

ALLISON KADE

Palisades

PALISADES HAS THE YELLOWTINGE around his eyes like Keegan used to warn about.

My bro Keegan used to say it was a matter of time fore Palisades got it. When that time came, he would tell me, I'd have to look into the cat's yellowed eyes and say, "I love you, Palisades, and now I've got to kill you."

Yellowtinge is always the first sign. I ceive I still have a little time fore the cat starts pissing everywhere. Earlier this week, I traded Ambrose for some plastics so I could hold Palisades even when the worst came. Plastics for my hands and legs and feet, so I could stroke behind his ear without fear of catching the yellowtinge myself, so I could say bye nice-like, fore snapping his neck.

I ceive it ain't exactly ladylike to be snapping cat necks, but these ain't exactly ladylike times.

When we was kiddens, Ma used to lead me and Keegan on our daily scavs. The three of us gived our building a good up-down-up-down, climbing the stairs together as a family. Those days, the stairs was made of concrete and the walls was painted a pinkish white, half peeled near the edges. On the first floor there was an old dangling lamp with crystal shiniess. These days, the concrete stairs is covered in greenish mildew and the paint is all gone, so the walls is the color of cinderblock. The old lamp is gone, too, one of the early things to be eaten up by Yorkers looking for nuggets.

Back then, there was lots more nuggets to scav from the building. I always wondered why people didn't take everything with them when they hurried to West Manhattan but Ma said the gov gave people a short time during the evac cause another cane was coming. To speed em up the gov only gave citizenship to the people who made it in time.

When Keegan and I was kiddens, Ma would go to the Park by herself, leaving us at our place. Keegan and I had a stash of old games we found in the building, and Ma let us keep them cause back in those days there was this idea that kiddens was just kiddens.

The first surges happened when Ma was a teen. She never talked much about how things was when she was a kidden, when the old levees was enough. I do know there was horses in the Park and no one scavved

through the city cept the poor, and even they lived richer than me and Ma. They got help from the gov, and some of them even had places to go at night with volts.

When Ma was away, Keegan and me tected each other and played those old games, like Uno and Guess Who and Battleship. There was way more candles back then, and Ma didn't say none about us flickering them while she was gone, way she would now.

That is, if she still ceived what was happening round her.

Keegan membered more of the early days than me. He even membered Pa. While Ma was at the Park and the candles was flickering, Keegan and I sat on the chipped, clammy tiles on top of Ma's good blanket. He telled me tales bout how Old New York used to be a place for the richies, fore either of us was born. I had trouble picturing richies on my street, in my building. Keegan said there was more places to the south and east of the island that was gone below the water. He said that Brooklyn Bay was named for a place what used to be there, and that West Manhattan used to be called New Jersey, fore everyone moved across the river and named it after the place they left behind.

Old New York, my home, is that left-behind place.

When we played Battleship, Keegan was always West Manhattan. He made me be Old New York and took most of my ships at the start to make it more real. Even when I was young I ceived it was no fair, but now that he's gone, I'd let him be West Manhattan every day.

MA AND I LIVE high up on seventeen, which is tough on Ma, but she can't leave the place anyway so it don't really matter. I chose our place cause it's good for walking. Sometimes I have to take the raft out from the second floor, but usually I can get out on the first floor with just my boots.

The Park, though, is always under water. Once, it didn't rain for a while and my raft got beached around the old zoo. Other than that, I never seed the Park as nothing but a big lake.

When I started going to the Park on my lonesome, Ma was scared. But she sure couldn't go no more, with her limp and gimface and bad nightsight. The big tradesmen come out during the almost-dark, after a long day of scavving. In case there's trouble I always bring my bang, which Keegan finded in our place a couple years fore he went.

My biggest trade piece is something better than batts or candles or even the once-in-a-blue-moon fresh fish. I sell the weather. And today, I have a lot to sell.

I drive the raft to my usual spot on the Great Lawn (they call it that, though I ain't never seed any grass). I set down the anchor Keegan builded for the old raft. Watching my back from all sides, I whistle my little beat and the people start coming.

Crinklestein gives me four batts for the news.

Hermann gives me a can of limas and an old can of pina. (He knowed pina is Ma's favorite.)

Shrimps gives me a pack of cookies, totally fresh. No mold, not even hardened. I don't tell him I think he's overpaying.

