

# **Lucifer's Hammer Study Guide**

## **Lucifer's Hammer by Larry Niven**

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# Plot Summary

Tim Hamner arrives at a party thrown by Julia and George Sutter to announce that a comet he discovered has been authenticated and named the Hamner-Brown Comet. The "Brown" is a youngster who reported his own sighting about the same time. Tim explains that he found it first but waited for some time to be certain that it really was a comet before making the report.

Over the coming months, many people will worry that the comet might strike Earth and some prepare for end-of-the-world scenarios. Tim soon meets Harvey Randall, a documentary film maker who covers the scientific data regarding the Hamner-Brown. Harvey professes to believe the experts who say the chances of a comet strike are minimal but makes some preparations anyway. When the strike does occur, thieves hit the Randall home, killing Harvey's wife, Loretta, and taking all the supplies Harvey had gathered. Harvey's son, Andy, is in the mountains on a hiking trip with the Randall's neighbor, Gordie Vance. As Harvey leaves the city in the company of his colleague Mark Czesku and Mark's girlfriend, Joanne, they encounter Gordie's wife, Marie, and take her with them.

In the mountains, Andy and Gordie kept the troop of scouts safe, killed a group of bikers who took girls hostage, and declined the offer to go into a safer community in favor of remaining in this lifestyle. Nearby, Senator Arthur Jellison has gathered some supplies for a stronghold, though not enough that people would have noticed that he's expecting the comet to strike. While he turns away many, those inside band together. Jellison's word is law, to the point that he holds the power to order executions for those who hoard goods rather than putting them into a community fund for the common good.

When the comet does hit, some who were prepared are already off the coastal regions. Tsunamis hit within the hour and earthquakes do massive damage. Four astronauts - two Americans and two Russians - watch in space as China fires on Russia, Russia fires back and the United States joins in Russia's defense. The astronauts come to Earth in the Russian shuttle because the American ship is damaged. They join in the fight of those living on Jellison's ranch as thieves join to form a band of cannibals and attack those who are merely trying to survive. The stronghold created by Jellison soon becomes home to a group forced to fight to survive. Many are turned away because the meager resources within aren't sufficient to sustain them through what is going to be a difficult winter. Those with skills that can help the community thrive are welcomed, including the astrophysicist in possession of a "how to" book that covers things from napalm to insulin.

Tim, Harvey and others will eventually come together for another common cause - to protect a nuclear power plant that could give them a boost toward re-establishing a civilized country.



# Prologue through June; Three

## Prologue through June; Three Summary

Tim Hamner arrives at a party thrown by Julia and George Sutter to announce that a comet he discovered has been authenticated and named the Hamner-Brown Comet. The "Brown" is a youngster who reported his own sighting about the same time. Tim explains that he found it first but waited for some time to be certain that it really was a comet before making the report.

Also at this party is Harvey Randall and his wife, Loretta. Harvey is a documentary film maker and is looking for his next project, which will turn out to be the Hamner-Brown comet. Senator Arthur Jellison and his daughter, Maureen, also attend.

At the San Joaquin Nuclear Power Plant, Barry Price is heavily buried under paperwork. He says that if he'd wanted to handle all this legal paper, he'd have been a lawyer or a criminal. He talks with his secretary and lover, Delores, about the problems facing them, including the fact that environmentalists are trying to keep the plant from opening.

In Los Angeles, Eileen Hancock is stuck in traffic, while in the wastelands of the Soviet Union, Dr. Leonilla Alexandrovna Malik treats children. She is disappointed that she is having no opportunities to do the job she's trained for - an astronaut.

Harvey prepares to begin his next project—a documentary on the comet, with his sometimes-colleague Mark Czescu. At home, Harvey meets up with Gordie Vance, his next-door neighbor. Gordie is planning to take a group of Scouts on a hiking trip. Harvey says he's busy with the comet documentary but agrees to allow Andy to go.

As part of the documentary, Harvey interviews Dr. Sharps, a member of the team at Jet Propulsion Laboratories who are watching the comet. Sharps says the chances of the comet striking the Earth are "about a zillion to one." The interview prompts Sharps to think about the knowledge that could be gained if there was a manned lab to study the project from space. He immediately calls Senator Arthur Jellison.

Tim Hamner hosts a party at his home to watch the airing of the documentary but admits that his family has grown apart. Now he knows little of what he should say to other members of his family. There's some minor talk of the fact that comets do hit the Earth sometimes.

Fred Lauren is watching a woman named Coleen. He uses a telescope and has come to know her very well in this manner. He wants to talk to her but doesn't dare because he doesn't want to go to prison. When Fred hears of the comet, he's positive it will hit and that there will be nothing left. With that in mind, Fred goes to Coleen's apartment and brutally murders her. He is, in fact, impotent. When the police arrive, Fred gives himself up without argument, saying that the world is coming to an end, and it therefore doesn't matter what happens to him.



Johnny Baker and Rick Delanty will be the Americans who go up in space to study the comet. Rick will be the first black man in space. The only real reason the Americans are sending a team is because they've been led to believe that the Russians will be sending a team. The Russians have been fed the information that the Americans are making plans, ensuring their own participation.

Above the San Joaquin Valley, Harry Newcombe is driving his mail truck to Senator Jellison's ranch. It's "trash day," a service Harry has invented himself by saving up all the junk mail to deliver on a particular day of the week. This service and his personality have made him popular with many along his route, including Jellison's housekeeper, Mrs. Cox, and her daughter, Alice. Harry will later be told to stop trash day, but will remain an important figure in the valley area after the comet strike.

## Prologue through June; Three Analysis

The first chapters of the book are dedicated to introducing characters, some who will never be heard of again and others who play minor roles in the story. These chapters are: Prologue; January: The Portent; January: Interlude; February: One; February: Two; March: One; March: Interludes; March: Two; April: One; April: Interludes; April: Two; May; June: One; June: Interludes; June: Two; and June: Three.

Tim will later refer to himself as a playboy. He's not married, has plenty of money from his company called Kalva Soap. After the comet strike, Tim admits that he'd always bought whatever he wanted and needed and that he without the ability to buy, he doesn't really know what to do. Another of the guests, Harvey Randall, seems not to want to be there but knows that his wife enjoys these kinds of parties.

Harvey considers that he has trouble making ends meet and that he works to support his family. He compares the modern day with decades gone by saying that boys were once a help to their families but that children now are expensive and bring in nothing until adulthood. Harvey pledges that he'll never let Andy know the lengths Harvey goes to in order to provide Andy the best of everything. Though Gordie won't reveal his own problems, his finances are also in trouble. Gordie has embezzled money from the bank where he works. He plans to commit suicide while on the hiking trip, which is why he wanted Harvey or Andy along - so that the boys wouldn't be on their own after his death.

The concern that the comet could hit Earth is becoming an epidemic. Many fear that it will create an end-of-the-world scenario, despite what the experts are saying. While many begin to stock up for the event, others - like Alim Nassor - are preparing to take advantage of the fear. They make plans to strike homes of those who are making preparations to leave the Los Angeles area on the day the comet will near the Earth. Nassor and his gang are now creating a list of possible houses to hit and will actually finish their own work with plenty of televisions, electronics and other equipment worth a small fortune. The problem is, when the comet does strike, they'll realize it's all worthless and begin dumping the stuff to make room for any food they can find.



Henry Armitage is a television preacher. He immediately catches on to the idea that the comet could be the catalyst for the end of the Earth and begins preaching this message. His message will catch on, and there are many who begin to believe that the end of the world is inevitable.

From his lab at Jet Propulsion Laboratories, Dr. Dan Forrester explains how the comet will pass near the Earth and likens it to a hot fudge sundae. His analogy will soon become a popular way of describing the comet, and the day the comet is slated to come near Earth will become known as "Hot Fudge Tuesdae."

Over the next month, some people dismiss the possibility that the comet could possibly strike Earth while thousands of others buy survival gear and prepare for what they believe is inevitable. Harvey Randall is one of those who says there's no possible way the comet will hit but quietly goes around gathering things he believes will be valuable. He buys roasts, cuts the meat into thin strips and makes jerky. He purchases pepper and vitamins. Senator Jellison has an assistant quietly go about gathering survival supplies, though his formal statement is that there's no reason to panic.

As the comet nears, the lives of those closest to the story continue. Tim asks a woman named Eileen to marry him. She declines but after the strike will reconnect with Tim and the two will escape together. Harvey spends a night on the Jellison ranch, and he and Maureen make love, though Harvey feels the guilt of being unfaithful and moves to the bed in the guest room in the middle of the night.



# June: Four; Hammerfall Morning; Hammerfall: One

## June: Four; Hammerfall Morning; Hammerfall: One Summary

Rick Delanty is up and around, no longer so sick and able to do his part of the work. As they look at the Earth from the Hammerlab, the conversation turns to the fragility of the Earth. Johnny Baker says that the only answer is to colonize other planets. It's during this conversation that Leonilla begins to rave about Russia's practices, including those that prompted them to develop the technology to launch a man into space but misused it creating stunts to impress the rest of the world. Jakov explains away her tirade by saying that women become irrational every twenty-eight days. Johnny verbally agrees but seems doubtful.

