

# [ice land] (2003)

by Jonathan Seinen

One strength of the corpus of contemporary Canadian plays may also be a weakness: its tendency to label its constitutive elements. Thus, we might turn to our bookshelves to find plays clearly “about” teen, feminist, queer, prairie, nationalist, and even “official” experiences and histories. We might then turn to an assortment of critical collections of plays and essays that further clarify, explore, and indeed reify these fields of knowledge around which Canadian theatre has been arranged. Proceeding further we might discover that those works that fit into these now-recognizable genres have proven (and provable) attendance records and therefore have been successfully produced at state-funded professional theatres; in certain cases they have garnered issue-specific professional artist grants to enable their creation in the first place. Indeed, entire theatre companies have emerged fully mandated to tackle one or more of these issues by developing and producing representative new plays. But in parallel with this discussion of genre reification, consider the place of Walterdale. It has not limited its mandate in order to back one or more ideological fields. It operates outside of the “popular issue” dramaturgy within which so many of Canada’s play producers are often trapped. An important example is Jonathan Seinen’s vivid and violent [*ice land*], which ignores none of these popular issues, yet wears none on its sleeve.

Seinen was born in Terrace, British Columbia, in 1980 to Dutch-Canadian parents. In 1985 he moved with his family to Slave Lake, Alberta, and, following a year in Ancaster, Ontario, he moved to Edmonton in 1995. He studied theatre at Royal Holloway (2002, London, England) and the University of Alberta, where he graduated in 2004 with an honours BA in drama before attending the National Theatre School’s acting program in Montreal, from which he graduated in 2007. His other plays include *Regeneration* (2004, University of Alberta’s Working Titles Festival and Theatre Network Nextfest) and *this.it*, a short piece presented at the Edmonton International Fringe

Festival in 2004 as part of the multi-author production *OuterSpaces*. His play *Unknown Pleasures* premiered in Calgary in June 2008 at Sage Theatre's Ignite! Festival. Seinen currently lives in Toronto, where he continues to write.

*[ice land]* was initially developed in a University of Alberta playwriting course led by Alberta playwright Conni Massing. As Seinen explains, the play began as a personal writing exercise, "an experiment to find out how I really saw the world and what I could dare myself to write. After living in England and falling in love with Sarah Kane's astounding talent, confrontational ideas and bleak imagery, I wanted to see how her sensibility could translate into Canadian English" (Seinen). Indeed, *[ice land]*'s high tension and graphic violence are more reminiscent of plays by British playwrights such as Kane and Howard Brenton than they are of many Canadian plays. As a personal "experiment," *[ice land]* uses powerful language and situation to stunning effect. And notably, it finds ways to discuss Canada in both regionalist and internationalist perspectives with a dreadfully straight face.

*[ice land]* is a brutal and disturbing incursion into the extreme depths of torture and human suffering. Coming upon a bunker in the basement of a house in prairie Saskatchewan some time after a nuclear holocaust, Iris finds herself held hostage by three "desperate, dangerous" men bent on survival and growing "mad" by the day: the blind and controlling Frederick, the aggressive Luther, and the simple Pluto. As Luther contemplates shooting and eating campers in a nearby settlement, Frederick is consumed by his own sexual appetite (primarily for Pluto), and Pluto, keeping house, admits that he loves Frederick. Iris tells Luther about the terrors she has seen in this post-apocalyptic world but admits, somewhat sardonically, that she would rather be on the prairies than in the farming co-ops on the West Coast: "The prairies have always been about individual initiative, right? I proudly carry on that tradition." But when Luther returns covered in blood, having roasted one of the nearby campers, and Frederick orders Pluto to poison Iris's food, tradition, it is clear, has been annihilated by the drive for in/human survival. Though it is a work of intense imagination, *[ice land]*'s violent prophecies are difficult to ignore as world tensions, we are reminded daily by the news media, rise in perpetuity.

*[ice land]* ran June 9–14, 2003, at Walterdale Playhouse (firehall) with the following cast and creative team:

FREDERICK	Mark Henderson
PLUTO	Kevin Gojmerac
IRIS	Sarah Hoyles
LUTHER	Brian Bergam
DIRECTOR	Michael Cowie
DRAMATURGE	Heather Inglis
STAGE MANAGER (REHEARSAL)	Mary Anne Trann
STAGE MANAGER (PERFORMANCE)	Evan Pang

# [ice land]

by Jonathan Seinen

I exist on the best terms I can  
The past is now part of my future  
The present is well out of hand  
“HEART AND SOUL”—JOY DIVISION

*Characters* IRIS  
FREDERICK  
LUTHER  
PLUTO

*Setting* A basement bunker. To the back of the stage is a stairwell, coming down from the upstairs. Stage left is a kitchen area with a hotplate and cupboards. Upstage from this is a door in the wall, into the sleeping area. There are some chairs in the main area. A large Canadian flag hangs at the back of the room. A bare light bulb hangs from the ceiling.

*The Time* This play is set a short time into the future (+/- 10 years).

*Note* When a “/” appears, it indicates an overlapping of dialogue. It acts as a cue for the next line to start. “(...)” indicates the intended completion of an interrupted sentence.

## Scene One

*The room is dark. Frederick is sitting with a bowl of beans, his cane beside him. Pluto stands in front of him. Frederick eats a spoonful.*

FREDERICK Take your shirt off.

*Pluto does so. Frederick takes a bite.*

FREDERICK Take off your pants.

*Pluto does so. Frederick takes another bite.*

FREDERICK Come here.

*Pluto walks towards Frederick. Frederick offers him a spoonful of beans.*

FREDERICK Eat.

*Pluto eats.*

*Frederick puts the bowl down on the ground. Stands in front of Pluto.*

FREDERICK Take off my shirt.

*Pluto starts unbuttoning Frederick's shirt. Frederick touches Pluto's head, hair, shoulders. Pulls him forward. They kiss. Noises from upstairs. Then, Luther struggling with Iris to get her down the stairs. Luther pushes Iris down the stairs and eventually she's on the ground, standing up to defend herself as Luther circles her, pointing a gun. She is soaking wet and carrying a jerry can.*

IRIS What the / hell is this?

LUTHER Look what I found sneaking around outside.

IRIS (*Watching Luther circling her.*) What are you going to do? Huh?

LUTHER Sneaking around on our property.

*Luther pulls chain on light bulb and the room fills with its incandescent light. Iris realises there are others in the room. Pluto grabs clothes and moves to the side, Frederick standing still, his shirt undone. He has a scar running across his chest.*

IRIS What's going on?

LUTHER This is our home, girl, and you're trespassing and we don't like trespassing persons.

FREDERICK Who is this, Luther?

LUTHER She was trying to bust in, sir.

IRIS I was just looking for a place in from the rain. Why'd you have to / drag me ... (down here like this)?

FREDERICK (*To Iris*) What is your name?

*Iris spits in Frederick's face. She realises he's blind.*

LUTHER        *(Approaching Iris. She is staring at Frederick, sizing him up)* Tell him your name!

*Iris doesn't respond. Luther is ready to strike.*

FREDERICK   *(Slowly wiping the spit off his face. Smells it)* This is going to be an unpleasant evening, friend, if we don't know each other's names, don't you think?

*Pause.*

IRIS            Iris.

