

Of Hearth and Home

Written by

Austen Courpet

Story by

Constance Ao and Fernando Moreno

Revision Date: 12/02/2017

WGAw Registered

Austen Courpet
9838 N. Ivanhoe St.
Portland, OR 97203
(408) 666-5351

FADE IN:

EXT. ROAD - DAY

It's dry. The earth is scorched. A highway mirage rises up off the road.

A tumbleweed is kicked down the road by strong wind -- it rolls and rolls --

EXT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMS, ENTRANCE - DAY

-- until the tumbleweed gets caught up momentarily against a signpost.

The hand-painted sign reads: HAUSLER FAMILY FARMS. The image is slightly faded but still evokes warmth. The sign has the likenesses of a father, mother, and son all reaching out with fresh produce in their hands.

The wind kicks the tumbleweed free of the signpost and the dead plant rolls on.

EXT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMS, DRIVEWAY - DAY

Just after the signpost, a long driveway extends from the road to the family farmhouse. There are a few living trees, but everything else is dead grass. This is no lush oasis.

SHOUTING IN THE DISTANCE.

EXT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMHOUSE - DAY

The drive leads up to what was once a beautiful TWO-STORY FARMHOUSE. Now the paint is wearing off.

In front of the house sits a TRUCK and an OLD CLUNKER sedan. The truck is getting loaded up by MATTHEW HAUSLER (46), he loads bag after bag from the front porch.

In the passenger seat of the truck sits ELIZABETH HAUSLER (43), she's wearing a dust mask.

Standing with arms crossed on the porch is JORDAN HAUSLER (18).

MATTHEW
Help me, will you?

Jordan doesn't budge.

Matthew continues loading up, he's sweating profusely.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
You know your mother can't help,
come on and give me a hand, son.

JORDAN
No! Why are we leaving?

Matthew heaves a heavy bag into the back of the truck.

MATTHEW
You know why. With the power gone
now, we can't afford to stay.

JORDAN
We can get the solar panels working
again.

MATTHEW
And the next dust storm will
destroy them.

JORDAN
Rosewood's wind turbine--

MATTHEW
--No! There's no rain. There's no
electricity. There's nothing here.
We're leaving for Haven.

Elizabeth leans out the open window.

ELIZABETH
Listen to your father!

JORDAN
I can't believe you guys. You just
want to abandon everything. You
just want to give up.

MATTHEW
You think we want to leave?

JORDAN
I'm staying. I'm going to make it
work.

Matthew grabs the last bag AND Jordan's acoustic guitar.

Jordan reaches out and quickly grabs ahold of his guitar.

MATTHEW
Get in the truck!

Jordan pulls his guitar free from his father's hands.

JORDAN
You said we would stay no matter
what. You said the others were just
too weak to handle it.

The two men have a staring contest.

MATTHEW
You can't stay here alone.

JORDAN
I'm eighteen.

MATTHEW
Boy, this family is more important
than this house.

JORDAN
I'm not going.

Matthew looks as though he might drag his son off the porch --
he checks his watch -- they're running out of time --

Matthew hurries for the truck.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Matthew gets in the driver seat of the truck.

ELIZABETH
We can't leave without him.

MATTHEW
Radio said a black blizzard is
coming. If we don't leave now,
we'll miss our chance.

Elizabeth starts COUGHING -- she's really sick.

ELIZABETH
Come back... for him...

MATTHEW
Right now, we've got to take care
of you.

EXT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMHOUSE - DAY

Jordan clutches his guitar as the truck makes its way down
the long driveway, kicking up dust on its way out.

INT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jordan sets his guitar down and takes a seat on the couch. The house is eerily quiet. He's alone now.

It's lunchtime. Jordan gets up to get something to eat.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - DAY

Jordan enters the storage room, just off the living room. The small room is filled with five gallon buckets. Jordan opens one of them -- the bucket is filled with rice. Jordan grabs a scoopful.

It looks as though he could survive for quite some time.

Suddenly the ambient light in the room drops -- it's dark -- Jordan drops the rice back into the bucket -- he turns and heads for the nearest window--

INT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

--Jordan looks out the window -- a dust storm is coming.

Jordan grabs a number of empty water jugs and races outside.

EXT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMHOUSE - DAY

Jordan sprints to a wheelbarrow resting beside the front porch and throws his water jugs inside. He races around the back of the house as quickly as he can.

The sky darkens.

EXT. WATER WELL - DAY

Jordan hurries over to the well. With no electricity, he has to hand pump the water. He cranks the pump until water flows out. He fills each of the jugs.

The wind picks up, blowing dirt in Jordan's face.

Finally Jordan fills the last water jug and heads back inside -- just in time -- the storm is here!

