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“All The Time In (What’s left of) the World”

**An original drama by**

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Synopsis

*In 2026, what came to be known as The Last War began. All the countries with nuclear capabilities utilized them, and the Earth was left devastated, a shell of its former self. The war ended in 2029. While about 96% of the population of the world was destroyed, some lucky few survived. There is no wildlife, no plants, and the water is all tainted with radiation. As it is with many apocalyptic situations, what few people there were left isolated themselves, secluded their families to the confines of whatever structure was deemed safe. Amidst the destruction and gloominess, one family managed to survive mostly intact. This is the story of Rick Paulson and his two daughters, along with one of their boyfriends, as they live the rest of their days in the underground basement of Rick’s house. While on a routine run out for food, the boyfriend (Todd) comes across a pharmacy that has become home to a group of people, people who may or may not be dangerous. When Todd realizes that one of the group members might have seen him, he rushes home to inform the group. Realizing that they are possibly being watched and low on food, the family must make a decision, and quickly. But when it all hits the fan, who can be responsible and courageous enough to do the unthinkable?*

Cast:

*Rick (male, age 46)*

*A lawyer before the nuclear war of 2026. Lost his wife in the war, lives in his basement with his two daughters and one of their boyfriends. He will do anything to keep them safe.*

*Vanessa (female, age 24)*

*Older daughter of Rick. She was just recently employed as an accountant before the war. She is incredibly close with her sister, Tanya, and loves both her and her father more than anything.*

*Tanya (female, age 21)*

*Rick’s younger daughter. Was just starting her first job as a summer camp councilor when the war began; the first thing she did was go home. She has beaming respect and faith in her older sister, Vanessa. She looks up to her for everything; she is also very much caring of her father. Todd is her boyfriend of 3 years, and they both love each other very much.*

*Todd (male, age 22)*

*Neighbor to Rick and his family; also the boyfriend of Tanya, Rick’s younger daughter. He worked at the local grocery store for a few years before the war struck. After his family was lost, he looked to Rick, and he took him in. Rick is very approving of Todd, and considers him one of his own.*

*Mister (male, mid-50’s)*

*One of the “crazies” that lives in the pharmacy down the road from Rick and family. He is the person that sees Todd during his run and then stumbles across the family’s house while on a hunting venture.*

**ACT I**

[Curtain opens to reveal 3 chairs, a sleeping bag, a coffee table and a cabinet, as well as a radio.]

[**RICK PAULSON**, a father, sits on a chair with his two daughters, **TANYA** and **VANESSA**]

RICK

Girls, listen, I know Todd has been out for quite some time, but I’m sure he’ll be back within the hour.

VANESSA

But what if he doesn’t come back? What if there’s… something out there that got him.

TANYA

Vanessa’s right, Dad. Todd’s been out for almost two hours. The pharmacy is just a block down the road.

RICK

Tanya, I know you’re concerned about your boyfriend, and you have good reason. I’m concerned too…

[Footsteps off stage right]

VANESSA

What was that?

[TANYA picks up pistol from coffee table. Checks for ammo.]

TANYA

What’s the call, Dad?

RICK

Well, either it’s Todd or we have company, pleasant or not. Is it loaded Tanya?

TANYA

Yeah, it’s all set. Safety off.

[Clicks off safety on pistol.]

RICK

Alright. Vanessa, grab the axe and get ready to swing if I open the door.

VANESSA

But Dad-

RICK

Vanessa, now is not the time to be afraid. We all have to be violent sometimes; the world has changed and moved on. There’s barely one left.

[Footsteps get louder, closer.]

RICK

Alright girls, opening the door in 3, 2, 1…

[Flings open the door, to reveal nothing. Nobody is there.]

[Suddenly, TODD bursts into view. He appears terrified.]

TODD

Don’t shoot! It’s me!

[VANESSA lowers the axe, TANYA drops gun to her waist, moves towards TODD.]

TODD

Not now, T! Get out of the way and close the door!

[TODD enters the basement; RICK slams door shut and locks it.]

RICK

Todd, it’s great to see your face again, guy. Why the hurry-

TANYA

Todd! [They embrace.] I’m so glad you’re okay! Was the radiation that bad?

TODD

It’s just as tingly as always, but I wore the mask, so I didn’t inhale any of it. But I have bigger news, some that’s not as pleasant.

RICK

What is it, son?

TODD

Actually, two things; the first is slightly less serious than the other.

VANESSA

Spit it out Todd. We need to know.

TODD

Right. First, we aren’t alone on this block.

RICK

So it is true. How many, Todd?

