AND LEIF'S SHIELD WAVERS A BIT UNDER THE ATTACK.

GLORIA  
Oh fuck!

LEIF  
Everybody down!

CASPAR  
What the fuck?!

CLEMENTINE STOPS HER ATTACK.

GLORIA  
Did she just shoot friggin' lasers from her hands?

LEIF  
I think so?

CLEMENTINE  
(Maliciously singing.)  
"Anything you can do I can do better, I can do anything better than you..."

CLEMENTINE FIRES BEAMS OF ENERGY AT THE SHIELD AGAIN. SOME OF LEIF'S EQUIPMENT BEGINS SHORT CIRCUIT UNDER THE STRAIN.

LEIF  
Everybody stay down!

WE MOVE BACK TO THE NEWSROOM.

SIOBHÁN  
So, Amanda... What are we looking at now?

AMANDA MARIE  
Uh... There's a woman... she appears to be shooting lasers out of her hands at the diner that has just appeared on the steps of the capitol...

SIOBHÁN  
Sure that's... okay just making sure.

WE BEGIN TO HEAR "SPORTSCENTER" STYLE MUSIC COMING FROM SEEMINGLY EVERYWHERE.

THOMAS

What is that music?

WE MOVE BACK TO THE ROOF.

LEIF

We're okay, the shield's holding.

GLORIA

You didn't tell me about lasers out of the hands, Leif.

CASPAR

This is the LESS powerful version of her?

LEIF

We're okay. We're just getting started.

AVA

What is that music?

EFFIE

(As Kitty Caldwell)

Welcome back, sports fans I'm Kitty Caldwell here with Bram Frampton.

ZEBULON

(As Bram Frampton)

And we are coming to you live from The Rumble at the Capitol! If you are just joining us the fight is off to a thunderous start, Leif unleashed a DEVastating Particle Beam attack on Clementine but then Clementine surprised us all by returning fire with not one but TWO particle beams out of her own damn hands.

EFFIE

Bram, the look on Leif's face when she returned fire.

ZEBULON

Kitty I thought Leif was going to make a big old boom boom in his dipey-wipey.

EFFIE

Bram, how do you think Leif's going to recover from this?

ZEBULON

Well, Kitty, Leif may be a mere mortal compared to Clementine's crazy godhood but he's got a bag of tricks the size of my grandmother's yarn barn. Who knows what he's going to pull out of there.

A SQUADRON OF DRONES TAKES OFF FROM THE ROOF.

LEIF

Fly my pretties.

ZEBULON

And it looks like it's drones!

EFFIE

You know Bram, I was not expecting drones so soon.

ZEBULON

It's an unconventional choice, but Leif's an unconventional guy, let's watch...

CLEMENTINE

Drones? What are you going to do? Annoy me to death?

LEIF

Firing flechette guns.

THE DRONES ALL UNLEASH A HAIL OF FAST MOVING NEEDLES

CLEMENTINE

OW! Fuck!

EFFIE

Ooooh those bees do like to sting don't they?

ZEBULON

Kitty the drones appear to be firing some sort of projectiles at a very high rate right now, let's talk to Leif about it. Leif, what are your drones packing right now?

LEIF

Huh?

EFFIE

We see you've got some interesting firepower on the field right now, tell us about it.

LEIF

Uh, yeah, flechette gun or a needle gun. Small, needle like projectiles fired with an electromagnet at a very high velocity.

EFFIE

Well that sounds like an ouchie factory.

ZEBULON

I'll tell you, Kitty, I am never looking at my acupuncturist in the same way again.

CLEMENTINE IS RANDOMLY SWATting AND FIRING HER LASER HANDS AT THE DRONE SWARM. WE MOVE BACK TO THE CONTROL ROOM.

TANIA

Okay, I have several questions that I need answered.

DANIEL

Like why are our doppelgängers on the roof of a diner that's suddenly appeared on the steps of the capitol?

TANIA

Yes, thank you Daniel, that's one.

EFFIE

You know Bram, the drones looked like an odd choice at first but Clementine does seem to be having a dickens of a time getting rid of them.

TANIA

Maybe we should start with who's breaking in to the broadcast?

DANIEL

Only so much I can do about that, this technology is one step up from the Bronze Age.

TANIA

(Into headset.)

Tom, we have no idea what's going on with the other voices, also we have no idea what's going on with anything.