On Earth, Barry Price announces to Delores that he's just received word that the nuclear plant will go online the following Tuesday - the same day the comet will be near the Earth. Barry asks Delores to marry her, citing the fact that she's carrying a baby and that child needs a father, but Delores declines and Barry seems somewhat relieved, though he presses the issue, and she promises to talk about it after an upcoming visit to Los Angeles. In Bel Air, Alim Nassor and his brother, Harold Davis, are casing houses where people are leaving the city. Alim plans to rob all the houses in a particular area, but takes time out to wonder what he would do if the comet actually struck the Earth. Alim tells Harold to take the guns in case there's trouble and Alim plans to take food, just in case it's needed.

In Burbank, Eric Larsen and his partner, Investigator Harris, are patrolling when they get a call of screams coming from a particular apartment. They go there, break in the door and find Colleen Darcy dead, one breast cut off, a bloody arrow drawn to her pelvic area and an excessive amount of blood. Fred Lauren rushes from the closet, still holding the knife, but gives himself up when Eric confronts him with a gun. During the transportation to the jail, he says only that he's not worried because the Earth will be destroyed by the comet.

On the morning of the comet's arrival, the Hammerlab comes to the realization that the comet's trajectory is nearer the Earth than anyone had thus far predicted. The crew, realizing that they'll likely be pelted with, at the least, high-velocity gravel, consider aborting, but Rick and Leonilla strongly object. They watch as the comet passes behind the moon from them and the moon "rose in it's ghostly net of shock waves." Meanwhile, Harvey Randall is preparing to go to work, though Loretta is fearful and begs him to stay home. He says he can't but promises that he'll never be more than fifteen minutes away. In the Hammerlab, there's a sound that indicates the lab has been hit and a tense moment follows. They all fear that they've misjudged the path of the comet. The width of the comet and the fact that the comet has many pieces, makes it difficult to get an



accurate readout. Now Leonilla shouts that the people of America and Russia must be warned that there will be debris in the sky. She points out that it's a perfect opportunity for fanatics to misinterpret what's coming at them and to fire in retaliation for what they believe to be happening.

On the day of the comet, there's another of the radio broadcasts by Reverend Henry Armitage, who ends his broadcast by saying that donations have paid for these sessions, but with the world at an end no more donations will be requested. Meanwhile, Tim Hamner is trying to get to JPL to watch the comet. Having been up most of the night, he'd dozed off in the early morning and is now running late. He encounters first a major roadblock and then a group of men in white robes chained to streetlights and begging passersby to pray that the comet misses Earth. Eileen is watching the ruckus through the front window of her office, having had no customers that day and knowing that the roadblock would keep all others away. Eric is among the officers who cuts the chains to arrest the white-robed fanatics.

## **June: Four; Hammerfall Morning; Hammerfall: One Analysis**

After the comet strike, someone will ask if those at the nuclear power plant are willing to do what it takes to save it. Barry Price will say that he made that decision soon after the strike when he should have gone to Dolores and didn't.

Gordie and the Scouts are camped on the night of June Fourth as the comet puts on a fabulous light show, so bright that the stars can hardly be seen. Around midnight, Gordie wakes and checks on the kids, finding Andy awake and watching as well. Gordie's is thinking of committing suicide at a particular cliff along the trail. He's chosen that spot because a person near the edge could find themselves on a crumbly spot that will give away, meaning it could realistically be an accident. He wishes there were another way, but knows that he can't continue to cover up the thousands of dollars he's embezzled and that it will soon be discovered. The following morning, he makes hot chocolate as usual, so no one could later say that there was anything out of the ordinary, or that Gordie was depressed.

In Bel Air, Alim and his crew are robbing houses. They find many valuables including a stash of drugs. With several more houses on their list to hit, Alim sees the comet apparently hit the Earth and calls on the CB for all his accomplices to drop what they're doing and meet at "the cabin near Grapevine," which Alim says will be high enough to be safe. He'll later say that they had been rich until they realized that all the things they stole were worthless in this new world.





# Hot Fudge Tuesdae: One; Hammerfall: Two; Hot Fudge Sundae: Two

## Hot Fudge Tuesdae: One; Hammerfall: Two; Hot Fudge Sundae: Two Summary

In a deserted spot in the Santa Monica Mountains, Frank, Mark, and Joanna agree that they'll have no lights that night so that they won't risk alerting someone to their presence. They've arrived on three motorcycles, and though Mark continues to say that it's "a drill," they're awake the following morning when the comet hits. Frank lays all three of the bikes on their sides so that they won't fall when the earthquakes hit, then all three get into their sleeping bags in an open space and wait. Soon, the mountains "begin to dance."

At the JPL communications center, Charles Sharps and Dan Forrester are manning the conversations with the Hammerlab when they hear Johnny Baker say it appears it's "going to hit." They then receive transmission that says there's "a large strike" about three hundred miles from the communication center, followed by a request to send helicopters for the families of the astronauts.

In an underground concrete bunker somewhere in the northeastern United States, Major Bennet Rosten and Captain Harold Luce are waiting commands. The US fear that the Russians will believe the US "blind and crippled" by the comet event, using that as a time to strike. When they receive word of a "red alert," they're joined in the bunker by a third man, a sergeant, who is assigned to stand watch at the door, which is now locked. Rosten and Luce turn their keys in the locks that begin the process to launch their own attack, but it's some time later before they receive additional orders.

On the Greek isles, archaeologists Alexander Willis and MacDonald sit atop a mountain to watch the comet's passing. They are working on a dig of the ancient city of Atlantis. As there's a bright flash behind them, MacDonald closes his eyes, but Willis doesn't and says he believes he's blind. MacDonald says he doesn't believe it will matter and describes for his colleague the oncoming tidal wave that soon engulfs the island as the volcano under the island sends lava to the surface. All on the island are killed.

Chet and Mabel Hawker and their friends, the Andersons, are playing bridge aboard a plane when they see the flash of light from the comet. The plane's captain warns everyone to return to their seats and fasten their seat belts just as the air blast catches them. The plane begins to freefall, and Mabel watches as lightning strikes the Statue of Liberty and then the plane.

On Ocean Boulevard, a bearded man calls for others to pray as the comet hits water off the coast. In the ocean, a man named Gil paddles frantically from shore as the tsunami forms and manages to reach the top of the wave, leaving his married girlfriend, Jeanine,



behind. He rides the wave and considers for a moment that he might live. He and the beaded man see each other as the wave roils over the land and an apartment building appears in front of Gil "like a flyswatter."

Tim continues to search for a store that sells televisions, but the one he locates is not yet open. He is thrown to the ground as the earthquakes begin and is under his car until he smells gas. In her office, Eileen finds that Joe Corrigan, hit by glass from the window, is dead. Eileen looks to Eric Larson for guidance but he, being from Kansas, has no idea what he should do. His partner is dead, and he watches in horror as three men use shotguns to shoot the Comet Wardens - the men in white robes who caused the traffic jams and kept them from leaving the area. Eric, calling on their respect for the law, demands that they not shoot anymore and urges them to leave, first taking one of their shotguns. He then goes back to the Burbank Jail where he finds that a jailer has released all the prisoners except Fred. Eric, citing the fact that no one deserved to die locked in a cell, kills the murderer.

Eileen watches the murder of the white-robed men and then slips out a back door, meeting Tim in the parking lot. Tim is being swept up into the riot and fears he'll be identified as the man "who invented the comet." He grabs an abandoned tape recorder and microphone and shoves it into an armed man's face, asking questions. The man answers, refuses to sign a form which Tim says would allow him to use his statements on television, then runs on. Tim continues to use this technique and Eileen quickly joins him, acting as his assistant. They soon find a car and follow another man out of the area, driving across lawns and soon finding a highway that leads out of town.

At JPL, the screens change from images to static and those manning the controls are shocked into inactivity. Dan Forrester continues to work, plotting the locations of the hits as nearly as possible and figuring fallout. It's Dan who warns that there's going to be an earthquake next and urges everyone into the open parking lot. As the earthquake subsides, Dr. Sharps thinks he hears children crying and then discovers that the janitor, Al Masterson, has brought his wife and children with him to work. Al has heard just enough to know that there's a chance the comet will hit. His station wagon is loaded with supplies, including gasoline in cans strapped to the back. Everyone looks to Sharp for direction, and he says that they should all remain together, but that they should go for their families. He points out Senator Jellison's ranch, high in the mountains, and they split into groups, each headed to retrieve families and then going for higher ground. Dan refuses to go with them, saying that he has to return home for insulin, and that he has things to do. Sharps watches him go, not expecting to see him again.

On the hiking trail, Gordie accounts for all the Scouts. They see the comet strike and Gordie struggles to make sense of the light, considering and dismissing ideas such as it is weapons testing. Then the rain begins and Gordie, tasting the salt, knows that the comet had hit. He says that he now knows that the comet means he won't be facing bank auditors the following week and he can live. He urges the scouts back to Soda Springs to wait out the coming events and hopes that Harvey Randall will see after Gordie's wife.



## Hot Fudge Tuesdae: One; Hammerfall: Two; Hot Fudge Sundae: Two Analysis

As Joanna listens to Mark and Frank, she's increasingly annoyed that Mark continually interrupts Frank with opinions of his own regarding what other catastrophes could cause the end of the world. Frank had felt they'd be safer on the Mojave, but Mark had objected, saying it was a long way to go for a drill. It's important to remember that Frank had originally been undecided whether to accompany the couple, but had because he felt Mark incapable of protecting Joanna and Joanna overly confident that she could protect herself.

