

**The View From Heaven**

**by**

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## CHARACTERS

### *The Brothers*

Daniel Bennet	23, oldest brother, harsh, lost his wife, is now completely hell-bent on survival for his brothers, no thought for the rest of the world,
Luke Bennet	21, calm, peacemaker, viewing the situation as almost a joke or a cruel irony worth laughing at, and is adverse to making it to the refugee camp
Simon Bennet	19, youngest, angry and distraught over the loss of family and friends, but compassionate and worried about any other survivors

### *Others*

Madeline Bennet	Daniel's wife, died some time recently during the crisis, sweet, caring, optimistic, but the sadness he feels is also in her, as she is an echo of his mind
Mother	28, accusing, angry, carrying her baby
Marcus	23, tough guy, shares Luke's humor
Chopper Two	voice only, typical chopper pilot

## CHARACTER NOTES

Throughout the play the BROTHERS are usually facing away from each other, DSL and DSR and watching the doors and windows unless directed otherwise, and their lines are said over the shoulder, with a glance, or not turning to the other person at all.

OTHERS do not display this behavior, looking in a normal fashion at the person they talk to.

## COSTUMES

The BROTHERS are well armed, and they all carry full backpacks, but are dressed in civilian clothing, not military. DANIEL carries an assault rifle in his hands, SIMON carries an Uzi, and LUKE carries a mean looking combat shotgun, which must have a sling as he will go up and down the ladder several times.

MADELINE should be dressed in something that flatters her actress, close to perfect, but not over the top, as she is Daniel's memory of Madeline.

MOTHER was well dressed once, wearing a casual dress or skirt and blouse, but the clothing is a bit torn and dirty, and looking a bit out of place on her hip is a machete in a sheathe belted around her waist.

MARCUS is dressed in a military uniform, but the sleeves are cut off leaving his arms bare, and he is unarmed.

### SETTING

A house living room, any windows are tightly boarded; it can be seen that the stairs to a landing with three doors have been smashed out and replaced with a ladder. On the first floor there is a fireplace in the SR wall. USR corner there is a table with dining room chairs. There is a door DSL, its hinges positioned UPS, and door DSR, padlocked and boarded over. In the back wall, obscured by the ladder, is a door hidden from the audience through which some characters will exit.

### TIME

Tomorrow. A serious disaster is occurring, implied as a zombie attack or something similar to I Am Legend, but never admitted as such. One act.

## ACT 1

(CURTAINS open. LIGHTS up.)

(DANIEL, LUKE, and SIMON rush in through the door DSL,  
slam the door, SIMON bolts it,

LUKE

Man, this neighborhood has really gone to the dogs.

DANIEL

Find the note.

LUKE

(Sings badly)

Doe, ray, meeee –

DANIEL

(Snaps angrily)

Search!

(THEY search.)

SIMON

I found it.

LUKE

Really?

SIMON

Oop, nope, napkin.

DANIEL

Keep looking.

(Short search. LUKE picks up piece of paper on small table by the  
door.)

LUKE

Found it.

DANIEL

(Frowns at Simon.)

You should have seen that, Simon.

SIMON

Get off my back.

LUKE

(reading the paper, hardly looking up)

Daniel, get off his back.

DANIEL

(crossing to Luke)

We're short on time.

(reaches for the paper)

LUKE

Actually, we'll be here for awhile.

DANIEL

(reads the paper)

Dammit... We're three hours behind them, at least.

LUKE

They'll be gone by the time we get there. We'll have to wait.

SIMON

How long?

DANIEL

(from the paper)

There's a two-way radio upstairs.

LUKE

I got it.

(heads up the ladder and goes in the first room)

SIMON

Shouldn't we all get upstairs? Wouldn't it be safer?

DANIEL

Probably. We'll see what Luke thinks.

(DANIEL and SIMON are quiet for a moment, neither facing the other, not because they are ignoring each other, but because they are watching the doors and windows.)

DANIEL

We shouldn't have stopped in town.

SIMON

Those people needed help.

