

BUNKER CYOA STORY

(Based on the CYOA by Reddit User "FoxPengi1")

Story written by Reddit User "CarthagePlate_210"

"To the receiver,

Greetings and congratulations. On behalf of the global Human population, your efforts today will help save modern civilization in the face of mass extinction. After reading this, you will be participating in the Bunker Colony Construction Initiative, or "BCCI". This is a mandatory service, judged from prescreening of your genetic, economic, social, and mental standings.

The area you will complete your design plan in is secret from all major governments and political entities, in addition to any of your personal contacts. You will not be released until confirmation is given of a completed bunker design. There is no time limit to your participation, though we recommend you work quickly considering the oncoming global crisis. Once the design is confirmed, construction will begin. You will be notified in secret when construction is completed unless you choose otherwise in the design plans.

To assist in your choices and emotional concerns, an Artificial Intelligence (AI) assistant is located with you. Please feel free to inquire about select decisions, but remember the limitations in their programming. Damage or destruction of the AI assistant assigned to you will result in your immediate termination and rejection of your design.

Thank you for your participation with the BCCI. We await your design plans for preserving the future of Humanity and the Earth."

Well. This is far from pleasing to read.

I put the letter down on my lap and sit back on the plain white bed I woke up on a few minutes ago. The last thing I remember is falling asleep in my bedroom after a long day at work and a simple meal at home. Thinking about the different ways to explain how I got from my bedroom to a bare, small room lit only by a wall-mounted screen straight out of science fiction causes me to shiver.

I put the letter on the bed instead of my lap. Looking down at myself, I see I am wearing the same clothes I went to bed with. At least that part of me has not been messed with. Whoever brought me here also gave me a small pair of slippers for me to slip into; that way, my feet will not get dirty from walking around on the cool metal floor beneath me.

I take a moment to breathe. The letter talks about an “oncoming crisis”; what does that mean? Is that something I will have to choose? How can I prepare against it? I don’t have any experience in making these kinds of things!

Why am I the one to do this?

Someone better must be available.

Who even operates this place?

These questions, and others like them, rush through my mind as I try to stay calm. It takes some force of will to stand up, put my feet in the provided slippers, and walk over to the glowing screen. Its light dims as I approach, seeming to sense me being near it. The letters “BCCI” are printed in large text on the screen. I raise a shaky finger and tap it against the screen, above the letters.

The screen goes dark, and then reactivates to show an empty expanse of dark blue light. “Welcome, Designer,” a mechanical voice says from somewhere just by the screen. *“I am your Artificial Intelligence Assistant. I will help you through your participation in the BCCI program. Are you ready to begin the program now?”*

I step back from the screen. I cannot see any speakers or holes in the wall where a voice might come from. “Where are you?” I ask dumbly.

“I am inside the computer screen, Designer.” The voice sounds emotionless, like a simple machine would be. *“I am speaking to you through hidden audio projectors. Please do not search for these projectors as this will cause damage to my systems. The letter you have been given specifically warns against damaging with my systems.”*

“Right.” I swallow, realizing how dry my throat is in this room. “C-Can I at least see you?”

“I will project a virtual image for you to communicate with. Please stand by.”

A portion of the blue expanse shifts and swirls into a small ball of lighter blue. This ball then undergoes a rapid metamorphosis into a human woman’s face with long hair that trails down to its shoulders. The face is not one I recognize, but I can tell it looks pretty.

“Is this to your liking, Designer?” the face asks. Its lips move in perfect replication of human speech, its eyes clear like glass.

“Yeah, that’s f-fine,” I answer. “Do you, uh, have a name?”

“I was not programmed with a name, Designer. For ease of communication, you may call me “Assistant” or “AI”, unless you have a different name in mind.”

It wants me to pick a name?! I wrack my brain for a possible answer; something simple and easy to remember. The virtual face patiently waits as I turn away from the screen, muttering names to myself.

“Okay,” I eventually tell the AI as I turn back to face it, “how about the name “Aida”?”

