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THE FALL OUT SHELTER PROBLEM

Your group are members of a department in Washington D.C. that is in charge of experimental stations in the far outposts of civilization. Suddenly the Third World War breaks out and the bombs begin dropping. Places all across the globe are being destroyed. People are heading for whatever fall-out shelters are available. You receive a desperate call from one of your experimental stations asking for help.

It seems there are ten people but there is only enough space, air, food, and water in the fall-out shelter for six people for a period of three months, which is how long they estimate they can safely stay down there. They realize that if they have to decide among themselves which six should go into the shelter, they are likely to become irrational and begin fighting. So they have decided to call your department, their superiors, and leave the decision to you. They will abide by your decision.

But each of you has to quickly get ready to head down to your own fall-out shelter. So all you have time for is to get superficial descriptions of the ten people. You have half an hour to make your decision, and then you will have to go to your own shelter.

So, as a group you now have a half hour to decide which four of the ten will have to be eliminated from the shelter. Before you begin, I want to impress upon you two important considerations. It is entirely possible that the six people you choose to stay in the shelter might be the only six people to start the human race over again. This choice is, therefore, very important. Do not allow yourself to be forced by pressure from others in your group. Try to make the best choices possible. On the other hand, if you do not make a choice in a half-hour, then you are, in fact, choosing to let the ten people fight it out among themselves with the possibility that more than four might perish. You have exactly one half hour. Here is all you know about the ten people.

1. Bookkeeper; 31 years old

2. His wife; six months pregnant

3. Famous Historian; 42 years old

4. Bio- Chemist

5. Rabbi; 54 years old

6. College Co-Ed

7. 16 year old girl of questionable IQ; a high school drop out; pregnant

8. 39 year old former prostitute; "retired" for four years

9. 36 year old female physician; unable to have children; known to be a confirmed racist

10. 46 year old male violinist; served 7 years for pushing narcotics; has been out of jail for 6 months