THOMAS

Folks, we don't have any answers for you about what's currently happening at the capitol, all we can tell you... uh...

SIOBHÁN

All we can tell you is that we're going to keep on this until we can tell you something, how about that?

THOMAS

That sounds good.



ZEBULON

Kitty I'm starting to get this sense that Leif is putting together his next move and the drones are just a distraction.

THOMAS

Yes, also you're going to be hearing some other voices as we're broadcasting. That is, unfortunately, another thing we don't know about. They're just kind of... here.

EFFIE

Bram she is like Tippi Hedren out there with those drones.

THOMAS

Like that. Like what you just heard. No idea where that's coming from.

SIOBHÁN

Amanda are you still there?

AMANDA MARIE

I'm still here.

SIOBHÁN

I don't know how else to ask this, but are... the laser beams randomly firing into the sky?

AMANDA MARIE

Siobhan there now appears to be a squadron of drones? Firing something at the laser lady? And she's firing lasers randomly at the cloud of drones? In other news, could someone please fire me for having to say what I just said?

THOMAS

And this is all happening in the parking lot of the diner that has just appeared on the capitol steps.

AMANDA MARIE

... Sure.

WE MOVE BACK TO THE ROOF.

LEIF

Okay, everybody, real quick while she's distracted by the drones, everybody take one of these.

CASPAR

What are they?

LEIF

You don't want to know, just do it.

GLORIA

Are these grenades or something?

LEIF

Or something.

AVA

I love it, give me one.

LEIF

Everybody throw on three, ready? One, two, THREE!

FOUR STEEL BALLS BOUNCE INTO THE PARKING LOT AROUND  
CLEMENTINE'S FEET.

CLEMENTINE

What's this now?

WE HEAR A SUDDEN HISSING SOUND AND RAPIDLY SOLIDIFYING ICE.

CLEMENTINE (CONT'D)

Oh SH-

THE ICE HARDENS COMPLETELY WITH CLEMENTINE INSIDE.

AVA

Dude.

CASPAR

Is this what I think it is?

LEIF

Chemical ice.

EFFIE

Looks like you were right, Bram.

ZEBULON

Kitty it's looking like the drones kept Clementine busy just long enough for Leif to make his next move.

EFFIE

And it's gotten a chilly reception, wouldn't you say?

ZEBULON

That's right, it's looking like Clementine failed to turn before the iceberg and now she's got passengers manning the lifeboats.

GLORIA

You trapped her in a giant ice cube.

LEIF

I did.

GLORIA

Can she get out of it?

LEIF

I'm sure she can get out of it. The question is, can the diner suck the evil out of her before she escapes.

CASPAR

How long did it take with the Shopzies?

LEIF

Several hours.

CASPAR

Yeesh.

GLORIA

How long do you think she'll be frozen?

LEIF

Not several hours. I need to work on my next move.

ZEBULON

And that's half-time. What a way to end the first half, wouldn't you say, Kitty?

EFFIE

Bram, as we've seen before, Leif loves to steal things.

ZEBULON

That is true, he is not Ronald McDonald he is the Hamburglar.

EFFIE

And right at the end of the first half we see it. Chemical Ice. The dreaded tool of his arch enemy, The Teds.

LEIF

Hey, if it works, it works.

ZEBULON

You heard it right here folks, from the man himself. If it works, it works.

EFFIE

Don't go far, folks, we're going to have more action for you, right after this break.

WE MOVE BACK TO THE TV STUDIO.

THOMAS

... Okay, now the voices appear to be cutting to some sort of commercial break which we're not hearing, not sure what that's about.

SIOBHÁN

If you're just joining us... wow. How to summarize this?

THOMAS

A bit of a challenge.

SIOBHÁN

Earlier this evening, on the steps of the Capitol, a diner appeared.

THOMAS

That's bizarre thing number 1.

SIOBHÁN

On the roof of that diner appeared to be... well, us. People who look exactly like myself, like Tom, as well as Sean and Tania who produce this show.

THOMAS

Bizarre thing number 2.

SIOBHÁN

And then... uh...

THOMAS

I'll take this one, and then a red-headed woman also appeared in the parking lot of the diner that had just appeared on the capitol steps... and she began shooting lasers from her hands.

SIOBHÁN

Yes, that... that happened. And that is bizarre thing number 3.

THOMAS

Now, that's plenty of bizarre things for me. But we are not stopping there.