The face blinks once. *“I accept this name, “Aida”, as my own,”* it announces without any sort of fanfare or disappointment. *“Are you ready to begin the program now, Designer?”*

“Yeah.” I swallow again as my fingers involuntarily twitch. “Let’s get started.” *The sooner this is done, the sooner I can go home.*

The face moves itself to the lower right-hand corner of the screen. This leaves the rest of the expanse to split into different sections of relatively equal size. There are too many sections for me to count right away, and the first of these sections grows out to cover the rest of them. I feel a chill rush down my spine as this section splits into more sections, a grid within a grid.

“This is the first section of the plan, Designer.” The face that represents Aida appears on the bottom-right corner again. *“Please press on the screen to confirm your selection. You can only choose one of these options. I will be here for the entire duration of your planning, observing and processing your choices. If you have questions, feel free to ask me.”*

I nod and look to the rest of the screen. There are four options here, all listed underneath a single enlarge block of text. The larger block reads “CRISIS TYPE”; the four sections beneath it list four types of disasters that could occur. None of the choices look appealing to plan a bunker for, and two of them seem right out of a film or movie. There is smaller text that scrolls along on a loop for each option, adding further details and explanations.

“Hey,” I ask Aida, “are these disasters going to happen or not? These options look like they were planned out ahead of time.”

“These are hypothetical disasters with a high possibility of actual occurrence within the next generation of Human life. Do not consider any of them as impossible, Designer.”

That is *not* what I want to hear! Another chill crawls along my back while I reread the options and their extra bits of text. A sense of importance to my decision grows on me; this could have real consequences, and it can lead to the end of the world! That letter was right when it said for me to choose things carefully.

Out of the four options, all of which I consider “bad”, I choose the one I think is not as “bad”: “ECOLOGICAL DISASTER”. Pressing my finger on that option causes it to be highlighted against the others, and then the other sections turn into blue pixels that vanish back into the greater expanse.

“Selection confirmed, Designer,” Aida announces. *“Please consider this scenario for all future selections in your bunker’s design.”*

“That should be obvious,” I grumble while the screen changes to show the larger grid from before. The first part of that grid now displays the choice I made. I do not get time to admire how the grid looks before the second section of that grid fills up my view.

This second section splits into eight subsections, each displaying the name of some geographical landmark on the Earth. The enlarged words above the subsections read “SURVEYED BUNKER LOCATIONS”. The extra text that scrolls at the bottom of each choice provides details about things easy and hard to find at that place.

“Please choose one of these choices, Designer,” Aida tells me. “Future selections may have multiple choices for you. I will inform you of how many choices you must make with each section when we get there.”

“Thanks for that,” I say with a brief smile. “That will make this less overwhelming for me.”

“Your mental wellbeing is critical to the BCCI, Designer. Now, please select your bunker’s desired location.”

My smile drops to a frown as I read over the listed locations. As I am planning for an ecological disaster, I can see all of these options succeeding or failing. I finally go with the location “ANDES MOUNTAINS” because of its defensibility and abundant resources buried underground. Food and water will be a problem, though, since mountains do not have easy access to plant life.

“Fantastic effort, Designer.” Aida’s voice does not sound enthusiastic, so her words feel hollow to me. *“I will send word of your approved location to the BCCI administrators as you continue your design planning.”*

My eyes snap over to Aida’s face as the screen moves on to the third section in the grid. “Wait, you can contact the people who put me here? Can I speak to them?”

“That is not possible, Designer. The BCCI is a program designed for isolated operations. You must not have any contact with the outside world to preserve the quality of your choices.”

I growl between clenched teeth. “I’m really on my own? Who will check on me if I get hungry, or thirsty, or tired, or sick, or if I need to... you know, relieve myself? Where’s any of that here?!” With each thing that might go wrong for me, I raise my voice at Aida; by the last word, I am nearly shouting at the AI

“Please remain calm, Designer. Your needs will be attended to when you inform me of them. However, you are not currently in need of anything you have listed. Please continue with your next selection.”

The sharp turn of logic Aida uses makes me stumble in finding a response. She—no, *it*—has full control over what goes on here. If what Aida and that letter say is true, then I am all alone here. And I have to plan something that will affect other human lives? What say do I get in this?!

"This is crazy," I tell Aida, "completely crazy!" I do not look at the virtual face on the screen while I say this.

"Circumstances as they are warrant the use of what you consider "crazy" measures to guarantee Human survival, Designer. Please continue with your next selection."