FREDERICK   Thank you. My name is Frederick. This is Pluto. I believe you've already met Luther.

IRIS            Charmed.

LUTHER        The pleasure's all mine.

FREDERICK   Now that we all know each other, why are you here?

IRIS            This fucker came out of nowhere and dragged me down the stairs.

FREDERICK   Why might he do a thing like that?

IRIS            It was raining outside and the house looked abandoned. I was looking in the windows to see if anyone was home.

LUTHER        But the house isn't abandoned.

IRIS            I realise that now.

LUTHER        And now you're trespassing.

What's with the jerry can?

IRIS            I'm looking for gas.

LUTHER        You're not American, are you?

IRIS            What?

LUTHER      If you're American, I'll fucking slit your throat. Americans always stick their noses in other people's business, showing up where they're not expected...

*Iris doesn't dignify with a response.*

LUTHER      (To Frederick) She was looking around the house, Frederick. Peering in the windows. She was going for the front door. She was going to come in here and find us.

IRIS          So?

FREDERICK   So we don't want anyone to know we're here. We want to keep this bunker to ourselves.

LUTHER      But perhaps we can make an exception. In your case.

FREDERICK   What were you doing out in the rain?

*Pause.*

IRIS          Taking a stroll.

*Pause.*

FREDERICK   Was it a pleasant stroll? Was the rain crisp, clean, the kind of rain on a warm spring evening on the coast, or more of a biting acid rain, the kind of rain that burns your eyes, burns holes through your skin, down to the bone? What was the rain like, Iris?

IRIS          I was looking for a place, that's all. I saw this house...

FREDERICK   What did you think of the house when you first saw it? Did you think "well, there's my safe haven, there's my protection, there's my future"? When you walked along the road and saw this little house on the prairie, surrounded by absolute nothingness, and the rain falling – how did it make you feel?

IRIS          I'm freezing.

FREDERICK   Ah. Pluto, get her a blanket.

*Silence as Pluto goes into sleeping room and gets blanket. Crosses to Iris and wraps her in it.*

FREDERICK How do you feel now, Iris?

IRIS Better.

FREDERICK Good.  
Where were you walking?

IRIS North.

FREDERICK Why?

IRIS My car broke down.

FREDERICK Where?

IRIS About 2 hours south.

FREDERICK Where were you driving?

IRIS North.

FREDERICK Why?

IRIS Looking for gas. Food. Whatever I can find.

LUTHER Well, you found us.

IRIS Yes, I found you.

FREDERICK Where are you coming from?

IRIS Last night I was in Regina.

FREDERICK Regina?

IRIS Yes, Regina.

FREDERICK What did you find there?

IRIS Some food.

FREDERICK Anything else?

IRIS There is nothing else.

*Pause.*

FREDERICK Are you going to Saskatoon?

IRIS I might.

FREDERICK Why?

IRIS I haven't been there yet.

LUTHER Ha! There's nothing there. Nothing but deserted shopping malls and burnt out homes. We burnt out the homes.

IRIS I'll see for myself.

*Pause.*

FREDERICK Is there anything you'd like to tell us?

IRIS What?

FREDERICK Anything you'd like to share? About the world beyond these four walls? About the remnants of a once great country? Anything at all?

IRIS No.

FREDERICK No?

IRIS What's there to say?

FREDERICK Indeed. *(Pause)* Empty your pockets.

IRIS What?

*Iris looks at Frederick.*

LUTHER Do what he says. Empty your pockets.

*Iris empties her pocket. Car keys. Luther is watching her carefully with the gun. She tosses them on the floor. Luther forces her to pick them up and give them to him.*

LUTHER Car keys.

*Iris reaches into another pocket. A pack of Marlboro cigarettes and a box of matches. She hands them to Luther.*

LUTHER      Where the fuck did you get those?

IRIS          I found a case in Regina. I was going to use them to barter for food.

LUTHER      (*Grabbing them*) But these are Marlboros.

IRIS          So you're observant too!

FREDERICK   What else?

*Luther has put his gun away and is readying to light the cigarette. The lights flicker and go out.*

LUTHER      Oh, great.

IRIS          What the hell?

LUTHER      Frederick, the lights / have gone out.

*The lights return, but at a reduced level. Luther is about to strike a match. Iris has dropped the jerry can and pulled out a small handgun, aiming it at Luther.*

LUTHER      Shit. She's got a gun, Frederick.

*Pluto pulls out a gun, aims at Iris.*

PLUTO        PUT THE GUN DOWN.

IRIS          Give me my keys and let me leave. I will let you get on with whatever it is you guys do down here. Just let me leave.

*Luther very still. Frederick moves over to where Luther is, grabs cigarette packet and matches from his hand, and lights cigarette. Smokes.*

FREDERICK   As appealing as that sounds, I'm afraid we may need your car. We're running out of food. And we don't want to leave our home just yet, you see, so a car will make gathering food much easier.

What you ask is simply out of the question.

PLUTO Give me the gun. Or I'll blow your brains out.

*Iris gives up. Pluto takes her gun. Luther quickly moves to kitchen and grabs handcuffs. Meanwhile, Pluto, gun still trained on Iris, moves to Frederick and gives him Iris's gun.*

FREDERICK Nice work, lover. *(Frederick kisses Pluto.)*

*Luther goes to Iris and binds her hands behind her.*

LUTHER Fuckin' bitch. No more misbehaving, yeah?

FREDERICK Now why do you want to carry one of these around with you?

IRIS Because I plan to stay alive.

FREDERICK Luther, take a closer look. Make sure she hasn't any other surprises up her sleeve.

*Luther searches her pockets.*

LUTHER Nothing.

FREDERICK Good.

Are you hungry, Iris?

IRIS If I'm staying here, I might as well eat something.

FREDERICK Well then, Iris, have a seat. Pluto, serve up some beans for our new friend.

*Luther forces Iris to a chair. Pluto serves up beans for Iris. Luther's gun still trained on her.*

IRIS Do you need to wave that thing in my face? I'm not going anywhere, you shit.

*Lights flicker again.*

FREDERICK Luther, go see what's up with the generator.

LUTHER Good idea.

FREDERICK And make sure Iris doesn't have any friends waiting outside for her.

LUTHER Right.

*Luther takes the gun upstairs to look outside. Frederick moves to his original position and sits down. Pluto crouches downstage of Iris in order to feed her.*

FREDERICK So, tell me, where were you when ... when nonsense took over?

*Pause.*

FREDERICK Tell me. I haven't had a decent conversation in months. What have you been doing the last few years?

*Pause. Iris looks at the spoonful.*

FREDERICK Eat the beans.

*Iris eats the spoonful. Pause.*

FREDERICK We used to live in Edmonton. We were members of a certain organisation. Now, as in any organisation, order is key. Strict discipline was essential. If you had guys getting out of line, making demands, stepping beyond their reach, you'd have chaos. Disorganisation. Completely unacceptable.

We had this guy who thought he was a big shot. Thought he was "cock of the walk." One night, on a raid, he went crazy, lighting houses on fire, spraying innocents with gasoline, bashing in car windows. Now, none of this was particularly uncommon. The only problem was, he was doing it on another organisation's property. And this kind of insubordination was unthinkable, after the hard-fought peace we had established between ourselves and this other organisation.