DANIEL

(snorts)

And look where that got all of us. Where are they now?

SIMON

(rounding on Daniel)

We couldn't just leave them!

DANIEL

(turning also)

Next group of survivors we come across I'll be happy to leave you with them.

(LUKE comes out from the first room and goes to the second room.)

LUKE

You won't leave him behind, Daniel, he's too good a shot.

(goes into the second room)

DANIEL

Luke, just find that radio!

(Pause. DANIEL glares and SIMON looks upset, then both turn away.)

SIMON

What's happened to you?

DANIEL

*Happened* to me? Nothing's happened to me. I'm standing here uninjured and I'm approximately six hours from getting out of this hell-hole. I hope.

SIMON

I mean what's wrong with you? You've been... pitiless this whole trip. You've refused to stop for anyone else.

DANIEL

(interrupting)

Do you want to get out of this or not?

SIMON

(continuing)

And that mother, who couldn't get back to her apartment. Her son was just a baby! You refused to even try and get to him. Madeline would have wanted you to –

DANIEL

(furious, rounds on Simon)

Madeline is dead! Dead! *My* life is my only concern now.

SIMON

You're as bad as the... the...

DANIEL

(waits as Simon falters, then turns away, laughs and gestures to indicate outside the house)

The what, Simon? Going to call them what they are?

(LUKE, leaving the second room and moving to the third, laughs grimly.)

LUKE

(half to himself, laughing)

Call them what they are... we must be going mad.

(DANIEL and SIMON watch him go. Then DANIEL pulls a chair over from the table and sets it facing the DSL door.)

SIMON

Whatever they are, you're no better than them if you can't show a little compassion.

DANIEL

(shrugs off his backpack, sets it beside the chair, and sits down)

You want to survive, same as me. You could have gone with that women, nothing was stopping you.

(LUKE comes out from the third room before SIMON can reply.)

LUKE

(emerging with the radio)

This must be a movie.

DANIEL

(glances at him)

What are you talking about?

LUKE

(leans against the railing)

We must be in a movie. The batteries are dead.

(DANIEL growls and leans his head back in frustration.)

DANIEL

(ironically)

Of course they are.

SIMON

(over the end of Daniel's sentence)

What kind does it take?

LUKE

Dee.

SIMON

A big MagLite uses those, right?

LUKE

I think so, probably. You don't have a flashlight with you by chance?

SIMON

Nuh uh.

DANIEL

Nothing that big.

SIMON

One of the guys we picked up in town had one.

DANIEL

Also does us no good.

SIMON

I remember where he dropped it.

LUKE

Oh gosh...

(speaking half to himself, thoughtful, considering the prospect of going back)

LUKE (continued.)

I'm starting to run low on shells.

DANIEL

We're not backtracking.

SIMON

I thought I would go. Alone.

(DANIEL and LUKE object, LUKE loudly, DANIEL less so.)



SIMON

I'm faster than you, Daniel. And Luke, you're banged up after falling from –

DANIEL

It's not about how fast –

LUKE

It's not about who's best suited. The whole idea is mad, no one is going. We'll just estimate the time and move out accordingly.

SIMON

If they radio for us and we don't reply they won't wait. They might not even land.

LUKE

Marcus was with that group. He'll land.

SIMON

You aren't even sure Marcus got through.

LUKE

Of course he –

DANIEL

Let him go.

LUKE

We can't –

DANIEL

Let him go. It's not that far, right?

(DANIEL looks over his shoulder and SIMON nods)

DANIEL (Continued)

It's not that far and he knows where it is. We cleared the route on the way here. It can't be overrun again already. He'll be fine if he hurries.

(LUKE comes down the ladder as SIMON checks his weapons and puts down his backpack. LUKE and SIMON bump forearms instead of putting down their weapons and shaking hands. DANIEL rises from his seat to bump forearms also. It's a solemn affair, but not a final farewell by any means.)

(DANIEL hefts his rifle and faces the door. LUKE unbolts the door and throws it open for SIMON who exits. LUKE shuts the door after DANIEL nods all clear.)