I roll my eyes at the feelings bubbling in my gut from being nagged by a machine. I try to dismiss the thought of Aida staring at me while I work while I look over the third list of options. There are two lines of enlarged text at the top of this screen: "PRIMARY SYSTEMS" and "BUNKER TYPE".

I roll back my shoulders to let out some of my tension. *Here we go. Be smart about this.*

I look over the listed types carefully, four of them in total. Aida is not telling me I must pick more than one option, so I plan to choose one. After checking each option, I select "MODULAR" for the type of bunker I want to create. Its versatile design should be helpful in planning the rest of this stuff.

Aida says nothing as the larger grid appears again. Then the fourth part of the grid enlarges itself, still showing "PRIMARY SYSTEMS" at the very top. The words "BUNKER ENTRANCE(S)" appear below that and eight possible options appear at the bottom.

"This section requires you to choose between one and three options, Designer," Aida says. "You can select the same option multiple times, if you desire."

I nod while looking over the options. I quickly select the choice of "HANGER BAY", along with the sub-option of "REINFORCED" layers for it. This causes a smaller list of the numbers one to three to appear. I choose to have one of this entrance, and *that* causes a new screen to appear above my other choices. A 3-D map of a mountain range appears on the new screen, which I look at in confusion.

How complex is this going to be?

"Please select the approximate location in the Andes Mountain Range for your desired bunker entrance," Aida instructs me. Not wanting to cause further difficulties, I pick a spot near the summit of one of the range's western mountains. Higher altitude will mean it will be easier to keep safe from anything climbing up the mountain. Bad weather will still be a problem, though.

The second entrance option I choose is one I pick twice in a row: "NATURAL ENTRANCE". Since the mountains do not have urban places like cities, I figure having entrances carved out of natural rock will be easier to keep useable. For each of the two entrances, I pick a different cardinal direction for it to lead from the primary "modules" of the bunker. One entrance goes to the north, the other to the south.

Aida accepts my choices without comment or critique. The screen showing all the entrances goes back to the grid so the next screen can come forward. This category is for "POWER

SYSTEMS”, and again Aida says I can pick up to three different options or multiple of the same one. As I check each option’s additional information, I notice a new icon above Aida’s head. It shows a magnifying glass and a small cartoon map.

I look to Aida. “What’s floating on your head?” I ask.

Aida’s eyes roll upwards to look at the icon. *“That is a map tab,”* the AI says. *“You can select it at any time during the process to look at a three-dimensional representation of your bunker’s design in progress. Simply say, “Open map,” and I will open it for you. To minimize it, say, “Minimize map,” and I will do so. Does this answer your question?”*

“Yes, thank you. Open map, please.”

Aida complies without moving from her position on the display, although her eyes do roll back down to their normal spot. The “map tab” balloons out to cover most of the screen, but Aida remains in front of the image of a detailed map showing a cutaway view of the Andes Mountains. The map slowly rotates so I can take everything in. I see a hanger bay positioned where I had chosen, along with the two natural entrances going in opposite directions. It all looks very sophisticated to me.

“Minimize map,” I tell Aida. She does so immediately, leaving me with my choices for the bunker’s power systems. My first choice is a single “FOSSIL FUEL GENERATOR”, figuring the resources in the mountains will provide things like coal or buried oil to burn.

As I think over my next option, a question comes to me. “Aida,” I ask the AI, “where will the choices I make go? Do I get to place them myself?”

“For the sake of convenience, Designer, all your selections per section of the BCCI program will be placed once that section is complete. As an example, all your “Power System” selections will be placed when you have chosen them all. As for location,” Aida goes on to add, *“my systems will dictate the most logical placement for each system as determined by collected algorithms of similar existing or former bunker complexes constructed across Earth’s history. Final decisions will be made by BCCI administration when construction begins.”*

I am not pleased to hear this. It sounds like my decisions are a second or third thing to consider when the bunker is built, rather than the first thing. That makes this whole thing feel less significant. Then again, less impact from my choices means I will have less blame put on me if this messes up...

No. I don’t want to mess this up. I don’t want people to die.

I scratch an itch on my neck and delve back into the selections before me. It takes only a few seconds’ consideration to add one “POWER GENERATOR” system for backup purposes. After that, I decide to add a bit of flair and choose a “LIGHTNING CAPTURE” device. That one will probably go near the top of the mountains to collect energy from big storms. Since the crisis here is an ecological one, thunderstorms may become more common.