Gallup tries to give me two candles, but I say no, this is three-candle news.

They pay me more than anyone else cause I ain't ever let them down. My news is real pure, straight from Ambrose, and I never make shit up just to get their batts.

Here it is: Late tonight, after it's almost daybreak, there's gonna be another cane.

The surges is supposed to come back, like at least a ten-storey wave. When I heard the news, I was glad Ma and my's place is on seventeen. The old levees around the city is gonna help a little, Ambrose telled me, but better stay away from the levee cracks cause that's where the water will surge extra. I don't know how people ever thought the original levees round Old New York would be enough, cause they got way huger levees in West Manhattan now, but I guess you learn from your mistakes.

After I collect my bounty, I drive the raft back to our place. I climb the stairs with my wetsacks full of batts and candles and canfood; on my way up, when I hit twelve, I stop for a sec and eat a cookie. It has choco in it. I haven't had choco in years. In the early days, Keegan and I used to find it in cupboards while scavving.

Ma likes my loot, but she don't say so. "Palisades been tecting you, Ma?" I ask.

She don't say nothing. She sits on the good blanket Keegan and I used to sit on and stares out the window. Her hair is speckle gray and black and musty brown. "Want me to crack the window?" I ask. "Big surges coming tonight but for now you can stink the fresh air." She twitches and I take it as a yeah. Sometimes I see little yesses and nos in her.

I push the window and a breeze flies through the room. We live in a place what used to be three bedrooms, but usually we stay in the big main room with the broken table and pretty kitchen. There's a sink, but no water comes through so you still gotta drink from the rain or use

iodines on street water.

I chose this apartment cause it looked the richest. It has high ceilings that curve up in the middle like a dome and fancy tiles in the big room. Best of all, when the richies who used to live here got away, they left behind warm coats with only a few moth holes. One fit me perfect, so I took it as a sign that this was the place for us. I also found a pair of dark glasses for the sun. I coulda traded them away but it was something I kept for just me. I never wear em outside cause everyone would try to thief em, but once in a while I model em for Ma or wear em to sleep.

I open the can of pina in front of her. She don't look at me but she moves her eyes away from the window for a sec and I take it as a thank you. She takes the open can and starts dripping sticky yellow pina into her mouth in a way she woulda yelled at me when I was a kidden.

Good thing she's still wearing the plastics I put on her. I put on my own plastics and pet Palisades behind his ears. "I'm gonna run out quick, boy, and if it goes good maybe I won't have to kill you."

FIRST TIME I SEED THE TALL LEVEES of West Manhattan, I was bout twelve. Keegan and I was on the old raft (wouldn't be a few years fore it sprung a leak and Ambrose helped me patch it). Keegan said to me, "Sis, you ceive Fort Lee?"

I said, "Ceive it? Bro, I'm gonna live in Teaneck someday. You member Battleship? I'm gonna invade Tenafly and have volts like this all the time. Even at night."

We was in the raft toward day-end. We had to go back fore the night surge came in, but Keegan wanted to show me the lights. On one side of the river, Old New York was black as normal, little figures on rooftops like ants on an antpile. Since we was kiddens we seed the lights to the west every night, under the bright of the moon. But this was the first I seed it up close. There was tall lamps on a path with trees and benches. People was walking along the water, not fishing or hunting or caring bout us, just looking, like they didn't get that the lights made them not see the water so good.

Not like us who could see in the dark.

Keegan drove the raft to the Break—back then I didn't ceive it as the Break, since I was never there previous—and a square door toward the top of the levee came open. Out crawled Shepherd, but I didn't ceive him as Shepherd yet, neither. Shepherd climbed down a ladder and splooshed onto our raft.

“Ho,” Keegan said.

“Hey,” Shepherd pointed at me. “This your sister?”

“Kara,” I said, proud.

“My bro will be taking over soon,” Shepherd said to Keegan, ignoring me. “I told you I’m getting married? We’re moving to Chicago.”

“Mmm,” Keegan said with an air I never seed fore. “I ain’t never been there.”

Shepherd laughed, not nicely. “Of course you haven’t.”

“How you gonna get there?” I asked. My bro looked at me with a face like I flickered his last candle without permission.

“Train,” said the older boy, as though taking a train wasn’t nothing.