INT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jordan seeks refuge inside the house from the dust storm.

Jordan goes over to a desk with a HAM radio and flips the radio power ON. Jordan keys the microphone to transmit:

JORDAN
This is K-G-6-M-M-R calling C-Q,
over.

Jordan waits for a response, but gets none.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
Anybody out there? Waiting for an
answer back...

Nothing but static -- Jordan waits another minute before switching the radio OFF -- he better conserve the battery.

Jordan spots his guitar and takes a seat with it -- he tries to distract himself by strumming the strings -- it's no use -- he can't block out the HOWLING of the wind.

EXT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMS, ENTRANCE - DAY

It's daytime, but the sky is dark -- the furious dust storm ravages the farmlands. The hand-painted sign beside the road is getting sandblasted.

BLACK.

INT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jordan wakes up on the couch.

The dust storm is over. It's quiet again.

Jordan heads outside to asses the damage.

EXT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMHOUSE - DAY

The farmhouse still stands, but the TARP that covered a gaping hole has come off the second story.

The dust storm has also ravaged a small VEGETABLE GARDEN. Jordan walks over to it -- he bends down and lets the sand fall through his fingers -- not good. Jordan digs down and tries excavating the vegetable plants out from the layers of sandy dirt covering them -- he finds one -- still alive -- he brushes the dust off the leaves.

JORDAN
Looks like you're going to make it.

Jordan seems pleased -- all is not lost.

Next Jordan grabs a ladder from the side of the house -- he sets it up against the house and climbs up -- he has a hammer and nails -- he's going to fix the tarp. He hammers one of the loose sides -- suddenly the other side rips free and falls to the ground.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

Damn it.

Jordan doesn't want to admit this job would be easier with two people. He struggles until he finally gets the tarp secured.

Finally on the ground, he looks up at his handiwork.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

That should hold for now.

Jordan chugs some water and then heads back inside.

INT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jordan grabs his guitar and starts to play --

EXT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMHOUSE - DAY

Jordan walks outside and sits on the porch step, still playing his guitar.

Words come to him:

JORDAN

Home.... Home....

The farm looks peaceful and tranquil for the first time in a long time -- but Jordan is the only one around to enjoy it.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

*Looking out on what once was...
Beautiful sunset... Water flowing
everywhere...*

A tumbleweed rolls by. Jordan looks out at the dry farmland.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

*And all I can see now... Is
destitution for hours and hours...*

Jordan stops singing for a moment. He's choked up by what the farm has become -- a shadow of what it once was --

The sun starts to set.

Jordan forces himself to keep playing:

JORDAN (CONT'D)
Home.... Home....

Jordan stops playing. Is this place still home?

Jordan heads back inside as daylight fades.

INT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

It's a new day.

Jordan sits in front of the HAM radio -- he keys the microphone to transmit voice:

JORDAN
This is K-G-6-M-M-R, calling C-Q,
over...

No response -- he tries again:

JORDAN (CONT'D)
Attempting to make Q-S-O with
someone in Haven, over.

Nothing.

Jordan turns OFF the transmitter.

THE SOUNDS OF A VEHICLE APPROACHING THE FARMHOUSE.

Jordan rushes to the window -- he sees an OLD VAN driving up to the house.

Jordan looks bewildered -- he has no idea who this is -- he goes to the porch door to investigate.

EXT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMHOUSE - DAY

The van comes to a stop behind the old clunker in front of the farmhouse. The van is beat up and covered in layers of dust. A peace sign is drawn on the dusty rear window.

The driver cautiously exits the vehicle -- this is EDDIE, he's in his late 30s and wears a long-sleeved coat.

Jordan stays inside the house and watches from the porch window.

EDDIE

Hello?

Eddie steps up onto the porch.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Anyone home?

Eddie approaches the front door -- Jordan cracks it -- Eddie stops in his tracks --

JORDAN

Who are you?

Eddie raises his hands up and takes a step back:

EDDIE

Name's Eddie.

Eddie reaches out for a handshake.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

My family and I were just passing through.

Jordan doesn't shake hands, but opens the door a little more.

JORDAN

Which way you come from?

EDDIE

From the East. Everyone's heading West now. Nothing left, even for savvy travellers like us. The storms are just too dangerous. Too unpredictable.

JORDAN

Well I'm going to make it work here.

EDDIE

You're resilient. I like that.

Finally, a handshake.

JORDAN

I'm doing my best anyway.

EDDIE

I saw driving up that your roof needs mending. I could lend a hand with that. I'm a decent carpenter.

JORDAN
That would be great.

EDDIE
Maybe we could trade services.
Could we maybe have some food and
water?

Jordan notices a WIFE (30s) and CHILD (2) step out of the van
as Eddie motions for them to come out -- they look like
they've seen better days -- life on the road is hard.