And so this organisation demanded that this particular member be made an example. So, in the public square – Churchill Square it was called – they extracted their payment. They stripped him, poured acid in his eyes, cut off his dick, and branded him across the back with the word "TRAITOR." Then they sent him on his merry way. The example had been made, the peace had been spared.

I think he drowned in the river.

Examples must be made, Iris. So that order does not fall into disorder.

I'm sure you understand.

Where have you been?

IRIS            On the road.

FREDERICK    Before that.

IRIS            I was south of Regina, near the border. I was living with my brother and his wife on their farm. They went out for food and never came back.

One night, this soldier drove up. I guess he had gone AWOL or something. He tried to rape me. I killed him with my brother's hunting rifle, took his jeep and started driving. I've been on the road for five months.

FREDERICK    What are you doing here? It seems most people have gone far, far away from here.

IRIS            Yes.

PLUTO          Why did you stay?

IRIS            ... I'm a solitary creature.

FREDERICK    That's too bad. *(Pause)* We've not had the pleasure of a woman's company in a long while.

*Pause. Frederick is "staring" at her. The lights return to normal. Iris eats another spoonful.*

IRIS            So you used to live in Edmonton?

FREDERICK    Yes.

IRIS            I remember watching the riots on TV.

FREDERICK    This was the real thing. We owned that town ... for a while, at least. Others would loot and bring us the merchandise as a sign of good faith. The street wars I orchestrated were glorious to watch. We'd torch an entire neighbourhood and kill them as they came running out. Just for kicks. Nothing stood in our way. *(Luther comes down the stairs.)*

But, soon enough, we were invaded. For our resources. Calgary was first, and Edmonton was next on the list. We decided to jump in a car and head

east. But it got out of hand in Saskatoon. It went too far. So we came out to this little bunker on the prairie to settle down.

Did you find anything out there?

LUTHER Nothing. As usual.

FREDERICK How's the generator?

LUTHER It needed some gas. But it's getting old, Frederick. I'll take a look in the morning. See if I can fix it.

IRIS You have gas?

LUTHER Maybe.

Where's your car?

*Iris sits still. Luther threatens her.*

PLUTO (*Quietly to Iris, getting another spoonful ready*) You might as well tell him.

IRIS (*Looks Luther straight in the eyes*) It's two hours walk south from here along the highway. Highway 11. It's a US Army jeep. It's got California plates, license number FUCK U.

I left it sitting in the middle of the road.

*Iris takes another spoonful. Pluto readies another.*

LUTHER It's from the army?

IRIS Yes.

LUTHER Cool. How 'bout I go find it, bring it back here. What about that, Frederick?

FREDERICK Good idea.

LUTHER Then we can get outta here, huh? Find someplace else to live. Maybe drive south, show those Yanks who's boss, whaddya say?

FREDERICK We'll worry about that later.

*Pause. Iris eats another spoonful.*

FREDERICK (To Iris.) Is there anything you would like to ask us?

*Pause. Iris is eating her beans. She's hungry—she hasn't eaten in quite a while. She turns to Pluto, directs all questions to him.*

IRIS Well, first of all, How long have you been here?

LUTHER 'Bout two months.

IRIS Where did you get the beans from?

FREDERICK They were here when we arrived.

LUTHER Six dozen cans. One a day.

IRIS You must be running low.

FREDERICK Yes, we are.

LUTHER Hope you're enjoying them.

*Iris looks at Luther. Eats another spoonful.*

IRIS So, what do you guys do?

LUTHER What do we do?

IRIS Yeah, what do you do around here? For fun? For shits and giggles? It must get pretty dull sitting in the dark.

LUTHER I used to go out with the rifle and shoot gophers, mice, birds. They've all disappeared. Guess I killed 'em all.

FREDERICK We used to play chess. I just kept beating them.

IRIS Maybe we can have a game sometime.

FREDERICK (Surprised) I'd like that.

*Pluto invents new ways of cooking beans.*

IRIS (To Pluto) You do?

PLUTO        Yes.

IRIS         What's your favourite way?

*Pause. She eats another spoonful.*

PLUTO        I once cooked a mouse to see what it would taste like. Put it in the beans.

IRIS         (*With beans in her mouth*) And...? What was it like?

PLUTO        Chicken.

IRIS         Really?

*Pause.*

IRIS         What about sex? You guys have a lot of sex?

LUTHER       What?

IRIS         How do you feel when your roomies are fucking, hey, Luther? Do you like it when they screw?

LUTHER       You little shit.

*Luther starts to roll up his sleeves as a threat of violence to Iris.*

IRIS         I know it's the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but you're from Alberta, so, I thought maybe you MIGHT have a problem living with gays. Maybe not a PROBLEM as such, but a difficulty nonetheless...

              Maybe you like to watch.

FREDERICK   (*Frederick distracting Luther*) Luther, while you were outside, Iris and I were chatting.

LUTHER       (*Luther playing along*) Oh, yeah? Learn anything interesting?

FREDERICK   It seems Iris killed a man when he tried to rape her.

LUTHER       Really?

FREDERICK   With a hunting rifle.

LUTHER      *(Approaching Iris. Pluto is moving away)* A hunting rifle?

FREDERICK   A hunting rifle.

LUTHER      Well, we've got a hunting rifle, don't we, Frederick?

FREDERICK   Yes, I believe we do. But where is it? I don't think we've used it since you killed all the gophers.

LUTHER      No, that's true. I haven't used it in months. It's in the cupboard.

FREDERICK   In the cupboard, way on the other side of the room.

LUTHER      Be difficult to get to. Especially if you're tied up.

FREDERICK   Did you know, Luther, that Iris has been driving around for five months?

LUTHER      Five months? That's a long time. Must get awful lonely. *(Luther is touching Iris's hair. She glares at Frederick.)*

IRIS         *(Under her breath. To Frederick)* You fuck.

*Lights down as Luther continues to play with her hair.*

## Scene Two

*Lights come up on the basement. Iris is lying battered on the stage. She is now on the floor, her left hand handcuffed to a post. Her clothes are torn. Pluto has draped the blanket over her. He sits watching her. He has a gun by his side. Nothing happens for a moment. Then Iris stirs. She slowly regains consciousness and looks around. Sees Pluto. Pluto sees her. She crumples back to the ground.*

PLUTO        Are you okay?

IRIS         *(Indecipherable mumble.)*

*Pause.*

PLUTO        Are you okay?

*Iris vomits.*

IRIS           *(Raising her head)* I feel like shit. *(Drops her head)* Have you been sitting there watching me?

PLUTO        I wanted to make sure you were alright.

IRIS           Where's Luther?

PLUTO        He's gone to get your jeep.

IRIS           Did I fall asleep?

PLUTO        Yeah.

IRIS           How long?

PLUTO        Couple hours.

*Pause.*

PLUTO        Need some water?

*Iris spits.*

IRIS           I need a cigarette.

PLUTO        Luther has them. Sorry.

IRIS           Figures. *(Iris sits up.)* So, let's get to know each other, shall we? How are you?

PLUTO        How am I?

IRIS           Yeah, how are you? It seems your roomies don't care too much for either of us. I've only been here a matter of hours and I already want to leave. You live here. Why's that?