The screen goes away, and I choose not to check on the map before the fifth set of options appears. The title here reads "SURVIVAL SYSTEMS", under the "PRIMARY SYSTEMS" tag. There are four choices here.

"Designer," Aida speaks up as I start reading the first choice, "This section does not require selections from you. All options here are given to your bunker at no extra cost. This is a gesture of appreciation from the BCCI to preserve current Human quality-of-life standards and prevent technological regression."

I process Aida's statement and ask back, "Then why show this to me at all?"

"Presenting these add-ons will logically provide comfort to you, Designer. The residents of your bunker complex will not live in dangerous, sub-par conditions. I will keep this page open until you say, "Proceed", Designer."

I let out a sigh and mutter, "That's a relief." It does feel like a relief to me, a weight lifted off my shoulders. Better that the "Administrators" of this whole program do the hard work of installing safety features and special things. Since I know these will all be added on regardless, I spend little time looking over the descriptions of "GENERAL ELECTRIC SYSTEM", "BASIC OXYGEN FILTRATION", "BASIC WATER FILTRATION", and "FIRE SUPPRESSION".

When I tell Aida to "Proceed," the screen goes back to its place on the grid. As the next screen comes forward and displays its choices, I see the topmost title has changed to "SECONDARY SYSTEMS".

"We are now in the secondary systems for your bunker, Designer," Aida announces. "These choices are important to the bunker's survival, but not as much as your primary systems. Still, the BCCI advises you to think carefully."

I nod while reading over the options before me. Underneath the title "HABITAT MODULE QUALITY", I see four options for living conditions. The choices range from very lavish to very lackluster. I don't want to spend lots of money, or very little, on how the people in this place will live. If the people here are going to live for a long time during a crisis, I want them to be happy.

I finally choose the "STANDARD" option. It includes a good bed, a restroom, a storage closet, a desk with attached personal computer, and even some extra storage space for each resident. Seems good to me!

The next screen is one Aida says I must pick more than one option again: the title reads "FOOD SUPPORT SYSTEMS". I feel my muscles tighten in fear; this is going to be difficult. The mountains do not have much food growing on them, so I must find good options from the eight choices presented.

I quickly choose to have some "FUNGAL COLONIES" put in the bunker for easy food, despite fungi being listed as lacking in nutritional value. I then select a "HYDROPONICS BAY" for more

complex fruits and vegetables. This leaves the issue of more substantial foods like meats. With only one choice left, I realize I have locked myself out of some choices that require two at once.

“Aida,” I quickly ask, “Can I take back a choice before I confirm them all?”

The AI closes its eyes. *“I am sorry, Designer, but you cannot do that unless my logical algorithms determine the choices to be detrimental to the bunker’s survival. If that happens, I will inform you immediately. So far, your choices make logical sense for dealing with the selected crisis.”*

“What if I make a mistake and it still works logically? Can I take that back?”

“No, Designer. This is to both prevent the BCCI from being overwhelmed with Designer corrections and prevent the Designer from making illogical choices with the purpose of weakening the bunker’s survivability.” Aida opens her eyes and looks right at me. *“Consider your options ‘locked in’, as a Human might say, unless my systems say otherwise.”*

“That isn’t helpful for me!” I snap. “I think I just made a mistake, and you’re saying I can’t fix it? Don’t you *want* the people who live here to survive?!”

When I hear the words I just said, I feel my cheeks grow hot. I sound like I care about this bunker and the crisis it will be trying to survive. That’s not totally the case, though; this is just a simulation. I’m talking to a computer and planning out the designs for a potential bunker colony. The key word is “potential”; this plan might be left unused; it shouldn’t matter so much.

Right?

Right?!

My hands start to shake. My vision blurs around the edges. The thought of my mistakes killing countless lives fills me with dread. Oh, God, this isn’t going to work!

I quickly jab my fingers on the previous choices for this section, trying to deselect them. Nothing happens. They really are “locked in”. I’m stuck with them, like a god with their mortal creations after they run rampant in the world.

