

The Heretics (of Houndsmoth): Episode 1 - A Hero's Welcome

Written by

Nash Peterson

Original Concept

Email: npeters021@gmail.com  
Phone: (612) 618-9378

WGA Registration  
# 2158185

COLD OPEN

**EXT. DARK FOREST - NIGHT**

Inside a dense forest, birds CHIRP and moonlight streams through the treetops when:

SILAS YAMANE (16): an Asian-American, WHEEZING and covered in blood, CRASHES through the thick brush.

Sprinting for his life, he looks behind him to see:

A pack of otherworldly creatures chasing after him.

SILAS  
(yells)  
Help! Somebody help me!

Ducking left and right past tree-after-tree, the pack stays on his heels.

Up in the distance, he sees a bright light like a large bonfire peeking through the trees.

SILAS (CONT'D)  
Johnston! Mrs. Q! Anybody!

A branch trips as he tumbles to the ground.

The animals lunge for him. Silas covers his face when he calls out.

SILAS (CONT'D)  
Houndsmoth!

BOOM! A massive wall of sound erupts from his hands.

Silas looks up to see the pack and a cone of shattered foliage missing. Staring at his hands, he picks himself up and runs off.

**EXT. SCHOOL GROUNDS - NIGHT**

Breaking through the treeline, Silas runs past a crumbled stone pumphouse and into an open field. A stupified Silas drops to his knees as he stares at:

A massive castle on a distant cliff on fire.

SILAS  
Why didn't I listen?!

Staring down at a puddle before him, a confused Silas sees himself in a superhero costume.

Looking up beside him, Silas notices six other heroes standing next to him in their own costumes.

The one who catches his attention, VICTORIA OXBOW (18): a stunning girl with ice forming around her hands, stares ahead at the inferno before them.

Looking back at the fire, a red dog with glowing yellow eyes sits before Silas. It stares into the boy's eyes.

MR. HOUNDSMOTH (V.O.)

Now you are ready.

The obscured figure of MR. HOUNDSMOTH (40s) appears behind Silas and puts his hands on the boy's shoulders.

Transfixed, Silas stares into the dog's eyes.

MR. HOUNDSMOTH (V.O.)

...To shape the world, according to the lessons I taught you here.

Just then, countless glowing yellow eyes light up the forest behind Mr. Houndsmoth and the six.

MR. HOUNDSMOTH (V.O.)

Welcome to your graduation, Silas.  
No turning back. Now...wake up!

Mr. Houndsmoth raises his hand to Silas' ear and SNAPS his fingers when:

**INT. SANTA BARBARA COUNTY JAIL - HOLDING CELL - NIGHT**

A baggy-eyed Silas startles awake in a communal holding cell. POLICE OFFICER #1 (20s) CLANGS on the bars.

POLICE OFFICER #1

Yamane!

Looking up from his spot on the bench, Silas raises his hand. As the cell doors are BUZZED open, Silas stares at his hands.

ACT ONE**INT. SANTA BARBARA COUNTY JAIL - INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT**

Sitting in an interrogation room handcuffed to the table, Silas stares at his hands as DETECTIVE GARNIER (30s) sits across from him with a stack of folders.

DETECTIVE GARNIER  
Silas Yamane, do you understand  
what you're being charged with?

Silas stares down at his hand and makes the same gestures from his dream.

DETECTIVE GARNIER (CONT'D)  
(annoyed)  
Silas, I'm up here.

SILAS  
Sh! I think I got it.

The teen makes a more emphatic gesture with his hand.

DETECTIVE GARNIER  
Got what?

SILAS  
In my dream, I could blow shit up  
with my hands. Like those guys in  
those something-universe movies.  
'Cause guess what? I'm a superhero,  
bro.

Frustrated, Garnier sits back in his chair as Silas rattles his handcuffs and makes the same gestures with his hands. After a beat, Silas gives up.

DETECTIVE GARNIER  
Are you done?

Silas doesn't say a word and gives Garnier the biggest shit-eating grin, his head wobbling around with dilated pupils.

DETECTIVE GARNIER (CONT'D)  
Mind telling me why you were at  
that party? And resisted arrest?

SILAS  
I was working on my mile time.

Garnier pulls a backpack onto the table.

SILAS (CONT'D)  
It's my backpack, so what?

DETECTIVE GARNIER  
Where did you get it?

Silas pauses.

SILAS  
Everyone has their gadgets. Mine  
come from Goodwill.

DETECTIVE GARNIER  
(angry)  
This stopped being cute when I  
caught you selling weed without a  
license at Leadbetter. But you went  
too far this time.

SILAS  
Chill out, bro! It's legal now. The  
only crime I've ever committed is  
being the hero of the party.  
Getting people to laugh more, dance  
better, and help out some friends  
along the way. What harm do Janice  
and Robert see in that?

Garnier unzips the backpack and empties bricks of coke,  
heroin, and ziplocks of pills spill onto the table.

Silas' smile disappears. Garnier then pulls out a handgun  
inside an evidence bag.

DETECTIVE GARNIER  
So that's what heroes do nowadays,  
Silas? Help friends commit  
felonies?

Silas stares at the backpack.

DETECTIVE GARNIER (CONT'D)  
I can't sweep this under the rug.  
You're looking at ten to twenty-  
five years for this, not in juvie,  
but federal prison.

SILAS  
(stunned)  
I want my phone call.

DETECTIVE GARNIER  
I have pull with the judge. I can  
lower your sentence in county  
prison, but I need names.

SILAS  
I want my phone call! Now!

KNOCK! KNOCK! DETECTIVE #2 (40s) enters the room. Whispering  
something in Garnier's ear, he stands and gathers the  
evidence into the backpack.

DETECTIVE GARNIER  
They loved you, Silas. This'll  
break their hearts.

SILAS  
Tell them to get a puppy next time.

Garnier tosses a flip phone on the table and walks out.

Once the door SLAMS, Silas grabs the phone.

As Silas struggles to recall a phone number, the SHADOW of a  
man appears along the room's walls.