*Iris doubles over in abdominal pain.*

IRIS           Ah, shit.

*Iris lies back down.*

PLUTO        Would you like a chocolate?

*Iris groans.*

PLUTO I've got some hidden away. Thought you might like one.

*Pluto scavenges in the kitchen, finds his box and takes it out.*

PLUTO I've had these since we left Edmonton. I save them for special occasions.  
(*Pluto takes out a half bag of Hershey's Kisses*) Would you like a Kiss?

IRIS Sure.

*Pluto moves to Iris with the box, takes out two Kisses, and slowly unwraps one in his hand, and watches it as he slips it in her mouth. She chews as he gets one out for himself. Iris grimaces.*

IRIS It's rotten.

PLUTO Is it? (*Pops the Kiss in his mouth*) I can't tell.

*They sit chewing, Iris grimacing, Pluto delighted.*

IRIS What else have you got in the box?

PLUTO A few little personal things. A stuffed animal. Some cash – not really worth anything now ... My diary. More candy. Pictures.

*Pluto is rifling through, flipping through photographs.*

IRIS What are they?

PLUTO They're from before all this happened. My family. Friends. My parents. My dog, ... Gabriel.

IRIS Gabriel?

PLUTO Yeah. My boyfriend. Well ... / ex-boyfriend.

IRIS Oh really? Let me see.

PLUTO I haven't shown anyone. These are the only pictures I have of us ... of him. One night we found one of those photo booths that take your picture and it still worked...

IRIS He's cute.

PLUTO        Yeah.

IRIS            What happened to him?

*Pluto takes pictures and puts everything back in the box. He crosses back to the cupboard.*

PLUTO        One night we went out to try and find some food – Gabriel was getting ill. Malnutrition, I think. We raided this abandoned Safeway and found some cans of peaches and some cans of beans. Green beans. On the way back to our apartment, we ran into these enormous guys. Shaved heads. Big boots. Y’know, militia types. They demanded the food, but Gabriel said no. They pulled a knife out and stabbed him. Beat me up. Took me back to their place...

*Pause.*

PLUTO        Frederick was their leader. He had people believing he could see the future.

IRIS            Fucking hell. And can he?

PLUTO        Well, no. Not since ... Luther used to think he could. I don’t know.

IRIS            Isn’t that a tad problematic? He’s your master...

PLUTO        He’s my partner ... We’re partners.

IRIS            Right. Shouldn’t you believe him, then?

PLUTO        Yes, well ... He believes he’s going to die in my arms ... I guess I like the sound of that.

*Pause.*

PLUTO        At least I’m safe. Nothing else matters, really.

*Pause.*

IRIS            I was married once. When I was 21. He was in the army. He was one of the first to go. I knew I’d never see him again.

He only wrote me one letter. “Some nights my arms ache because I’m not holding you,” he said. “These guns are cold companions.” He died in his sleep.

What was Gabriel like?

PLUTO I can barely remember ... not even his smell, the way his skin felt to touch. Sometimes I imagine he's here.

But Frederick's here.

*Pause.*

PLUTO Do you still have the letter?

IRIS Letter?

PLUTO From your / husband.

IRIS No. I burnt it.

PLUTO Why wouldn't you keep it?

IRIS I burnt it, alright?

PLUTO I would have kept it.

I keep things.

IRIS Well, I don't.

*Pause.*

IRIS So, Does your partner let you fuck him?

PLUTO What?

IRIS Does Frederick let you fuck him? Huh? Does he?

*Pluto is silent.*

PLUTO I can't.

IRIS Oh.

*Pause.*

IRIS How'd you find this bunker?

PLUTO        It was my uncle's house.

IRIS         Your uncle built a bunker?

PLUTO        The house was built back in the '50s or something. It's a Diefenbunker.

IRIS         A what?

PLUTO        Nevermind. My uncle believed the world was going to fall apart at the year 2000. You know, Y2K? He stocked it up back then. Cans of food. Water. Emergency supplies. Even guns. But the food's running out.

IRIS         No more mice to hunt either.

               What are you gonna do?

PLUTO        I count on Frederick.

IRIS         You love him?

*Pause. Pluto smiles to himself.*

PLUTO        Tell me what you've been doing.

IRIS         I drive around the prairies, searching.

               Now and then I find settlements. But these people ... they're not people anymore. They'd eat you on the spot. I think there's some poison in the air ... if you stay in the same place too long...

               I keep driving and I stick to myself.

               Around here, except for you guys, I've seen nothing. For miles in all directions. Nothing.

PLUTO        What are you doing here then?

IRIS         I haven't much choice right now, do I, kid?

PLUTO        No, I mean ... We haven't seen anyone in months. And here you are, appearing out of nothing ... Are you an angel?

IRIS         What? ... You're not serious...

PLUTO       Angels don't have to have wings, you know. That's what I believe. They can look like humans ... like you. Reminding us that ... that we're human. And that we need each other ... that we need hope and love ... that, that...

IRIS         I'm tied up in a bunker. What are you talking about, an angel?

PLUTO       Maybe you're a devil, then.

IRIS         I'm just a person trying to survive in a fucked up world. That's it.

*Pause.*

PLUTO       I used to dream about angels.

IRIS         I don't dream at all anymore.

*Pause.*

PLUTO       I do love Frederick. I know he doesn't feel the same, but I don't care. I'm alive. Sometimes I'm cold, sometimes I'm hungry. But I'm alive.

*We hear Luther returning upstairs.*

LUTHER      *(From upstairs)* Honey, I'm home!

*Pluto goes to sleeping room and looks in the door. He keeps the gun trained on Iris, never looking away from her.*

PLUTO       Frederick, Luther's back.

*Pluto moves back to where he was and sits down, still looking at Iris.*

IRIS         Would you even know what to do with that thing?

*Pluto looks at gun. Holds it to his head. Laughs to himself. Luther comes down the stairs, stands at the back of the room. He's carrying a bag with cans and powdered milk in it, a carton of Marlboro's under his arm. He's eating from a package of cookies. Iris and Pluto look at him.*

LUTHER      Where's Frederick?

*Pluto indicates the sleeping room. Luther notices Iris has vomited.*

LUTHER      Clean that up.

*Pluto moves to clean up the mess. Luther crosses to Iris and demonstrates his affection. She rejects him.*

LUTHER Would you like a cookie? They're raisin oatmeal.

*Iris just stares at him.*

LUTHER It's snowing out there now. Fucking climate change.

And thanks for the jeep. Pretty cool.

IRIS I'm happy for you.

LUTHER Yeah. We can drive around and find things to kill.

IRIS Great.

LUTHER I looked through the jeep to see if there was anything useful. Not much, but I found this. *(Pulls out a small vial)* I'm curious, Iris. What is this? Is it poison? Is it, like, strychnine or something?

IRIS Why don't you drink it and find out?

*Luther crosses to Iris.*

LUTHER Why don't YOU drink it?

*Luther tries to force it on Iris.*

IRIS It's rat poison. Meant to kill big rats. I got it off this guy. I cut his throat with a screwdriver. A whiff and you're fucked; a drink and you're dead.

LUTHER *(Tossing vial up and down)* Interesting. Here, Pluto, catch. If you ever get lonely.