Groaning, I rub a hand down my face and try to breathe slowly. There’s one option left to choose, and then Aida will tell me if there are problems to fix—or so it says. I tap on the option for “HUNTER-FISHER DRONES” after reading they can be reconfigured for bunker defense as well as hunting animals.

“Aida,” I get out through a lump in my throat, “have I made a mistake here?”

The AI has its eyes closed again before I turn to look at its face. After a few seconds of silent calculating, it gives its answer: *“There are no mistakes, Designer. All your Food Support choices are logical and implementable.”*

I feel a rush of relief, stronger than I had imagined. Aida opens its eyes once more and holds eye contact with me for a second. I am the first to turn away; there are new options I should be looking at.

The title for this category is “HYDRATION SUPPORT SYSTEMS”. I look back to Aida to see how many options I can choose from the possible four. She tells me, “*Only two options this time, Designer.*” As I read the options over, Aida’s words make sense. The listed ways are all quite complex or require large bodies of water nearby—mountains often do not have large bodies of water nearby, unless underground.

I feel like I am making a mistake when I select the option for “RAINWATER MESH”. I figure this choice will be best placed around the mountains where the bunker is. After that, I tell Aida, “I don’t want any more choices from this section.”

“*Understood.*” Aida closes the screen and it goes back to the larger grid. “*Your choice is a logical one, Designer. Do not be upset.*”

“All the other options did not fit with mountains,” I gripe. “I’ve never been to the Andes Mountains, so I don’t know if pipelines or hot springs exist there. Water is going to be a problem for this place, I know it!”

“*Do not feel overwhelmed by emotional weight from your choices, Designer.*” Aida sounds like a counselor now, trying to keep me from panicking. “*This is a plan, not a fully approved construction. The BCCI Administration will have final authority over the design you create. I reiterate that your choices so far have been logical.*”

I wipe my eyes and rock on the balls of my feet. Aida’s words help, but they do not fully erase my worries about messing all this up. I am genuinely concerned now for the fate of the people in this place, simulation or not. It scares me to feel this way, but I cannot stop my emotions from having their say with all this.

While I am having an emotional attack, the next screen comes up from the grid. The title for this section is “AUTOMATED DEFENSE SYSTEMS”. Aida tells me I can pick up to three *different* options, which is new. There are eight possible choices, so I read over each one before making any selections. Each of them is good in some way, but I end up choosing three that seem to fit together.

My first selection is for “ANTI-ARMOR TURRETS”, since a mountain allows for great vantage points and long-range attacks. Also, if people try and attack the bunker from the ground or air, this will certainly scare them away. As I tap the screen to confirm the turrets, Aida makes an announcement:

“*Designer, I wish to offer you a customization option for the locations and systems in the bunker. You may name your selections, or give them specific designations, if you choose to. Choosing not to name them is perfectly acceptable as well.*”

“Eh? Name them?” I raise an eyebrow at the concept, but as I think about it, I find myself liking it more and more. “Okay,” I say with a smirk, “can I name these turrets?”

“You may, Designer.”

“Okay, uh, let’s go with...” I stall, trying to generate a name that can fit for anti-armor missile launchers built into a mountain. Then I get a burst of inspiration: “Thunderbolts. Thunderbolts will be their names.”

“I will mark this down, Designer. The Anti-Armor Turrets will be designated “Thunderbolts”. Numerical designations for each turret will be provided automatically.”

“Okay.” My next selection is for a “PERIMETER DETECTION” system. The mountains should allow access to unfiltered radar and sonar tracking. “Aida, please name the perimeter detection system “Panopticon”.”

“I will mark this down, Designer. You have been using Greek names and terminology so far for the customization process. Is this going to continue?”

“Yes, it will.” I lick my dry lips and try to not say more about it. The names of Greek deities and concepts come to me despite not studying them closely for what feels like years. I do not know why this is happening, but I do not question it for the moment. The names seem appropriate.

My third defense system selection is an “INTERNAL SUPPRESSION” network, which I tell Aida to name “Eidolons” and group them by the modules they are set up in. Afterwards, I tell Aida to “Open map” and look at how things are placed. What I see confuses me at first, until I spot how the modules all link up via small passageways and corridors that can bend and shift.