As the comet hits the water, a spray goes upward and is quickly spread out over the limits of the atmosphere. Then the water that doesn't evaporate condenses. Soon those who survived will be facing muddy, salty rain that falls heavily.

As Tim and Eileen are driving, Tim wants to stop and help the wounded and those who are just standing around without realizing the danger. Eileen tells him that they can't help the wounded because they're all going to be killed by the tsunami anyway. Tim compromises, hanging his head out of the window and yelling at people to get to higher ground. A woman rushes to the car and shoves a bundle into Tim's hands, yelling that his name is John. Tim looks at the baby, who is dead, and at Eileen's insistence drops it out the window. He says that at least they were able to give the woman hope that her child had lived. Eileen says that they'll become civilized again when they can afford to be, but that their sole purpose now is survival.

One piece of the comet falls into the Sea of Cortez, sending water upward and outward. In the South Atlantic, a wall of water forms, bursting through the channel between Africa and Antarctica. By the time it reaches India, it's only four hundred feet high, having lost half its force and coming to the end of its push at the Himalayas. The "Sacred Ganges is choked with bodies."

Tim and Eileen continue on a road that slopes upward until they're stopped by a landslide. Tim breaks part of a chain link fence from its support posts and Eileen breaks through it so that they can get around the slide. They drive through a golf course, and it's this that makes Tim suddenly realize the extent of the situation. He talks about a woman who had once stepped on a green with her spiked heels and the uproar that ensued and that they are now rutting up the green with no worry of repercussions.

Tim tells Eileen that he has supplies at his observatory and Eileen first accuses him of having "Hammer fever," but he says that he always keeps it well-stocked because he's been snowed in there for as much as a week at a time. With a goal in mind, they continue on, and Tim suddenly seems more interested in moving forward. This same phenomenon is seen in many of the characters. They want to simply sit down and do nothing until someone tells them what to do. It's interesting that when faced with no real idea what they should do next, people need to be told. Many are simply unable to make a decision on their own. This same thing will be seen in the crew from JPL, who turn

instinctively to their director, Dr. Sharps, for instructions and are willing to do what he tells them simply to be doing something.



# Hot Fudge Tuesdae: Three

## Hot Fudge Tuesdae: Three Summary

Harvey struggles to get home through all the traffic, often pushing his way through with the travel all. When he arrives, the front door is open and he makes his way inside, prepared for an oncoming threat, but finds Loretta dead on the floor, apparently having been shot by a shotgun. The dog is also dead and Harvey soon goes to his bedroom to find an array of items on the bed. These things - worthless to most people - were what Loretta had packed as a survival kit and included pantyhose and makeup. The thieves had taken the suitcase she'd been packing, all the jerky Harvey had made and his stockpile of vitamins. He soon just lays down and is almost asleep when Joanne and Mark arrive. They had been ambushed by a group of bikers, apparently the same ones who hit Harvey's house, and Frank had been killed. Now they bury Loretta, pack everything they believe might be of value to them or as a trade, and again leave the house, this time with one of the bikes in the travel all, Mark riding slightly ahead on the others and Joanne driving.

Harvey tells Mark that Andy is up in the mountains with Gordie and suddenly realizes that he doesn't know where Gordie's wife, Marie, is. As they're leaving, they meet Marie, who imperatively orders them to come back to her house so that she can get her things. Mark reluctantly does so, figuring that they'll be there a long time, but finds Marie already changed and waiting on the porch with a blanket bulging full of items she wants to take along. She stops to argue about the route once, agrees that Mark has made the right decision after all, and continues to drive while Joanna rides "shotgun" with her own shotgun ready for protection. Harvey rides in the back, dozing in and out of consciousness and obviously in shock.

Rosten and Luce then get the command that the status regarding the nuclear missiles remains "red." They are then informed that the Soviets weren't the first to fire their own missiles, that they were fired on by China, that the Soviets had not fired on the United States and that the Soviets were requesting retaliation on China. Meanwhile, glowing pieces of the comet fall on land across the Eastern United States and Mexico, while a "mother hurricane" forms over Mexico, forcing floodwaters up the Mississippi Valley.

## Hot Fudge Tuesdae: Three Analysis

Dan goes home where he has many supplies waiting. He picks up a book from his collection, puts it into a Ziplock bag, adds mothballs and seals the bag. He does this dozens of times until he's out of bags, then carts them all to the abandoned septic tank, long out of use, on the back of his property. He believes that there might come a time when someone needs this information. He admits that his degree will no longer be worth anything, but he has a skill that will be needed - he can make insulin and all that's required is a lab and the killing of one sheep per month.



On the Hammerlab, the astronauts don't say anything for some time following the comet strike and then watch in horror as nuclear missiles make patterns across the sky and then produce mushroom clouds. The American craft is damaged, and they are all going to have to leave the lab on the Russian craft. The question is where they will go. Considering the comet and the missile strikes, they know that Jakov's family in Russia are probably dead as are Rick's family in Houston. They talk of the fact of glacier movement that could put much of Russia under water. One of the Americans ask Jakov if he plans to return to Russia to face the nuclear strike or to China to wait for the Russians to invade. They consider Africa but the Americans point out that they don't know the language. They decide that they'll land in California. They know they're on the last of the space missions for some time and agree that they need to save records for the future.



# The Quick and the Dead; Rich Man, Poor Man; The Landlord

## The Quick and the Dead; Rich Man, Poor Man; The Landlord Summary

Eileen and Tim arrive in Tujunga to find it filled with armed men in an array of outdated and ill-fitting uniforms. They are told that a soup line will be forming and that ration cards will be handed out soon. Someone gives him a snack package of cheese and crackers, which he shares with Eileen. Then the two of them decide that they shouldn't remain but should go toward his observatory. They try to buy a car, are told that his money's no good, and meet the car dealership owner, Harry Stimms, who recognizes Tim, does agree to sell them a car for two hundred, fifty-thousand dollars and for fifty thousand more throws in extra gas, oil, rope and some beer. They drive in the near dark, barely able to see and soon almost drive off the road at a collapsed bridge.

Around dawn, a car comes shrieking past them and falls off the end of the bridge, despite Tim's warning honk of their horn. They get out of the car and see that there's a barely adequate gravel road cutting off from the main road. After some discussion, Tim leads the way on foot while Eileen drives. At the bottom of the gorge, they find a stream and realize that the bigger flow is being held back by a dam. Tim wades across, finds it's only keen-deep, and Eileen follows in the car.

Eileen and Tim make it down a dangerous mountain road and up the other side until they reach the road again. They soon come to a collapsed tunnel and some men with shovels are trying to dig a drivable road around. To Tim's news that most of the California basin is flooded and there will be few survivors, Fred Haskins - not really grasping what Tim is saying - says that he expects the army will soon send someone for them and they might as well try to clear a way over the mountain. When they hit the road on the other side, they find people gathered at a ranger's station. There's a church group with some ninety kids as well as some campers. A ranger asks Tim what they should do, and Tim tells him that they can't return to "civilization" because it's gone. Tim advises him to find ranches or food warehouses and to plant anything edible, since it's only June and there's still time for some production. The ranger asks Tim to go with him, but he declines, saying it's easier for small groups to find ways to feed themselves. Against his own wishes, he agrees to take four of the young church children with him.

They arrive at Tim's observatory to find several men - led by Marty Robbins - guarding with guns, refusing Tim admittance and saying generally that laws of ownership no longer exist. Marty says that they'd discussed what to do on the off chance Tim arrived, and that he isn't allowed to remain. There's an argument as Marty seems ready to kill Tim, asks that Eileen remain with them since they're "a woman short." But the other two men, Larry and Fitz, face down Marty. Then Larry's wife, Mary Sue, sees the children in the car and agrees to keep them. She seems reasonable, asking Tim if he wants the



children to remain with them despite Fitz's objections. Before Tim and Eileen leave, they're given a couple of cans of soup and some gas. The argument continues as Marty suggests that allowing Tim and Eileen to leave in their car might not be a good idea, but Larry tells him that if the talk of murder continues, their previous deal, regarding their survival, is off.

## **The Quick and the Dead; Rich Man, Poor Man; The Landlord Analysis**

With no options at the point of the collapsed bridge, Eileen and Tim sit in the car, and Tim reaches for her, but she is passive. He agrees that it's not the place, but she says that she will be with him, if that's what he wants. She then says that it looks as if the two of them are going to be together and that they might as well be married. Tim wonders if he should have tried to save his own family and berates himself for thinking only of his own life. He tells Eileen that she is the one who's gotten them this far and that he's worthless, but she tells him that when she found him in the middle of the riot, she was elated.

In London, the floodwaters begin to recede, leaving the Thames bulging with bodies. Back in the car, Tim and Eileen wake, shivering with cold, and Eileen moves onto Tim, asking if he's "still in the mood." They make love and Tim wonders at it, but notes that it's not so unbelievable that on the night the world comes to an end, the survivors "screw like a couple of minks." He puts his arm protectively around her, pleased with the reflex to protect.