JORDAN
Of course.

EXT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMHOUSE - DAY

Time has passed. Eddie and Jordan are sitting on the porch
eating.

Meanwhile, Eddie's wife and child walk around the garden. The
child is amazed by one of the plants. Jordan notices and
joins them in the garden.

JORDAN
Tomato. That's a tomato plant.

Jordan hands the child a small watering can.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
Want to help me water?

Jordan helps the child pour the water out slowly.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
Good job.

The child looks happy. The child turns his gaze to the
farmhouse and points --

CHILD
House.

JORDAN
Yep, that's my house.

Jordan takes in his homestead for a moment.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
Not quite what it used to be, but
it's home.

Eddie walks over and assesses the small garden.

EDDIE

Jordan, we could build a barrier around your garden here. If we build a fence but leave some spaces for air to pass through I imagine we could make a fairly effective wind break.

JORDAN

That's a great idea.

EDDIE

No sweat. It should be easy enough with the two of us. I don't think we'll be able to get to everything until tomorrow though.

The day IS getting late.

JORDAN

Why don't you all stay inside tonight? I've got extra rooms.

WIFE

We don't want to be any trouble.

EDDIE

We're happy in our van.

JORDAN

But when was the last time you slept in a real bed?

Eddie brings Jordan in for a hug.

EDDIE

You're a good man, Jordan. Hold on a second...

Eddie hurries over to the van and digs around for a moment -- he pulls out an unlabeled BOTTLE and hold it out so that Jordan can see, it looks like it probably contains alcohol.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Let's celebrate!

INT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

-- Eddie finishes pouring the rest of the alcohol into Jordan's cup. Jordan is clearly intoxicated:

JORDAN

Thank you for sharing this with me.

EDDIE

No need to thank me, you're the one
that needs thanking. You've given
my family food and shelter. And
family is everything.

Eddie notices the storage room while talking to Jordan. He
seems to be taking mental stock of all the supply containers.
Jordan is unaware.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I see you have a talent with kids.
Maybe you'll be a father too one
day.

JORDAN

Sure. Maybe one day.

Eddie raises his glass. He proposes a toast:

EDDIE

To one day!

The two drink. Jordan's vision is blurring.

INT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMHOUSE, JORDAN'S ROOM - DAY

Jordan opens his eyes -- he's lying on his bed -- he is
disoriented -- it's morning -- his head is pounding -- Jordan
has a massive hangover.

Jordan gets up to check on his guests.

INT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMHOUSE, UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Jordan KNOCKS on the guest bedroom door.

JORDAN

Eddie?

No response. Jordan gently turns the doorknob--

INT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMHOUSE, GUEST ROOM - DAY

--Jordan stands in the open doorway -- the room is empty. The
bed is made. Jordan heads downstairs.

INT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jordan comes down the stairs.

JORDAN

Hello?

Nobody here either.

Jordan notices a light coming from the crack under the storage room door.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - DAY

Jordan opens the storage room door --

A look of shock -- now horror -- the supplies are gone.

A lit lantern sits in the middle of the empty room.

Jordan has been robbed.

JORDAN

No!

Jordan races to the front door.

EXT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMHOUSE - DAY

Jordan bursts out of the house.

The van is gone.

JORDAN

No!

This is a huge blow for Jordan. His head is pounding.

INT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMHOUSE - DAY

Jordan takes a seat at the desk. He turns the HAM radio ON.

Jordan holds his stomach, he's hungry and still feeling the hangover.

Jordan hovers his finger over the microphone but decides not to transmit:

JORDAN

(to himself)

K-G-6-M-M-R here, looking for a
cure for stupidity.

Jordan reaches to turn the radio OFF. Suddenly the silence breaks:

MATTHEW (V.O.)
This is A-X-C-5-3-9, calling for C-Q, over.

Jordan can hardly believe it:

JORDAN
This is K-G-6-M-M-R, how do you copy, over?

MATTHEW (V.O.)
Is that you?--

JORDAN
--Yes, it's me, over!

MATTHEW (V.O.)
Are you alright? I've been trying to reach you, but this is the first chance I've had to use a radio, over.

JORDAN
I'm alright. How's mom? Over.

MATTHEW (V.O.)
She's doing better, over.

JORDAN
That's good to hear, over.

MATTHEW (V.O.)
How 'bout you? Over.

JORDAN
I had a setback... but I'm fine, over.

MATTHEW (V.O.)
Son, I'm sorry. I never should have left you behind. There's no way for us to get back to you. We had to sell the truck, over.

JORDAN
I'll be fine, over.

MATTHEW (V.O.)
If you need, you can always try Old Bill's place. He had some gas stored away. Fill up the clunker and come join us... we miss you, over.