*Throws vial to Pluto. He sits back down and looks at it. Frederick comes in.*

FREDERICK So, Luther, did you get the jeep?

LUTHER Yes, sir.

FREDERICK It will make gathering food and supplies easier.

LUTHER Right. I've got a solution to the food problem. So I'm driving back here and I drive past this little settlement about 15 kilometres south. It's like this little camp. A couple kids on this old homestead. They had a fire going and this guy on guard ... I took him out – target practice, you know. And I threw him in the back of the jeep. We're set for at least a week. He's a bit skinny, but...

I figure we could go out late at night with the jeep and a gun ... knock a few of them off, cook 'em up good and tasty ... mix 'em in with the last of the beans.

PLUTO You're sick.

LUTHER I'm being practical. Frederick, they'd never expect it. A gun shot under cover of night ... Really, I mean, how else are we going to survive?

PLUTO Frederick, please, this is unacceptable. We aren't animals...

IRIS Yes you are.

*Pause.*

FREDERICK Some animals eat their children.

*Pause.*

FREDERICK Before we descend into madness, we will use the jeep to visit towns within driving distance, looking for food and supplies. Iris has managed to survive this way, so we should be able to find something. Pluto has been studying the map, and there are enough towns within an hour or two to hit a few and grab what they've got for us. You and Pluto will head out in the morning and I'll stay here and look after our guest.

LUTHER C'mon ... You can't even SEE her.

*Frederick pulls out Iris's gun from his pocket, moves towards Luther, and points it directly at his groin. Frederick keeps gun trained on Luther as Luther tries to avoid it during his speech.*

LUTHER Fine. But, Frederick, you haven't been outside in three months. You know what's out there? Dick-all. I saw these three kids. That's it. I passed through a couple towns on my way back here. Bodies lying on the streets. There are no windows in the shops. The grocery stores are ransacked completely. This is all that was left. I'm tired of beans, I'm tired of the same thing every day. I need some meat.

*Frederick puts the gun away.*

FREDERICK Then eat Iris.

*Luther moves to Iris, crouches, touches her hair, her face.*

LUTHER I could never do that.

*Iris maliciously smiles.*

IRIS How big of you. Give me a cigarette.

*Luther takes out cigarette packet from his pocket. Takes one slowly, puts it in her mouth, takes out lighter, lights it. She smokes.*

IRIS Thanks, lover.

*Pause.*

FREDERICK Are you two finished?

*Pause. Luther sits down next to Iris. Eats cookies. Frederick puts the gun away.*

FREDERICK Okay, then. You can watch Iris. Pluto and I will head out in the morning and find some supplies. I'm going to get some rest before the sunrise.

*Frederick exits into sleeping room.*

PLUTO So you killed this kid and now you're going to ... eat him?

LUTHER Desperate times...

PLUTO You don't have any respect for life. You just kill people like, like...

LUTHER Pluto, I've never felt more alive. When I'm this close to death, I feel like I hold my life, I hold it in my hands. This is what it was like back in Edmonton. And I miss this feeling.

PLUTO You treat death like some toy, some game, some TV show...

LUTHER There's a fucking war on! I'm not the only one / killing people.

PLUTO It doesn't matter how many million die. Or where. Or how. It still means something. Life still counts for something. *(Almost to himself)* So does love...

LUTHER What? You're kidding, right?

Look, if you can't handle the way things are, if you can't survive according to the new rules...

PLUTO Then what?

LUTHER Then maybe that poison will come in handy.

PLUTO Maybe we're dead already and nobody bothered to tell us.

LUTHER Yeah, maybe. And maybe we're still alive and the world is a shit hole.

FREDERICK *(From sleeping room)* Pluto. Come here.

*Pluto looks at Iris. Stands. Gives gun to Luther. And goes into the sleeping room. Luther is mindful that Frederick may hear him.*

LUTHER *(Whispers to Iris)* These faggots are fucking crazy.

*Pause.*

LUTHER That kid must be about 15, 16. The thing is, he hasn't known anything but this. The world was fucked up from the moment he was born. There must be someplace where they're trying again, someplace where they're trying to make some kind of civilisation.

You've been out there. What's going on?

IRIS The world is a rapist.

*Pause.*

IRIS I'll tell you a story.

LUTHER Okay.

IRIS I stopped into a deserted gas station. I wandered inside hoping to find some food – Twinkies or Oreo cookies or some other non-perishable food item meant to last past the end of the world. The shelves were bare, candy wrappers on the floor. I walked through to the diner. There, under a table,

I found three children huddled together. A girl of about 8, and two boys a little younger. I asked them “What are your names?”, but they didn’t answer. They were ... their eyes were full of ... rage. I reached out my hand and said, “My name is Sarah. I want to be your friend.” And this girl leapt out and bit my hand. Hard; it started bleeding. She was clawing at me, flashing her teeth. The boys followed, grabbing at my legs, digging in with their fingers, their teeth. They were screaming, making noises like wild animals. I tripped over backwards ... tripped over a dead body, but it had been picked clean ... I saw dried blood on the girl’s clothes, blood around their mouths ... I fought them off, desperate ... I ran back to the car and drove off. They chased me down the highway...

Those are the only children I’ve seen.

LUTHER      They were going to eat you.

*Pause.*

LUTHER      Your name isn’t Sarah.

IRIS          And what’s Pluto real name?

*Pause.*

LUTHER      There was a time when I thought I would never kill anybody. I once killed for a jug of sour milk, some eggs, and some stale bread. I once killed for a bicycle. I once killed for spite. Someday I may even kill myself.

I didn’t plan on this.

But I’m making the best of it.

IRIS          You’re a fucking animal.

LUTHER      And what are you, huh? Guns, rat poison. I saw the blood inside the jeep. You try to come across as some kind of victim when you / yourself...

IRIS          I’m adapting.

LUTHER      And so am I.

But this basement is driving me mad.

*Pause.*

IRIS I've been to the west coast.

LUTHER Yeah?

IRIS Yeah. After the bomb fell, I started driving west. See what was happening on Vancouver Island. And there were all these little communities set up, all these little towns. People growing their own food. They were completely unaware of the madness on the rest of the continent.

LUTHER Why'd you come back?

IRIS I'm not ready for that kind of cooperative shit.

LUTHER You'd rather live in this wasteland than somewhere warm?

IRIS The prairies have always been about individual initiative, right? I proudly carry on that tradition.

*Luther is looking at Iris.*

LUTHER I need to go somewhere warm, where fruit grows on trees, where the ocean laps on the beach. Someplace safe and warm. Down south, far away from here. Maybe I'll take you with me. We'll go south, find someplace to settle, somewhere to raise a family. We'll leave them behind, we'll leave them here because this is where they want to stay.

IRIS How you gonna get across the border?

LUTHER What?

IRIS The border's been closed for years, you know that.

LUTHER Do people actually give a damn about the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel anymore? I figured they'd have something better to do than try to keep them out.

IRIS IT'S TO KEEP US IN, you idiot.

*Pause. Luther takes cigarettes and matches out of front pocket. Takes one himself. Lights it.*

LUTHER *(Singing quietly.)*  
O Canada  
Our home and native land  
True patriot love  
In all our son's command...

LUTHER Name your favourite Canadian of all time.

IRIS What?

