

Garbage Day

John thrust aside an old car tire as he crawled out of a mound of discarded soda cans and bones. The community was ruined. The storm was unavoidable, destroying his thought-to-be invincible township. Inside a pile of garbage, the small city was protected from the outside world, protected from disease. The harsh winds and intense hail and thunder of the previous night tore down the walls of the town, crushing everything the inhabitants had worked for for the past 6 years. Garbage rained down on the buildings and streets, suffocating most of the town's citizens.

John looked around and saw bike tires hanging from trees, televisions in ponds, and rats scurrying away from his feet. He decided to walk around the wreckage to make sure there weren't any people who were still alive and stuck in the mountains of rubbish. All of a sudden, someone behind him shouted, "Show yourself!"

He twirled around to find a stout, middle aged woman who was armed with a shard of glass. He threw his hands above his head and said, "No trouble here! Just assessin' the situation..." He was surprised to find how raspy his voice had become, seeing as it had only been one night since the storm.

"Well stop assessin' and help me look for shelter!" the lady nagged.

John didn't want to anger the woman, so he just followed her. John was afraid to talk, seeing as their first impression hadn't gone so well. He finally worked up the courage to ask the lady her name. "The name's Margaret. That's Peg to you." she said gruffly.

John was shocked at how mean the woman sounded, because she *had* just survived the greatest disaster the town had experienced. "My name's John. I was a technologist in the city." he stuttered.

They walked in silence for about an hour and a half across the litter-strewn terrain. "So what kinda shelter are we lookin' for Peggy?"

"First of all, it's Peg. Second of all, we want something with walls and a roof. Preferably underground."

"I'll be on the lookout!" John chimed, trying to lighten up the mood. Peg gave him a dirty look.

Eventually the pair came across an old church that they could use as a lookout tower. When they were in the steeple, John looked out the window and spotted a large olive green object sticking up from the many layers of trash like a lighthouse on a foggy night. It looked like it was made out of some kind of metal. "I think I see something Peg!" he exclaimed.

"Looks like another piece of garbage to me."

"I've got a feeling..." John hoped.

John and Peg walked down to the object. When they went up to it, they noticed it was much bigger than they initially thought. "Let's dig down and find out what this baby is!" John said excitedly.

"If you say so..." moaned Peg.

After a while, Peg and John had dug through so much garbage that their hands were black, and their nails were caked with muck, but they had excavated a boxcar from an old train! John pushed on the door, but it wouldn't budge. "Let me try!" yelled Peg.

Peg gave the door one strong shove and the door went flying open. "Wimp" she teased.

When they got inside, smiles spread across both of their faces. "Good find." Peg congratulated, finally cheering up. Apart from a few rats, cockroaches, and spiders, the boxcar was clean and spacious. John could picture the car with furniture and appliances, and he knew it would make a great shelter.

"Let's get a good night's rest, and we'll figure out what the heck we're gonna do from here in the morning." John said as night fell.

"Good idea." agreed Peg tiredly as she sat down in the corner and closed her eyes.

John laid down and closed his own eyes, grateful that they had found shelter. He dreamed of how they, two commoners, would rebuild the massive city that once stood and preserve the human race.