

A Tale of 2 Cities—And Departures

1 message

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Warning: This newsletter contains spoilers for *The Leftovers* season 1 and up to the first four episodes of season 2. Wondering why you're getting this? Catch up here with **Streaming TV Party's** previous newsletters.

Introduction: [Streaming TV Party: We're watching *The Leftovers*](#)

Season 1: ["Pilot" and "Penguin One, Us Zero"; "Two Boats and a Helicopter" and "B.J. and the A.C."; "Gladys" and "Guest"; "Solace for Tired Feet" and "Cairo"; "The Garveys at Their Best" and "The Prodigal Son Returns"; Season 1 Retrospective & Season 2 Preview](#)

Season 2: ["Axis Mundi" and "A Matter of Geography"](#)

The power grabs at play

One of the more shocking things in "Off Ramp," an extremely bleak episode that takes us back to Mapleton as Laurie and Tom struggle fighting against the Guilty Remnant, is just how much has changed in a couple of months in an otherwise largely familiar location. The cult's nihilistic passiveness is still apparent as they refuse to move when Laurie speeds toward them with a car (likely not the first time she's done so) or when she rips the notepad from one member's hand, but there's a hint of cruelty that wasn't there before. Yes, the Mapleton chapter's plan to [plant Loved Ones bereavement figures](#) of the departed was extremely fucked up, but you could logic your way to how they came up with that plan. (It doesn't look like this Guilty Remnant will whisk members whose faith is wavering away to a nice motel for pancakes as Patti Levin once did with Laurie.)

It's there, all the same, this season, such as when the Guilty Remnant leaves a message for Susan—one of the women Tom extracts out of the cult—that reads "Any day now," leading Susan to drive her family into traffic, or when Tom is finally caught red-handed in his effort to extract another member. He's dragged out of town and chained up in a truck where Meg rapes him, and the Guilty Remnant douse him with gasoline as Meg contemplates setting him on fire with a lighter; she doesn't, but I don't think she ever planned to. The cruelty is the point of it all—and *The Leftovers* never shies away from that point—and with Meg now in charge of some faction of the Guilty Remnant, some of her angrier and more violent tendencies might be bleeding through. (If you are a victim of sexual assault or want more information on sexual assault, contact the [Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network](#) at 1-800-656-HOPE (4673).)

But not all cruelty is purposely malicious, although it often ends up that way. When Laurie attends a meeting with a publisher interested in her book, they ask questions intended to help make her book better. ([Some of which even I had.](#)) But the publisher also pushes for more insight into how Laurie felt about certain aspects of her time in the Guilty Remnant such as how she felt about Jill becoming involved—something that Laurie has never worked through. Does the editor care about her feelings?

Perhaps, but only far enough in that it gives him a bestseller.

Even Tom, at the end of the episode, tries to take his own power. Seeing that Laurie's efforts are meaningless as long as they're unable to fill the hole left by the Guilty Remnant, he makes up a story—as far as we know, anyway—about Holy Wayne giving Tom his power to heal through hugs shortly before Holy Wayne's death.

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Whip Something Up

'There are no miracles in Miracle'

Most of “Orange Sticker” is spent on the, as we eventually learn, fruitless search for Evie Murphy and the contemplation over whether Jarden is as special as people believe. Evie's brother Michael is staunch in his belief that his twin is gone and eventually starts scraping off the orange sticker meant to mark a household untouched by the Sudden Departure. Patti eventually reveals to Kevin that Evie and the other girls all departed, although she doesn't elaborate—and it's unclear just how much we can trust her. (More on her in a bit.)

John Murphy is so insulted by the idea of charlatans trying to make their way to Jarden that he uses his power as fire chief to scare them off. (According to Erika, Isaac's house was the first one he burned down.) John also knows that Kevin Garvey—who somehow managed to hide that his palmprint is on the car Evie was last seen in—won't find the kind of safety he was looking for in Jarden. And Nora, who once worked in departure-related false claims (and is smart enough to keep ex-cop Kevin out of trouble), is convinced that it can't happen again—and even compares the Sudden Departure to the story of Noah's Ark.

On the complete opposite side of the spectrum, Matt Jamison firmly believes that it's special because on his first night in Jarden, his wife Mary came out of her trance-like state; he says they talked for hours. Virgil somehow senses that Nora has suffered a great loss. And Kevin is searching for something, even if he doesn't realize it yet, as he finally stops ignoring the voices in his head that at least one other person can see.

Recommended

In the new Brazilian teen drama [Kissing Game](#), a mysterious illness that's transmitted through kissing spreads throughout a small town.

[First Cow](#), Kelly Reichardt's intimate story of friendship, capitalism, and a very special cow in the early 19th century Pacific Northwest, is finally available on VOD—but you can also support independent cinema by [screening it in a virtual theater](#).

Twin Peaks. Blue Velvet. Mulholland Drive. Eraserhead. These are just a few of the films David Lynch is known for, but one thing's for sure—his vision is unlike anyone else's. Learn how he does it in this comprehensive new class.*

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With the ghost of old Patti Levin

If you told me that Patti, the gloomy, de facto leader of Guilty Remnant in season 1, would end up being season 2's comic relief, I... might've believed you. But I would have also raised my eyebrow *a lot*.

Because Patti is a fucking [hoot](#) in "Orange Sticker." She tempts him by offering to help him find his phone and revealing what happened to Evie. She reveals a very specific kink that her ex-husband Neil was into when he cheated on Patti. She wants to know why Kevin hasn't told Nora and Jill about her. She taunts him about how Nora buying the house must've emasculated him. And she *actually* rickrolls him. "[Patti's] main focus is trying to get [Kevin] to pay attention to her: 'acknowledge my existence, I am here,'" Ann Dowd [told Inverse in 2015](#). "Stop pretending I'm not here, I'm not going away.' They're present with each other."

Kevin does finally crack in his resolve to ignore Patti, asserting that he does love his family, but then Patti reveals why he woke up where he did during his last sleepwalking episode. He was trying to kill himself, and she believes that he really wanted to die, which he denies. "Well, you're certainly entitled to your opinion," she replies. "I'm just glad we finally talked about it."

But whenever Patti returns, or if Kevin tries to kill himself again, he'll have a bigger problem on his hands: Nora, who handcuffed herself to Kevin so that she doesn't have to wake up in fear that he departed, will probably be right by his side.

Discussion Questions

- What's the deal with Australia? It's been mentioned in three separate episodes this season: The Pillar Man wanted Michael to send a letter to David Burton, Kevin Sr. planned to head there, and a man named David Burton was allegedly resurrected outside of Perth.
- How did Meg, one of the newer Guilty Remnant recruits at the end of season 1, end up in charge?
- Do you think there's any truth to the story that Tom is telling? Or is it all a lie like we're led to believe?

Next Week: Be sure to watch the next two episodes, "No Room at the Inn" and "Lens," respectively.

Thoughts? Contact me at newsletters@dailydot.com and drop me a reader's note: We just might include it next time.



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