LUTHER Favourite Canadian. All time.

IRIS Ummm...

LUTHER Okay. I'll go first. William Shatner.

IRIS William Shatner? You mean...

LUTHER Yeah, yeah, James T. Kirk of the Starship Enterprise. From way back in the 1970's or something.

IRIS I used to watch that. I was convinced we'd be living on the moon before I was 20.

LUTHER Me too. Oh well.

Your turn.

IRIS Okay. Ummm ... Oh. Those guys who made that cartoon about that small town ... y'know, with the songs ... (*Sings*) "Blame Canada..."

LUTHER What? That wasn't Canadian. That was ... uhh ... *South Park*. Definitely American.

IRIS Oh, fuck, I don't know. Stupid question.

LUTHER JUST PICK ONE.

*Luther is getting upset.*

IRIS Fine. Céline Dion.

LUTHER CÉLINE DION?! ... You don't have a clue. I thought you'd pick someone cooler than that. Like Neil Young or Ron Peterson or even Mr. Dressup. Geez...

IRIS SORRY.

*Pause. Smoking.*

IRIS           Is that your flag then?

LUTHER       Yeah.

IRIS           Looks pretty beat up.

LUTHER       *(Laughs)* How symbolic.

*Pause.*

IRIS           You're going to take my car whether I go with you or not, is that right?

LUTHER       Yes, well, that's the way it is, I suppose.

IRIS           Well, fuck you then.

LUTHER       No, fuck you. I'm offering you a way out here.

                  I want you along, Iris, because ... well, you're intelligent, you're like me.

IRIS           Yeah?

LUTHER       Yeah, sure.

IRIS           Really?

LUTHER       Listen. The two of us could make it, y'know. Start over. Like the Garden of Eden.

IRIS           The Garden of Eden?

LUTHER       Yeah, where our children can grow healthy and strong.

IRIS           Our children?

LUTHER       Just imagine how perfect they'd be. Your looks, my strength, our survival instinct. It'd be perfect. Exactly what this world needs now.

IRIS           *(Indicates her belly)* Maybe you're right.

LUTHER       They'd be fucking gorgeous.

*Pause.*

LUTHER Y'know, I had a twin when I was born – when we were born. But she died when we were six.

When I first saw you, I imagined you were her.

*Iris is silent.*

LUTHER From a distance, you really look like what I would imagine her to be. Tall. Beautiful. Determined. My sister would have walked through the front door too.

Did you have any siblings?

IRIS No.

*Iris lies down as if to sleep.*

LUTHER *(Singing softly again.)*  
God keep our land  
Glorious and free  
O Canada we stand on guard for thee  
O Canada we / stand...

*Lights flicker again to a lower level.*

LUTHER Fucking generator.

*Lights fade to black.*

### Scene Three

*Morning. Iris is sleeping on the floor where she was the night before. Pluto, "on watch," has fallen asleep too with the gun fallen out of his hand, beside him. He is quietly snoring. Frederick emerges from the sleeping area, himself just woken up. A moment. He smiles. Moves to Pluto and crouches. Gently nudges Pluto. Pluto doesn't wake. Nudges again. Doesn't wake. Frederick leans in and kisses him on the cheek. Whisper in his ear.*

FREDERICK *(Whisper)* Wake up.

*Pluto opens his eyes. Turns to look at Frederick.*

FREDERICK You fell asleep.

*Pluto, realising what's happening, grabs gun and jumps up. Looks around. Sees Iris sleeping. Relaxes.*

PLUTO Luther woke me up and told me to look after her. He went outside. Guess I fell asleep. Sorry.

*Pluto sees vial on the ground – it's fallen out of his pocket. He bends down and grabs it.*

FREDERICK What is that?

PLUTO Luther found a vial in the jeep.

*Pluto hands it to Frederick. Frederick lifts stopper, goes to sniff it. Pluto stops him.*

PLUTO Iris says it's rat poison, but like really strong rat poison.

FREDERICK Why do you have it?

PLUTO Luther gave it to me. Said I might get lonely.

*Pause. Frederick replaces stopper.*

FREDERICK Cook up some breakfast.

*Pluto gets up, goes to kitchen area. Grabs can of beans. Opens it, puts it on the stove. Frederick stands, thinking, playing with vial in his hand.*

PLUTO Beans, beans, the musical fruit ... the more / you eat the more...

FREDERICK What's he doing out there?

PLUTO Fixing the generator. I think we're running low on gas, too. Might be stumbling around in the dark soon.

FREDERICK Nothing new.

*Pause.*

PLUTO Frederick, it sounds like he's heading off south and taking Iris with him.

FREDERICK I know.

PLUTO I think he's losing it. He thinks Iris and him are going to start a family. If he's going to eat that boy ... Frederick, he's going to eat me.

FREDERICK I won't let him.

He'll come 'round. He'd be lost without me. That jeep is our means to find some food and bring it back here, where we're comfortable. If we need to, later, maybe we'll take off. But not right now.

PLUTO Have you talked to Iris? She said to Luther that on Vancouver Island there are settlements, there are people...

FREDERICK Iris will tell you whatever she wants.

*Pause.*

FREDERICK *(Tossing vial up and down)* Pluto. We have to make an example. For Luther's sake. *(Moves in Pluto's direction)* Here. *(Holds out vial to Pluto)* Make her some beans.

PLUTO *(Moving to Frederick)* You want me to poison Iris?

FREDERICK Yes.

*Pluto slowly takes vial. He slowly turns back to beans, hesitates, then pours the whole vial into the pot. Quickly stirs it.*

FREDERICK Good. That solves that. Now go see what he's doing.

*Pluto goes upstairs. Iris stirs, sees Frederick, sits up. Watches him.*

FREDERICK Have a good sleep?

IRIS Great.

FREDERICK Good. Glad to hear you're getting on well.

IRIS Can I have some water, something to drink?

FREDERICK No.

*Pause.*

IRIS Please?

*Pause.*

IRIS Your boyfriend is really quite lovely. Seems to care about you a great deal.

FREDERICK Yes, he does.

*Pause.*

IRIS Luther's a bit of a dick.

FREDERICK Seems to care about you.

*Pause.*

IRIS You know, Frederick, you're really fucking ugly.

FREDERICK I know. You see my dead eyes, you see all the dents and cuts and bruises and burns on my skin, and you turn away. You can't help it. Ugliness is repulsive. To you, I am repulsive. I can feel the ugliness creep under my skin, into my blood, into my bones. There is no fighting it.

It happens to all of us, sweetheart. These days, we haven't a choice.

Let me get you that water.

*Frederick crosses to the kitchen to get cup of water.*

IRIS What's it like being blind? Stumbling around in your own darkness, never being quite sure what's going on around you. Having to rely on others. And you're not getting any younger, Frederick. Why, by the look of things, you're already a senior citizen.

FREDERICK You're about 6 feet tall, you've got dark hair, you've got lovely teeth, and you're in fantastic shape. I dreamt about you, Iris. I haven't had a dream in months. And last night I saw you ... and you were on the ground, surrounded by this smoky haze ... green grass on a foggy morning ... and you were coughing / ... coughing up blood.

IRIS ... coughing up blood. And the air smelled like aluminum and I'm coughing my lungs out of my chest ... I used to have that dream when I was a child. All the time. And I'd wake up and I'd be holding a pillow over my face with my own hands.