(DANIEL sits back down. LUKE finds another chair and sits opposite him, facing DSR.)

(LIGHTS dim, SPOTLIGHT comes up on Daniel.)

LUKE

He better hurry.

DANIEL

He will.

(Enter MADELINE, from room upstairs. SPOTLIGHT slowly comes up on her. LIGHTING on stage is dreamlike/ethereal.)

MADELINE

Daniel?

(DANIEL raises his head a bit, but does not respond.)

MADELINE

Daniel? What's going on out there?

DANIEL

(does not look at her)

I'm not sure, Madeline. We just have to sit tight for awhile.

MADELINE

You shouldn't have let Simon go.

DANIEL

Nothing will happen to him.

(MADELINE comes down the ladder and crosses to Daniel, puts a hand on his shoulder.)

(LIGHTS go down almost completely/completely on the rest of the stage.)

MADELINE

Are you sure?

DANIEL

(smiles)

He's too good a shot.

(DANIEL, after a moment, puts a hand over hers on his shoulder.)

DANIEL

I should have gone with him. I've got nothing left to lose, but he might have a future.

MADELINE

Don't say that. There's always something to live for.

DANIEL

If I can't share it with you I don't want it.

MADELINE

(takes his face in her hand and turns him towards her)

That's no way to act.

(DANIEL takes her hand and pulls her around and MADELINE sits on his lap.)

MADELINE

Do you remember why I fell in love with you?

(DANIEL stops looking at her.)

DANIEL

(sighs)

I don't remember anything anymore.

MADELINE

I told you every day.

DANIEL

I don't want to remember.

MADELINE

Because you care. About me. About your friends. About the strangers you see around you. About children, single mothers, and broken families. About anyone who might be hurting.

DANIEL

They're all gone now.

MADELINE

You gave a damn when no one else did. You hated seeing people hurt.

DANIEL

(chuckles)

What irony. You loved me for how I hated.

(pause)

Everyone is hurting now. Survivors. Victims. The dead, the living, everyone hurts.

(looks at her, mournful)

I hate everything.

MADELINE

They can't hurt forever. There's still hope.

DANIEL

(half-sings, *View From Heaven* by Yellowcard)

I'm sure the view from heaven, beats the hell out of mine here.

MADELINE

(smiles)

You sang that at your father's funeral. You used to sing all the time. I loved your voice.

DANIEL

(angry)

*I* loved *you*, Madeline. Why were you taken from me?

Madeline

Bad things happen to good people, Daniel. You never accepted that, you hated it, and I loved you for that.

DANIEL

We've been over this.

MADELINE

And you still don't accept it. That's why we're talking about it.

(DANIEL and MADELINE sit quietly for a moment. DANIEL hesitantly looks at her, then moves to kiss her, but stops himself.)

DANIEL

I should let you go.

MADELINE

You know you don't have any choice in that.

DANIEL

(Nods and tears his gaze from her face.)

MADELINE

Don't ever stop loving me. That's how it should be. But don't let it cripple you.

(standing)

Your brothers have a chance, and for them you need to put your grief aside for awhile.

DANIEL

I know.

MADELINE

(runs her hand up Daniel's arm and rest it for a moment on his cheek as she goes to stand behind him)

Do you blame yourself?

(SPOTLIGHT on Madeline begins to dim, SPOTLIGHT on Daniel remains.)

DANIEL

Yes.

MADELINE

(stepping back)

Why?

DANIEL

There's no one else left to blame.

(SPOTLIGHT on Madeline fades entirely and MADELINE exits via hidden door.)

(On lights out LUKE get up from his chair and steps to CS.)

(LIGHTS come up quickly. From OSL, a burst of automatic gunfire.)

LUKE

Simon's coming!

DANIEL

(jumps up)

Gah! He's brought them down on us!

(Silence from OS. DANIEL and LUKE stand tensely. DANIEL creeps to the door, puts a hand on the knob. LUKE takes a ready stance. DANIEL yanks the door open, SIMON is standing there about to knock. SIMON sees Luke and ducks.)