The three entrances to the bunker each connect to a fungal colony, while the hydroponics bay rests near the bunker’s bottom. The Hunter-Fisher drones lie docked inside the hanger bay; their power supplies are connected to the fossil fuel generator placed near the bottom of the bunker’s current area. Several tens of meters exist between the hydroponics bay and the generator, while the power storage banks are clustered around the generator to collect extra energy. Below the hanger bay is the lightning capture device, a rod that juts up into the digital sky to attract and ground lightning bolts. The rain mesh extends for at least a mile outside the bunker and mountains in all directions, piping water to the bunker’s center.

I let the map rotate a few times around as I see how Aida has used logic to place everything so far. I do not say it aloud, but I am impressed by how this is working out.

“Aida, can I name the Hunter-Fisher drones as well?” They were chosen from a previous selection, but if I am allowed to name robotic things then the drones would apply too.

“You may do this, Designer.”

“Okay.” I think about a name for another rotation of the map and come up with, “Furies”. Aida approves this without issue. In addition, she modifies the map on the screen to show the names I have already given. After I check the positions of everything again, I have Aida minimize the map and move on to the next section.

The section that appears next is “HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS”. Aida tells me I can pick up three different systems from the eight possible options. This feels just as important, maybe even more, than food or water systems. Healthy people are happier than sick people. I quickly choose the option for a “MANNED HOSPITAL” because of the expertise I know human doctors and nurses can provide. After that, I spend several minutes’ deliberation before I choose a “PHARMACEUTICAL LABORATORY” after reading it can help synthesize new chemical medicines from gathered materials.

My finger hovers over the option for “MEDICAL DRONES”, but I eventually do not choose it. “I’ve made my choices, Aida,” I announce. “Proceed.”

“Yes, *Designer*.” Aida’s eyes close as the screen goes back to the grid. “*Your choices are logical with the power systems you have chosen. With this, we have now completed the secondary systems for the bunker. Next are the tertiary systems.*”

I nod and rub my arms to get some warmth in them. The first selection screen showing the title “TERTIARY SYSTEMS” has the subtitle “RAW MATERIALS COLLECTION SYSTEMS”. Like some other options, I am told I can pick three different choices. I smile as I remember the Andes Mountains have lots of raw minerals and materials to mine.

My first choice from the eight possible selections is quick: a “CONNECTED MINE”. This will provide some labor for the people and materials for the bunker to use. It seems obvious to have in a mountain range; no one will be able to see it, and it can go down very far in the ground without human obstruction.

I then add some “MINING DRONES” which I tell Aida to name “Cerberus” and number them accordingly. The drones are listed as “Moderate” size, which is still larger than a human but smaller than a fighter aircraft. The extra text for the drones says they can work for long periods of time without recharging, but they will require long rest periods in between cycles. I figure one of them can be always operating to provide some continuous mining efforts.

Two options are enough for me, and I tell Aida to open the map right away. The map reveals the mine is carved straight down to the west of the bunker, connecting to the fossil fuel generator and power storage banks via several modules. The mining drones rest in small depots at the top of the mine, ready to go. It looks satisfying.

The map is minimized when I tell Aida to move on. The next selection screen has four possible options under the title “MANUFACTURING SYSTEM”. Aida adds an explanation as well: “*Your selection here will determine how quickly goods for your bunker are produced and their level of quality. Please consider your previous selections when making your choice.*”

I rub my hands over my eyes and read each option closely. Considering the bunker will be collecting lots of materials, I do not want resources to go to waste or lie unused for a long time. But I also want the bunker's goods to not break easily or quickly wear down. So, I choose the option of "WORKSHOP"—a place where goods can be made quickly with a dedicated team of workers. The workers, according to the option's extra test, can even "jury-rig" things on demand. The quality will be lower than what might be good, but replacements can be easy to make.

Aida closes the screen and brings up the next one. This screen shows four different options under the title "AMENITIES (STANDARD)". *"You do not need to pick anything here,"* the AI tells me. *"These options are all automatically available for your bunker on behalf of the BCCI."*

"That's very generous," I say while I keep my eyes on the options: "INTRANET", "MESS HALL", "EXERCISE GYMS", and "MEETING HALLS". These are similar to basic things people in big cities on Earth today have access to, so I welcome their automatic additions.