It swivels around the single light in the room, studying  
Silas as he DIALS the number. It RINGS.

VIC (V.O.)  
(from phone)  
Hello?!

SILAS  
(into phone)  
Vic, it's me. I need your help.  
That backpack you gave me was full  
of drugs. Garcia or Darren must've  
planted it on us. I need you to  
come down to SBPD and straighten...

VIC (V.O.)  
Haha! Gotchu fool, leave a message.

SILAS  
(frustrated)  
Dude, it's me. Come down to SBPD  
and help me out. And change your  
shitty outgoing, what are you  
thirteen?

The shadow appears behind Silas and puts a hand on Silas'  
shoulder.

RING! Silas clutches his ears as a hitch-pitched ringing echoes through his head for a brief moment.

In a fit of rage, Silas SMASHES the phone to pieces on the table.

After a beat, the STATIC disappears. Silas looks around the empty room.

The door opens, a perplexed Garnier enters the room.

SILAS (CONT'D)  
(motions to the phone)  
It was like that when I found it.

Garnier takes out a key and releases Silas' handcuffs.

DETECTIVE GARNIER  
You've been released from our  
custody.

SILAS  
That was fast! By who?

The detective gives Silas a concerned and unsettling look.

DETECTIVE GARNIER  
A very powerful man. And your new  
headmaster.

Garnier grabs Silas' arm and guides him out of the room.

**EXT. LAX DEPARTURES - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT**

A squad car drives up to the DEPARTURES curb of LAX.

DETECTIVE GARNIER (V.O.)  
You've been remanded to the care of  
Mr. Houndsmoth. His home is in the  
Black Forest. You're leaving  
tomorrow night.

SILAS (V.O.)  
The hell I am?!

Detective Garnier steps out of the car and opens the door.

DETECTIVE GARNIER (V.O.)  
You want the alternative?

A reluctant Silas steps out of the squad car, dragging his luggage behind him.

SILAS (V.O.)  
 So what is this? Someone else to  
 pass me off on? Another group home  
 or some shit?

**INT. LAX GATE - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT**

Silas and Garnier stand in line as passengers file through the gate.

DETECTIVE GARNIER (V.O.)  
 It's a boarding school with classes  
 and teachers out near the Bavarian  
 Alps. I've heard a lot of great  
 things about it.

SILAS (V.O.)  
 Then you go?!

Getting closer to the ticket desk, Silas tries walking away. Garnier grabs Silas' arm, revealing their handcuffed wrists.

DETECTIVE GARNIER (V.O.)  
 While you're there, you will follow  
 every last one of Mr. Houndsmoth's  
 rules: attend all your classes, get  
 good grades and follow directions  
 from his staff. Step out of line or  
 contact anyone back home other than  
 Janice, Robert, myself, or your  
 emergency contacts...

The two approach the desk. Silas inspects his bag. A pair of glowing yellow eyes stare at Silas from inside the gate.

DETECTIVE GARNIER (V.O.)  
 And Mr. Houndsmoth has the  
 authority to discipline you. As  
 severe as sending you back here,  
 where you'll be prosecuted as an  
 adult. Do I make myself clear?

Just as Silas turns back around, the glowing eyes disappear.

SILAS (V.O.)  
 You can make yourself schnitzel for  
 all I care.

Garnier grabs Silas' arm and walks through the gate just as:

**INT. MUNICH AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS - MORNING**

Garnier and Silas emerge from their gate down the concourse of the bustling, early morning Munich Airport.

DETECTIVE GARNIER (V.O.)  
 Show some gratitude! Future  
 leaders, politicians, and business  
 moguls have gone here. And Mr.  
 Houndsmoth is giving you a world-  
 class education on his dime.

Walking down the concourse, Silas and Garnier pass foreign posters and travelers speaking foreign languages.

DETECTIVE GARNIER (V.O.)  
 Don't forget, the reason you're  
 here is because of you.

Pulling his jacket up, Silas walks closer to Garnier as they walk further down the concourse.

**EXT. MUNICH AIRPORT - ARRIVALS - MORNING**

Silas and Garnier wait at the curb with the luggage as cars and buses pass by.

The detective pulls something out of his coat and slips it in Silas' backpack.

SILAS  
 Planting more evidence on me?

DETECTIVE GARNIER  
 Layoff. It's a family tradition.  
 Back when I went on trips with my  
 parents. Open it when you get  
 there.

Just then, a rusty blue pickup truck pulls up with JOHNSTON (40s): a gruff, annoyed handyman with bloodshot eyes and sandpaper skin behind the wheel.

DETECTIVE GARNIER (CONT'D)  
 You Johnston?!

The driver nods. Garnier uncuffs them and opens the car door. Silas gives Garnier an indignant look.

DETECTIVE GARNIER (CONT'D)  
 Johnston'll take you to the school.  
 I gotta get back to the states.

SILAS

(panicked)

You prick! You're just gonna leave me with this creepy German?! All for something I didn't do.

Garnier puts his hand on Silas' shoulder. He bats it away.

DETECTIVE GARNIER

It's too late for that. I came here as a favor to your parents. The rest is up to you. Life's about opportunities, Silas. Make the most of this one.

Garnier loads his bags into the truck. Silas gives Johnston an uneasy look as he climbs in the pickup and SLAMS the door.

As Johnston SHIFTS the truck in gear, Silas watches Garnier wave goodbye until he becomes a speck on the horizon.

**EXT. AUTOBAHN - CONTINUOUS - MORNING**

The rusty blue truck squeaks down the Autobahn. Flashy sports cars rocket past them, blasting german POP MUSIC.

After a beat, Johnston takes a turn off the highway and enters a dense forest in the span of an exit ramp.

**EXT. FOREST ROADS - CONTINUOUS - MORNING**

The truck follows the winding roads cut into the sides of the steep hill, dense trees towering over them with each turn.

Silas looks back and sees the massive mountains off in the horizon before slipping behind a thick wall of trees.

**EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - CONTINUOUS - MORNING**

Reaching the top of the hill, the paved road turns to a gravel one. Bumping up and down, the thick canopy of trees nearly blot out the early morning sun.

**INT. TRUCK (MOVING) - MORNING**

Jostling up and down inside the tattered truck interior, Silas turns to a silent Johnston.

SILAS

Are we there yet?

Johnston doesn't respond. Silas looks back at the road to see animals darting between the trees.

Just then, Silas spots a pair of glowing yellow eyes. Then another and another as it follows them down the road.

A HIGH PITCH RING echoes through Silas' head. After a beat, it stops.

Looking behind them, the glowing eyes are gone as they approach a break in the trees.

Silas' mouth drops open as they break the treeline and see:

Houndsmoth Castle - an imposing gothic castle from his dream come into view. Resting on the edge of a cliff, The rusty truck rumbles towards a castle older than time itself down a cobblestone driveway.

**EXT. DRIVEWAY/MEZZANINE - MORNING**

Johnston pulls underneath a stone mezzanine where:

MRS. QUARTERMASTER (40s): an older woman wearing a worn but pressed uniform is waiting for them with a bubbly smile.

MRS. QUARTERMASTER

(cheery)

Guten Morgen, meine Susse! You must be our new student, Mr. Yamane! Did I pronounce that right?

SILAS

(stupified)

Just Silas. Is this place for real?

MRS. QUARTERMASTER

It sure is! My name is Manuela Kirchner. But you can call me Mrs. Quartermaster.

VROOM! Johnston drives off, leaving Silas' bags in a heap.

MRS. QUARTERMASTER (CONT'D)

You've met our sturer Platzwert: Wilhelm Johnston. He runs the outside; I run the inside. Now, if you'll follow me.

Mrs. Quartermaster takes his bags through the front doors.

Still staring at the stone walls, Silas reluctantly follows her inside as the doors shut behind him with a THUD!

ACT TWO**INT. CORRIDORS - MORNING**

Mrs. Quartermaster guides Silas down a maze of crowded stone corridors, fitted with a patchwork of modern aesthetics like jerry-rigged wall outlets and light bulbs.

MRS. QUARTEMASTER

This is Schloss Houndsmoth. Donated by our generous headmaster and family patriarch, this eleventh-century castle serves as a home for over two hundred students of all ages. Working together to shape the leaders of the world.

Noticing a pair of rusty keys hanging from her hip, Silas catches up to her. His gaze fixed on the keys.

MRS. QUARTEMASTER (CONT'D)

We haven't finished your class schedule. Once we do, you will be assigned two Occupational Courses or O-Cs like Professor Neri's "Modern Technology" or Professors Duncan and Fergus' "Rhetoric and Philosophy." You'll learn so much over your stay here...

She turns around, Silas nearly runs into her.

MRS. QUARTEMASTER (CONT'D)

Do you have any questions so far?

SILAS

Not really. Didn't expect so many adults around here. Looks like a school for superheroes or wizards.

MRS. QUARTEMASTER

None of those here. Except for maybe His...

SILAS

His what?

Mrs. Quartermaster changes the subject.

MRS. QUARTERMASTER

As for the students, The headmaster believes a community of children and adult students living and maintaining the same space together helps build character.

A herd of kids stampedes past Silas and Mrs. Quartermaster. Silas swipes the keys without her noticing.

MRS. QUARTERMASTER (CONT'D)

(shouts)

I've told you all a thousand times. No running in the halls during morning chores. I'm talking to you, Connor! Those bathrooms better be spotless, young man.

(To Victoria)

Victoria, a little help?

VICTORIA (16): the stunning girl from Silas' dream turns a corner and steps in front of the kids. The herd stops running and disperses.

SILAS

Who's that? Wait, did you say chores?!

The pair turns a corner as Silas bumps into a porcelain statue. Mrs. Quartermaster catches it.

MRS. QUARTERMASTER

Oh yes! We may live in a palace. But there are no kings or queens here. Every resident is responsible for at least one or two duties to maintain this old place, Victoria being my star example. Starting with breakfast at six A-M, followed by chores, the morning lecture, lunch, the afternoon lecture, chapel, evening chores, free-time, and lock-up at ten P-M sharp. Everyone works for their keep. Which reminds me...

The two climb a staircase. Silas struggles with a large bag.

MRS. QUARTERMASTER (CONT'D)

Typically, we don't give tasks out on your first day.

The woman stops and takes the other end of his suitcase.

MRS. QUARTERMASTER (CONT'D)  
But Johnston needs an assistant and  
lacks the humility or a young man's  
back to ask for one himself.

The two disappear up the stairwell. Something sneaks out from  
under the stairwell and follows after the pair.

**INT. MRS. QUARTERMASTER'S OFFICE - MORNING**

FLICK! A single lightbulb flashes inside a dusty old office  
with a creaky desk, extra chairs stacked in the corner, and a  
cot laid out on the far wall.

MRS. QUARTERMASTER  
You can leave your things in my  
office while I fix your room. I'll  
be back to take you to the pump  
house once I'm done herding the  
cats downstairs. Just keep yourself  
busy in the meantime.

SILAS  
Oh, real quick, do you have a phone  
I could use? My Dad told him to  
call when I got...

Mrs. Quartermaster SLAMS the door behind her.

Confused but now alone, he pulls out his smartphone.  
Scrolling past his CONTACT LIST, he dials a California number  
and presses the call button.

He holds the phone to his ear. The call is immediately  
dropped.

Silas attempts the same thing. The call is dropped again.

Frustrated, He scowrs the office for a landline.

Taking out Mrs. Quartermaster's stolen rusty keys, Silas  
unlocks the desk drawers and finds nothing.

He checks the reception bars. The top of his phone says "NO  
SERVICE."

SILAS (CONT'D)  
I'll try outside. This has gotta be  
a mistake, Vic.

Silas sits down on the cot and looks at his backpack by the  
door. He walks over and pulls out a wrapped present Garnier  
gave him.