SIOBHÁN

No we're not.

THOMAS

Because now there is a big block of ice? Is that right, Amanda?

AMANDA MARIE

That's right, Tom. Huge block of ice.

THOMAS

And do we have any idea where this block of ice may have come from?

AMANDA MARIE

Seriously?

THOMAS

Well, I'm just wondering-

AMANDA MARIE

You really think I'm going to know where a block of ice the size of a Ford Super Duty came from?

THOMAS

I don't uh-

AMANDA MARIE

You're asking me this before you ask me about the magical diner or the laser lady?

THOMAS

I'm just trying to kill some time, Amanda, because apparently we're on a commercial break!

SIOBHÁN

Folks if you're watching at home and think that we're all having some sort of massive hallucination, who knows? You may be right. One thing's for sure though, for the past several minutes I bet you *haven't* been thinking about how the sun's trying to destroy our planet.

THOMAS

That's a very important point, Siobhan. In fact I almost forgot myself.

WE START TO HEAR "BACK FROM COMMERCIAL" MUSIC.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Okay, it looks like we're hearing something again, let's listen in. Amanda, keep that camera pointed at the action.

AMANDA MARIE

Well what else am I going to film?

THOMAS

Okay, just making sure.

ZEBULON

And we're back!

EFFIE

Bram, while we're waiting to for the second half to begin, a bit of behind-the-scenes business. I have heard from multiple sources that right before the action began tonight, there was a dramatic change in Leif's approach to facing off with Clementine.

ZEBULON

Is that right?

EFFIE

It's true, and it all has to do with something called "Maxwell's Demon".

ZEBULON

Sounds spicy!

EFFIE

Now, I would not be able to explain this to you, I'm no expert. Luckily, in the studio right now we have the member of the team responsible for this tactic change, Dr. Ava Maddox. Ava, how are you doing today?

AVA

Huh? Oh. Oh, okay. Hi.

CASPAR

What are you doing?

AVA

Shh. I'm doing press.

EFFIE

Ava. Maxwell's Demon. Tell us all about it.

AVA

Maxwell's Demon is a thought experiment proposed by physicist James Maxwell.

EFFIE

And what does that have to do with our match up tonight?

AVA

Maxwell's thought experiment imagined a super-being. Someone who was able to control the flow of particles in a way that defied the laws of thermodynamics. Maxwell asked, could a being like this exist?

EFFIE

And what does that have to do with our match up tonight?

AVA

Well, for a long time it was thought that Maxwell's Demon couldn't exist, because cheating your way out of the laws of thermodynamics would cause you to incur an entropic debt. You would be generating energy, and you don't generate energy in any universe, you move it from one place to another.

EFFIE

I'm sensing a twist.

AVA

Then along comes Zurab Silagadze. He proposed that Maxwell's Demon could exist if the demon was paying off its entropic debt through mirror mater, like mirror photons or dark matter. So we thought, what if Clementine works in a similar way?

EFFIE

Well I don't understand a word of that but you're saying you used this idea to take Clementine out at the knees?

AVA

She's definitely working at a reduced capacity right now. She could easily get out of that block of ice had Leif not started siphoning dark matter.

THE ICE STARTS TO CRACK.

GLORIA

Uh, Leif?

LEIF

Yeah?

GLORIA

I think the ice age is coming to an end over here.

LEIF

Fuck, already?

GLORIA

Look.

LEIF

... Shit.

ZEBULON

Kitty, it looks like the second half is starting  
wether we like it or not.

EFFIE

Clementine has had enough of the ice bath and she  
is ready to take the field.

GLORIA

What do we do? What's the next move?

LEIF

Goddamn it, it doesn't matter.

GLORIA

What do you mean?

LEIF

I was hoping I'd be able to hold her off longer  
than this, she's unstoppable.

GLORIA

Nobody's unstoppable, Leif. Think.

THE ICE KEEPS CRACKING AND WATER BEGINS RUNNING FROM IT.

AVA

The ice is melting. I think she's raising her body  
temperature.

LEIF

Fuck!

GLORIA

Hey, you told me you've been in worse jams than  
this. Think about those, what did you do?

LEIF

Ok... I would always make a plan but then there was  
always a point towards the end where I would have  
to abandon the plan and just wing it.

GLORIA

I think we're there.