Once I tell Aida to proceed, the next screen shows eight options and the title "ADDITIONAL AMENITIES". Aida says I can pick up to three different options here. At this point, I think I have a good design for what I need with the bunker. Additional comforts would be nice, but they are not necessary. Still, some sort of additional comfort would be nice...

Aha! I press my finger on the option for "LIBRARIES". *This will be good.* The extra text for this choice says it will include a central library with drone helpers to find specific audio or physical books; beyond that, there will be several smaller spaces for the different corridors of the bunker to have nooks where books can be placed for collection or returning. It seems very efficient.

"Aida," I tell the AI, "I want to name the larger library "Atlas". The smaller libraries can be called, um, the "Muses". I blush at how far I am going with these names, but I figure the people overseeing all of this can erase the names if they don't like them.

"I will apply the given names, Designer. They are logically appropriate for your selection."

"Okay. And, um, I-I'm done with additional amenities."

"Very well, Designer. Here is the next selection of choices." The larger grid brings up a new screen, and the title "LUXURIES" appears above eight options. *"You may select up to three different options from these choices,"* the AI tells me again.

I look over the options and feel hesitant to take any of them. Things that probably would be nice to have would be good for the people's morale in the bunker. But how many resources will be available to keep them good for a long time? There's already a library; what else would work?

I finally select "MEMORIALS" as an option, thinking that they can be extended downward as more people inevitably die. The fact I know, almost for sure, people will die if this plan goes forward puts a bad taste in my mouth. I also consider the option of some "GREENERY", only to turn away from it when I think that the plants will not be useful for manufacturing.

"Aida," I tell the AI, "Please name the memorials "Elysium". That's the only selection I will take from here." *God, I hope this won't make the place look like a death trap.*

"As you wish, Designer. This completes the tertiary systems for the bunker. We will now move to selecting the crew of your bunker."

My eyes widen as I see a new screen come forward from the grid. This one is titled "BUNKER CREW" and has far more options than the others. The selections are divided into groups of occupations people could take. Each occupation also has a number next to it, ranging from a few thousand to just a hundred people.

"The residents of your bunker will have different occupations and training," Aida explains while I look over all the possible choices in this section. *"You may pick up to ten choices, and you may pick the same choice multiple times. Additionally, on behalf of the BCCI, you will start with some people at no extra cost."*

"Who are those people?"

"You will receive the following automatically: two groups of "RESIDENTS", each with five thousand members; one group each of "CIVICS" and "TECHNICIANS", each with two hundred members; and one group of "MEDICAL" workers of one hundred members, due to your selection of a manual hospital earlier."

"That's a lot already! And I have to add more?"

"Yes, Designer. You may choose up to ten more groups."

I shake my head as it whirls with numbers. I cannot calculate the number of people I want to have in this bunker; it is already reaching over ten thousand people, which is more than I feel comfortable dealing with. Some of the groups look tempting, though, so I reluctantly start adding more people. It will mean more mouths to feed, but I quickly develop some ideas on what to choose.

My first three choices are all for the "ENGINEERS" group, each group having one hundred members. I figure they can help repair the drones with the "TECHNICIANS" and construct new parts to the bunker. They can also help "RESIDENTS" in the mine and power generation systems.

My next two choices are for "SCIENTISTS"; each group of them has one hundred members. I imagine them working in the laboratories and hospitals, developing new chemicals and researching ways to improve the bunker. With a library of material to delve through, they will probably get *something* good to deal with an ecological disaster.

My next two choices are for "SECURITY", each group of them having one hundred members. They can help stop crime inside the bunker, but I figure crime rates will not be very high if the

world outside is going to be dangerous to live in. Still, it is better to have some level of protection.

After this, I pick one group each of “CHEFS”, “FARMERS”, and “SOLDIERS”. The “CHEFS” and “SOLDIERS” each have one hundred members per group, but the “FARMERS” have two hundred members. The chefs can work in the mess halls to make better food than machines can; the farmers will be in the hydroponics bay and fungal colonies to get whatever they can out of the plants; the soldiers can patrol the outer ranges of the bunker once it becomes safe to do so and deter surviving humans from raiding the mountains.