SIMON

Whoa, whoa! It's me!

LUKE

(lowers his shotgun)

Sheesh, you shouldn't have been so blasted quiet.

SIMON

(gets up and comes inside)

Sorry, jeez.

(SIMON tosses a big MagLite flashlight to Luke)

(DANIEL shuts the door.)

DANIEL

Were you followed?

SIMON

Yes, but I took care of them. We're clear.

DANIEL

That was quick.

SIMON

(raises an eyebrow)

I've been gone an hour and a half.

(DANIEL shakes his head, confused, then settles back into his chair. LUKE and SIMON work on the radio.)

SIMON

What's the matter with Daniel?

LUKE

He was mumbling to himself the whole time you were gone.

SIMON

Talking to himself?

LUKE

I heard him say Madeline's name.

SIMON

(glances at Daniel)

I can't imagine losing a wife.

LUKE

He's only just holding it together.

SIMON

That's not an excuse for what he's done.

LUKE

He's done nothing wrong. Not really.

SIMON

We've all lost family and friends. Folding up like that; it's not right.

(LUKE checks the radio and frowns, flips switches.)

LUKE

It's got power... We should be hearing something faint at least. I'm thinking it was upstairs for a reason.

SIMON

Bad reception?

LUKE

Yep. I'll take it upstairs.

(LUKE and SIMON look over at Daniel.)

LUKE

Keep an eye on him. Just one eye though.

(SIMON nods and sits in Luke's chair. LUKE ascends the ladder and into a room.)

(LIGHTS dim to dreamlike/ethereal and SPOTLIGHT comes up on Simon. MOTHER enters from DSL door, carrying her baby, shuts the door behind her. DANIEL does not react to their entrance, does not see them. SPOTLIGHT comes up on Mother as LIGHTS fade entirely/almost entirely.)

SIMON

(to himself)

I should have made him stop.

MOTHER

Yes, you should have.

(MOTHER goes to SR window, peers between the boards over the window.)

MOTHER

(biting tone)

You're awfully snug here. Feeling safe?

(SIMON does not look at Mother unless stage directions say otherwise.)

SIMON

Why were you separated from your baby in the first place?

MOTHER

Does it matter? Don't make excuses for yourself.

SIMON

It's not my fault.

MOTHER

Isn't it?

SIMON

Daniel wouldn't stop.

MOTHER

He speaks for you and your other brother as well?

(gets down on her knees beside Simon)

I needed your help. My baby was out there.

(holds the baby out to him)

Helpless.

(SIMON looks at the baby, sets down his Uzi, and takes the baby carefully)

MOTHER

(accusing)

That's who you abandoned. He's three months old.

SIMON

(now looks at her, distraught)

I'm sorry. I couldn't leave my brothers.

MOTHER

They both can take care of themselves.



SIMON

I need them!

MOTHER

(smug)

So you were being completely selfish.

SIMON

No!

MOTHER

You were. And my baby and I suffered for it.

SIMON

No... I... it wasn't... none of this is even supposed to be happening! It's like Hell on Earth out there.

MOTHER

That it is. And you've adapted quite quickly.

SIMON

I wanted to help you. I should have, I realize that. But this... this... curse, this plague...this apocalypse... I'm scared. Scared to my very core.

MOTHER

That doesn't change what you did.

(gets to her feet)

SIMON

(looks down sadly at the baby, sings quietly *View From Heaven* by Yellowcard)

And melodies in the air, singing, "Life just ain't fair..."

(stops singing, looks at the Mother)

I'd give anything to make this right.

MOTHER

Good luck with that.

(snatches the baby back)

You might as well have killed him yourself.

(leans close to him)

What good is surviving if you sacrifice your soul?

(SPOTLIGHT on Mother fades as MOTHER stalks off to exit out the hidden door.)

(LIGHTS spring up as soon as Mother is gone.)

SIMON

(looking at his empty arms)

I might as well have killed him myself.