TODD

This kind of gets into the second bit; there’s a group of them in the pharmacy. About six men and four women.

TANYA

Them?

[RICK and TODD look at each other, nod.]

RICK

Girls, Todd and I have been going on recon runs once a week or so since the war, and we have seen other people.

TANYA

Well, isn’t that good? We can connect and share supplies!

TODD

No Tanya, this is far from good.

VANESSA

Why?

RICK

Because these are not people like us. These people… never moved on from the loss of the war. They’re outcasts… essentially people who are mentally unstable.

VANESSA

So, crazy people?

TODD

Yes, that’s why I had to hurry back here; I thought one of them had spotted me. I guess we’ll find out.

[RICK turns to TODD]

RICK

What do you mean, “we’ll find out”?

TODD

Well, I wasn’t sure if they saw me or not. I just saw one of them and ran back here, I didn’t think to confront them.

VANESSA

Wait a second, guys. Dad, how do we know these people are “crazy”? Is it because they’re not us?

RICK

Well, Vanessa, let me remind you that we don’t know who these people are, or what they do to people. What Todd and I have gathered, however, shows that they certainly aren’t normal.

TANYA

How so?

TODD

Well, when your father and I have observed their actions, we’ve heard them talking to themselves. Usually, it has to do with God and a “better place”. They believe the war was for a better purpose. They also-

TANYA

Dad, they’re not right, are they?

RICK

[Pause] Right about what, honey?

TANYA

About this war being for the better. Because that would mean that Mom is in a better place, right?

[RICK closes his eyes and turns slowly]

[There is a pause before he speaks, full of emotion.]

RICK

Tanya, you should know better than to speak of what happened to your mother. Don’t you miss her?

TANYA

Of course I miss her, Dad. We all miss her, but we have to be strong. You told me that.

RICK

[Slightly angry] You don’t know what it’s like to lose someone that was your other half; I don’t need to hear you tell me to be strong!

[RICK hits the wall with his fist.]

TODD

Just calm down, Rick. It’s okay. Tanya didn’t mean to offend you; she just wanted to know what’s really going on. This is confusing business.

VANESSA (to Tanya)

Just take a breath and try to accept this, T. This is a lot for me too. Let’s go sit down and leave Todd and Dad to talk.

[VANESSA and TANYA exit left.]

RICK

What are we going to do Todd? There could be someone tracking us as we speak.

TODD

I’m sorry Rick, I was being careless. I should have taken the back alley away from the street and gone farther down to the IGA if I had remembered.

RICK

Don’t beat yourself up about it. But, things will change around here. Did you manage to get any food?

TODD

[Crestfallen] No. No, I didn’t.

RICK

[Slumps into a chair] Todd, do you realize how low on food we are? We have three days, maybe.

TODD

I know, Rick. There was no way to get any though!

RICK

Well, I’ll have to make the next run, then.

TODD

When were you thinking?

RICK

Tomorrow afternoon most likely. Gives us enough time to discuss the new rules and boundaries, as well as enough time to see if anyone *did* follow you.

[Re-enter VANESSA]

VANESSA

Dad, what’s going on? I heard you two yelling. Tanya’s all caught up in the fact that you yelled at her, and now what’s this about change? Hasn’t there been enough change for one year?

RICK

Well, things are going to *have* to change again now that we know another group of possibly dangerous people might know we’re out here.

VANESSA

Possibly? You mean you’re not sure?

RICK

Vanessa, I think it’s safe to assume that since we don’t know them, know what they’ve done, or know how they interact, that we shouldn’t approach them or try to accept them.

VANESSA

Fine, but that doesn’t explain any of the so-called changes you two were thinking about discussing earlier.

TODD

Well Vanessa-

RICK

I think I’ll handle this one, Todd.

[TODD nods and steps back]

VANESSA

What’s going on, Dad?

RICK

We can’t snack or eat aimlessly anymore.

VANESSA

…Why?

RICK

We have, at best, three days of food left.

VANESSA

No… That can’t be right. I just checked…

RICK

I’m sorry honey, but we have to adapt to our situation. And it won’t be easy.

VANESSA

Can’t we just go and get some? The market isn’t that far away.

RICK

We have to wait. Two journeys out in the same day are just too damn risky. I don’t want to send Todd out and risk being captured or killed, they’ve already seen his face.

VANESSA

Well, then me and Tanya-

RICK

[Quickly] No.

TODD

Well, why not, Rick? They’re both fully capable.