When he seed my face, Shepherd rolled his eyes. Thank God Ambrose is nicer than his bro. Sometimes I wonder will I ever get outta Old New York, and if I get out would I be with Ambrose, and if I was with Ambrose would we be together til we was old people and had kiddens of us own, and if we did, would our kiddens be mean like Shepherd, or nice like Ambrose?

Shepherd dropped his pack and opened it to show us tons of batts and candles and iodines, plus some beancans. “What do you have for me?”

Keegan had five wetsacks that day—pickings was good back then—with jewelries and electriccs and a few lady hats. Shepherd liked it and gave us everything he got, including more batts than I had ever seed in one place. He made a face like he got us good, but I couldn’t ceive what good the electriccs would be without batts to run them.

When we left the Break I asked Keegan did he like Shepherd or what? Keegan said no, he didn’t like Shepherd none. But then I asked, well why were you shamed when he talked about riding a train? You shamed cause you never left New York?

Keegan said nothing for a ways, then shook his head. “Not for Pa, we coulda lived there too.”

I said what, what does that mean, but he wouldn’t say no more.

We was quiet for most of the ride but then I wanted to drive the raft. Keegan was scared cause I was still a kidden, but I begged and he let me try. Lucky thing I got to learn, too, as that raft would be mine soon. I’d have to come back this way by myself fore either of us expected, by the time the next high surge came in.

TONIGHT, when I get to the other side of the river, I climb the rope ladder and the calluses on my hands feel good, like my skin got an itch underneath for too long and nothing can get it itched but the rope’s rough

hairs. Ambrose hauls up my raft and hides it in our usual shadow place behind the levee door. I edge out, knees first, and he pulls me up by my hand.

Keegan died bout eight years ago. I dunno more specific than that cause I don't got a cal. I know rough how long it was cause back then I was a kidden and now I'm a woman, more or less. After Keegan died Ma started to go to her place in her mind, so no one said Kara, you gotta take over the trade, but it ain't like Ma gonna get on Keegan's raft and ask Shepherd what was what. When I went to West Manhattan alone my first time, Shepherd ain't cry nor nothing like I thought he should when I say what happen, just asked if I can do my bro's old job and I said yeah, and he said okay, he still gonna get married so I should deal with his little bro starting soon.

First time I met Ambrose, he was chubby like no one in Old New York, with fat around his cheeks and neck, like he run out of space to store his food stash so he store it in his mouth. He was bout thirteen, a year more than me. These days, he's taller than Shepherd ever was, and no chub. Maybe he saw I was hungry and felt bad bout eating too much. Now his face is hard-looking and has stubbles and his arms is strong. Since Shepherd went away, Ambrose don't just haul up my raft and take my nuggets, but he tell me bout his life and I tell him bout mine and from a long time ago I got a feeling he didn't have many friends, but nor did I have any friends, neither.

Me and Ambrose hide in the shadows for a sec. We don't spot no one coming, so we tail it for the supply shed. It's only a minute's run and it's mostly in shadow, but in one part we gotta sprint into the light under a lamp, so we do it fast and run into the shed and crash into each other and in the spirit of danger his mouth is on me right away, like always.

We used to care more about being quiet, but by now I can't magine anyone coming in on us. Ambrose's lips is salty, face coarse, skin underneath smoother than I'd have ceived fore I got to feel it myself.

He says the shed is full of mildew and hates the stink but I don't stink it at all. It stinks none worse than our place. Everything in Old New York is wet, slimy, yellowtinged. I bet I am too. But when I come here, the air has a diff stink. In my whole life, I never stinked fresh wood til I got to that shed. Ma said that Old New York had a lot of wood back in the day, but now it's only the drift kind. The wet eats through it.

My first night in the shed with Ambrose, the fresh wood stinked great, like I magined a forest. Through the slats I spotted lights like I seed with Keegan years ago, but now they was up close. No flame, no flicker. Just

light. There's even a light in the shed, no batts needed. About a year ago Ambrose told me to turn it on, pull a cord. He thought I'd like it, but I didn't. It glowed weird. I'm good with matches, but there weren't art in pulling a cord.

Ambrose touches, licks, caresses, breathes me. I breathe him. I run my nose through the hair on his chest and do fog circles on his neck with my breath. As I feel all the good things crashing in on me I scream a little and turn my head, and see the freshwood ceiling and shiny tools and supplies, and feel the mulch floor beneath us that's soft and hard at the same time, and I don't know where I wanna be or if this is good but I think, well, Kara, it sure ain't bad.

