SHELTER

by Cupid Deloriane

THIRD DRAFT: 23/10/08
(1) INT. GOVERNMENT OFFICE - DAY

CU - Two dotted lines at the bottom of a document; a male hand - holding a pen - enthusiastically signs his name on the top one; DOMINIC FLETCHER. He hands the pen over to a female hand that signs her name underneath; EVETTE FLETCHER. A hand belonging to a GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL takes the completed document from Evette.

GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL’S POV;
Dominic and Evette sat opposite a large desk in a plush office.

    OFFICIAL (O.S.)
    Well, that’s that settled then.

SIDE VIEW OF TABLE
The official quickly scans the document in his hand. Satisfied, he looks up at the young couple and smiles warmly.

    OFFICIAL (CONT'D)
    So, tonight will be your last night in your own beds for two months! What did you think of the place when you looked around earlier?

The couple look at each other and grin.

    DOMINIC
    It was probably a bit smaller than we thought...
    (to the official)
    ...but I’m sure we’ll get used to it.

    OFFICIAL
    Good. (Beat) Well, there will be someone coming over to collect your things this evening and then tomorrow morning we’ll come for you.

Dominic and Evette look at each other and smile.
OFFICIAL (CONT'D)
All that remains for me to say is
to thank you on behalf of the
Yorkshire Regiment and wish you
the very best of luck. And when
you get out you can start
thinking all about your early
retirement!

With that the official stands up, signalling the end of the meeting.

DOMINIC
(offers his hand)
Thank you very, very much for
this opportunity.

OFFICIAL
(shaking it)
No, thank you both for being so
co-operative.

The couple stand up from their seats and make to leave.

EVETTE
Thank you again. See you
tomorrow.

Dominic and Evette leave the office. The government
official turns to a tall, highly decorated army general who
has been stood out of shot behind him and sighs deeply.

ARMY GENERAL
I think we’ve made the right
decision.

The general steps forward and stands alongside the
government official who’s now glancing over the papers on
his desk with concern.

OFFICIAL
I hope so.
(looks up at General)
I hope so.

FADE OUT
(2) EXT. YORKSHIRE MOORS - DAY

The seemingly boundless landscape of the Yorkshire Moors in early Spring, carpeted in a vast array of greens and browns. In the middle distance a LAND ROVER snakes its way across a faded dirt track.

A SUBTITLE appears in the sky above the van; THE YORKSHIRE MOORS

The van leaves the track and continues across the steep hillside off-road.

(3) INT. BACK LAND ROVER - DAY

Dominic and Evette sit next to each other opposite their young daughter Claire. Next to Claire is the mysterious army general from the office who keeps his gaze firmly on the window to his right.

EVETTE
(to Claire)
You okay honey?

Claire, sitting directly opposite her mother, looks up to meet her gaze. She smiles and swings her legs casually.

CLAIRE
Yeah.

The four sit in silence, riding the bumps. Suddenly, the Land Rover stops and TURNS OFF ITS ENGINE. The driver thumps the wall.

DRIVER (O.S.)
We’re here.

(4) EXT. YORKSHIRE MOORS - DAY

The DRIVER, an young infantry soldier in full uniform, gets out of the car and walks to the back, opening the door for the four passengers to disembark. They look around and take in the views of the peaceful valleys that surround them.
ARMY GENERAL

It’s just along here.

The soldier and his general walk to a flat clearing twenty yards away from where the car stopped. Slowly the Fletchers follow.

The soldier starts making small circles with small steps, his head stopped to the ground, searching for something. Almost immediately he finds what he’s looking for; patches of metal under the grass. This is the BUNKER ENTRANCE.

SOLDIER

Here we are.

Dominic, Evette and Claire stand opposite the solider and the general, the gap of grass between them.

ENTRANCE POV;

Black. Then, as the soldier lifts up the entrance to the bunker a METALLIC SCRAPING SOUND is heard and the five can be seen stood in a circle directly above. They stare into the camera for a few seconds.

(5) INT. BUNKER - DAY

CU of calendar; APRIL. The first two days have large ‘X’s over them signalling that this is Day Three of their mission.

A TIGHT PAN OUT reveals the calendar is above a small desk with a large radio transmitter on it. Dominic is sat at it with his back to us reading a thick security manual.

DOMINIC

(to Evette in other room)

Hey Evie, get this. We’ve been reduced to a number, HQ will only refer to us as ‘20384’!

After several more seconds of reading Dominic stands up from the chair and stretches and sighs deeply. A TRACKING SHOT follows him from the desk to the doorway of the other room where Evette and Claire are. He stays in the middle of the doorway.
DOMINIC (CONT'D)
Who wants a game of Scrabble?