Jordan considers this for a second and then remembers:

JORDAN
(to himself)
Old Bill's supply stash! That's it!
(into the microphone)
Got to go dad, over.

MATTHEW (V.O.)
We love you son.

JORDAN
K-G-6-M-M-R, signing off.

MATTHEW (V.O.)
Over and--

Jordan turns off the radio.

EXT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMHOUSE - DAY

Jordan gathers up the wheelbarrow and some bungee cords. He pushes the wheelbarrow down the long driveway toward the main road.

EXT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMS, ENTRANCE - DAY

Jordan pushes the wheelbarrow East. He glances back at the battered hand-painted sign -- he's dissatisfied with the way it looks -- he'll have to get some supplies to fix that too.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Jordan continues pushing the wheelbarrow along the road. There's not much out here. No people. No buildings. Nothing.

EXT. OLD BILL'S FARM - DAY

Time has passed. Finally Jordan reaches Old Bill's farmstead. From the look of things, this place has been abandoned for a long time. Still, it's clear that Old Bill was an eccentric farmer.

EXT. OLD BILL'S FARMHOUSE - DAY

Jordan searches around the exterior of the farmhouse until he finds what he's looking for --

Jordan finds a supply stash and a hidden root cellar -- Old Bill was a prepper too. This is a big win for Jordan.

Suddenly the wind picks up -- that's not good -- a dust storm is coming.

Jordan loads up the wheelbarrow with haste. It's a race against time now.

EXT. OLD BILL'S FARM - DAY

Jordan's wheelbarrow is overloaded with supplies. Jordan pushes the wheelbarrow as quickly as possible back toward the main road.

As Jordan bounds down the drive, he hits a pothole --

The wheelbarrow goes flying, and so does Jordan -- his ankle twists -- he falls -- the wheelbarrow crashes spilling all of its contents.

JORDAN

Damn it!

Jordan tries to stand -- it hurts. This is not good -- if he gets caught in the storm he could be done for -- there's no shelter out here.

Jordan tries to reload the wheelbarrow -- it's nearly impossible with his injury -- he stands up the wheelbarrow -- he tries too push it forward -- he can't do both.

Jordan tosses the wheelbarrow over in frustration. For a moment it looks as though Jordan is ready to give up.

Jordan looks up to the sky and shouts in frustration:

JORDAN (CONT'D)

I just want to get home!

Jordan takes in his own words.

Jordan looks in the direction of his childhood home -- and now he looks back in the direction of Old Bill's farm -- Jordan is making a decision -- a look of determination crosses his face -- he's made up his mind about something.

EXT. OLD BILL'S FARM, GARAGE - DAY

Jordan raises up the old garage door -- inside is an old JEEP and a wall of five-gallon gas containers.

The Jeep is locked.

Jordan starts testing the gas containers -- ALL EMPTY --

Jordan notices a spare gas container on the back rack of the Jeep -- it's FULL.

Now all Jordan has to do, is make it back to his old clunker.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Jordan hops along with the gas can. Dirt swirls in the air now as the dust storm approaches. Jordan is unprepared.

Jordan removes his shirt and uses it as a mask.

Jordan hobbles forward, giving it his all.

EXT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMS, ENTRANCE - DAY

Jordan is back. Each step is agonizing.

EXT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMHOUSE - DAY

Jordan fills the old clunker with gas -- it won't start. The battery is dead.

Jordan rests for a moment against the car, taking shelter from the dust and wind -- he's thinking --

INT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jordan pushes the front door open and hops inside. He heads over to the desk where the HAM radio sits. He follows the cords and cables, tracing them back to the BATTERY he uses to power the radio -- he grabs it --

EXT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMHOUSE - DAY

Jordan connects jumper cables to the car battery -- he turns the key -- the engine starts -- it's running!

Jordan loads the clunker with his guitar and a few jugs of water -- his only remaining possessions.

Jordan takes one last look at the farmhouse.

EXT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMS, DRIVEWAY - DAY

Jordan drives down the long driveway. The windshield is covered in dust from the storm. Suddenly the dust becomes MUD.

IT'S RAINING -- Jordan stops the car to get out.

Jordan looks up -- the rain falls on his face. Jordan LAUGHS.

JORDAN
Now you decide to rain?

Jordan lets the rain fall on his tongue.

EXT. HAUSLER FAMILY FARMS, ENTRANCE - DAY

Jordan is driving again. He comes to the main road.

The hand-painted sign has been knocked over. The image is completely washed out.

Jordan glances at a road map resting in the passenger seat.

JORDAN
Alright... let's go home.

Jordan drives away -- he's heading West.

FADE OUT.

THE END