

THERE IS NO HOPE IN THE CITY OF CHAOS

By Elizabeth Ung

CHARACTERS---

AMELIA, female, 20's

ACORN, male, teens

FAYE, female, 20's

Note on Casting: AMELIA, ACORN, and FAYE are people of color. They may also be portrayed as any gender identity and pronouns may be changed to reflect those identities.

Setting---

The possibly-not-so-distant future. Apocalypse and all that.

Pacing---

Dialogue and action should be urgent. Until it calms down. And then it picks up again. And calms down.

(Concrete walls and a creaky table. A musty, rusty space. Amelia sits at the table smoking a cigarette. She is bloodied, bandaged, and badgered. Acorn enters with a backpack. He is also bandaged up.)

AMELIA

Holy shit. You did it.

(Acorn sets the backpack on the table. Amelia approaches it but Acorn stops her.)

ACORN

Hold on. Wait until Faye gets back.

AMELIA

Faye? Why wait for her?

ACORN

Because she helped me.

AMELIA

C'mon, at least give me a peek.

ACORN

No. You'll damage it.

AMELIA

What do you mean I'll damage it?

ACORN

Don't open the backpack yet.

AMELIA

Why? It's just a simple fucking glance.

ACORN

You can't touch it or see it or anything---

(Acorn takes the backpack and carefully holds it against his body.)

AMELIA

What's the matter with you?

ACORN

Nothing. You can't see it yet.

AMELIA

Of course, I can. What the hell, Acorn?

(Amelia tries to get the backpack. Acorn and Amelia do a round of "keep-away." Amelia then punches Acorn in the face, knocking him and the backpack down. Amelia takes the backpack. Acorn then clamps onto Amelia's legs, stopping her.)

Don't you dare!

ACORN

Why can't I have a peek?

AMELIA

(Acorn chomps on Amelia's leg and she drops the backpack. Acorn scavenges it and scurries to a corner.)

Give me the damn food!

AMELIA

It's not food!

ACORN

What's not food?

AMELIA

This is not food!

ACORN

What?

AMELIA

It's *not* food.

ACORN

I know what you fucking said. What the hell did you get from the greenhouse?

AMELIA

A plant.

ACORN

I believe that's food.

AMELIA

No.

ACORN

Then what? Why are you being so difficult?

AMELIA

It's not food!

ACORN

If it's not food, *then what the fuck is it?!*

AMELIA

ACORN

It's hope.

AMELIA

Bullshit.

ACORN

It is!

AMELIA

Really?

ACORN

Yeah. It is.

AMELIA

You're kidding me.

ACORN

This is our chance to have hope for once. We haven't had it for a long time.

AMELIA

What exactly is this "hope" you have in your backpack, Acorn?

ACORN

It's a seed for the future.

AMELIA

Yeah. Sure.

ACORN

I'm being serious here, Amelia. We can't live forever on these stupid rations and spoiled food laying around. We have to think ahead and make food that's actually good for us. This will save us from both the hunger and the insanity of it all.

AMELIA

Right. I get ya. But there's just one, itsy-bitsy, teeny-weeny problem. *We ain't got no fucking food right now!*

ACORN

Faye is bringing more food from her home.

AMELIA

What?

ACORN

She said that she'll take some food from her dad's ration pile and---

AMELIA

Wait? What the hell? Her *dad's* ration pile? That's stealing, Acorn! *(recollecting herself)* I needed you to get the last plant from the greenhouse for *food*.

ACORN

And you don't think *that* was considered stealing?

(Amelia slaps Acorn on the head.)

AMELIA

Idiot. It's about *who* we steal from. We haven't eaten in two days. We are on the brink of either starving to death or dying from our wounds. We can't wait any longer.

ACORN

Well, *you* can also add to the fact that you're smoking your days away.

AMELIA

Shut up. It's my choice.

ACORN

You make no sense.

AMELIA

Neither do you!

ACORN

I found this plant. I took this plant. It's mine and I decide what to do with it!

AMELIA

Then die for all I care!

(Amelia sits back down and relights another cigarette. Acorn sits on the floor. Small pause.)

AMELIA

How the hell are you going to plant it if there's no soil?

ACORN

I took some soil from the greenhouse. I'm not stupid.

AMELIA

Are you actually going to put it anywhere?

ACORN

Outside. Where mom and dad are.

(Another short pause. Just then, footsteps. Faye enters with a limp. She is holding a couple of rations in her arms. Amelia and Acorn immediately help her.)

THANK YOU FOR READING!

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