While people are depending on military, police and rescue crews to save them, the hard truth is that those people are going to be of little actual use. For example, Captain Hora is leading a group of troops when their convoy is blocked by mudslides. One of the members of the team, Corporal Gillings, knows that he won't allow Captain Hora to continue to order him around. Despite the fact that the troops don't have live rounds of ammunition, Gillings does have some shells and he puts several rounds into his gun in preparation of carrying out his plan.





# The Mailman: One; The Mailman: Two; The Stronghold: One

## The Mailman: One; The Mailman: Two; The Stronghold: One Summary

Near Silver Valley Ranch, Jason Gillcuddy announces to his friend, Harry Newcombe, that he's finished his book and will soon be leaving the valley. Harry hears that news, celebrates the book with a cup of brandy, and is driving on with his route when the earthquake hits. He travels onward and is soon beset by a mud slide. He tries to navigate it but the truck overturns. He remains in the truck overnight, and wakes, piles all the first class mail in his bag and sets out on foot. He reaches the Miller's place where Jack, Cicelia and Roy are busy harvesting their tomatoes. Cicelia tries to take him into town, but the road ahead is cracked open and Harry returns to help the Miller's with their harvesting. The next morning, he goes on with his route, despite the downpour. He arrives at the commune led by Hugo Beck to learn that the comet did hit. They are amazed that the mailman is out delivering mail and urge him to forget it, but Harry says that he will finish his route.

Harry arrives at the home of Carrie Roman. The gate is, as always, padlocked, but Harry calls out that he has mail for them. Then a shot comes his way and he rushes for cover, soon abandoning the idea of going on down the road and jumps into a ditch, half swimming to get away.

He then goes to the Mucho Nombre Ranch, a property shared by several families who could never agree on a single name. There are two families now in residence and some guests, who sought to get away from the devastation in the lower regions. Harry spends the night on the floor because the beds and couch are all taken. The next morning, their conversation turns to what they should do next. One of the men, Norm Lilly, wants to meet the Romans and asks Harry for an introduction, calling it one of his first "post-comet" messages. Harry agrees and the two men drive to the Roman place, and Norm is shot, without warning, full in the chest with a shotgun. Again, Harry runs but takes the mailbag along.

Harry's next stop is the Chicken Ranch, owned by the Sinanians, a couple who have an entirely automated egg operation. The chickens are all out of their pens and the owners inside, dead. The wife apparently died of natural causes and the husband of a self-inflicted shot. Harry moves the bodies from the house, takes the pistol for his own protection, and decides to take up residence there himself.

Jellison listens to the transmissions from the Hammerlab from his home in the mountains and hears the astronaut's transmission that the comet is going to hit Earth. He goes into town to talk to the area officials, including Mayor Seitz. The conference between Jellison and Seitz includes several men from the area and Jellison soon makes



it clear that they're totally cut off from any organized government. Seitz soon bows to Jellison's authority, saying that he may be mayor of this tiny town but isn't qualified for this type of emergency. A man named George Christopher points out that they're going to be flooded with people seeking refuge and advises that they stop that tide from coming in. While Jellison doesn't immediately agree, it soon becomes policy that no one is allowed into the area unless their names appear on a "very short" list. George and his brother Ray are among those who man the incoming check point, and the two men also create a landslide across the major road into the area, later blowing up a bridge to eliminate any traffic. Jellison points out that they need some particular professionals, including doctors.

While there's some dissent over the issue, Jellison makes the point that the best course is to pool resources, so the entire community can survive. While Ray says that it sounds like communism, George says that it makes sense to join together. He cites the fact that the last bit of feed shouldn't be wasted on cattle that won't make the winter anyway. Jellison suggests setting up a council to make those decisions. His assistant, Al Hardy, will actually take over many of the duties associated with this task.

## **The Mailman: One; The Mailman: Two; The Stronghold: One Analysis**

Hugo Beck and his followers say that there's "no more establishment," and point to Harry's uniform, urging him to get rid of it. He says that he doesn't really know what they do there and it does occur to him that they could be growing weed. They refuse to take him into town, citing the need to conserve fuel, or to feed him, saying that they soon won't have anyplace to purchase food.

Harry's idea, though not yet formed, is to continue delivering the mail. While it can be argued that there will be no more mass mailings coming into the area, there is a no other method for passing messages among the residents of the area. He will soon come to the conclusion that this is a service he can provide and one that is needed. Meanwhile, he literally risks his life to put a package in Carrie Roman's mailbox. He's already been shot at by the time he does so, but he rushes to the box, shoves in the package, and rushes back for cover. And as he's being shot at, he jumps into a ditch to get away but doesn't leave behind his mail.

Jellison has some health issues which causes Al Hardy some concern, though the exact nature of the problem isn't outlined. At the Jellison ranch after the town meeting, the senator asks Maureen about her relationship with George Christopher. She says it's none of his business, but Jellison says everything is now his business, especially if something could create a problem for the people under his protection. Maureen assures him that it was a teenage crush but doesn't tell him that they made love at age fifteen. George has never married, though Maureen says it's ridiculous to think he has pined for all for the past sixteen years. She does have some sort of relationship with Johnny Baker, the astronaut, but there are few details other than the fact that Jellison knows of the situation, that Johnny has recently divorced and that Jellison seems to approve.



# Sanctuary; Beggar Man; The Stronghold: Two

## Sanctuary; Beggar Man; The Stronghold: Two Summary

Harvey Randall is awakened by an argument between Marie and Mark. He settles it by looking at a map and deciding that Mark is making the best decision regarding which direction to go and notes that they'll be traveling by the Jellison ranch. He takes over the driving and admits that it's time for him to stop wallowing in his self-pity and to take action of his own. They're met at the gate by a guard who takes the message of Harvey's presence to the house. They're allowed in and Jellison asks what purpose they can fill, a point Harvey takes as a sign that Jellison is in control and the ranch is now a stronghold. Harvey notes this as security and approves. With Mark's military training, Jellison agrees to have them stay on. Harvey, noting that they're not far from where Gordie and the scout troop will likely emerge from the woods, convinces Marie that they should stay.

Eileen sleeps as Tim drives and he notes that she sleeps through the best driving he's ever likely to do. He comes to a series of drop-offs, calculates weight, trajectory and distance with consideration to g-force and manages to make it through some rough roads. They continue traveling until water blocks their path, passing several stalled cars and at least two men armed with shotguns. Eileen, checking the map, decides they're near a railroad track and manages to get on the rails, driving the rails through the coming hours. Tim manages to poke a hole in a soup can with the bumper of the truck and they eat that while riding out a hurricane.

Al is on guard at the gate when Harry arrives with the mail. Jellison is surprised but Harry explains that he sees there'll be a need for messengers, even when there are no letters from outside the area to be delivered. Jellison asks how he expects to be paid and Harry says that he believes the customers will take care of that. Jellison takes the hint and has Mrs. Cox bring Harry coffee. Jellison then asks how Harry got through the roadblocks, and Harry says that he simply waved at George Christopher as he passed, and that he wasn't questioned.

Harry shares information about all the places he's been, tells Al that he's killed a bear and that the meat should be recovered quickly, then invites Jellison to take whatever chickens he needs from the many running loose at the Chicken Ranch. Harry fills in many gaps in Jellison's knowledge of area events: that the people from Mucho Nombre Ranch were looking for him, that a man named Deke Wilson has a stronghold similar to that of Jellison, and confirmed that the San Joaquin Valley was flooded.



## Sanctuary; Beggar Man; The Stronghold: Two Analysis

Eileen and Tim meet up with another group, stalled at an impassable landslide. They share their remaining can of soup and some wood they've had drying in their car for a fire. As the group breaks up, one of the families, Brad and Rosa Wagoner, remain behind with their two children because of a broken axle. Tim can't stand to leave them behind and they take the Wagoners along with them. They choose a road that leads in the general direction of Jellison's ranch. Tim hopes to find refuge there because he donated fifty-thousand dollars to the senator's campaign. They arrive at the roadblock and are denied admittance. Then Tim recognizes Mark Czescu from Harvey's crew and comes up with a plan. Citing Mark's concrete experience, Brad's building experience and Tim's electrical knowledge, he presents the fact that the three of them can get a water-powered electrical site in operation.

That idea, along with Brad's military background, earn them Jellison's approval, and they're allowed into the stronghold. It's interesting that many of those who really want to help others will assure themselves that they can't help everyone and will manage to save only themselves. It seems that Tim and Eileen just can't bring themselves to leave the Wagoners behind. It's also interesting to watch the dynamics at work - that some people have no trouble protecting their own and leaving everyone else to fend for themselves.

Al Hardy doesn't like guard duty but does it to keep people away from Jellison. He notes that he can say "no," but that Jellison tends to say "yes." Al believes that the only way to keep them from being overrun with refugees is to keep them away from the senator. He also notes that he had considered himself a good judge of character, but that was in a previous life. Now, every refugee who approaches the gate looks like a walking scarecrow and they look worse as the days pass. He is relentless. There was a councilman from another town who pulled a gun on Al and ordered admittance to the senator. Al raised his hands, as if in surrender, which was actually the sign for the rifleman to fire - and the councilman was killed instantly.

Meanwhile, the comet hurls on into outer space, leaving its mark on the Earth. Some things - the earthquakes, floods and rains - will soon pass just as the tsunamis and hurricanes begin to wind down. But there will be snow over the Arctic that will remain for centuries.