“Aida, I’ve made my choices.” *Please don’t let this be too many people, please don’t let this be too many!*

“Your number of total crew comes to...” Aida pauses while she runs the numbers. “...*Eleven thousand, six hundred members. This is within survivable standards for the crisis you have selected.*”

Another big wave of relief rushes through me, only to poof away like smoke when Aida then says, “*We will now select the role of governance in the bunker.*” Four choices appear on a new screen, and I feel nervous about picking any of them. This bunker must have some system of law, that is obvious, but which one to choose?

After deliberating between two choices that appeal to me the most, I go with the option for “TECHNOCRATIC”. The extra text for it shows a council of members from different fields that will work together for a common purpose: keeping the bunker alive. I figure that is better than putting the power in one person’s or *everyone’s* hands.

“*A wise choice, Designer.*” I blink at Aida seemingly expressing personal satisfaction with my choice, but she moves right on to the next screen. This set of options has a title I do not know how to take:

“PERSONAL ROLE”

I look at Aida, my legs trembling. “I-I’m sorry, am I going to be living in this place? Aida, is that really going to happen?”

“*It is not a certainty. However,*” the AI clarifies with a small tilt of its virtual head, “*if the crisis you selected for this plan does occur, then you will be notified of your plan’s implementation and be assigned the role you choose here. Please select carefully, Designer.*”

Being “careful” is an understatement in my opinion! My legs keep trembling as I read over each option’s extra text. Since I am designing this place, a role of authority over how it will operate seems good to me. But I do not want *all* the power here; it looks like this bunker will have lots of things to deal with and my brain can only take so much.

With a heavy sigh, I choose the “SKILLED LABOR” option. It mentions getting specific training in the field of my choice among the bunker’s crew, something I feel I will desperately need.

“Selection confirmed,” Aida says as the choice I tapped lights up. “Which career field do you wish to be trained in?”

I clear my throat. “Engineering, please.”

“As you wish, Designer. There is one final choice you must make before your participation is complete.”

The last unfilled screen on the grid expands out before me. The title here reads “POST-CRISIS PLAN”, and there are four options here. It does not take me very long to pick the option for “COLONY-SETTLEMENT”, where the main bunker will stay underground but a settlement will be built on the surface. Since the Andes Mountains are not flat, this will mean the surrounding landscape after the ecological disaster has passed. I suspect *that* will take a long time.

The extra text for this option says classism could develop on the settlement. Good thing I picked those “SECURITY” and “SOLDIER” options for the crew.

“Your choice is confirmed, Designer.” The grid is shown again, all its sections filled in. *“I will now open the map tab for you to see a completed placement of your selections.”*

The tab opens to reveal... something incredibly intricate. My jaw hangs open as I take in all the various modules connecting to each other like honeycombs in a beehive. The mine extends down beyond the mausoleum, but both are kept separate from each other. The mess hall and meeting hall are at the central heart of the bunker, and the “Atlas” library is close by them both.

Living quarters are each separated into modules that ring around the bunker’s levels like branches to a tree trunk. The hospital, laboratory, and workshop are all in different cardinal directions from each other, with larger passageways linking them all together for ease of delivery.

The finished bunker extends several miles down into the Andes Mountains, and the rain mesh nets reach out for at least a mile in all directions. Up near the top of the mountains, the hanger bay and lightning capture rod rest like beacons of hope and pits into the underworld, respectively. And through it all, the mountains are not broken down or destroyed, proving their resilience.

“Wow.” That is all I can say as I take in all my plans coming together. “Just... wow.”

“Thank you for your effort and participation, Designer.” I break away from the bunker’s finished map to look at Aida. *“Your plan has been sent to the BCCI administration teams for analysis and potential use. You will be notified if your plan is deemed appropriate for use.”*

The screen changes back to that empty blue expanse. But Aida is still present, and her face moves to takes center point.

“On behalf of humanity, the BCCI congratulates you for being a supporter of our survivability against all odds. You will now be returned to your previous living quarters and can resume your normal life. Goodbye, Designer.”

A hissing sound comes from around the computer screen. I step back, but I can already taste something sweet on my tongue. The air fills with that sweet taste—a gas, pumped into the room.

My vision grows blurry as I stumble around and finally crumple to the floor. The last thing I see is the glowing screen with Aida’s smiling face looking down at me. My last thought is whether this was all some twisted dream or a sign of things to come.