

Rev. Linda has slightly adapted these words by award-winning poet, playwright, actress, and storyteller [Eleanor Cade Busby](#):

My Post-Apocalyptic Prediction

Humanity will survive. Not because of science. Not because of diplomacy. Not because somewhere in a bunker beneath a mountain there are twelve brilliant people with clipboards working on the problem.

Because Doris brought potato salad. Nobody asked her to. In fact, there was some confusion about whether we were still having the picnic, what with the collapse of civilization and all. The power grid had failed, three governments had fallen before breakfast, and Canada had stopped answering its phone.

But Doris had already boiled the potatoes. And once Doris has boiled the potatoes, history can do whatever the hell it wants. We are having lunch.

She arrived carrying the big Tupperware bowl with the yellow lid. You know the bowl. Every family in North America has had that bowl since 1973. Nobody remembers buying it. It simply appeared one day and has been passed from generation to generation along with diabetes and unresolved resentment.

“Do we have ice?” Doris asked. We did not have electricity. “We really should keep this cold.” Apparently salmonella remains a concern during Armageddon.

Meanwhile, Bob had been listening to the emergency radio. “They’re saying we should shelter in place.” “Fine,” Doris said. “Put this in the shelter.”

This is why women will ultimately run the post-apocalyptic world. Men will be outside trying to determine whether the strange orange glow on the horizon is a forest fire, nuclear detonation, or the Second Coming.

*Women will be downstairs labeling leftovers.
POTATO SALAD.
MONDAY.
EAT FIRST.*

By noon, the neighborhood had gathered. Nobody officially organized it. Civilization may have ended, but apparently we still know that when something terrible happens, you bring a casserole.

There were six casseroles. Nobody knew what was in four of them.

One had cornflakes on top, which means either funeral or apocalypse, and frankly the distinction was becoming academic. Someone brought deviled eggs. This seemed unnecessarily provocative.

There were brownies, three bags of hamburger buns and seventeen hot dogs because nobody in recorded history has ever successfully coordinated the purchase of hot dogs and buns.

Frank brought beer. (Frank is now Secretary of Emergency Management.)

Doris was worried that nobody was eating the macaroni salad. "I made it with the little shells." Of course she did. There could be horsemen riding across the sky and Doris would be standing beneath them saying, "Take some home with you. I can't eat all this."

And that, I think, is how this chapter ends. Not with a bang. Not with a whimper. With someone standing in the doorway holding a Cool Whip container that does not contain Cool Whip.

"Here. Take this." "What is it?"

"Potato salad."

"Doris, civilization has collapsed."

"I KNOW."

She shoves it into your hands. "And bring my container back."

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