# **After Doomsday First Week: The Princess; Second Week: Mountain Men; Fourth Week: The Wanderers**

## **After Doomsday First Week: The Princess; Second Week: Mountain Men; Fourth Week: The Wanderers Summary**

Harvey and Mark are making their way into the mountains in search of Gordie, Andy and the Scouts. As they're searching for a place to camp, they smell wood smoke and climb in that direction. They are suddenly told to stop by a young girl, and then Andy approaches. Harvey rushes to Andy who immediately asks about his mother. As Harvey explains her fate, Andy and the girl stand together. Harvey is then taken on to the makeshift camp, where Gordie is waiting with the other scouts and girls that Harvey discovers are also Scouts. Gordie says that the girls had been captured by a group of bikers who had raped one girl to death and killed the Scout leader who was trying to stop it. Gordie and the boys invaded and killed the bikers. Gordie says that Andy killed two. The boys are all teamed with a girl, all in sleeping bags together, including Andy. Gordie has a young girl, no more than sixteen, in his own sleeping bag. Harvey tells him that Marie is at the ranch, and Gordie says she cares nothing for him or their son and that she won't even want to see them once she knows they're alive. The next morning, he says that he and the boys have taken a vote, that they won't go with Harvey, but that he's welcome to stay. Harvey, realizing that he's actually lost Andy to this lifestyle, declines, as does Mark.

Dan Forrester is walking through the woods when he encounters a man in a ragged military uniform. The man demands whatever food Dan has, takes an almost spoiled fish and the chocolate Dan had been saving for a moment when he had something to celebrate. He also takes Dan's windbreaker and one of his two cooking pots. The man explains that he was among a military group that killed its leader and turned rogue. Dan, angry that the man was taking his windbreaker, asks if he realizes that there are no more factories to make material and no more machines to shape the fabric. This seems to make some slight impact on the man and as he backs away into the woods; he warns Dan not to go west because there are a group of military men there who have killed a man and woman and eaten them. Dan is not surprised to learn of cannibalism, but is surprised that it's occurring so soon. He counts himself lucky that he got away with what he has, decides to stay away from the west, and moves on.

Sergeant Hooker is marching with his men, including a captive named Dr. Cowles. Hooker knows that he should have killed Gillings as soon as he found out that Gillings had shot their commander, Hora. Now they're almost all weak and sick, and Cowles



relentlessly tells him that it's from eating humans, though Cowles himself ate as well. While they're having this conversation, they see the space shuttle coming to land.

The shuttle is basically flying blind, unable to see through the cloud cover. By the time the clouds break, it's too late for them to change course anyway, and they land safely on the property controlled by Deke Wilson. Johnny is first out and he explains the reason they're in the Russian shuttle. Deke explains the recent attack by the military group, and Leonilla is surprised that conditions are so bad so soon. They arrive at the Wilson home to find foxholes, and Johnny says there should be better fortifications, but says he doesn't know what it should be. They are told of Jellison's ranch nearby and Deke plans to send word that the astronauts are here. He says that they might be of use to Jellison and that it would be good to have the senator owe him for a change. He then says that the astronauts will be expected to work while they're his guests.

## **After Doomsday First Week: The Princess; Second Week: Mountain Men; Fourth Week: The Wanderers Analysis**

Maureen is having a crisis, but it's mainly of her own fear that she will not be able to save all the people depending on her family. She says that she "snoops" through homes, taking inventory and creating lists of items to be shared in the best way possible. She says many of the people willingly give her access to everything they own and trust that the Jellisons are going to see them through the coming events. Maureen believes they won't be able to provide that security and feels that she's misleading the people. While she's struggling with this, she encounters Harvey. Harvey encourages her to tell him what's wrong and counters with a story of his own. He says that the conditions outside the stronghold are worse than she can imagine and that there was a point where he was willing to just give up. He says that he was encouraged to continue and that the hope that things were going to work out is worth more than she can know. He says that she and her father can't work miracles, but that if they can give someone hope that it's going to be alright, they've given that person a few more hours or days of peace. They come together and make love, though Maureen tells him that she doesn't love him. He tells her that she barely knows him and urges her to give it time. He then says that he's going to try to go out in a couple of days to find Andy, and she says she wants him to return safely.

Under the direction of Gordie and Andy, the Scouts seem to be doing well. They have rigged a suitable shelter and have plenty to eat, having caught fish and game and found some wild vegetables that Harvey doesn't recognize. It's Gordie who says that the boys are carrying on the role of men in this setting and that they know they'll be reduced back to the roles of children if they go with Harvey. Harvey notes that Gordie is different, but can't really put his finger on what it is. It seems possible that Gordie has cast off the yearning for civilization, but it's not hard to imagine why, since he was posed to commit suicide just before the comet hit.

It's noted that there are some changes to the Earth at this point, including that Florida is "a series of islands." Volcanoes continue to erupt, and it's still raining almost continuously—there will be more changes before the impact of the comet subsides.

The group of military men have tried to find a place they could settle down, but know it has to provide food and shelter and be defensible. All those places are taken, and they haven't had the manpower to take over. Hooker knows they need recruits, but haven't been successful on that front, either. Now, Hooker watches as the shuttle comes down to Earth, though it takes him a minute to figure out what he's seeing. One of the men asks whether astronaut would taste like turkey, and Hooker says they'll never know because the shuttle is falling in the area where they were shot up the day before. It's noted that only the doctor, Cowles, can see Hooker's face as he says this and that Cowles isn't likely to tell what he sees there. The topic isn't explained further, and it's up to the reader to determine what emotion that might have been.

When Rick steps out of the space shuttle, he announces that he was the first black man in space and probably the last for a thousand years. Then someone asks if they made him "ride in the back," which prompts some laughs from those gathered.





# Fourth Week: The Prophet; Sixth Week: High Justice

## Fourth Week: The Prophet; Sixth Week: High Justice Summary

Alim Nassor and his gang are wandering the hills without any clear purpose, and there are fights erupting over the few women included in the group. Alim knows that it's "bad" to have women along but worse to have none. The problem is there are few women and four men have been killed over the women. One of the women committed suicide after her husband was killed. Alim and Jackie talk about the situation, and it's Jackie who says the blacks have gotten what they always wanted; city hall is gone and there's no more rule to keep the blacks down. The problem now is that there aren't enough blacks to hold onto even a small piece of land in order to live. A couple of those with Alim, Chick and Cassie, have farmed, but none of the others know anything about survival in this situation. As Jackie and Alim discuss this, Jackie points out a group of armed men below. It's led by a man Alim knows as "Hook," and they estimate the group to be some fifty or sixty men. Alim goes in to meet him, flanked by Jackie and Jackie's brother, Harold, hoping to join but to retain some of his own power.

Rick Delanty is with a group from Deke Wilson's farm, going through a flooded home in search of anything that might be useful. He heard the previous night from a refugee that a group of blacks - Alim's gang - had joined up with the military group that has turned cannibal. Deke knows that the large group might now return to his farm. They find apple juice, submerged but good, and some other items. The store is half flooded and filled with rotting corpses and, as one man says, they've just had to get used to it and move on.

At the Jellison ranch, preparations are continuing. There are now greenhouses around the property as the snow on the mountain creeps ever lower, prompted by storms, though there's now a couple of hours of sunshine every day. Jellison holds court whenever the need arises. The event includes rewards of candy bars for any children who catch vermin such as rats. Then he has to decide the fate of Peter Bonar, who has been caught hoarding chicken feed and seed corn - his second offense. Jellison tells him that he has to leave the stronghold, though his children can stay. Bonar says they have no right to separate him from his family and Jellison considers the ramifications of putting children out. Jellison considers that they will likely grow up hating everyone in the community for putting their father out and says Peter can take the children as well. Jellison then agrees to have the son of a woman named Mrs. Darden stay on in the stronghold. Jellison says that allowing the woman's one surviving relative to stay isn't a difficult decision but notes that she doesn't look as if she'll survive the winter. Jellison finds himself hating her because she'll eat food that won't sustain her and could do good for someone else.





These court proceedings are now being held at the Jellison ranch and are attended by armed guards. They had been held in town at city hall with an effort to give some credence to the proceedings. Al Hardy is running the court, taking notes and has much power. Jellison tells Al to decide what Bonar can take with him when he leaves. Al notes that Jellison is tired, and Jellison himself thinks that there's going to be a time in the not-too-distant future when he can rest, though he doesn't say why he believes things will be so much better once they've survived the winter.

## **Fourth Week: The Prophet; Sixth Week: High Justice Analysis**

In the camp, Alim and Hooker discuss their situation. They're out of food, though they've killed a farmer, cooked him into a stew, and everyone ate a portion. Alim killed the one woman who refused. For Alim, it's a source of pride that his people never considered that a possibility, though they are now cannibals because Hooker otherwise wouldn't have allowed them to join up. The fact of cannibalism seems to hold the group together, likely in their mutual shame of taking that drastic step.

Alim tells of his encounter with the bikers and the blue van, the same group that killed Loretta. He says that Alim's man, Hannibal, had been snorting cocaine and when they stopped the van, he took it upon himself to throw in a Molotov cocktail, starting a fire that burned the van filled with food, gas and supplies.