ZEBULON

Kitty, I want to remind everyone that that is not  
just a block of ice Clementine is trapped in but a  
block of Chemical Ice, the freezing point of which  
is far lower than regular old H-2-O. For her to  
cause that to melt so fast she would have to be  
generating enough energy to light up South America.



EFFIE

Bram, if Leif has a Hail Mary pass, it's time for him to throw it.

CASPAR

Hail Mary pass! Hail Mary pass!

GLORIA

What's the Hail Mary pass?

CASPAR

Something to do with that huge antenna.

GLORIA

Leif, Hail Mary pass!

LEIF

(To himself.)

"Enough energy to light up South America."

AVA

I can see her inside the ice now. She's glowing.

CASPAR

Leif!

LEIF

I need to boost the signal. We're going all in on the Hail Mary pass. Caspar, see those two red cables?

CASPAR

Yeah.

LEIF

Pull them.

CASPAR

Okay.

THE CABLES ARE PULLED AND THEY CRACKLE WITH ELECTRICITY.

CASPAR (CONT'D)

Okay, these cables are VERY live.

LEIF

That's the dark matter energy I've been funneling from the surroundings.

CASPAR

Should I be holding these in my hands right now?

LEIF

On the Hail Mary antenna there's two auxiliary power inputs, do you see them?

CASPAR

Yes.

LEIF

Plug the cables into it.

GLORIA

What does the Hail Mary Antenna do?

LEIF

Nothing if this doesn't work.

CASPAR

I've plugged in the red cables and also I taste pennies.

LEIF

Here we go.

AVA

She's almost out of the ice!

CLEMENTINE

Leif! I'm going to make you pay for this one!

CLEMENTINE BURSTS FREE FROM THE REST OF THE ICE.

EFFIE

Uh oh. Clementine has broken free of that ice like it was a brick wall and she was the Kool Aid Man.

ZEBULON

She does not look happy, Kitty.

CLEMENTINE

Open up!

CLEMENTINE FIRES HER LASER HANDS AT THE SHIELD AND IT BEGINS TO BUCKLE.

EFFIE

Bram, Clementine is tearing into Leif's defenses and the look on her face...

ZEBULON

Like a bear who just stumbled into an Old Country Buffet, Kitty.

THE HAIL MARY ANTENNA BEGINS TO SPIN AND HUM.

LEIF  
There we go... C'mon.

AVA  
The shield is not doing great.

LEIF  
C'mon.

ZEBULON  
Kitty, we really need to be asking ourselves what this Hail Mary Pass could be. Could it do any good? Could this be the end of a very long streak of good luck for Leif?

EFFIE  
Leif, any statement for us in these final moments? Has your luck finally run out?

LEIF  
Fuck luck.

AVA  
Is anyone smelling popcorn?

WE BEGIN TO HEAR "ANOTHER WRESTLER IS ENTERING THE RING" MUSIC.

ZEBULON  
Uh oh, Kitty, we know what that music means!

EFFIE  
Bram it sounds to me like another player has entered the arena.

THE EX APPEARS!

THE EX  
Hey!

CASPAR  
Ex?!?

CLEMENTINE  
Who are you?

THE EX  
Get away from my friends!

THE EX PUNCHES CLEMENTINE AND SENDS HER FLYING.

ZEBULON

Hoooo MY! That is one heck of a haymaker from The Ex, she has sent Clementine rolling down the capitol steps faster than a drunk Kennedy.

EFFIE

This is a game changer, Bram.

LEIF

Fuck yeah.

CASPAR

Ex!

THE EX

Oh my God, Hi!

CASPAR

What the hell?!

THE EX

I kept hearing this really annoying sound in the back of my head, when I really listened to it, It was a message from Leif saying you all were in trouble, so here I am.

GLORIA

The Hail Mary Antenna.

LEIF

Hail Mary is right.

THE EX

Who's this lady?

CASPAR

Ex, read my mind real quick.

THE EX

Okay.... Heh, Abe Lincoln... Okay... Okay... Shopzies? Could've workshopped that.

GLORIA

Thank you!

THE EX

... Oh my God she spied on you?... Oh my God an Asteroid!? Oh my God your mooooooms!... Wait...

GLORIA

Here it comes.

THE EX

She offered WHAT?!

CASPAR

It wasn't great.

THE EX

Oh, this chick's gotta go.

GLORIA

We agree.