DANIEL

Killed who?

SIMON

(snaps out of it, picks up his Uzi)

No one. Sorry, I was thinking out loud.

DANIEL

(gruffly)

Look, I'm sorry about how things are going.

SIMON

(angry, but with himself)

I'm sorry, too.

DANIEL

Simon... I refused to give her help... because I didn't want to put you in danger.

SIMON

Seems a little late for that.

DANIEL

I mean more danger. You and Luke are all I've got left -

SIMON

It does us no good to survive if we sacrifice our souls.

DANIEL

(angry)

Simon, I have enough souls haunting me. I don't need yours flitting around, too.

(SIMON stays silent. DANIEL is about to speak again as LUKE comes out onto the landing.)

LUKE

We're set up. We should be hearing from them in...

(trails off)

SIMON

(checks his watch)

About forty-five minutes. Geez, the time has flown by.

LUKE

It took me awhile to rig an antenna.  
(to Daniel)  
I'm getting chatter from the coast now.

DANIEL

Anything useful?

LUKE

More of the same all over.  
(pretending to be confused, mocking the people on the radio)  
"Where are we going? And why are we in this handbasket?"  
(spits distastefully, returns to normal voice)  
Chaos. We should be right at home.

DANIEL

Maybe if we were younger.

LUKE

Who's old?

(Long pause.)

LUKE (cont.)

Sooooo, are we just gonna sit around?

DANIEL

(pert)  
You could count your shells.

LUKE

That's depressing. I like to think the fun could go on indefinitely.

DANIEL

(getting annoyed)  
Infinite ammo?

LUKE

I wonder what the cheat for that is?

(LIGHTS fade to dreamlike/ethereal as Daniel speaks.  
SPOTLIGHT fade in on Luke.)

DANIEL

Can it, Luke. You can joke all you want when we get out, but right now, please, just leave me be.

(SPOTLIGHT fade up on Marcus as MARCUS steps out onto the landing from the SR upstairs door.)

LUKE

(glances at Marcus)

Marcus, we should have gone with you.

MARCUS

Yes, you should have.

(nods to Daniel)

Daniel seems to have lost his usual good humor.

LUKE

I know. It's irritating.

MARCUS

Has he got a good reason?

LUKE

He lost Madeline at the start of this misadventure.

MARCUS

Ouch. That would be hard for anyone.

LUKE

But for Daniel?

MARCUS

You've always known he was a romantic underneath.

LUKE

Not the best time for it to show.

MARCUS

You know you can't blame him.

LUKE

I'm sure I don't understand his issue.

MARCUS

Ha! Everyone you care about is safe. I got my sister out days ago.

LUKE

(snorts)

I'm not so sure I care where Maria is. And she doesn't give a rip where I am. .

MARCUS

So you'd rather be here?

LUKE

I'm having fun.

MARCUS

No doubt you are. Are you thinking Maria will come on the radio in a few minutes and demand that you get out of here?

LUKE

Wouldn't that be a trip.

MARCUS

You'd rather be here than face her, wouldn't you?

(MARCUS goes to ladder and goes down as LUKE gives him a look and speaks.)

LUKE

(Gives Marcus a look, 'Are you serious?' The look falters and his shoulders sag a bit)

It's better for her if we don't risk getting stuck in the same refugee camp.

MARCUS

Better for you. She's mature enough to work through this.

LUKE

I am not ready to get married.

MARCUS

Yea, you'd rather go to hell.

LUKE

Ha!

(gestures widely)

And here I am.

MARCUS

But of course, you're only kidding.

LUKE

(denial)

I'm not.

(SPOTLIGHT on Marcus widens enough to include Daniel,  
watching the door restlessly)

MARCUS

Whether you are or not, you won't leave him.

(indicates Daniel, then looks at him, concern in his voice)

He's going to need you.

LUKE

(a bit unsure of himself)

He'll be satisfied getting us to the fort. They'll need volunteers until the evac helicopters  
stop running.