He tears the packaging to reveal a set of old comic books with the name: MR. "S" & HIS SIERRA SQUAD.

SILAS (CONT'D)  
How old does Garnier think I am?

Silas walks over to the garbage bin.

Moments from throwing them away, he opens one of them and starts reading at Mrs. Quartermaster's desk.

BEGIN INSERT

Inside the pages of the comic, Silas follows the panels of seven superheroes using their powers to fight a supervillain named FEARMONGER, using ray guns and forties technology.

As he flips through the pages, Silas' face contorts as he sees:

Mr. "S" kneeling before his burning headquarters next to his team.

SILAS (CONT'D)  
That's weird. Just like in my...

He turns the page to see:

The red dog with glowing yellow eyes.

END INSERT

RING! Silas clutches his ears. The HIGH PITCHED RINGING pierces his eardrums, louder than before.

He topples to the ground. After a beat, the sound stops.

SLAM! BENGEE (14): a frail Indian boy with innocence and goodness to spare dives behind the door.

Startled, Silas hides the keys and stands to his feet.

BENGEE  
Oh, this is not good! Wyatt will...

SILAS  
Can I help you?!

Bengee holds up a trembling finger to his mouth.

WYATT (O.S.)  
Hey! Brah!

WYATT (19): a large American jock stomps toward Silas, who meets him at the door.

WYATT (CONT'D)

Have you seen that wimp, Bengee?

Legitimate confusion washes over Silas.

SILAS

Who? Oh, that's that kid's...

Realizing his mistake too late, Silas is shoved aside as Wyatt barges in and investigates the empty office. After a beat, he doesn't find Bengee.

WYATT

Who are you supposed to be?

Wyatt turns around as Silas tries to act natural.

SILAS

Uhh...I'm Silas. First floor bathrooms. It sucks, bro. I'm just playing hooky up here.

He squares up with Silas to intimidate him.

WYATT

Then why are you in Q's office?

After a beat of silence, Wyatt lets out a laugh as he playfully slugs Silas in the arm.

WYATT (CONT'D)

I'm just messin' with you, brah!  
I don't care. But I feel ya though,  
I ditched "swabbing the poop deck"  
all last semester.

Silas rubs his arm when he sees Bengee fall out of his hiding place behind Wyatt's back. Meeting the small kid's sad gaze, he moves Wyatt out of the office.

SILAS

(sarcastic)

Hehe. Gotta love that truancy, bro!  
I'll tell you what. If Bengee were here, he'd have to change his name to Squeegee after his swirly session. After vaping three pens and gettin' rub-on tattoos.

Silas watches Bengee slip under the desk as a glass cup teeters on the edge of the desk.

WYATT

I like your style! I just gotta settle some beef with that...

CLICK! A series of footsteps echo down the hall. The two stop talking as the footsteps get closer.

WYATT (CONT'D)

Shit! I'm supposed to be cleaning breakfast dishes. See ya later, brah!

Wyatt sprints out of the office.

CRASH! The glass on the desk shatters on the floor.

**INT. OUTSIDE OF MRS. QUARTERMASTER'S OFFICE - MORNING**

Bengee sprints past Silas and in the opposite direction Wyatt took earlier.

SILAS

(sarcastic)

You're welcome, bra...I mean, buddy.

MRS. QUARTERMASTER (O.S.)

Silas?! Who's up there with you?

SILAS

Just me, Mrs. Q.

MRS. QUARTERMASTER (O.S.)

Well, come downstairs and bring some good shoes along with your school supplies. Make sure to close the door and shut the lights off behind you!

Silas scowrs his mound of bags, unable to find it. He turns to leave when he sees a backpack sitting by the door.

He grabs the backpack and zips down the stairs.

Once Silas is gone, the shadow of a dog appears from inside the office.

In an instant, the lights flip off and the door SLAMS shut.

**EXT. PUMP HOUSE - DAY**

CONSTRUCTION NOISES spill from inside the pump house near the dense tree line. The same rusty truck that brought Silas to the school is parked outside.

Mrs. Quartermaster and Silas walk through the field of tall grass towards the stone structure with a tarp for a door.

MRS. QUARTEMASTER  
(calls to Johnston)  
Johnston?! Johnston!...BILL!

The CONSTRUCTION NOISES stop. Johnston emerges from the tarp as an unseen figure watches them from the forest.

MRS. QUARTEMASTER (CONT'D)  
You remember Silas Yamane?! He's  
going to help you with...

Before Mrs. Quartermaster can finish, Johnston turns around and goes back inside the stone structure.

SILAS  
Uhh, Mrs. Q. My wrist is feeling  
funny, so maybe I should...

MRS. QUARTEMASTER  
Would you excuse me, meine Susse?

Mrs. Quartermaster calmly walks inside the structure. An angry spat in German sizzles from the pump house at a whisper's volume.

Uncomfortable, Silas walks away and sits down on a pile of lumber facing the distant manor.

Watching him from the treeline, An unseen figure moves closer to an oblivious Silas checking his phone.

Inches away, the creature reaches for Silas when:

Mrs. Quartermaster emerges from the pump house. The figure hides as Silas pockets his phone.

MRS. QUARTEMASTER (CONT'D)  
(irritated; to Silas)  
"Du gehts mir tierisch auf den  
Keks"...You can move that pile of  
stones from there to there, dig a  
small trench around the pump house  
and close the shut-off valves  
before the storm hits. Johnston  
will show you where.

Silas looks up at a clear sky. And back at her.

SILAS

Storm?

MRS. QUARTERMASTER

There's a big storm coming this evening. Weather like this gets trapped in the valley by the mountains. So we have to be ready to move the groundwater away from the castle.

SILAS

(uncomfortable)

Hehe. I don't think I'm the best...

Silas trails off when he notices Mrs. Quartermaster is looking back at the pump house. A pair of eyes hide behind the blue tarp.

MRS. QUARTERMASTER

Water bottles are in the truck bed. Once the bell rings, go up to the second-floor classroom wing and ask one of the students to show you around for the day.