RICK

Shut it, Todd. Remember that you are a guest here. This is still my house, and those are still my daughters! You will respect that. I will not let them get into harm’s way, I’ve already lost one, and I will NOT lose another.

TODD

I’m very sorry, sir. Didn’t mean to offend you.

RICK

Damn right you didn’t. Now, we should all get some sleep. I’ll take first watch shift; Vanessa will take the one after that, then Todd has double duty.

TODD

Why do I have double?

RICK

Because Tanya needs to sleep and accept what’s going on; she’s taken it a bit tougher than the rest of us.

TODD

Right. Come on Vanessa.

[Beat]

Be safe, Rick.

[Black out.]

[Beat]

 [Lights Up, Just VANESSA and TANYA]

TANYA (hushed, sleepily)

What do you mean there’s only three days of food left?

VANESSA

It’s just what it sounds like, T. I wish it wasn’t like this, but it’s going to be harder than before from here on out.

TANYA

Vanessa… why do we keep living? The world is gone, what’s the point in going on?

VANESSA

[Shaken] Don’t talk like that! We have to stay strong; this life is worth living.

TANYA

I just don’t know Vanessa. Why do we shun the people down the road? Maybe they’re completely normal, and we’re the ones that are crazy.

VANESSA

Listen, I think you just need to sleep on this. You’ll feel better in the morning.

TANYA

You’re right… I’ll see you tomorrow.

VANESSA

Yeah, sleep tight, T. We love you.

TANYA

Thanks… I love you guys too. Stay safe on watch, okay?

VANESSA

Yeah yeah, I will. Go get some rest. Tomorrow’s going to be a long day.

TANYA

Okay, goodnight.

[TANYA exits]

[Lights move to where VANESSA stands]

VANESSA

What if they’re normal, and we’re crazy… What if we’re crazy… Well shit, given the circumstances I guess we’re all crazy.

[Fade lights out]

[Long beat]

[Lights up, TODD is sitting in a chair]

TODD (praying)

Dear Father, why have you cast down this disaster upon us? Why are we not worthy, oh God? Please, all I ask in this time of desperation is an answer. Please keep my new family safe from the outside. Please, keep us safe. I don’t know what I’d do if I lost one of them. I pray this all in your still holy name, Amen.

[TANYA enters from stage right, silently]

TANYA

Todd?

[Todd jumps up and aims gun at TANYA, surprised]

TODD

Stop- oh, don’t scare me like that, T. [Lowers gun]

TANYA

Sorry, I just wanted to give you some company.

TODD

But you should be sleeping, baby. It’s been a rough day for you.

TANYA

It has… and I want it to end, Todd. I don’t want to keep living in this terrible place. It’s pointless. Help isn’t coming. [Starts crying]

TODD

You can’t think like that! You have to realize that I love you, and your dad loves you, and Vanessa loves you too. Please, just stick with it; you’re everything to me.

TANYA

I just want to be somebody. Somebody that everybody knows.

TODD

T, you are somebody to us, and especially to me. And for what it’s worth, we ARE everybody. And we all know you, so I guess you have just achieved that little dream of yours.

TANYA (smiling)

Oh Todd [kisses on the cheek], I’ll stay, for you… and for my father, and my sister, and my mother… for you all.

TODD

It was never up for debate.

[They embrace as the light fades]

[Long beat]

[Lights back up, only thrust right to reveal **MISTER**, the man who spotted TODD near the pharmacy. He is out on a hunting venture to look for anything edible.]

MISTER (to himself)

Well, well, well, yet another beautiful day here in the good ol’ USA. I’m glad they sent ol’ Mister out here to do some huntin’, this way I can enjoy the pleasant day.

[Walks down in front of stage across to thrust left, where he stumbles across the Paulin’s house]

MISTER

With weather like this, the animals have to-

[Sees house]

Well, I’ll be damned. What has the good Lord given us here?

[Lights fade, curtain closes. END OF ACT I.]

**ACT II**

[Curtain open, lights up on the basement]

[The whole group is circled up in the room]

TODD

So, what’s the plan, Rick? For all we know there’s an army of those people waiting outside our house, and we only have two days left of food.

RICK

Well, tonight I have to go out and find something to eat.

VANESSA

I volunteer to go help you; I need to do my part.

RICK

No, no one is going with me. I’m getting old. You all have a future, you’re all young. If for any reason I don’t make it, at least you’ll be in good hands with Todd.

TANYA

Dad, you can’t be serious! We aren’t five anymore, we can help out!

TODD

She’s got a point, Rick. You could use the help.

RICK

Now you stay out of this, remember whose house you’re in.