MARCUS

You'll see that huey and you'll be the first one on.

LUKE

(laughs, half-sings/quotes *View From Heaven* by Yellowcard)

And get away from this place, have a new name and face, I just ain't the same without  
you in my life.

(set his jaw and glowers)

Not while I have shells for my shotgun. I am in no hurry to face your sister

(SPOTLIGHT on Marcus fades out.)

MARCUS

(heads back to hidden door)

You'll be on that chopper. I'll see you on the other side.

LUKE

(without anger)

Screw you, Marcus. I'll go back when I'm damn good and ready.

(MARCUS exits through the hidden door. SPOTLIGHT on Luke  
fades as LIGHTS come back up.)

(Squawking of the radio offstage comes though loudly.)

CHOPPER TWO

Come in Halfway House, are you there? This is Chopper 2.

(LUKE curses and hurries into the room. DANIEL and SIMON  
stand.)

CHOPPER TWO

Come in Halfway House, please respond. This is Chopper 2.

LUKE

(comes out with the radio)

Bennet Brothers here. Alive and unharmed.

CHOPPER TWO

Good to hear, Bennet Brothers. Will you make the next evac?

LUKE

We'll be there with pants on.

CHOPPER TWO

Much appreciated Bennet Brothers. How many in your party?

LUKE

Three.

CHOPPER TWO:

(pause)

Damn. We've recently been in contact with at least five others pinned down in your area. We were hoping they would make Halfway House.

(DANIEL, LUKE, and SIMON look from one to another, obviously sharing the same thought. Then LUKE's shoulders shake with quiet chuckles, DANIEL stares at Simon, weighing matters in his mind, and SIMON looks down at the floor, eyes closed in a grimace.)

CHOPPER TWO

(continuing, back to business)

Your pick up point will be four miles north-north east. Look for a windmill. E.T.A. one hour, so don't get held up.

(DANIEL looks up at Luke. LUKE inclines his head questioningly. DANIEL grimaces hugely, snarls, and nods.)

DANIEL

Ask him.

LUKE

(into radio)

Say again, how many pinned down in our area?

CHOPPER TWO

(surprised)

Five. Woman with a child among them. They were moving slowly, coming from the south. It's not likely they're still alive.

(SIMON reacts to what he hears, eyes wide.)

LUKE

(smiles mirthfully)

Chopper Two, we will be late to the party. We're going to see what we can do about those five other guests.

CHOPPER TWO

It's been an hour since they made contact and they were preparing to move. Are you sure, Bennet Brothers? We will continue to another pickup and your next pickup will be in twenty-four hours.

(LUKE looks to Daniel. DANIEL nods. SIMON crosses to Daniel, looks at him gratefully, then DANIEL and SIMON bump forearms as LUKE speaks.)

LUKE

Chopper Two, we're sure. See you in twenty-four hours.

(LUKE puts the radio back in the room while DANIEL and SIMON shoulder their backpacks and check their weapons. LUKE comes out and down the ladder.)

LUKE

I'm still not allowed to crack jokes, am I?

DANIEL

Try and hold it in.

LUKE

We must be mad.

SIMON

We're doing the right thing.

LUKE

We must be mad to do the right thing.

SIMON

(half-sings/quotes *View From Heaven* by Yellowcard)

If we all believe in heaven, maybe we'll make it through one more year.



(LUKE places the note they found upon entering on the table by the door)

DANIEL

(wry smile, half-sings/quotes *View From Heaven* by Yellowcard  
Cause it's all, shot to hell down here...

LUKE

You boys gonna sing all night?

(LUKE prepares to open the door. DANIEL covers the door, SIMON beside him. DANIEL nods, LUKE pulls open the door. DANIEL nods again and they exit, LUKE last, closing the door behind them.)

LUKE (O.S.)

Man, this neighborhood has really gone to the dogs.

(BLACKOUT.)

**FEEDBACK WELCOME: [bluemarten@gmail.com](mailto:bluemarten@gmail.com) or Jesse Abram Riggs on Facebook.com**