SILAS

I don't think I'm supposed to be...

Mrs. Quartermaster wipes the grass off Silas' hoodie and fixes his hair.

MRS. QUARTERMASTER

Nein, you're exactly where you need to be. Also, if Johnston needs something moved, please...insist.

SILAS

You aren't listening to me. I said, you can't...

MRS. QUARTERMASTER

(brash)

From what I've read in your file, you listen to many people. But heed none of them. So you will obey Johnston, the professors, and especially the headmaster. "Ist das klar?"

Silas tries to speak up, only to look down at his feet. She tilts his head up to look Silas in the eyes.

MRS. QUARTERMASTER (CONT'D)

We all serve a master. Choosing one to follow is the only real choice we have in this world. Have a lovely day. Have you seen meine Schlusssel um...keys?

Silas shakes his head. Mrs. Quartermaster smiles at him and walks back to the manor.

Once she's gone, a loud WHISTLE erupts behind Silas.

He turns to see Johnston pointing his finger at the tools leaning next to the pump house.

ENTER MONTAGE

- Silas struggles to load the stones in a rusty wheelbarrow.

- CRASH! The wheelbarrow tips over. He tosses the mess into a heap far away from where Mrs. Quartermaster instructed.

- Silas throws the rest into the forest.

SILAS

Good enough.

- Silas walks over to the bed of the truck. He sees a twenty-four pack of water bottles, chugs one, and tosses the empty bottle in the bed.

- Silas grabs a shovel and tries to dig the trench. He hits rocks, clay, and very little dirt. Frustrated, Silas half-asses a shallow trench.

SILAS (CONT'D)

Good enough.

- Johnston picks up a large box of pipe fittings from the truck. Silas insists on carrying it. Johnston brushes him aside.

SILAS (CONT'D)

Good enough.

- Silas grabs another bottle and sits on a pile of lumber.

EXIT MONTAGE

Silas sits down by his backpack and pulls out his phone. He excitedly dials the same number. It RINGS and immediately hangs up.

Frustrated, he stares at the castle off in the distance. Recognizing something, Silas reaches into his backpack and pulls out Garnier's comics.

The burning headquarters look exactly like Castle Houndsmoth.

RING! The HIGH PITCHED RINGING returns. Silas falls over and clutches his ears.

BEGIN INSERT

In a dream state, Silas follows a red dog through a dense forest in the pouring rain. They appear before a lake with a lone figure standing in the center.

END INSERT

Back to reality, The visions stop. Silas sits up and looks at the clear sky.

Silas whips out his phone and tries to call again when:

THUD! Silas jumps to his feet as something nudges the pile of lumber he's sitting on.

SILAS (CONT'D)

Hello?! Is someone there?

He walks over to investigate. An obscured figure peeks around the stack of lumber behind Silas.

Oblivious, Silas looks down and notices something under his foot when:

SINCH! A rope tightens around Silas' ankle and pulls him off his feet towards the forest.

Silas claws at the ground as he's pulled behind the truck. Just then, Wyatt appears, holding a rope tied around Silas' ankle laughing.

WYATT

Haha, sorry brah. But that was too good. You should've seen your face.

SILAS

(indignant)

What's your problem?! You...

Wyatt SHOOSHES him as he removes the rope from his ankle.

WYATT

(whispers)

Easy. Just playin' hooky while everyone's looking for Q's keys.

Horrified, Silas looks over at his back. Wyatt pulls out two vape pens and leans up against the truck.

WYATT (CONT'D)

At this point, someone probably took 'em. I'd hate to be the sap who's found with them.

Guilt riddled across his face, Silas takes one of Wyatt's pens and joins him.

SILAS

So...what're you in for?

WYATT

Broke the wrong kid's spine during college football try-outs. You?

Silas scoots away from Wyatt.

SILAS

Held onto a backpack for my friend Vic at some rich kid's house party. The cops got involved, someone planted Columbian on me, now I'm here.

WYATT

Badass, brah! Sounds like some Narco shit you guys were into.

SILAS

No, that's the thing. I'm not suppose to be here. This was all a mistake. Vic would never get involved in hard drugs. Let alone leave me out to dry.

Wyatt just nods.

SILAS (CONT'D)

I mean it! We've had each others' backs since kindergarten! That's why I gotta call him so he can set this straight and get me back home.

WYATT

Whatever, man. Good luck getting reception. You'd have better luck shouting to him.

Disappointed, Silas just smokes his van pens and stares at the castle.

SILAS

So what's this Houndsmoth guy's deal anyway?

WYATT

Dunno brah. Some rich prick who thinks he's saving the world by educating my dumb ass so he can pay the rent on his musty castle.

SILAS

Have you seen anything...weird?

WYATT

Like what?

Nervous, Silas looks back at the forest.

WYATT (CONT'D)

Just stay outta there. Only weird stuff 'round here happens in those woods. Probably where Houndsmoth and that shrimp Benguee hide all day.

SILAS

Yeah, what's your deal with that kid? He seems harmless.

WYATT

(aggressive)

None of your fuckin' business, if you know what's good for you!

The CONSTRUCTION NOISES stop. Wyatt peeks over the truck. In a flash, Wyatt takes his and Silas' vape pens and tosses them into the woods.

WYATT (CONT'D)

Gotta go. See ya around!

Wyatt shoots him with finger pistols as he disappears into the woods. Silas watches Wyatt run off until:

A shrill WHISTLE cracks through the air. Silas jumps to his feet and sees Johnston. He motions Silas to follow him.

**EXT. TREELINE - MORNING**

Johnston and Silas walk around the back of the pump house, literally inches away from the edge of a dense forest. RUMBLING water and machinery CHURN through the air.

While Johnston works, Silas drops his backpack by the valve and pulls out the keys.

Looking back at the school, Silas hides the keys behind a rock and returns to Johnston.

SILAS

A lot of work for a drizzle.

Johnston says nothing and pulls Silas over to a shut-off valve. He fits his pipe wrench to the wheel and turns it with a loud SQUEAK.