TODD

You know what, Rick? I’m getting plenty tired of you trying to control my voice here. I appreciate your hospitality, I really do. But you can’t always disregard my opinion and use your house as an excuse.

RICK (angry)

What did you just say?

TODD

All I’m trying to say is-

RICK

I don’t give a shit about what you’re trying to say! You will listen to me and what I have to say, because I’m just trying to keep you safe! Why can’t you just accept that and get your head out of your-

[TODD is pointing the gun at RICK]

[The room is dead quiet, everyone looking at TODD]

RICK

Now boy, there is no need to do something stupid now. Vanessa, Tanya, get into the other room and lock the door. Don’t come out until I say so.

VANESSA

But, Dad-

RICK

I said GO, goddamnit!

[Exit in a hurry VANESSA and TANYA]

TODD

And why not be rash, Rick? You said yourself that those girls are in capable hands with me.

RICK

You are one crazy son of a bitch!

[Enter MISTER]

MISTER

Well, that’s a very bold and rude statement given your situation.

[TODD whirls around and aims at MISTER]

TODD

What-- Who are you? Why are you here?

MISTER (ignoring TODD)

Can I sit down? Looks like quite the comfy couch.

RICK

Not a chance in hell. You will stand your ass up and put those hands of yours right behind your head.

TODD

Rick, what are we doing here? Let’s just shoot him and end this nonsense.

MISTER

Oh, you don’t want to shoot me. I’m a good man, don’t wanna hurt nobody.

RICK

Then why are you here?

MISTER

Ah, a fine question young man! You see, my friends and I need ammunition to survive, and they sent me to see if I could find the boy that was out for a stroll yesterday, figured he’d have something to share. Seems we were right.

TODD

Well, we don’t have any for you, so-

RICK

Todd, wait.

[TODD looks back at RICK, puzzled.]

TODD

What is it?

RICK

What if we set up a trade… Mister. We give you ammo, you give us food. It would help keep both of us alive and out of each other’s way.

MISTER

A fine idea! But, you need to see, not all of my friends are like me. Some don’t like people from outside the group. Don’t trust ‘em.

TODD

Rick, what are you playing at?

RICK

…Mister, if I went with you to our people, would you leave my family alone?

TODD

Rick!!!

MISTER

Don’t act surprised young man. You wanted this, after all.

RICK

What?

TODD

You shut up, Mister! We had a deal!

RICK

What do you mean “a deal”? Explain yourself boy!

TODD

I’ve been meeting with him. Weekly. Wanted him to come and take you so I’d run the house and be done with you. But he didn’t hold his end of our deal!

RICK

[Tightening grip on axe] I don’t think you should be worrying about your deal right now, Todd.

TODD

Well, I wouldn’t have to worry about it if Mister… [points and turns at MISTER]

[Mister is pointing gun at TODD]

MISTER

Quite the situation we have here.

TODD

Put it down. You won’t shoot-

[Mister pulls trigger, gunshot noise, quick black out flash]

[Lights back after flash, TODD and RICK in room, MISTER is gone]

RICK

What the-?

TODD

Oh God, oh God I knew it! I knew it!

RICK (to himself)

He wasn’t real…

TODD

Oh God, save my soul! Save my mind!

RICK

He wasn’t real… holy shit. This means that…

[RICK turns to TODD]

TODD

What the hell just happened?

RICK

I have no idea. Not one.

TODD

Do we tell-

RICK

Not a chance. Not until we get a clue on what’s going on here.

[Black out, curtain falls]

[End of Act II]

**Act III**

[Lights up on room, whole family is gathered around]

[It has been 5 weeks since the mysterious incident with MISTER]

RICK

If the calendar is to be believed, it’s Christmas.

TANYA (excited)

Really?! I can’t wait to open my- Oh, wait!

[Everyone laughs]

TODD

Well, even though there won’t be presents, there will be plenty of feasting!

VANESSA

How is that possible? The feast, I mean.

RICK

Well, Todd and I have been going on extra scavenges to the market, and even into some houses beyond there. We have saved a fair amount of food for the holiday in the cellar.

TANYA

No way! What do we have, Dad?

TODD

Well, we have Spam, we found a jar of honey, a few bags of potato chips, two jugs of water, a packet of iced tea mix, and three cans of corn.

VANESSA

That’s incredible! Oh my God, thank you so much!!!

[Gives RICK a hug]

TODD

What, no love for the other guy?

TANYA

No, that’s where I come in hotshot.

[TANYA gives TODD a kiss]

RICK

Alright girls, how about you go get a pot of hot water ready. I have to speak with Todd in private.