FREDERICK I used to dream all my teeth had fallen out.

*Pause.*

IRIS Let me ask you something. Does Luther have any tattoos, markings, scars, that sort of thing?

FREDERICK We all have scars.

*Pluto comes back down the stairs.*

PLUTO Frederick, Luther has gone crazy. He's built this huge fire outside and he's ... he's ... roasting that boy. He's covered in blood ... It's gross.

FREDERICK I'll go talk to him. Here, give this to Iris. *(Frederick hands him the cup.)*  
And give her some beans.

*Frederick heads up the stairs. Pluto goes to kitchen and stirs the beans. He turns to Iris.*

PLUTO You alright?

IRIS Yeah, sure. You got that water?

*Pluto goes over with the glass of water.*

PLUTO Here.

IRIS *(Looks at Pluto)* You first.

PLUTO What?

IRIS *(Indicates glass)* You first.

PLUTO You don't trust me? Iris, I gave you a chocolate Kiss.

*Iris takes a long drink.*

IRIS Do you believe dreams can tell the future?

PLUTO I don't believe in anything.

*Iris hands back the glass. Pluto takes it back to the kitchen area.*

IRIS Pluto, I think you should take the jeep and get the hell outta here.

PLUTO No.

IRIS You can't seriously want to stay here.

PLUTO I want to be with Frederick.

IRIS Look, Pluto, this is a fucking wasteland. Get out of here while you can.

*Pause.*

PLUTO Why are you telling me this?

IRIS Because I'm your friend.

I'm American. Well, I guess we're ALL Americans now, but...

I was in California. Another bomb came last Tuesday. And everyone decided to leave. So, there they were, in their cars, stuck in a traffic jam on the edge of the world at the end of time.

I stole the jeep and started off down a secondary highway, going north, stealing gas and food from abandoned stations along the way. People starving on the streets, families huddled around fires. Desperate, dangerous people. And coming up behind me – I could feel it – the great exodus.

I crossed the border two days ago.

PLUTO How'd you get across the border?

IRIS There's nothing a woman, some ingenuity and a gun can't do.

I won't be the first coming this way, Pluto. The south is worse than it is here; expect a lot of visitors.

PLUTO Why are you telling me this?

IRIS Because, Pluto, you can leave this shit hole before you die here.

*Pause.*

PLUTO You just want me to give you your jeep back.

IRIS            Sure, of course I do.

PLUTO        (*Irritated*) So why should I trust you? Why should I believe anything you say? Last night you / told me...

IRIS            I know what I told you last night. This is what I'm telling you now. You don't have to believe me, Pluto, but if you want to survive, if / that's at all important to you...

PLUTO        You think you can come in here and fuck with us? We're not going anywhere. We're staying here, Frederick and Luther and I. It's safe, it's warm. It's our home.

IRIS            What are you talking about? Luther's gone mad. He's going to eat you sooner or later. It's no longer much of a safe haven, is it?

PLUTO        Thanks to you. Everything was fine before you showed up.

IRIS            No, it wasn't. Look, I thought you might like to know what's really going on. But you've convinced yourself you love Frederick, that that means something...

PLUTO        I heard you talking to Luther last night. Telling him ... giving him some hope and ... and now you're telling me there's nothing out there...

IRIS            THERE'S NOTHING HERE EITHER.

*Pause.*

IRIS            Can I ask you something? What happened in Saskatoon?

*Pluto doesn't respond. He crosses to kitchen. Pluto scoops up some beans into a bowl and moves towards Iris.*

PLUTO        (*As a "peace offering"*) Here. Eat some food. You need your strength.

IRIS            I couldn't eat a thing.

PLUTO        (*Kneeling beside her*) It'll make you feel better.

IRIS            Pluto, your beans make me sick. How you could eat those for two months / I'll never know.

PLUTO        (*Insistent*) You have to eat / sometime.

IRIS           *(Equally insistent)* FUCK OFF WITH YOUR BEANS.

*Pause. Pluto gets up and goes back to stove. Luther comes down the stairs. He is wearing an apron that says "Kiss The Cook" which is covered in blood. There is blood on his face, hands.*

LUTHER       Breakfast is just about ready, folks. It tastes mighty fine. Rather like chicken, imagine that. I've got a cut especially for you, love.

*Luther kisses Iris.*

LUTHER       Yes, a piece of meat especially for you ... You and the baby better get some strength for the long journey ahead. Now, we should have enough supplies to make it to the border. There should be more gas over there, I'm guessing.

PLUTO        Luther, listen to me.

LUTHER       *(To Pluto)* We're taking off. My woman, my baby and me have had enough of you cocksuckers. *(Walking towards him. Grabs him, grabs his ass)* Unless you want to come with me, prettyboy. Let a real man take care of you.

*Pluto struggles free. Luther laughs.*

PLUTO        Frederick won't let you leave.

LUTHER       You think I care about him anymore? Look around, Pluto. Look where we ended up. Some hole in the ground. In the middle of nowhere. Not REALLY what I'd call the promised land.

I should have let the fucker drown.

PLUTO        And you're going to find this "promised land" out there somewhere, is that it?

LUTHER       Yeah, I am.

C'mon, Pluto, I'm giving you a chance here. Take it. I'm giving you a chance to be part of SOMETHING, something real. The start of a new civilisation, a new world. Frederick can't see it, but maybe you can.

PLUTO        And who are you? The beginning of this new world?

LUTHER Yes. Yes, Iris and I are the life-givers, the new Adam and Eve. Right honey?

IRIS *(Quietly)* Right.

LUTHER RIGHT HONEY?

IRIS RIGHT.

PLUTO You've lost it. Look at you, you think Iris loves you or something, you think she's pregnant, you think ... God, Luther, what happened to you?

LUTHER You and Frederick are happy to just stay here and live your own little married life. She found this place, and she won't be the last.

I don't know what you think you've found here, Pluto.

PLUTO No, no, this is our home, this is where we live. You know there's nothing out there. This is our only safety.

I know you and Iris talked last night. I know you believe her. But you can't. Just now she / told me that...

*Frederick stumbles in from upstairs. Luther has beat him with his own cane. Pluto crosses to support him.*

PLUTO Frederick! *(To Luther)* What have you done?

LUTHER He's old. He's getting in the way.

FREDERICK So, I guess you're heading out there to find your future. Pluto and I are staying here on our own then.

LUTHER That's right.

FREDERICK You're not taking the jeep. It belongs to all three of us. And two of us want it to stay here.

LUTHER Who stole it? Who went out there and got it?

FREDERICK Luther, we have been together for a long time. We've survived. Trust me, Luther, this is the safest place for us to be. I know it.

Listen to me, Luther. This is no way to deal with this. I've seen what it's like out there, Luther. I know you'll find nothing...

*Frederick falters. Pluto supports him.*

LUTHER Answer this, Freddy. Will you answer a question for me, huh?

FREDERICK Ask.

LUTHER Right. Let's think back a couple years. Back to the time we first met up, and you had all these stories about the future. Remember that?

FREDERICK Yes.

LUTHER Great. Well, so do I. And here's my question, Freddy, here's my question: When you dreamt about the future, is this what it looked like? Huh?