CASPAR

Yeah, she's, oh shit-

AVA

Laser hands!

THE EX

Laser what?

CLEMENTINE HAS RECOVERED AND BLASTS THE EX WITH LASER HANDS.

THE EX (CONT'D)

OW OW OW OW OW OW!

CLEMENTINE STOPS.

THE EX (CONT'D)

...Ow.

CLEMENTINE

Who the fuck are you?

THE EX

Who the fuck are you?

CLEMENTINE

I'm Clementine.

THE EX

That's a stupid name.

CLEMENTINE

You have to have someone fight your battles for you, Leif?

THE EX

Hey. Don't talk to him. You're talking to me now. These people are my friends and you're trying to hurt them.

CLEMENTINE

I don't know who you are, but you're in my way.

THE EX

I don't know who you are. And I don't care.

CLEMENTINE

Whatever. Let's do this.

EFFIE

Bram, the game is officially changed.

ZEBULON

This is an epic showdown, Kitty. The irresistible force of Clementine versus the Immovable Object that is The Ex. No telling how this turns out.

CLEMENTINE

You have no idea what you're up against right now.

THE EX

Sweetie, I've survived 11 million versions of Caspar, I'm pretty sure I can handle you.

CASPAR

That's a little unfair.

GLORIA

PUNCH HER IN THE BOOB!

CLEMENTINE AND THE EX SCREAM AND RUN AT EACH OTHER AS WE MOVE BACK TO THE TV STUDIO. SIOBHAN AND THOMAS WATCH IN STUNNED SILENCE AS WE HEAR THE SOUND OF PUNCHES BEING THROWN, THINGS BEING DESTROYED AND LASER HANDS BEING FIRED.

SIOBHÁN

So, uh... Amanda?

AMANDA MARIE

Yeah?

SIOBHÁN

What uh... What are we looking at here?

AMANDA MARIE

I have no fucking idea.

THOMAS

Whoa, language!

AMANDA MARIE

Like the FCC exists anymore.

THOMAS

Can you just describe what we're seeing right now?

AMANDA MARIE

Of course I can't.

THOMAS

Could you maybe just give it a try, Amanda.

AMANDA MARIE

Oh, okay, fine. There's a red headed lady with laser hands and she is currently in a fight with a... I don't know, some sort of thing that nerds masturbate to.

THOMAS

I'm just trying to report the news here, Amanda.

AMANDA MARIE

Well here's some breaking news: ya' can't.

BACK IN THE PARKING LOT. THE EX AND CLEMENTINE ARE OUT OF BREATH AFTER BEATING THE CRAP OUT OF EACH OTHER.

THE EX

Hey Clementine, you know what's funny? Look at us. We're out of breath after trying to beat the crap out of each other. But here's the thing: I don't breathe. I'm an android. So what am I doing?

CLEMENTINE

What are you doing?

THE EX

I think it's a relic. I used to be programmed to mimic human behavior. There's a few things I still keep around just for fun. I imagine it's the same for you, right?

CLEMENTINE

What do you know about me?

THE EX

Well, I can read minds, Clementine. And I've been trying to read yours for the past few minutes, but it's funny... You don't have one. You've got arms, legs, a head. No brain. There's nothing there.

CLEMENTINE

... I know.

THE EX

That's a new one for me. What happened to your brains?

CLEMENTINE

Guess I didn't need them.

THE EX

I know how you feel. I don't have a brain either.  
My body is just one big slab.

CLEMENTINE

You don't look like one big slab.

THE EX

Aw, I bet you say that to all the girls... It's a little lonely, right?... Knowing there's no one like you... Here we are, two unique beings. Maybe we should compare notes?

CLEMENTINE

No, thank you.

THE EX

Oh. Relentless in the pursuit of your mission? Yeah, I used to be like that too. Then I realized I didn't have to be. I realized I could let it all go. You should give it a try.

CLEMENTINE

Why is this diner full of people who can't shut the fuck up?

THE EX

I know, it's really annoying right? It's the ones that don't talk that worry me though. Anytime I see someone who doesn't talk and keeps to themselves I worry about them. Because they're afraid. They're afraid if they open their mouth that something will change. They say something and it changes everything. That's an amazing thing about words. I'm pretty powerful, as I'm sure you've noticed. The power that runs through me is the kind of thing that normal people dream of. But it's nothing compared to someone just opening their mouth and speaking. You can say the right word at the right time and the ground can shift underneath you, a dark world becomes brighter, you can change everything about yourself in an instant, just by speaking... Give it a try Clementine... Speak...