VANESSA

Keeping a secret, Dad? They don’t make friends.

RICK

I’m your father, I don’t need to be your friend, sweety. Just get the water, alright?

[VANESSA and TANYA exit, giggling]

RICK

How are you holding up?

TODD (meekly)

I’m… fine. I’m good.

RICK

Not too convincing there, son. Let me in, what is it?

TODD

Sometimes, when I dream, I see him. Just standing there, gun in his hand, watching me.

RICK

Does he ever say anything?

TODD

No… he just keeps this smug look on his face.

[RICK nods, standing up]

TODD

Rick.

[RICK looks at him]

TODD

Have you ever considered that we may be legitimately crazy?

RICK

Todd… I think about it every day.

{Exit RICK]

[Beat]

[Enter TANYA]

TANYA

Todd, could you help me get a fire going to boil the water?

TODD

Sure thing, honey.

[They go to thrust]

TANYA

So, what were you and my dad talking about?

TODD

Nothing important.

TANYA

Oh, spare me. My dad is awful at concealing something. What were you talking about?

TODD

I said nothing important!

TANYA

Okay, no need to get worked up about it.

TODD

I’m not worked up, I’m just tired.

TANYA

Why are you tired—

[Enter VANESSA, suddenly]

VANESSA

Tanya, I made a fire for water in the other room already!

TANYA

Oh, I knew that!

TODD

Then why did you ask me to help?

TANYA

Well, I figured that two fires—

VANESSA

Cut the shit Tanya. Todd, she just wants to know what you and my dad were talking about.

TODD

Oh, come on Tanya!

TANYA

I’m sorry, I just wanted to know!

TODD

Well if Rick wanted you to know he would have told you too!

TANYA

Excuse me?

TODD

If it was important that you knew, Rick or I would have let you know! Damnit T! Keep your nose out of this.

TANYA

Well why are you so goddamn defensive about this?

TODD

Because it’s none of your business! You don’t need to know, so you won’t!

[Enter RICK]

RICK (calmly)

Todd, let’s just tell them.

TODD

What? Are you nuts?

RICK

No, but we might be.

VANESSA

Dad… what are you talking about?

RICK

Well honey, about five or so weeks ago, when Todd thought somebody had spotted him… you remember that day, right?

VANESSA

Of course. Most eventful day in awhile.

RICK

Right. Now, on that day… a man was here.

TANYA

What?!

RICK

Give me a second, Tanya. I’ll explain.

TANYA

You damn well better.

RICK

Easy, easy… just calm down. Now, the man came because Todd told him to. The man came to take me away.

TANYA

Todd… I’m so confused.

TODD

Let your dad explain, T.

RICK

Thanks. Now, I will not lie to you. I was going to harm Todd. Most likely fatally. But something happened. The man had a gun. He aimed up to shoot Todd. And when he pulled the trigger he disappeared. Gone, into thin air.

VANESSA

Just, gone? [Snaps] Just like that?

RICK

Yeah, just like that.

VANESSA

So… what do we do?

RICK

[Deep sigh] Me and Todd have to go. Far away.

TANYA

Dad, no! You can’t be serious about this! Todd, try to stop him!

[She reaches for TODD, he moves away]

TODD

Baby, I’d love to… but he’s right. We don’t know if you’re safe with us.

TANYA

We are! Nothing you said before was dangerous!

RICK

Tanya… if Todd and I are seeing people that don’t exist, they could become our reality. And that can put you two in a lot of danger.

VANESSA

Wait, Dad… was there ever a group at the pharmacy?

RICK

Not to you there isn’t.

VANESSA

My god— [covers her mouth, shocked]

RICK

Todd and I will pack our things tonight and head out tomorrow. We will leave you the gun and almost all the food. We’ll take two sleeping bags, two gas masks and a book of matches.

TODD

And a Bible. We’re gonna need some of the word to help us.

TANYA

No… no, no, no!

RICK

Hey, maybe we’ll come back. You never know.

VANESSA

What happens when the food runs out?

RICK

You know where to find it. You’ve walked these streets since you were children. Just remember, masks and the gun every time you go out there. You never know.

TANYA (crying)

Dad, does it really have to be like this?

RICK

Yes, it does my dear. I’m sorry. We’ll be gone before you wake up tomorrow.

[VANESSA and TANYA both hug their dad]

[They then hug TODD, TANYA holding on longer]

[Girls wipe their tears]

RICK

Now, how’s about we have some dinner?

[Slow fade to black]

[Curtain falls]

**[END OF SHOW]**