Water RUMBLES down the above-ground pipes away from the pump house as the pipes snake through the forest.

Johnston gives the pipe wrench to Silas and struggles to his feet. He points at the pipe snaking into the forest.

SILAS (CONT'D)

I can't go there by myself. It's...

Johnston points again at the pipe as he disappears around the corner. Silas sees strange shadows sway over the trees.

SILAS (CONT'D)

When's that damn bell gonna ring?

RING! The HIGH PITCHED ringing drops Silas to the ground.

BEGIN INSERT

Silas sees the red dog from earlier, leading him through the forest to a figure standing at the center of a lake.

END INSERT

Silas pulls himself up only to see:

A floppy-eared dog, covered in mud, sitting before him.

Startled, He runs away past the pump house. After a beat, he peeks around the corner. The dog is gone.

DING! DONG! Loud bells chime from the school. Silas runs back and grabs his backpack before sprinting back to the school.

ACT THREE**INT. CLASSROOM WING - DAY**

A BUSTLING crowd engulfs the classroom wing as students stand around talking or commuting to their classes.

Silas arrives on the second floor and hides behind a column.

He uses his phone's reflection to clean himself off, including tufts of muddy hair clinging to the backpack.

Taking a deep breath, Silas enters the crowded hall with the other students.

Walking past a window, Silas looks out at the forest and sees the muddy dog from earlier, staring at him from the ground.

Rubbing his ear, Silas bumps into Victoria.

BEGIN INSERT

In an instant, Silas jumps from reality and sees the two of them in their superhero costumes.

END INSERT

Returning to reality, Silas and Victoria look at each other.

SILAS  
(to Victoria)  
Sorry I wasn't...

Victoria turns and walks inside a classroom labeled "PHILOSOPHY AND RHETORIC." Silas follows after her.

**INT. PHILOSOPHY AND RHETORIC CLASSROOM - DAY**

Silas walks into a classroom with bookshelves, busts of smart people, and a small stage at the front. He spots Victoria sitting alone, writing in a journal.

Silas spots an open seat next to her. He walks up to her row, passes her, and sits at a desk diagonally behind her.

He tries to get Victoria's attention: dropping a pen by her desk, exaggerated stretching, even grunts and coughs.

Victoria doesn't respond.

PROFESSOR DUNCAN (O.S.)  
 Virtus, Viget, Vexo! Virtue thrives  
 for whom?

Everyone in the class, including Victoria, stand next to their desks to speak their doxology. Silas follows suit.

CLASS  
 (in unison)  
 For the students of conflict and  
 struggle!

PROFESSOR DUNCAN (30s): An otherworldly, suave Englishman walks to the podium at the front of the room.

PROFESSOR DUNCAN  
 You may be seated. Before we start,  
 if anyone finds Ms. Kirchner's  
 keys, you are to return them...

PLINK! Someone's pen hits Silas' foot. He looks up towards Victoria. She still has her's in hand.

BENGEE (O.S)  
 (whispers)  
 PSST! Friend!

Silas sees the pen's owner is Bengee, sitting behind him. Startled, Silas hands him the pen without looking up.

Bengée slides Silas a yellow piece of paper across the floor. It reads: "THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP THIS MORNING. WE SHOULD TALK AT..."

CRINKLE! A shoe crushes the note before Silas can finish it.

PROFESSOR DUNCAN  
 Why gravity and subsistence appear  
 to be swirling around a new face in  
 our universe today, class.

Silas looks up to see Professor Duncan standing over him with his purple and yellow pupils.

PROFESSOR DUNCAN (CONT'D)  
 Stand when you address the class!  
 Whatever is said must be clear,  
 concise, and worthy of entropy's  
 precious time.

Silas stands up. The class, except Victoria, stares at him.

SILAS  
 H..hi. I'm Silas Yamane.

PROFESSOR DUNCAN

And where do you call your point of origin, Mr. Yamane?

Seeing that Victoria is looking up at him, Silas puffs out his chest with false confidence and a smirk on his face.

SILAS

I'll point to mine if you point to yours first.

Some of the class chuckles at Silas' quip, except Victoria.

PROFESSOR DUNCAN

I see. And what volumes of scholastic enrichment, moral instruction, and cultural conflagration do you choose to edify or compensate for the idiosyncrasies of your existence?

A beat of awkward silence ensues.

PROFESSOR DUNCAN (CONT'D)

What do you read?

SILAS

Oh, I don't read. I have the Internet!

The entire class grows eerily quiet. The professor abruptly becomes fidgety and irritated.

PROFESSOR DUNCAN

"By thine sin, so fell the angels!"

Silas' foot catches on something as he kicks his backpack over. Several Mr. "S" comic books spill across the floor.

Professor Duncan picks a comic off the ground. Lying on the floor underneath the comic book Duncan picked up are Mrs. Quartermaster's keys he left in the forest earlier.

Confused and horrified, Silas bends down to collect the comics along with the ring of keys.

PROFESSOR DUNCAN (CONT'D)

Plato once said: "A hero is born among a hundred, a wise man a thousand, but an accomplished one not in a hundred thousand." Why is that, Mr. Yamane?

Silas ignores the question. Duncan then guides Silas to the front of the dimly lit stage, clutching the comics with the keys.

All Silas can do is follow Duncan as he paces around him.

PROFESSOR DUNCAN (CONT'D)

If you were a Cynic. Plato would suggest heroes, those who follow the conventions of their day, are easier to find than the scholars who challenge or even change them.

CLICK! A sharp snap of one's fingers rings through the room. Silas rubs his ears as he's the only one who heard it.

PROFESSOR DUNCAN (CONT'D)

If you were a Stoic. He would suggest an army of heroes is weaker than the few who tame their emotions and live in balance with nature.

Just then, A pointed-eared dog with charcoal black fur sits before him. The class is unaware of its presence.

PROFESSOR DUNCAN (CONT'D)

Or, to those who read today's material, you'd say Plato never coined this phrase. In which case, you are correct.