CLEMENTINE

... No.

THE EX

... Okay. Then I guess it's back to beating the crap out of each other.

LEIF

It was you, Clementine.



GLORIA

Leif.

CLEMENTINE

What?

LEIF

You're trying to figure out what destroyed your world? It was you.

CASPAR

I thought we said-

LEIF

Trust me.

CLEMENTINE

That's impossible.

LEIF

You're right. It is. But you can do impossible things, Clementine. It was you.

CLEMENTINE

I *come* from a destroyed world, I can't be the cause of it.

LEIF

Every time you went back in time trying to save it, you destroyed it a little bit more. I know, it's hard to understand... I'm coming down.

CASPAR

Leif, what are you doing?

LEIF

Hey. I said I would handle this. I'm handling it.

GLORIA

Let him go, Caspar.

ZEBULON

Kitty, what do you think we're looking at right now?

EFFIE

Bram, in an unprecedented move, Leif has called a time out and is headed out on the field. It's brief moments like this that can shift a game's trajectory entirely. Let's watch.

DOOR CHIME.

LEIF

... When you put us in jail, it was on your version of Earth in the future. I imagine that was on purpose, you wanted us to see what your world had become. But there were people there. People from other planets. They were picking through the rubble, trying to find out what had happened. They had learned some things. They had learned that every bad thing that had happened on the planet happened when there was a visit from a beautiful red-headed woman named Clementine.

CLEMENTINE

You're lying.

LEIF

I didn't figure it out. It was Tamara. Do you remember Tamara? She was a security guard at a mall? You gave her a diamond from the surface of Mercury. She spent the rest of her life trying to figure out who you were. She learned a lot. Siberia? Indonesia? Fires in California? Does any of this sound familiar?

CLEMENTINE

There's no way you could know that.

LEIF

Clementine, there's no way you *can't* know it. I know pretty well what it looks like when someone's dancing just as fast as they can, trying to keep the truth away.

CLEMENTINE

That can't be the truth.

LEIF

You've been pushing through every door, weaving through history, trying to make something happen. If you stopped? For just one second? If you took one second to look back and see the trail of destruction you're leaving behind you? You'd know I was right.

CLEMENTINE

... It can't be me.

LEIF

I know a little something about leaving a trail of destruction behind you. Sometimes it's so much you feel like you can't ever look back. So at a certain point you decide that the only way you can function is through denial.

(MORE)

LEIF (CONT'D)

It works pretty well for a while but, it's no way to live... Clementine, we have you trapped here.

CLEMENTINE

What?

LEIF

That was the whole plan, okay? We get you here, we trap you here, the diner would slowly take away your powers while we duck and cover and hope you don't kill us first.

CLEMENTINE

...

LEIF

Go ahead, try to teleport away. You can't.

CLEMENTINE

... TURN IT OFF!

CASPAR

Ex!

THE EX

Leif, get behind me.

LEIF

I'm going to turn it off. Okay? It's okay. I'm going to turn it off, not because I'm afraid you're going to kill me but because... Because I believe in you, Clementine. I believe in people. I believe they can change.

LEIF PRESSES A BUTTON ON A REMOTE.

LEIF (CONT'D)

There. It's off. How about we call this one a draw?

CLEMENTINE

Why?

LEIF

Because we can't beat it out of you. You've got to see it for yourself.

CLEMENTINE

...

CLEMENTINE TELEPORTS AWAY.

ZEBULON

And that's the game!

EFFIE

Bram, you can't call it a victory, but everyone did walk away from this one and you can't be mad at that.

ZEBULON

Kitty, this was the fight of Leif's life, and what did he do? Abandoned his usual way of thinking at the last minute and used his real power: being a human being.

EFFIE

So poignant, Bram. So poignant. We're going to take a quick break then we'll be back as Bram and I brake down the match moment by moment.

RADIO STATIC.

CASPAR

They're not actually going to break it down moment by moment are they?

EFFIE

(Herself again.)  
We're back y'all.

LEIF

Sorry everyone.

THE EX

I thought it was really beautiful, Leif.

LEIF

Thanks, Ex.

GLORIA

When you said you were going to abandon the plan, I was not expecting this.