(6) INT. BUNKER - DAY

CU of the calendar again, this time nine of the days have been crossed out.

The three Fletchers are sat at a modest dining table eating from unmarked tins.

DOMINIC
(to Claire)
What’s the first thing you want to eat when you get home?

Claire ponders the question, excited at the possibilities.

CLAIRE
(eventually)
Fish and chips!

DOMINIC
Fish and chips? Of all the dinners in all the world you want fish and chips? Fair enough.
(To Evette)
What about you honey?

Evette smiles at being included in the game.

EVETTE
Hmm. (Beat) I’d have to say a good chicken and pasta dish, with a really creamy, cheesy sauce.

Dominic grins and takes a mouthful of his dinner from the tin.

EVETTE (CONT'D)
And let me guess, your meal of choice would be a steak?

DOMINIC
Oh yes.
(To Claire)
(MORE)
So when we get out of here we’ll have fish and chips for breakfast—
(To Evette)
A creamy cheesy pasta for lunch and then a big steak for dinner.

Claire giggles.

DOMINIC (CONT’D)
How does that sound?

CLAIRE
Yeah!

Dominic and Evette share a glance and smile. A wide shot captures the moment, like a family photo.

(7) INT. BUNKER - DAY

The calendar indicates that eighteen days have passed.

Underneath it Dominic is sat at the radio desk again with the headphones on, mid-conversation with those at the other end.

RADIO (THROUGH HEADPHONES)
20384, this is HQ. Requesting report from yesterdays initiative. Over.

DOMINIC
Okay... Air pressure is normal, no need for the Kearny. The entrance seal and vents are fine, no damage. Whatever you did up there we didn’t feel it and nothing’s come through. Over.

RADIO
Affirmative 20384. There’s no ill health amongst any of you? No coughing, shortness of breath, dizziness? Over.

DOMINIC
Nothing out of the ordinary. Over.
RADIO
Affirmative. Await further instructions for the next phase.
Over and out.

A click is heard on the radio and Dominic stands up, putting the headphones down on the desk.

EVETTE AND CLAIRE
Are in the forefront of the frame sat on their beds. Evette is reading a novel and Claire is playing with two dolls on her lap. Dominic steps into the doorway between them and leans against the wall, watching over his girls, lost in thought.

After a few seconds Evette looks up from her book and smiles at Dominic.

EVETTE
Everything okay?

DOMINIC
Yeah, fine. They just wanted to know if anything had got in.

Evette screws up her face and puts her novel under her chair. She looks over at Claire who is still playing with her dolls and stands next to Dominic.

EVETTE
Like what?

DOMINIC
I don’t know, anything at all.

EVETTE
What do you think they were doing?

DOMINIC
I don’t know, probably trying to test for any leaks, trying to put gasses or some sort of dust in.

EVETTE
Have you read that manual they left?

(MORE)
EVETTE (CONT’ D)

There’s a lot of things they didn’t tell us about in the meetings.

DOMINIC
(nodding)
I know. I’m not looking forward to these ‘blast tests’ or whatever they are.

EVETTE
(scared, looking for reassurance)
What do you think they’re going to do? Drop a bomb on us?

DOMINIC
(slight smile)
I don’t think so. In the Yorkshire Moors?

EVETTE
I wouldn’t put it past them. Reading that manual makes it sound like they’re going to try and destroy this thing with us in it.

DOMINIC
Well, it’s a bunker, it’s got a very specific use. That’s what they test for, I guess.
(smiles)
But we’re obviously going to be fine. They wouldn’t put us in here if we were under any risk.

Evette doesn’t answer, leaving his words hanging in the air. Dominic puts his arms around her and kisses her on the top of her head.

(8) INT. BUNKER – DAY

The calendar is in the foreground showing twenty-two days crossed out. We ZOOM OUT and PAN LEFT, revealing the family sat around the dinner table, again eating from tins.
CLAIRE
Is playing with her food, spinning the spoon in the tin.

CLAIRE
I don’t want anymore of this.

Claire puts her tin down in front of her on the table and slides it into the middle of the table. Evette sighs deeply, sensing her daughter’s frustration.

EVETTE
(sighing)
You know there isn’t anything else.

Dominic backs up his wife, attempting to quell the looming confrontation between them.

DOMINIC
Eat it up please Claire.

CLAIRE
I don’t want it!

Evette looks at Dominic despairingly.

EVETTE
It is getting a bit repetitive. Do you think we can ask them if they’d send down anything else?

DOMINIC
I think they’d tell us, in no uncertain terms, to get stuffed.

EVETTE
But there’s no harm in you asking, is there?