When we finish, we lay on the dirt of the shed floor and don't talk, and keep not talking for a while, and then we both talk at the same time.

I say: "Did you get the meds for Palisades?"

He says: "Move in with me."

I sit straight up at look at him real serious. He look serious, too. "What about Ma?" I ask.

"We can go back sometimes and give her the stuff she needs. Maybe we can get her a fake ID and bring her over here, too."

"You'd get me a fake?"

"I know a guy."

"I can't pass. My speech ain't nice like you . . ."

"There are plenty of refugees here from right before the final evac. You could blend in. I'll sneak you textbooks and help with your reading, and you'll be speaking like a Manhattanite in no time."

I shake my head. "At least your refs got citizenship."

"It's not like that. The stance back then was that if you didn't evac, the government couldn't afford to go back and save you, or give you social services. That doesn't mean they're chasing people down to find illegal refugees from the island."

"Yeah?" I pull the tattered blanket round my nakedness. "Then how come the levee's so high? How come the latch only opens from inside? How come the gov telled everyone to evac, but they didn't paid to help people do it? How come only the poor was left behind?"

"There's only so much they can do, you know? It's not like anyone expected the old levees to break. They held up for years, even after the rest of the boroughs sank, so they thought they'd always be okay."

"They wasn't."

"No."

“You’d wanna be seed with me out there? Even if I talk like I do?”

He don’t look at me when he say, “I love you, Kara.” I get uncomfortable and he know it so he joke, “And it’s not like there’s any other girl I’m seeing around here, anyway.” I slap his arm. “That place is a hellhole. Seriously, it’s a sinking island. It’s not a place for you.”

“What about the other Yorkers?”

“Someone else will step up to take over the trade.”

He’s leaned back on his elbows and my knees is curled in and I wanna go back to his warm skin a hand’s length away but the space between us is bigger than it looks. I breathe in the wood. “Did you find the meds for Palisades?”

“What about my offer?”

“What about the meds?”

“I looked, but no one had any they could trade.”

“I told you I’d give you extra good trades, anything. He tects Ma from the vermin.”

“I’m not lying. Anyway, I wouldn’t make you trade me all those things.”

“You don’t ceive I’m a dummy, that it’s just a cat?”

“No.”

We spend another few minutes not talking.

“Kara?” Ambrose asks.

“Yeah?”

“Is there anything I can say?”

I’m quiet and we not-talk a little more.

THE WINDS IS ALREADY STARTED when I get back to the island. I tuck the anchor into my wetsack and drive the raft through a breach in the levee, where the water hisses like the wind is gonna do through our windows later. As usual I haul the raft over my head to get over the leftover levee wall, but the wind almost pushes me down.

The surge is already come, and the streets is high enough that I can’t sloosh back to Ma and my’s place. I set the raft in the street and start to paddle. Problem is, the winds is going the wrong way.

I look up and see the full moon. Everyone knows a full moontide means full surge. I push off the ground—thank the stars my paddle can touch the bottom—to get back to Ma and my’s place. The raft rickets and swings to the left in an eddy, but I push it back straight again. In a few minutes, it veers again and I gotta muscle it out.

While I’m muscling, I see Gallup in the shadows of a downed build-

ing. My old trading buddy don't look like such a buddy no more. I never felt so weird in the dark fore. Gallup come forward like to help with the raft, but when my raft moves again I ain't sure if I'm relieved cause I'm moving or cause Gallup ain't had to help me.

My city stinks like I membered.

I dock the raft at our place, haul it high as the tenth floor but then put it down because I ain't in the mood to carry it all the way to seventeen right now. In the early days we used to fear other people would take our nuggets, but ain't no one here since me and Ma for a couple years.

I struggle with the door to our place—the wet sticks to it, and it gets extra angry when a cane is brewing. Finally I kick the damn thing in, eager to toss down my heavy wetsacks.

Ma has a bright red smear on her face and teeth and ears and fingers, a smear that can't be nothing but blood cause I can stink it from the doorway, and it's in her hair, too. Her eyes look like Palisades', with a yellowtinge around them and a funny expression like a laugh but meaner, and there's fur on her hands and scratches on her arms where the plastics was covering up this morning, but now her plastics is ripped all over, cept the hood still dangling from the back of her collar.

“Ma?”

She licks her lips, and there's fur on em.