LEIF

I know.

AVA

I wasn't too happy about it either but, doing the math, she would've needed to stay here for hours before the diner could fix her. That means several hours of Clementine and the Ex pounding away at each other. They would've leveled the whole place.

GLORIA

I guess I could get more mad about it but I FOR REAL thought we were all dead.

CASPAR

You know, thinking back on it now, this whole thing was a terrible plan.

LEIF

It was our only plan.

CASPAR

Yes, I'm realizing now that, just because it is the only plan, does not, in fact, make it a good plan.

EFFIE

I don't like that you went against our wishes, Leif, but we understand. It was made better by watching our friend deliver just a little bit of ass-whuppin' to Clementine.

THE EX

My pleasure.

ZEBULON

It is, of course, wrong to celebrate violence, except for, of course, this time.

AMANDA MARIE

Excuse me?

LEIF

...

GLORIA

...

CASPAR

...

EFFIE

It is such an odd feeling staring into my own face like that.

ZEBULON

I don't see it.

AMANDA MARIE

I'm Amanda Marie... I'm with Breaking News America... We're live right now... could I ask you some questions?

LEIF

Gloria, looks like you've got to give them the talk.

GLORIA

You know what? You do it.

LEIF

For real?

GLORIA

Yeah. You did good today. Go take a victory lap.  
Talk to the people.

LEIF

Okay. Okay, cool.

LEIF WALKS OVER TO THE CAMERA.

LEIF (CONT'D)

Hey there.

AMANDA MARIE

Could I get your name?

LEIF

I'm Leif. Hello everyone...

THE EX TELEPORTS UP TO THE ROOF.

THE EX

Okay, HI!

CASPAR

WHOA teleporting.

THE EX

Sorry.

CASPAR

That's okay, it's been a tense day I'm a little  
jumpy, how are you!?

THE EX

That was so much fun just now!

CASPAR

Fun is a word.

THE EX

Clementine's crazy powerful.

CASPAR

She is. I hate it.

THE EX

I haven't gotten a real workout in a while, she  
shot me with laser beams!

CASPAR

Only you could phrase that exactly like that.

THE EX  
So how have you been, are things with Ava, y'know-

AVA  
I'm sitting right here.

THE EX  
Oh hey, Hi!

AVA  
Thanks for bailing us out, Ex. I love your violence.

THE EX  
Thank you.

GLORIA  
Ex, I can't believe this but I'm going to hug you.

THE EX  
I love it.

GLORIA  
I've never been happier to see a thing I don't understand in my life.

THE EX  
Sounds like Clementine really put y'all through the wringer, huh?

GLORIA  
It was rough there for a minute.

THE EX  
I loved swooping in and saving the day, I felt like Zorro.

GLORIA  
Okay, I'm making everybody food. Come down in a minute and tell me how Shel is doing okay?

THE EX  
Okay, I will.

AVA  
I'll head down, too. Thanks again, Slugger.

THE EX  
No problem. So, what happens next? Do we go after her, do we wait for her to come to us?

CASPAR  
Ex. You can't come with us.

THE EX

Why? You obviously need my help.

CASPAR

Oh yeah, for sure. But, I don't know where this ends with Clementine. She could come back at us even harder than before, she's completely unpredictable.

THE EX

Which is why you obviously need my help.

CASPAR

Ex. Why don't you tell me why you can't come with us?

THE EX

(Sighing.)

... Because I have obligations now.

CASPAR

That's right, you're off on a distant planet raising little tree-lets now. If we went up against Clementine again and something happened to you, they'd be screwed. You've got people depending on you. I'm thrilled to see you, but if Leif had told me he was calling you in, I would've told him no. I'm sorry. You can't come with us.

THE EX

... Fine... Can I at least drink a margarita and pretend like I'm drunk again?

CASPAR

Of course.

THE EX

Okay, let's go.

CASPAR

WAIT.

THE EX

What? What's wrong.

CASPAR

Wait...

THE EX

Caspar?

CASPAR

You can't come with us. But I do need you to do me a favor.



THE EX

Oh. Okay...

ME MOVE TO LEIF BEING INTERVIEWED IN THE PARKING LOT.

LEIF

So wait, regular magnetic storms?

AMANDA MARIE

I mean, they're not like clockwork but it's a couple of times a month.

LEIF

A month?!

AMANDA MARIE

A month.

