



Synopsis

Chas is homeless. Everything he owns is in three shopping bags as a hurricane compels him to break into the abandoned Palmtree Resort.¹ He expects only temporary shelter but instead finds a fragile community. The survivors at Palmtree cling to varied and intense needs to regain control of their lives. The resort, once a symbol of luxury and leisure, now functions as a makeshift refuge where rules are fluid and trust is rationed.²

Chas's entry isn't easy. He encounters a rattlesnake and is injured when breaking through a window.³ He meets the confident and outspoken Horace, who provides help. Horace maintains order at Palmtree with a mix of charisma and assertiveness.⁴ Deidra, sharp and emotionally guarded, becomes a friend and ally. Her teenage sister, Morgan, is fiercely independent and unpredictable. Zito, a former corporate owner with a criminal background, tests the group's stability.⁵

As resources dwindle and the outside world remains inaccessible, tensions rise. Chas and Deidra begin to bond over shared tasks and quiet defiance, while Horace's influence on the group becomes stronger.⁶ The need to shoplift more frequently for produce and supplies reveals

1 The first paragraph brings the reader into the central character's plight. That "hook" could be even sharper with words describing Chas's appearance.

2 Yes! That's a clear description of a setting that holds potential for plot and character development.

3 This puts an example of good storytelling into the synopsis, where the protagonist faces one challenge after another.

4 It's also good to show differences between characters, as is being done here with Horace.

5 Of the four characters Chas meets in this paragraph of the synopsis, Zito defined only by his history. Consider sharing something about his personality.

6 Plot and character development are both revealed here.

Author: Ward Rangler
Genre: Survival fiction with social allegory
Title: Sleeper Cell



ingenuity, desperation, and danger. The group’s moral compass wobbles. Chas finds himself complicit in choices he would have once condemned.⁷

Morgan’s sudden disappearance fractures the group’s fragile cohesion.⁸ The former employer of most group members is receiving extortion demands, possibly from someone within Palmtree. Chas, increasingly protective of Deidra and suspicious of Horace, begins to question the very structure that’s kept them alive. Palmtree, once a haven, now feels like a trap.⁹

The climax unfolds in a blur of accusations, arrests, and revelations.¹⁰ Zito’s quiet resistance turns active, and Horace’s authority collapses under the weight of his own secrets.¹¹ As law enforcement closes in, Chas and Deidra flee northward in search of another form of survival.¹²

In the final scenes, Chas reflects on the essential need and cost of community. Sleeper Cell is a survival story with recurring themes of trust, autonomy, and the emotional toll of shared confinement.¹³ Long after the hurricane season passes, storms linger within each character, reshaping their sense of self and their place in the world.¹⁴

7 It would be good to reveal how Horace gains influence over the other group members.

8 The person reading this will wonder why Morgan’s disappearance “fractures the group’s fragile cohesion.”

9 This paragraph is packed with subplots. For purposes of a synopsis, describing just one of them would be stronger.

10 An ending that unfolds “in a blur of accusations, arrests, and revelations” might be seen as rushed and chaotic. That phrase is true but not essential.

11 This is the first mention of Zito’s resistance and Horace’s secrets. To avoid confusing the reader, those details could either be briefly spelled out or omitted from this document.

12 Ideally, there should be an explanation of explain why law enforcement is closing in. Has someone been questioned, or has activity at Palmtree been observed?

13 It’s good to see Sleeper Cell’s themes so clearly and concisely stated in this closing summary.

14 The storm imagery at the conclusion is effective, especially since a hurricane was prominent at the beginning.