Alim and Hooker are putting off their discussion of what to do next when they get word of someone approaching. It's the Reverend Henry Armitage. He claims to be a messenger of God and says that the group Hooker leads has been spared for a purpose. He goes so far as to say that everything they've done has had a purpose. Hooker likes the sound of that - that there was a deeper reason for their cannibalism.



## **Ninth Week: The Organization Man; Tenth Week: Journey's End**

### **Ninth Week: The Organization Man; Tenth Week: Journey's End Summary**

Harvey and Mark are splitting rocks, and Harvey notes that someone has figured the necessary caloric intake for those working at this manual labor, but that his stomach doesn't think it's enough. Alice Cox arrives, summoning Harvey to Jellison's house. There he finds a meeting that includes the major and police chief, as well as George Christopher. Al Hardy tells them that the current supplies and what's being planted should be sufficient to make the winter. The other purpose of the meeting is to discuss Harvey's plan to go "Outside" on a salvage expedition. He points out that there are many things under water that can be of use, but that won't be any good by the following spring. There's concern that those going out would have to fight and could be killed, taking valuable manpower and supplies from the stronghold, and that the stronghold might not be able to defend itself if a large force were to go out together.

At the sound of a kitchen timer, Tim picks up a rifle and goes to check on the pass that has been used by people trying to get into the stronghold. He likens this task to sky watching, saying that all you had to do was memorize what the area looks like, then look for something that doesn't belong. On this day, he sees Deke Wilson's truck coming. They've been expecting Deke, who sent word that he's bringing visitors. As soon as they arrive, Deke, Jellison and some others meet. Deke says that he's expecting an attack from the men who call themselves the New Brotherhood Army. That band includes Hooker, Alim and the Reverend Armitage. Deke asks for sanctuary in the stronghold, is told that there's not enough food, and Jellison says that he believes they'll have a few weeks reprieve before an attack. Johnny then gives an overview of what they saw from space.

### **Ninth Week: The Organization Man; Tenth Week: Journey's End Analysis**

The living arrangements at this point have Harvey, Tim, Eileen, Mark, Joanna and the four Wagoners living in a single dwelling, and they're now building on to make a little more room. At the Jellison's house, there's a new addition as well, this one to house the guns, ammunition and supplies not being carried by the armed guards.

Outside the meeting, Al tells Harvey that he should stay away from Eileen because the only logical choice for a husband for Eileen is the person who will take the senator's place. Al confides that Jellison had planned to retire for health reasons and that his life expectancy may not be more than a year, and could be shorter. He reasons that the



only way the stronghold can continue is for Eileen to align herself with the next leader. Al says he's an outsider, as is Harvey, meaning they can't be that leader, and says that if Jellison dies without naming someone as his successor, Al will say he did and choose anyway.

Maureen has barely a nod for Harvey in public though they continue to meet socially. She tells the Reverend Varley that she has a lover but isn't free to love him openly and that her life has always been meaningless but at least it was exciting before the comet strike. She says she can't understand the purpose for the comet but that she can't believe in a God who would allow it. Varley responds that perhaps the purpose was to "shock a Washington socialite enough to make her take a strong look at her life." She walks away thinking that she's going to have a talk with Harvey, that she can't stand the current situation any longer.

As Rick and the others arrive, he notes that there are some differences between the people here and those at Deke's place, and that both are vastly different from what the world was like before the comet. To a gathered crowd, he explains about the missiles, that China fired on Russia, Russia fired back and that if Americans ever managed to reach that region, they'd find Russia covered in ice and Russians in China. He ends by saying Russia and America are now allies, a foreign thought to those gathered.



# Exile's Story; The Magician; The Expedition

## Exile's Story; The Magician; The Expedition Summary

Harry returns on foot, saying that the New Brotherhood Army took his truck. He has two men with him - Dan Forrester and Hugo Beck. Harry is certain that those in the stronghold will want Forrester because of his knowledge and his book. Beck was cast out of the stronghold for theft, and Harry brings him back to tell the story of the New Brotherhood Army. Dan is taken in, the diabetic sores on his feet cleaned, and he says that it's a strange feeling to know that he's safe at least for the next few hours. Beck is treated with hostility, but Harry insists that he be allowed to tell his story. Beck says that the New Brotherhood has enough food, mainly salvaged from supermarkets, but that they use cannibalism as rituals and to ensure loyalty. He says they are now about a thousand strong but that he believes they'll go to the San Joaquin Nuclear Plant before they attack Deke Wilson's place.

Dan Forrester hears some of the conversation about the new Brotherhood Army and the nuclear plant. Hugo Beck says that Armitage is preaching that all works of man should be destroyed, and that the "army" is following that train of thought. Dan says they must save the nuclear plant because civilization depends on electricity. He suggests that he can create mustard gas, napalm or even a nerve gas as a weapon against the New Brotherhood.

Tim and Eileen are expecting a child, and Tim promises that he'll return from a planned expedition to see the child born, though he teasingly says Eileen's figure indicates it might be twins.

A man named Jason, and Tim, Johnny, Hugo and several others head out to save the power plant from the New Brotherhood Army, knowing it to be the last possible source of electricity for the foreseeable future. They join with a group from a nearby settlement, a fishing village. Al Hardy has reluctantly agreed to house the women of that settlement within the stronghold for the coming winter in return for the use of two boats and a barge. At the power plant, they have access to washers, dryers, hot water for bathing and learn that the plant has been operating under the direction of Barry Price, though Los Angeles Mayor Bentley Allen is also on the grounds. The power plant workers soon come up with several things needed for Tim's diving expedition - including a depth gauge. Tim finds a general store, grabbing a few things from inside just as his air runs out. Back at the surface, they see other boats approaching, apparently carrying the New Brotherhood Army; there is a deck that seems to be a gun platform on one boat. In fact, Hooker has agreed for Alim to take two hundred men and go to the power plant, leaving behind the majority of the group.



## Exile's Story; The Magician; The Expedition Analysis

Mark has guard duty, which he says is better than "making little rocks out of big rocks," but it has its drawbacks as well. He says a family of four had managed to bicycle through the valley to reach the stronghold, and he'd had to turn them away. He reasons that four people won't make or break the stronghold's resources but then knows that if these four are allowed in, there will just be four more on another day, all with nothing but hope of finding something. He tells the four of a fishing village that's "barely hanging on," and they ride away.

Tim notes that the women look grim and that trying to appear nonchalant would be a wasted effort. Mark, on the other hand, is "indecently cheerful." Mark, who has little reason to care why they're fighting, has dubbed the expedition "The War of Harry's Truck."

Tim says that the comet created some cultural changes as well as all the other changes. He doesn't mention his own situation, though Eileen is now known as Eileen Hamner. He does point to Harry, Donna and Jason. Harry and Jason are both "married" to Donna, and Tim says that it seems to make sense because Harry is often gone for long periods of time and there'd otherwise be no one to watch over the Chicken Ranch in his absence.



# Expendables; The Valley of Death; The Aftermath; The Final Decision

## Expendables; The Valley of Death; The Aftermath; The Final Decision Summary

Harvey is called on to create obstacles for the Brotherhood Army as they begin the attack on the stronghold. The objective is to buy time for Dan to complete the manufacture of mustard gas. Harvey knows he's been chosen because he has no special service that's indispensable in the stronghold and he had served in Viet Nam. The group going to help him are largely youngsters in their mid to late teens, and Harvey knows they've been assigned to him for the same reason - they are ultimately expendable. Harvey and the others fell trees, set an oil slick trap and blow bridges along the way, but the massive army continues onward, swarming so quickly that Harvey's group are often doing nothing more but running. They do manage to hold the invaders back long enough and the mustard gas is ultimately effective and efficient. With the army in the valley, the men of the stronghold cast jars down and the gas quickly fills the valley. It's several days before the gas completely dissipates.

Those dead after the battle include Deke Wilson with Joanna and several others having near-misses. Of the Brotherhood, many are dead as a result of the gas, including Alim Nassor. After the battle, Maureen walks in on a conversation regarding the prisoners. George is opposed to outright releasing them, saying the Brotherhood will never again fight against the stronghold but they'll kill others. George says they should be put to death and volunteers for the duty, but Maureen objects. She says that they should be put to labor, but not called "slaves" lest the people begin acting as cruel slave masters and become accustomed to that evil. Jellison, obviously ill and trying to conserve energy, nods his agreement and Al tells Eileen it's time to establish a POW camp.

Tim returns as the stronghold is celebrating its victory. He is injured and says that Johnny Baker had given his own life, ramming a speed boat into the Brotherhood's barge when it seemed the invaders would take the power plant. Now Tim wants others to go with him to help defend the power plant, but most say they don't want to fight anymore. Al says that he'll welcome the men from the power plant into the stronghold, but Tim says it's the fact that with the power plant, there can be hot showers and electric razors and a chance at rebuilding society that matters. Leonilla says that with proper lighting, she could have saved at least ten of those who died as a result of their battlefield injuries. Though it takes some arguing, they agree that the power plant must be saved and they do so.



## Expendables; The Valley of Death; The Aftermath; The Final Decision Analysis

Many of those who were sent to fight break and run, and Harvey admits that he would have been with them if not for Marie Vance. He later says that it wasn't acceptable to go off and leave Marie behind, and so he stays and fights. Marie is an excellent shot and kills several motorcyclists herself. After the first day, Harvey and Marie spend a night in the truck and make love. Marie says that there's nothing permanent to the arrangement, that they know each other too well to become lovers, and that she has designs on George Christopher. She tells Harvey that he has a chance with Maureen and wishes him luck.