Silas tries to keep his cool until:

One dog turns into a pack, unfolding from the shadows and approaching Silas.

SNIFFING and inspecting a terrified Silas, his gaze is transfixed on the lead dog.

BEGIN INSERT

Standing before the burning castle, Silas sees a new generation of superheroes and villains stand across from each other.

PROFESSOR DUNCAN (V.O.)

It's for this "War on Context" that you are here. But beware, those who stare into the abyss. Lest the abyss stares into you.

A massive shadow looms over both sides until:

END INSERT

SNAP! Duncan snaps his fingers and brings a startled Silas back to reality. The pack is gone.

PROFESSOR DUNCAN  
It appears he almost fell in.

The class CHUCKLES.

PROFESSOR DUNCAN (CONT'D)  
(to Silas)  
You may continue to stave off authority with idle critique and deception, Mr. Yamane of Santa Barbara. Hero or not, Virtue seeks us all out. Better to surrender to it now than later.

Duncan hands him a large textbook. Silas accepts it and scurries away from the professor.

Plopping back in his desk and looking around the room for the dogs, Silas finds a white note on his desk. It reads: "WE NEED TO TALK AT LUNCH."

Silas sees Victoria flip a torn white page in her journal.

#### **INT. DINING HALL - DAY**

A pack of children sprints into a crowded dining hall, filled with students eating their lunches.

The kids weave around the long wooden tables, passing Silas reading Duncan's "INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY" textbook.

SILAS  
Never thought I'd see so many words that end in "-ism." Too bad it doesn't say anything about how to fight ghost dogs.

He sets the book down and glances down at Victoria's note.

COLTON (O.S.)  
You should've seen the new kid in Duncan's class.

COLTON (19): a jock with glasses at the end of his table re-enacts the moment Silas knocked over his backpack in class.

Silas sinks behind the textbook like a privacy screen.

He reaches down and pull out the stack of comic books from his backpack.

BEGIN INSERT

Silas flips through the colorful superhero graphic novels.

He stops on a panel with Mr. "S" walking into a field where a figure tries to escape in a rocket ship with a hostage.

Silas' attention is drawn to the glowing yellow eyes coming from the comic book villain and a familiar red dog.

Turning the next page, Mrs. Quartermaster's keys peak out from under the stack when:

END INSERT

THUD! Someone sits down across from Silas at the table.

Silas drops the textbook to find Bengee sitting across from him.

Bengee crawls onto the table and holds out his arm for a handshake. Nearby students watch the unusual exchange.

BENGEE

I was skeptical at first. But a real fan of Sierra Squad can always be trusted.

(clear throat)

"For a Superior..."

SILAS

Will you sit down?!

Bengee sits down in his seat.

BENGEE

Apologies, friend. It really is a treat to find another comic book fan here. Where are you from? What brought you here? What's your...

SILAS

Slow down, buddy. To clarify, I'm not supposed to be here. All I wanna do is leave this insane school to clear mine and my friend's name.

Bengee's enthusiasm dampens a bit.

BENGEE

Oh, okay. Well...he must be lucky to have a friend like you. I've always wanted one. How'd you meet? What's his favorite...

SILAS

Just stop, alright! I'm not in the market for making friends here. And I don't need more. Go find 'em some place else!

Silas sets up the privacy screen and eats in silence.

After a beat, he peeks around the textbook and sees a dejected Bengee staring down at his tray. Guilty, Silas drops the textbook.

SILAS (CONT'D)

I...look, I didn't mean it. In fact, I could actually use your help, uhh...

Bengee perks up and grins.

BENGEE

Benjamin Livingston. But you can call me Bengee. How can I help?

Silas passes Bengee a set of "Sierra Squad" comics.

BENGEE (CONT'D)

Issues one through twelve of Sierra Squad's "Fear Itself" run, nineteen-forty-one.

Bengee flips through each of them. Silas slides Mrs. Quartermaster's keys into his pocket without Bengee noticing.

SILAS

Hardly recognized them from their movies. Me and Vic'd sneak in when they came out in theaters.

BENGEE

Pale imitations, my friend. These are the O-Js.

SILAS

You mean O-Gs?

Bengee pauses.

BENGEE

Yes, them as well. So your friend's name was Victor?

SILAS

Both foster kids. I came from South Korea, Vic was a local. His dumb ass'd always get caught doing stupid shit, and I always got him out of it.

BENGEE

Like us this morning.

Silas pauses.

SILAS

Yeah...sure. Now I need Vic to return the favor. Plus, this place gives me...

As Bengée flips through the pages, Silas looks up and sees the floppy-eared dog from earlier watching him through the window.

BENGEE (O.S.)

Gives you what?

Silas looks back down at Bengée.

SILAS

Gives me...chills; it's drafty. So what about these comics? Anything you might recognize?

BENGEE

These are pretty good reprints. But you don't have the whole "Fear Itself" storyline. Many people don't know this series is actually the secret origin of Mr. "S" and his Sierra Squad.

Silas looks up and sees the dog is gone once again.

SILAS

Secret how?

BENGEE

Well, their publisher was having continuity issues and underperforming solo series. Along with a mess of retcons and...

SILAS  
English. Why is it a secret?

Bengee looks around the room and leans across the table.

BENGEE  
(whispers)  
I'll have to show you.

SILAS  
Show me what?

In an instant, Bengee ducks under the table.

Confused, Silas looks under the table. Sweeping the textbook and the comics into his backpack, Silas follows after him.

**INT. DINING HALL - UNDER THE TABLE - DAY**

Squatting under the table by the dangling feet of their fellow students, Silas follows Bengee down the length of the long table.

SILAS  
Bengee, where're you going?

The two reach the end of the table. Bengee holds out his arm while he observes the dining hall.

BENGEE  
My collection where the rest of  
"Fear Itself." No sign of him yet.

SILAS  
Come on! You don't need to hide  
from captain douchebag. What's that  
jockstrap have against you anyway?

Bengee says nothing and looks ahead.