DOMINIC
Oh I’M going to ask, am I?

EVETTE
Oh you know they won’t listen to me.
DOMINIC
They’re not going to listen to me either! I don’t think you realise, this is supposed to be real, we’re supposed to be cut off, isolated. They’re not going to drop down some different food just because we don’t like this.

Evette doesn’t respond. Dominic takes an aggressive mouthful of his dinner. Claire looks down into the contents of her tin.

(9) INT. BUNKER - NIGHT

The calendar indicates twenty-nine days have passed. Although there is no real concept of day and night in the bunker, this is the family’s ‘night time’, which is suggested by the low lighting.

Evette and Dominic in bed together. Whilst Dominic is still asleep Evette is sat upright; something has just woken her. There is a small beeping sound coming from the other room.

EVETTE
(aggressive whisper)
Dom. Dom!

She pushes him hard on the shoulder.

EVETTE (CONT'D)
Dom, did you feel that?

DOMINIC
(eyes still closed)
Feel what?

EVETTE
That shaking!

Dominic sits up slowly and rubs his eyes.

DOMINIC
What? What shaking?
EVETTE
(not impressed)
The whole place shook! They’ve been doing something again. I’m going to check on Claire. You can go and answer THAT (referring to the beeping).

Dominic aggressively throws his duvet back and walks through to the radio desk. He flicks a blinking red switch and holds the headphones over one ear. As he talks we only hear his side of the conversation.

DOMINIC
This is 20384. Well no, I slept through it but Evette felt it. Over. (Beat) No, everyone’s fine. Over. (Beat) Check the vents and seals in two hours, okay, understood. (Beat) Okay... day forty-one? Understood. Over (Beat)

Dominic hears some more before taking off the headphones, walking back into the sleeping area and back into bed.

EVETTE
What did they say?

DOMINIC
They wouldn’t tell me what it was, just more ‘testing’.

Dominic pulls the sheets over him and sits upright next to his wife.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)
How was Claire?

We see a quick shot of Claire asleep.

EVETTE
Scared. But I managed to explain it to her and I think she’s going back to sleep.

Evette looks at her husband.
EVETTE (CONT'D)
I know this is supposed to be some kind of secret mission but we’re supposed to be in on it! Why can’t they tell us what they’re doing?

DOMINIC
I’ve no idea. But apparently they’re going to be doing some similar testing on day forty-one.

EVETTE
What do you mean?

DOMINIC
(shrugs)
That’s what they said. Whatever they did this morning they’re going to be doing again.

Evette grunts and lies down, turning away from Dominic. Fade out.

(10) INT. BUNKER – DAY

CU of the calendar on a new month; MAY. We zoom out to see that the first three days have passed, making this their thirty-fourth day inside.

EVETTE
Is sat at the end of the bed reading with Claire, who is wrapped in a blanket in the middle of the mattress. Dominic, looking like he has some news, walks into the clearing again and waits for Evette to notice him.

EVETTE
(eventually looking up)
Yes?
(notices his expression)
What? What is it?
(to Claire)
One minute sweety.

Evette gets up and walks with Dominic through to the radio room.
EVETTE (CONT'D)

What is it?

DOMINIC

They’re cutting off the radio.

EVETTE

What do you mean?

DOMINIC

They’re cutting it off, no more communication. They said we’re past halfway now in the mission and now they need to see how we do on our own.

EVETTE

(visibly worried)

But what if we need something?

DOMINIC

I just think they’re trying to make the test conditions as real as possible.

(hugs Evette)

I don’t think there’s anything to worry about.

Dominic wraps his arms around Evette who rests her head on his chest and stares into the distance, visibly worried.

(11) INT. BUNKER - DAY

The calendar shows thirty-nine days have passed.

Dominic is sat at the radio desk with the headphones on, scanning the airwaves for any signals.

Evette walks into shot and stops in between Dominic and the desk. She offers him a bottle of water.

EVETTE

Here. (Beat) I don’t know why you keep bothering with that, you know full well you won’t get anything.
DOMINIC
(taking the water)
It’s better than silence.

Evette walks out as Dominic returns to the radio. We ZOOM SLOWLY into Dominic turning the dial, his mind lost in the noise as he searches for something, anything. Suddenly a faint female voice is heard.

RADIO (THROUGH HEADPHONES)
Mass... surf... underground...

Dominic jumps in surprise, knocking the water bottle onto the floor.

DOMINIC
(shouting)
Evette!

Dominic frantically fine tunes the radio dial trying to hone in on the signal. Evette walks into the room again.

EVETTE
What?

DOMINIC
I heard something! A voice.