“Ma, did Palisades go after you?”

I notice a heap of deep red animal meat beside Ma, and if I'm honest, I were glad she don't reply cause I dunno if I want the answer.

“You hungry?” I ask. “You do this cause you hungry? You don't see the cookies?” I try to talk to her like she was normal. “They got choco in them, you know.” But she ain't normal, and she ain't been normal for years.

Ma just look at me with those blank, yellowy eyes that say, *Our owner ain't know nothing. You better forgive her cause she ain't good for this world no more.*

A while back I traded Ambrose for a box of treats for the cat, real pricey. Now I lay the box next to next to the mound of fur, to tell Palisades in my head that I'm sorry bout Ma, sorry I can't tect him and thanks for tecting us all this time. Sorry, also, that I was holding out on these treats, but I didn't know. And Palisades, I wish you was here right now so I can pet you and you can tell me what to do.

Ma's eyes follow me as I move round the room, but her face and body don't move even a little. I don't say nothing as I walk out, sticking the door tight behind me.

I WAS BOUT NINE when Keegan killed Palisades' ma.

As a kidden I always thought that cause she was old, Palisades' ma membered the city fore the surges. Keegan and Ma said she ain't that old and cats don't live long as humans nohow, but she older than I was so I liked to magine she used to live in a marble place like we lived now, that in the old days people gave her milk that was fresh and cold cause they had volts and cold-machines in order to give their cats fresh, cold milk.

In our city most cats and dogs get yellowtinge soon or later cause they too dumb to know you can't drink street water. Palisades stuck it out long time. I used to ceive his ma got it sooner cause she was from the old days when everyone live in marble places and the street water is clean, and no one telled her things changed.

Palisades' ma was white with a big orange splotch on her tum. Prob when she was little she was clean and beautiful but when I was a kidden she always look gray cause the white fur show the dirt. Palisades is orange all over, bright, and the dirt don't show, like his orange is the sun and it burn the dirt away.

Keegan telled me since I was small that I gotta look every day into the cat's eyes. If he didn't do that daily, he wouldn't have finded the yellowtinge in the mama cat so early, fore she gived it to her baby Palisades nor me nor him nor Ma.

One afternoon, Keegan gived me plastics he got from Shepherd, one for me and one for him, and he picked up Palisades' ma, making cluck cluck sounds like hey girl, it's gonna be okay, but I knowed it ain't gonna be okay. He taked her to a diff floor, where there was slooshy carpet and rusty metal furniture, and I followed but didn't talk to the cat.

I asked Keegan, "How come I gotta go with you? How come you gotta do this stead of Ma?"

Keegan petted the cat through his plastics. "Ma hate this. She still talk bout when Pa beat on those guys fore we was borned, and how pissed she were. She can't do violence to no person, no cat, nohow. But we ain't got a choice, nor we all get the yellowtinge."

"She know what we doing?"

"She know. She pretend she ain't know, but she def know."

"How come you need me?"

Keegan looked at me serious-like, his brows coming together and ridgy mountains rising between. "Kara, I don't like it none, and you ain't gonna like it none. But now you strong for me, and later you gotta

be strong for Ma. You gotta do what she ain't do. Else we all die. I know we's hurting this cat, but we do it quick and then she ain't hurt no more, and soon we ain't hurt no more, neither. You ceive?"

I ain't say nothing, but I ceived.

Keegan showed me where he put his hands and how I gotta do to snap a cat's neck. "I don't wanna do this!" I screamed. I was nine and didn't ceive yet that sometimes want don't matter. "How come we can't use the bang?"

"The bang got only one bullet, so you don't use it unless if you don't use it, you die. Ceive?"

Grumpy, I ceived.

"Seriously, sis, you gotta hear me. We snap the cat's neck cause the bang is only for humans, cause humans is much harder to kill than cats. Cause it's only one bullet, you can only use it in an important time. That person you use it on gotta be worth it, like respect."

"I don't wanna show no one that kinda respect."

"I don't want to, neither."

I petted the cat through my plastics, feeling the clumpy white-gray fur neath the sheet so thin it felt like my own skin.

"Fore you snap the cat's neck, you gotta say your respects," Keegan said. "Tell the cat you love her, say she done good by catching the vermin and you preciate her. You gotta look at her nice to say bye." I was gonna cry but Keegan said, "You can't cry cause then the cat gonna cry and you make her sadder. You gotta tell her you love her from a place of being strong."