*Pause.*

FREDERICK What if I said yes?

Luther. We've looked out for each other. We've fed each other. We've survived. I saved your life. You've saved mine.

Now let me ask you a question. Since Iris is such a good friend of yours, tell me this: What is her brother's name?

LUTHER What?

FREDERICK Her brother's name. Well, she told me she had a brother. She lived with him just a few short months ago. Is that what she told you?

*Luther is silent.*

FREDERICK Where is Iris from?

LUTHER She's from ... I don't know. Who cares?

FREDERICK Why does she have American cigarettes? And why does she have a U.S. Army jeep?

LUTHER I guess she stole it off some American soldier.

FREDERICK Right. The border's been closed for years. How'd it get across?

*Luther is silent.*

FREDERICK    Alright, Iris – What’s the capital of Quebec?

IRIS            What?

LUTHER        What are you trying to prove?

FREDERICK    ANSWER THE QUESTION.

IRIS            Fuck off.

FREDERICK    Who was Canada’s first Prime Minister?

Who was Wayne Gretzky?

When did Canada build its first nuclear bomb?

Iris?

IRIS            Go to hell. This doesn’t mean anything.

FREDERICK    It proves we don’t know who you are, where you come from, or what you’re doing here.

*(To Luther)* Why don’t you ask her the name of her brother?

LUTHER        Iris, you told me you didn’t have any siblings.

*Pause.*

PLUTO         Luther, we’ve been together for a long time. Frederick’s right. We’ve survived. Now, Iris isn’t the person you...

*Luther walks over to Pluto. Stares. Pluto turns away. Luther grabs the bowl of beans and starts eating them. Pluto turns back. Luther spits some of the beans on Pluto’s face. Pluto madly wipes the beans off his face.*

LUTHER        Yum, these beans are so good...

FREDERICK    Luther.

LUTHER        ... I want to eat these beans for the rest of my life...

FREDERICK    Luther.

LUTHER ... I want to be stuck in a hole in the ground eating these beans...

FREDERICK LUTHER.

LUTHER WHAT?

*Pause.*

LUTHER Freddy, this is over. I've lived here for three months because I had nowhere else to go. Now, there's a jeep and you still want to stay in this shit hole? C'mon, we used to take chances, things used to be exciting. Now we just sit here and rot. Come with me, let me show you...

FREDERICK *(To Iris)* You've been around, Iris. You know there's nothing out there.

Why do you insist on pulling us apart like this?

IRIS I haven't done anything. You're all so paranoid that all you needed was a push. Now it's all coming crashing down. And I've had the pleasure of sitting here and watching.

FREDERICK *(Stumbling towards her)* I think you've said enough, Iris.

LUTHER *(Gun to Frederick)* Frederick, leave her be. She's my partner, and I don't appreciate you threatening my partner.

FREDERICK Fine.

*Pause. Frederick goes for Iris with his cane, starts hitting her. Iris crumpled on the floor. Luther follows Frederick with the gun. Luther is starting to feel the effects of the poisoned beans.*

LUTHER Frederick.

*Frederick pauses. Turns to Luther.*

LUTHER Frederick ... I'll shoot you.

*Frederick starts kicking Iris.*

LUTHER FREDERICK. I swear to God...

*Frederick freezes in mid-kick, looks to Luther. Eye contact. Frederick goes to kick again.*

LUTHER        STOP!

*The lights flicker as Frederick goes to kick her and go out. A gunshot. A groan is heard as Frederick falls on Iris. She screams. Lights flicker and come up. Iris pushes Frederick off of her, looks at him.*

IRIS            (To Luther) Give me the key for this.

*Luther shocked, grabs key to handcuff from pocket and throws it to her. Iris frees herself and slowly stands. Looks down at Frederick, who is writhing in pain. Kicks him. Looks at Luther.*

IRIS            Thanks.

*Luther, shocked, can only nod.*

IRIS            Okay. Let's get going. You ready?

*Luther nods.*

IRIS            Okay. Well, I don't see the point sticking around here. (Turns to Pluto) You sure you're not coming?

*Pluto doesn't move.*

IRIS            Well, sorry to leave you like this Pluto, but, hey ... C'mon, there's nothing here worth sticking around here for.

*Pluto doesn't move.*

IRIS            But I guess its up to you. Not much out there anyways.

*Luther falls to his knees, grabs his stomach. Fights for breath. He's dying.*

IRIS            (Goes to him and kneels beside him) Luther? What the fuck? Luther?

*Luther spits up blood. He falls to the floor and shakes.*

IRIS            Well, well...

*Iris looks over Luther's body and as he's still shaking, she reaches into his pocket and grabs the car keys. Grabs a gun from another pocket. Pluto takes out his gun and aims it at Iris. He pulls the trigger. The gun clicks.*

*He pulls the trigger. The gun clicks.*

*He pulls the trigger. The gun clicks.*

*He pulls the trigger. The gun clicks.*

*He pulls the trigger. The gun clicks.*

*He pulls the trigger. The gun clicks.*

*He pulls the trigger. The gun clicks.*

*He pulls the trigger. The gun clicks.*

*Pluto drops the gun. He falls to his knees, crying.)*

PLUTO Rat poison in the beans. Frederick wanted to poison you. You ruined everything.

IRIS *(Standing. She jangles the keys in her hand)* Thanks for the help.

*Iris grabs everything she can – the blanket, cans of beans, Luther’s bag of food, the carton of Marlboros – and moves to the stairs. Pluto isn’t following her. She stops and faces Pluto.*

IRIS It doesn’t really make a difference if you stay here or take off. It’s all over anyways. This is a war that no one wins. Some just bleed less than others.

I hear nuclear winters are a treat. Enjoy yourself.

*Iris exits. Pause. Hears Frederick’s laboured breathing. Pluto moves to Frederick’s body. Kneels. Takes his body in his arms. Holds him close.*

FREDERICK Pluto...

PLUTO Yes, we’ll be fine. Don’t worry.

*Frederick tries to sit up, tries to feel for the wound. Too painful.*

PLUTO Frederick, just relax...

FREDERICK Let me feel the wound.

*Pause.*

FREDERICK TAKE MY SHIRT OFF. (*Lovingly reaches to Pluto's face, brushes his cheek*)  
Please?

*Pluto takes off his shirt. The bullet hit his abdomen; his stomach is covered in blood.*

FREDERICK Doesn't look too bad.

PLUTO Just a scratch.

FREDERICK (*Suddenly shivering*) I'm so cold...

*Pluto grabs the Canadian flag from the wall and wraps it around Frederick, holds him close. Pause. Frederick pulls Pluto close and they kiss.*

FREDERICK What are you going to do?

PLUTO What? I'm staying with you, here...

FREDERICK No, you can't...

*Frederick reaches with not a little bit of pain, and grabs his gun. Holds gun out to Pluto.*

FREDERICK Shoot me.

PLUTO What?

FREDERICK I want you to shoot me.

PLUTO No, I can't...

FREDERICK PLUTO. Please.

*Pluto pauses for a moment. Then takes the gun. Stands.*

FREDERICK You've taken such good care of me.

*Pluto raises gun, aims at Frederick. He starts crying, shaking. The lights flicker and out. A gunshot is heard in the blackout.*

*The End.*