Maureen and Marie are only two of the females who fight alongside the men during the battle to stave off the Brotherhood. In addition, young Alice Cox - just ten years old - mans a radio that serves as a relay station between the various points.

Maureen considers whether her lack of will to carry on was real, especially now that she's faced death and fought to save her life and those of her family and friends. She reflects now on their world. The children learn reading and arithmetic, but now their lessons include how to herd pigs and catch rats. Rat hides are used for clothes, the meat can be eaten and their bones are suitable for needles. Pig manure, along with other forms of waste, is stockpiled and the resulting heat used to warm the former convalescent home now used as the hospital. The methane gas is used to power trucks, including those that gather manure.

Maureen goes to the hospital later where she helps Leonilla with cross-matching blood samples. As Leonilla puts it, there is no way to store blood "except in the donor," so a card is created for each person in the valley along with potential blood donors so that if there's ever a need for a transfusion, it can be accomplished.

Meanwhile, Harvey is working to help kill those downed in the valley, victims of the mustard gas who have not yet died. They're using a crossbow and bolts and Harvey notes that the gas will dissipate over the next couple of days. Meanwhile, it seems more humane to end the suffering of those remaining than to leave them to die the slower death of the poison. Harvey considers that the Brotherhood, in sweeping the area around the stronghold, has done well in clearing the region of would-be interlopers.

Jellison dies just as the group are forced to decide whether to go to the aid of those at the power plant. He urges them to save the plant and his final wishes are obeyed.

The following spring finds Tim looking over the stronghold. Much of the water has receded, leaving behind some swampy areas. The valley where the battle had occurred is now being cultivated for crops and electric lines are being strung so that the stronghold will have electricity within a couple of weeks. Tim looks up to see a white streak across the sky and realizes that it's a jet. He'd heard that some aircraft survived in Colorado Springs and now he knows it to be true.



Tim pats his shirt pocket, laughing at the irony of the message delivered to him by Harry the postman. It's from Harry Stimms, and it's an IOU for a quarter of a million dollars - the price of the car Tim had purchased. Tim wonders what he can use to satisfy the debt. He knows he can get Stimms a job at the power plant. He also figures that a pregnant cow should be worth the two-hundred, fifty-thousand dollars of the IOU.





# Characters

## Tim Hamner

The man who discovers the comet that becomes known as the Hammer-Brown Comet. At one point, in a mob of people immediately after the comet strike, Tim worries he's going to be recognized and killed for having "invented" the comet. Tim is wealthy. He owns a soap company called Kalva Soap and oversees the operations, and admits that he depends overly much on money. Once the comet strikes, he heads for higher ground with a woman named Eileen. When they find themselves without a vehicle, Tim's answer is to simply buy what they need. He is only beginning to realize that his credit cards will be worthless as would be any cash he happened to have. Tim does find a car dealer who knows him and knows of Tim's wealth. The car dealer seems to know that the world as he knows it is coming to an end and that once he leaves the dealership - as he's planning to do - no laws will protect his inventory from those who want the vehicles. With that in mind, Tim plays on his wealth one more time and trades a quarter of a million dollar IOU for a car. He will later joke, saying that it's the most expensive car he's ever purchased but that it was well worth it. Tim changes dramatically over the course of the story, though it seems that his resourceful nature was in him all along. It took losing his monetary wealth to bring out the side of Tim that would pick up a gun and patrol an area to keep it safe from interlopers.

## Senator Arthur Clay Jellison

Jellison is a fan of the space program, and it's at his request that the United States puts astronauts up to study the comet. Jellison listens carefully to the scientists who talk about the comet and takes the public stand that there's nothing to worry about and no need to panic. Privately, he tells some of his people to buy up camping gear and supplies, just in case the comet doesn't miss after all. Jellison owns a ranch in the mountains above the San Joaquin Valley, and it's there his neighbors gather to create a region that would come to be known as the stronghold. Jellison becomes judge and jury here, ordering the executions or expulsions of those who don't obey the laws as they exist there, including that against hoarding goods that might be used for the common good of the people.

## Al Hardy

Senator Jellison's right-hand-man. Al says he had hoped to win the Congressional seat when Jellison retired, but he knows he can't possibly rule the stronghold after the senator's death. Though not an official ruler, it's Al who keeps track of food, supplies, and everything that might be of use to them during their struggle to survive.



## Maureen Jellison

Maureen is the daughter of Senator Arthur Jellison. She is a beautiful young woman who hates the thought that she's the "princess" of Jellison's kingdom. She says that she feels like a prize to be won and that the man who wins her hand will become the new ruler of the "kingdom." Maureen has sex with Harvey before the comet strikes, but later can't decide whether that's truly where her heart lies.

## Harvey Randall

A documentary film maker who focuses on the comet as the subject for one of his projects. Harvey, like Senator Jellison, takes the public stand that the comet is going to miss the Earth. Privately, he buys roasts to make into jerky, vitamins and pepper that would make good trade goods, and fills the family pool with fresh water without chlorine - all just in case the comet does strike. He later berates himself because he didn't stay at home when the comet struck, leaving his wife alone to die at the hands of thieves.

## Barry Price

The project manager at the San Joaquin Nuclear project. Barry holds onto the power plant after the comet strike, though he and his men work around the clock to do so. When someone asks whether he plans to remain and fight for the continued operation of what is likely the last source of electricity in the area, Price says that he's already decided to do so when he remained at the plant rather than going to try to find his girlfriend who was expecting his child.

## Dr. Leonilla Alexandrovna Malik

The Soviet who is trained as a kosmonaut and remains hopeful that she'll eventually be chosen for a mission because she believes the Americans will have females in space and the Soviets will follow suit. Meanwhile, she's stationed in the northern Soviet Union where she's working as a doctor. She is chosen to go into space to study the comet. Leonilla supports the idea that there's no need to return to Russia following the comet strike. She becomes a physician in the stronghold upon landing on Earth.

## Gordie Vance

Harvey's next door neighbor who wants to take Harvey's son, Andy, on a hike with a group of scouts. Gordie actually has embezzled a significant amount of money from the bank where he works and is planning to commit suicide while on the hike. After the comet strike, he notes that he now doesn't have to die. When Harvey finds him, Gordie and his group of scouts have rescued some young girls, and Gordie has paired off with one of them.



## **Andy Randall**

Andy is Harvey Randall's son. Andy is on a hiking trip in the mountains with Gordie Vance when the comet strikes. When Harvey finds Andy, he learns that Andy has killed some men in order to rescue a group of young girls, and that he is now paired with one of those. Andy refuses to leave the mountains with his father, and Harvey admits that Andy and those with him might become a new breed of "mountain men."

## **Alim Nassor**

A black man who robs houses after the owners have left the city for fear of "hammer fever." Alim and his gang are highly successful, taking televisions and other electronics. They later find that these things are worthless and dump most of them to make room for items that really are important to their survival. Alim dies of mustard gas poisoning in a battle against the stronghold.



## Objects/Places

### The Hammer-Brown

The comet discovered by Tim Hamner. When the comet becomes public knowledge, some people blame Hamner for "inventing it."

### Kalva Soap Company

The company owned by Tim Hamner.

### San Joaquin Nuclear Power Plant

A nuclear power plant whose operation has been delayed by an array of problems but comes online just as the comet strikes. Though some will later strive to destroy the plant, others will risk their lives to save it, citing the need for electricity in order to rebuild society.

### Corrigan Plumbing Supplies

A company in Burbank where Eileen Susan Hancock works.

### Security First Federal Bar

The bar where Harvey meets up with Mark Czescu.

### Soda Springs

Where Gordie is camping with a group of Scouts, including Harvey Randall's son, Andy, when the comet hits.

### The Hammer Lab

The nickname given to the space laboratory manned by Russians and Americans to study the Hamner-Brown comet.

### The Stronghold

The nickname given to Senator Jellison's mountain ranch after the comet.



## **Jet Propulsion Laboratories**

Where Dan Forrester and Dr. Sharps worked at the lab that was tracking the Hammerlab when the comet struck Earth.

## **San Joaquin Valley**

The low area that becomes an inland sea after the comet strikes.



# Themes

## The Will to Live

The author notes that there are some who fear the comet will bring the end of the world and others who pray it will be so. There are those who are depressed and believe they have nothing for which to live. Maureen Jellison is one of those. She later says that it's one thing to stand on a mountain and consider falling to her death and quite another thing to actually take that step.

As Tim and Eileen are fighting their way out of town, Tim sees people in places bound to be covered in water in just a short period of time. Their own conscience says that they should stop and help, but they realize that they can't save all these people. Tim combines his desire to live with his desire to help others survive by yelling out the car window for people to run away.

When Harvey is asked to take a group of children to delay the advance of the invading Brotherhood Army, he admits to being afraid. He says that he understands the tactic - that the general should never send his best forces out as the advance and that he and his "troops" have been selected because they are expendable. On several occasions, he wants to run away because his will to live is strong. But it's also likely that it is that will for his adoptive community to survive that helps him remain strong in his fight.