I nodded.

"Say it," he telled me.

"I love you," I said to the cat.

"Good," he said.

Then he snapped her neck, and she yelled and there was blood on our plastics, and then it was over.

"What we gonna tell Palisades?" I asked. "He gonna see our plastics and know what we do."

"He ain't need to see our plastics," Keegan said. He set the dead cat by the broke window, where the wind can touch her and stroke her now we can't, and piled his plastics over her. I did the same.

"Palisades gonna be sad," he said, "but soon he gonna forget and get on with life. He gonna do his damn to not get the yellowtinge himself for a long time yet."

I EDGE OUT INTO THE HALL, leaving Ma behind.

I walk down to sixteen and collect every last nugget I ever stored there, and haul it back up. I go to fifteen and take the beancans I been storing there for ages.

On fourteen, the window is smashed and the wind gushes like water, but I fight through to get my fave photo album. We don't got photos of me or Ma or Keegan, but in the early years we found lots of albums in our scavs. I rescued this one from our old place and brought it here, hid in my fave spot so no one could thief it. I lift the floor up, a heavy old tile that slides away, and dig out the album.

It's got two photos of a whole fam: a ma, a pa and two kids, a boy and girl. As a kidden I ain't understand the first photo but Ma explained they was in a restaurant, eating pancakes and smiling, while a woman wearing weird clothes was serving them a hot brown liquid called coffee. Ma said the other photo was when it got specially cold and the rain freezed and falled like soft ice. It piled on the ground and people slid around on it for fun. Even though they don't look none like any of us, I always maged that maybe this was what my Pa look like, that maybe someday I could slide around on frozen rain, too.

Finally, I feel through my wetsack for a special heavy something. I always keep it near me just in case but til now I never felt it beating under my hand. I ceive that just in case is right now, that this is the case.

When I unstick the door, Ma's sitting in the same place with the same eyes. "I've gotta go for a long while, Ma. I ain't got no choice. You've gotta go, too." I set the photo by her, scared she gonna move at me, but she only sits. "When you get sad, think of me and Keegan looking like these kids. Magine yourself drinking coffee and someone serving you and soft ice falling from the sky, and it ain't wet no more, and the stink is only good."

Ma bares her teeth, still red with blood.

Slowly, not to startle her, I grip the bang inside my wetsack and it vibrates even more than before. I have only one chance, and I never done this fore.

I magine myself staring at her down the barrel, hesitating, ceiving what I ceive, maybe reckoning not to do it at the last moment. I magine Ma saying something normal and nice, that the red everywhere is meant as a laugh, Palisade's nearby, and Ma says don't you remember the old days when we had a laugh just to have a laugh, not caring about food or surviving or nohow, just a laugh for a laugh, back when you and Keegan

flickered the candles all you wanted, when there was plenty of batts, when you had time for games. Ma would say, you know, I ain't never told you fore, but you got Pa's eyes.

"I love you," I say out loud like Keegan teached me. I start to cry but member not to. The best I can do is keep the water in my eyes from leaking past onto my cheeks.

I point the bang toward her and my hands shake and I dunno if I'm gonna do it. But then Ma ceives what's happening, twitches and makes to lunge at me, so I pull the trigger.

That's it.

She falls back onto the photo I set by her, and as her blood drips onto it I hope it means she will member that photo with all she's got. The red from her heart blends with the red on her clothes, cept the new blood is fresher, brighter, color of ketchup on top the browner red of rotting wood.

Ma hiccups and then she ain't moving no more. I wanna kiss her forehead, but after all this Keegan would be mad if I got the yellowtinge myself. Few minutes ago I maged something full of drama, maybe a clap of thunder or a window shattering, but the room is quiet. I ain't know what to do so I say, "Bye, Ma."

Carrying my empty wetsacks, I stick the door shut as hard as I can and walk down to ten. My feet feel waterlogged and heavy. I sink onto my raft and listen to the wind hissing through the cracks in the foundation. I can't be outside for the cane, but I can't be with Ma. I'll sleep in the raft, and when all's over, I'll start my life new. The water won't get so far as ten, I don't think.

Normally, morning after a cane, I survey the wreck, figure out what people need, what they want to pay for, and trade with Ambrose for it. But after tomorrow, I don't plan to come back.