LEIF

Holy shit.

AMANDA MARIE

But what I wanted to ask you-

LEIF

So you can't use any modern electronics?

AMANDA MARIE

I mean, look at the camera we're using, this is from 1955.

LEIF

That's crazy.

AMANDA MARIE

It is, but I wanted to ask-

LEIF

So you guys are screwed.

AMANDA MARIE

Well, we're trying some solutions. There was an experiment in Hong Kong, something about tri-blend metallic shielding-

LEIF

Oh yeah that'll never work.

AMANDA MARIE

Can you tell me where this diner-

LEIF

Wait. I have an idea.  
(Calling up to the roof.)  
Ex?

THE EX

Yeah?

LEIF

The force field unit, do you see it?

THE EX

Yeah.

LEIF

Could you bring that down, and the book right next  
to it?

THE EX

Sure.

LEIF

Thanks... I think I can help you out.

AMANDA MARIE

Help... help us out how-

THE EX TELEPORTS TO LEIF.

AMANDA MARIE (CONT'D)

HOLY GODDAMNIT.

LEIF

Oh. Sorry. Not to worry. Just a teleporting  
android.

THE EX

Hi. Here's this big metal thing. Here's the book.

LEIF

Thanks Ex.

THE EX

No problem.

THE EX TELEPORTS AWAY.

AMANDA MARIE

Fucking what...

LEIF

You get use to it.

AMANDA MARIE

Can you tell me what she is-

LEIF

I'll get to that in a second. Let me talk to the people really quick, I'm going right into the camera... Hello, America. My name is Leif. I am leaving you with two things. One: Meesock's Tabernacle. This force field will hook up to any power source and give you a diffusion field that will protect you from magnetic storms but it'll only protect one building, which is why I'm leaving you with this. A copy of the Mysteries of Meesock. All kinds of interesting things in there that will help the world get through this trying time. There's an abandoned gold mine in South Dakota that's already set up for experiments and it's deep enough to protect you from magnetic storms. Good luck.

AMANDA MARIE

Thank you. So... Okay, let me just start from the beginning. What is this place?

LEIF

Oh shit. You know what? It's time to go. I've got to head inside.

AMANDA MARIE

Wait-

LEIF

(Walking away.)

You guys are going to do great! Read the book and get to work!

AMANDA MARIE

Who are you people?

LEIF

We run a diner!

A NEEDLE DROPS ON A RECORD AGAIN.

SONG:

WE MOVE BACK TO WHERE WE BEGAN, IN THOMAS' OFFICE. THE PHONE IS RINGING. HE PICKS UP.

THOMAS

Hello.

CASPAR

Your correspondent gave me this number to call.

THOMAS

Hello, me.

CASPAR

Well. Hello, me.

THOMAS

... This is weird.

CASPAR

I imagine it must be.

THOMAS

Not weird for you, though?

CASPAR

No, this is pretty average right now.

THOMAS

Okay...

CASPAR

Hey, any second now, we're not going to be here anymore. I'd ask your questions now, if you have them.

THOMAS

Okay... Why is my doppelgänger on the roof of a magical diner?

CASPAR

I'm not your doppelgänger. There's infinite universes and there's infinite... us. In your universe you're on the news, in mine I'm in a magical diner.

THOMAS

Okay...

CASPAR

You've probably got about 30 seconds.

THOMAS

... Any advice on being us?

CASPAR

I'm not the greatest version of us to ask advice from... how about this... Find people you love. Hold onto them. Never... ever, let go.

THE PHONE GOES TO A BUSY SIGNAL. THOMAS HANGS UP THE PHONE.

SIOBHÁN

Holy shit, the diner just disappeared, parking lot  
and everything.

THOMAS

... I just talked to him.

SIOBHÁN

Who?

THOMAS

Me.

SIOBHÁN

No.

THOMAS

Yes.

SIOBHÁN

How?

THOMAS

I told Amanda to give him my office number. The  
phone went dead then you came in.

SIOBHÁN

... What did you ask?

THOMAS

I asked him for advice on being me.

SIOBHÁN

What did he say?

THOMAS

... He told me to stick with you.

SIOBHÁN

Okay... So he's a genius.

THOMAS

I guess so.

SIOBHÁN

We're all going to find something resembling a bar,  
and then you're going to tell me everything.

THOMAS

Yes. Yes I will...

**THE END**