## Self-Preservation

While many of the characters exhibit a strong desire to live, some show that they will persevere no matter what life throws at them. One of the best examples of this is seen in Hugo Beck. Hugo is expelled from the stronghold and spends some time among those on the outside. He's eventually becomes part of the New Brotherhood Army, where he's told that he will eat of human flesh or be killed. Several refuse to participate in the cannibalistic ritual, but Beck and others do so.

There are many within the stronghold who believe completely in the ability of the Senator's plan to create a stronghold that will keep them safe. Those ones are willing to commit everything they have. Others believe only in their own abilities. Even at the risk of expulsion from the community, those people hoard essential survival items. What action they take depends entirely on what they believe to be their best chance of self-preservation.

George Christopher is among the first to say that they must close the borders of their community to outsiders. Christopher is citing the need for the community to survive and their inability to support the thousands of refugees who will inevitably be flooding into the region.



## Coming of Age

For several of the characters, this novel serves as a typical coming of age story. Andy is one of the first to come to mind. As the story opens, Andy is nothing more than an indulged teenager. His father says that there was a time when boys were a benefit to a family but that children are now merely a drain on a family's resources. Andy is very typical of this description. He does have the discipline to accomplish things, as evidenced by the fact that he's a scout and is respected by Gordie as capable of leading the boys. When the world changes following the comet strike, Andy seems to fit in. He quickly learns both to defend himself and independence from his father. When he participates in saving the girls, he immediately shows that he's willing also to be responsible for a family of his own. He seems to show here that he can be the son his father mentions - a boy who is a benefit to a family.

There are other characters who also exhibit this theme. Tim Hamner admits that he was a playboy who depended entirely on his ability to buy what he wanted until the comet strike. After that, Tim is among those who willingly picks up a gun to defend himself and his community. He's also the one who pushes the others to defend the nuclear power plant, seeing that it's an essential resource toward re-establishing life as it existed before the comet.



# Style

## Point of View

The story is written in third person omniscient point of view, though limited details are offered on the various characters. This is the only possible point of view because there are so many major characters in the storyline and they are not in the same setting most of the time. There is, however, some limitations to this method. For example, Andy and Gordie are in the mountain when the comet strikes and it's known that they are safe immediately following the disaster. However, Harvey goes on through a long period without knowing what happened to either of them. The reader also doesn't know until Harvey finds Andy and Gordie, and Gordie reveals the story of their life in the mountains over the past months. This may be distracting to some readers as characters are often introduced and not mentioned again for some time. By the time these characters are mentioned again, the reader may have trouble remembering the identity of that character. The fact that some characters aren't mentioned for long periods of time is also unavoidable considering the number of characters included in the storyline.

## Setting

The story is set in California. The places mentioned are, for the most part, real. For example, the San Joaquin Valley does exist. The mountains above the valley are also real, but Senator Arthur Jellison's stronghold - as a stronghold - does not exist.

The people seem real and the conversations reasonable, given their circumstances. Though there are some people in our current time, who do believe the possibility of a comet strike or some other end-of-the-world scenario, the events have not happened in "real life." If that event did occur, it seems reasonable to believe that there would be people who set up defensible areas such as the stronghold.

## Language and Meaning

The book is written in an easy-to-read style, but some readers will likely find it rather difficult to get into the story because of the sheer number of characters that must be introduced before the action can begin. This is an unwieldy task, and it's easy to confuse character identities. However, there is a list of characters at the beginning of the book with brief descriptions of each. While these bios aren't sufficient to fully understand a character, they are available so that readers may prod their memories regarding a particular name. With forty-seven characters on Niven's list, it's easy to see how a reader can lose track of a particular character.

The story also carries a "doomsday" theme that can't be ignored. Some readers may also find the overriding sense of doom and gloom are a problem.





Each chapter begins with a quote, most from famous authors. The chapter dated June fourth begins with a quote by Robert A. Heinlein, "The Earth is just too small and fragile a basket for the human race to keep all its eggs in." This becomes a topic of conversation on the Hammerlab as the astronauts discuss the fact that the Earth is, in fact, very fragile.

## Structure

The book is divided into fairly brief sections that are not numbered at all, but that are named by date. For example, the first is called, "January: The Portent," and describes the events immediately after Tim Hamner's discovery of the comet. The second is "January: Interlude," and this section introduces several characters during the time before the comet is being studied seriously. Other chapters include words such as "expendables," "stronghold" and "journey," describing the coming part of the story.

Each chapter begins with a quote, some that should be familiar to most readers but some that come from obscure sources that only the extremely well-read readers will recognize. The prologue is information about a comet. There are also sections in several of the chapters in which the events of the comet are described, beginning with its inception and going through the details of each stage of a comet's existence. These are set apart from the story by the use of italics. These sections of the story are not vital to the storyline, but do offer what seems to be a mixture of scientifically correct information and scientific hypothesis regarding the subject matter.

## Quotes

"Reprieved. For a little while. He went back to his papers, hating what he was doing. As he worked, he muttered to himself. 'I'm an engineer, dammit. If I'd wanted to spend all my time with legal briefs or sitting in a courtroom, I'd have been a lawyer. Or a mass murderer.'" - Barry Price at the San Joaquin Nuclear Project, January: Interlude, Page 20

"Have at 'em, Harry. Lost causes are the only ones worth fighting for. And the taxpayer's cause is about as lost as they come." - George Christopher, March: Interludes, Page 68

"The Hammer of God was coming to punish the decadent and the willful." - Henry Armitage, March: Two, Page 80

"The points to remember are these. First, the odds against any solid part of the Hamner-Brown hitting are literally astronomical. Over these distances, the Devil himself couldn't hit a target as small as Earth. Second, if it did hit, it would probably be as several large masses. Some of those would hit ocean. Others would hit land where damage would be local. But if Hamner-Brown did strike the Earth, it would be as if the Devil had struck with an enormous hammer, repeatedly." - Harvey Randall, April: One, Page 89

"There is absolutely no danger. The asteroid Apollo came within two million miles, very close as cosmic distances go, back in 1932. No damage. Adonis passed within a million miles in 1936. So what? Remember the panic in 1968? People, especially in California, took to the hills. Everyone forgot about it a day later - that is everyone who hadn't gone broke buying survival equipment that wasn't needed." May, Page 117

"Not only do millions think the world's going to end, but millions more hope so. It shows in their attitudes. They hate what they're doing, and keep looking nostalgically at the 'simple' life. Of course they won't voluntarily choose to be farmers or live in communities, but if everybody has to ... " June: Three, Page 159

"He found an observation scope unused at the moment; it had a big sun shield built into the optics so that he could look at the comet without going blind. The view was something like a stylized sunburst done in DayGlo and something like falling down a deep well while high on LSD." - Hammerfall Morning, Page 189

"Daniel Forrester, Ph.D., was a middle-aged man with no useful profession. His doctorate would never again be worth as much as a cup of coffee. His hands were soft,



he weighed too much, he was a diabetic. Friends had told him that he often underestimated his own worth; well, that was too bad too, because it restricted his bargaining ability. He knew how to make insulin. It took a laboratory and the killing of one sheep per month. Yesterday Dan Forrester had become an expensive luxury." Hot Fudge Tuesday: Three, Page 276

"He was prepared for the end of civilization; to be nearly alone, to find human beings few and far between. He was not prepared to watch it die, and he wondered what he should do about that, but he could think of nothing." - Tim, The Landlord, Page 308

"It was bad to have women in a gang like this. Worse to have no women. Alim wondered if he'd made a mistake, but it was too late now. Shit. Alim Nassors mistakes could kill them all, and that, if you liked, was power." Fourth Week: The Prophet, Page 443

"The Senator looked at the old lady, and he knew that whatever happened to her son, she would not survive until spring, and Arthur Jellison hated her for what she would eat before she died." Sixth Week: High Justice, Page 471

"He wondered why there were suddenly so many fish, then considered how their food supply had exploded. All those dead things floating in the water. It only bothered him for a moment." - Tim Hamner eating his first dried fish, The Expedition, Page 539

Dan Forrester, exhausted, introspective and happy, and no one caring; they praised him and thanked him and let him have his mood, to enjoy or hate, be glad or sad. Magicians may do as they please." Aftermath, Page 592

## Topics for Discussion

Who is Tim Hamner? Harvey Randall? Senator Arthur Jellison? Maureen Jellison? Gordie Vance? Andy Randall? Mark Czescu? Where do each of these characters wind up at the end of the story?

How does the comet become known as the Hamner-Brown? What are scientific predictions about the comet?

What is "Hammer fever?" What happens to those who "catch" this ailment? What did Alim Nassor plan to do when everyone was catching Hammer fever? What happens to his plan?

What is the New Brotherhood Army? Why do they practice cannibalism?

Describe Andy Randall. What seems to be his relationship with his father prior to the comet strike? What makes you think so? Where was he during the comet strike? Why does he decline his father's offer to return to the Jellison ranch?

Who is Harry Newcombe? What is "trash day" on Harry's route? What does Harry do immediately after the comet strike? What does he do in the months following? Why?

What is the name given to Jellison's ranch? Why are some people turned away from the safety of this location? Why is Harvey allowed inside? Tim? Dan Forrester? Rick Delanty?

How do those at Jellison's ranch fight off the New Brotherhood Army? Why do they return to the fighting to save the power plant?