Evette folds her arms, unimpressed.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)
It was a woman’s voice, I couldn’t make out what she was saying properly.

EVETTE
I think you’ve been listening to it for too long.

Without warning the voice is heard again. Dominic instantly takes his hand off the dial to leave it in position.

DOMINIC
(whispering)
Shh, it’s here again, listen.

DESK POV
Evette leans into Dominic to hear into the headphones.
The signal starts to die as the voice is replaced by more buzzing. Dominic starts to fiddle with the dial again but cannot find the voice. He turns to his wife.

EVETTE
(shocked)
What do you think it is?

DOMINIC
I don’t know, but this thing can’t pick up normal radio. It’s for secret or emergency broadcasts, that kind of thing.

EVETTE
Who’d be doing that kind of thing?

DOMINIC
I don’t know.

EVETTE
Another bunker?

DOMINIC
I don’t know. We can’t make outgoing transmissions, I know that. We can only speak when spoken to. So to speak.

Evette stands up and rubs her temple. Dominic puts his headphones down on the desk and turns off the radio.

DOMINIC (CONT'D)
It doesn’t make any sense. There shouldn’t be any broadcasts.

EVETTE
(panicked)
If there was some sort of emergency they’d tell us, right? Regardless of cutting us off for the mission. They’d get back in touch and tell us, wouldn’t they?
DOMINIC  
(stumped)  
I... I assume so, yeah. But it could be anything. (Beat) I’m going to keep trying to find it, see if I can get more than half a word coming through.

Evette makes to leave the room. A MID SHOT has Dominic blurred in the background.

EVETTE  
(back turned)  
I really wish we’d never got into all this.

As Evette leaves the shot, Dominic comes into focus. He sighs, letting her comments slide.

(12) INT. BUNKER - EVENING

CLAIRE AND EVETTE
Are asleep in their beds.

The calendar has fifteen days crossed off, indicating the family are entering their forty-fifth underground. Like before the camera ZOOMS OUT to reveal Dominic underneath – however this time the shot is HAND HELD and less smooth.

We stop at MID DISTANCE just to his right and gather than he is still trying to find the mystery signal. We then SLOWLY TRACK TO THE LEFT, finishing at the left hand side of the desk. As we stop it is revealed that Dominic has not only found the mystery signal, but is taking notes.

Dominic stops writing and holds up the note. We ZOOM to his eyes moving from right to left. Tears form in his eyes as he takes in the information.

(13) INT. BUNKER - DAY

CU of brick work. The camera follows the wall to its base and finds the calendar crumpled on the floor. We can just make out all the days in May have been crossed off.
A boot suddenly appears next to it. We follow up to someone in a protective suit and gas mask; we cannot make out who it is. They reach over the table to grab a pamphlet.

DESK POV
The person walks from the desk to another suited, masked figure at the base of the exit ladder at the other end of the room. The bunker is messy, empty tins are on the floor.

CLAIRE’S SHOULDER
In a protective suit – but no mask – walks casually from the bedroom to the two figures. One of them hands Claire a mask from behind their back.

EVETTE
You have to put this on before we can go up honey.

We ascertain that the other figure is Dominic as he hands the pamphlet to Evette.

DOMINIC
This is the evacuation procedure. Wait here while I go up and meet them.

LADDER POV
Looking down on the three. Evette and Claire look up as Dominic begins to climb the ladders towards us.

(14) EXT. YORKSHIRE MOORS - DAY

THICK DUST blows, obscuring any certainties in the landscape. The BUNKER HATCH opens Dominic emerges, stopping at the shoulders. We SLOWLY ZOOM into his visors reflection and can see what he sees; burned, broken trees and the thick, swirling dust that surrounds him. Something serious has happened, but he has no idea what.

(15) INT. BUNKER - DAY

Dominic, his suit filthy, climbs back down the ladder and joins Evette and Claire at the bottom.

EVETTE
What’s up there?
Dominic doesn’t hear her – he’s shocked to the core. Eventually he turns to his wife.

    DOMINIC
    (barely audible)
    There’s nothing there. Nothing!

He reaches into the vast pocket of the suit and pulls out a scrap of paper and hands it to Evette.

    EVETTE
    What’s this?

EVETTE’S POV
She holds the note up close and through the green tint of her visor we can makes out the transcript; “Britain... under nuclear attack. There... damage... surface, remain underground. Can anyone... hear me? We're... bunker... Lake Windermere... Believe there are others out... please respond.”

Dominic continues to talk as we read.

    DOMINIC (O.S.)
    That radio broadcast, it’s a loop, a recorded message. That’s what I’ve managed to work out.

Evette and Dominic look at each other as the wind whistles ever louder.

FADE OUT.