Feeling into his pocket, Silas takes the keys and slips them into the nearest backpack. He smirks.

Silas turns around as:

Bengee sprints towards the door. Silas chases after him.

SILAS (CONT'D)  
Wait up!

**INT. HALLWAYS - SHADOW SEQUENCE - DAY**

- Silas and Bengee's SHADOWS crawl across the stone walls. Bengee leads the way while Silas struggles to keep up.

SILAS

Bengee, where are we going?

- Bengee SHOOSHES him. The kid's shadow ducks out of sight. Silas' shadow stumbles around, looking for Bengee's shadow.

- A crowd of students walks past them. Once the group is gone, Bengee's shadow reappears. Silas follows.

- Sir Henry's statue tips over again. Silas catches the statue before it hits the ground.

- Bengee leaves Silas as his shadow climbs up a spiral staircase until it disappears.

**INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY**

Silas limps up the stairs and stops in the deserted third-floor hallway lined with identical study rooms.

SILAS

Bengee! Where'd you go?

He tries door after door, only to find each one is locked.

Just then, a realization comes across his face. He looks down at his hands.

SILAS (CONT'D)

When in Rome...

He steadies himself and holds his hands out.

SILAS (CONT'D)

Houndsmoth?...Fus-Ro-Dah!

Nothing happens. Frustrated, Silas puts his hands in his pockets and walks away when he pulls out:

Mrs. Quartermaster's keys again.

SILAS (CONT'D)

(confused)

But I...

Silas looks back at the doors, keys in hand.

**INT. STUDY ROOM - DAY**

Silas opens the door into an empty study room full of old furniture, dusty paintings, and cracking wallpaper.

He stops and looks at the paintings on the wall. Each piece of art depicts a grand moment in history that glorifies a man with hidden features.

Silas looks up at a painting of a very important man with his face obscured by the deep shadows in the room.

Rubbing his ear, Silas turns to leave when he sees an old rotary phone sitting on an old end table.

Silas rushes over to the phone. Struggling with the rotary, He hears a conference call of VOICES over the receiver.

FEMALE VOICE #1 (V.O.)

Has he lost his mind?! After waiting all this time, Houndsmoth chooses that American troublemaker as one of the seven.

MALE VOICE #1 (V.O.)

Hold your tongue! He knows what he's doing.

Silas listens intently.

MALE VOICE #2 (V.O.)

We all have a right to be anxious!

FEMALE VOICE #2 (V.O.)

Apart from the boy and Manuela's girl, we don't even have the seven on the castle grounds. We have to do something, or we'll miss our window.

A RABBLE of bickering erupts when a familiar voice chimes in.

PROFESSOR DUNCAN (V.O.)

Colleagues, nothing's changed. We have a remarkable student body for the year we've been waiting for all this time. Guided by the seven, I'm confident this new generation of heroes and villains will change the world forever in Houndsmoth's image. We just need to say the course. His course. Isn't that right, Mr. Yamane?

Startled, Silas drops the phone.

Looking around the room, Silas sees eleven human shadows materialize on the walls.

Backing up, Silas looks around and sees the pack of SNARLING dogs from earlier. He darts out of the room.

**EXT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY**

Back in the hallway, Silas tries to slam the door shut. It won't budge.

The pack stalks after him.

Looking back inside, he stares at the painting of Mr. Houndsmoth sitting over the ghostly dogs.

In an instant, the painting's obscured eyes glow yellow. The door SLAMS violently shut on its own.

Silas is about to sprint down the hall when:

He hears SNIFFLING behind him. Silas turns to see Bengee kneeling before an open wall panel.

SILAS

There you are! Listen, we gotta...

Moving closer, Silas sees an empty compartment with shredded comics everywhere. Profanities carved into the lid.

Looking down at an inconsolable Bengee, Silas turns to leave when:

He stops in his tracks. After a beat, he sets his backpack down and works on something with his back turned.

Kneeling down next to Bengee, Silas hands him a crudely wrapped present made of school supplies.

SILAS (CONT'D)

It's a...family tradition.

Confused, Bengee wipes his eyes and takes the present. He opens it, revealing the stack of comics Garnier him.

SILAS (CONT'D)

Vic and I were never big readers.  
We'd rather sneak into movies and  
ruin the ending in the trailer's  
comment section.

(MORE)

SILAS (CONT'D)

Probably put our fosters and ourselves into more trouble than they deserved and less than what we got. Regardless, we looked out for each other. Brother to brother.

Silas holds out his hand for a fist bump. Bengée hugs him.

SILAS (CONT'D)

Okay. You're welcome. Just let me know if you find anything.

Wiping the tears away, a smiling Bengée nods. Just then, a look of surprise on Bengée's face forces Silas to turn around to see:

Victoria leaning against a wall, observing the two boys.

SILAS (CONT'D)

Victoria, hi! How're you doing? I was looking for you in the dining hall. But I...I was helping Bengée...

He turns back to see Bengée disappeared. Victoria saunters over to Silas and stares into his eyes without saying a word.

SILAS (CONT'D)

So...

She SHOOSHES him. After an uncomfortable beat, Victoria turns away.

VICTORIA

Follow me.

Victoria walks down the hall. Confused, Silas picks up his backpack and walks after her.

ACT FOUR**INT. COMMON AREAS - DAY**

Victoria guides Silas through the bustling common areas, filled with students leaving for afternoon lectures.

Silas struggles to carry all the luggage by himself.

Looking at Victoria, he notices frost flaking from her fingertips when:

RING! The HIGH PITCHED sound echoes through Silas' head.

SILAS  
(in pain)  
Not again!

BEGIN INSERT

In a dream state, Silas sees passing students dressed as superheroes again.

Only this time, each one wears what look like badges around their necks.

Looking ahead at Victoria decked out in her costume, she's holding a pair of kamas dripping with ice and blood.

She turns around to look at Silas.

VICTORIA  
You aren't ready for him.

END INSERT

Returning to reality, Silas bumps into a passing student. He falls to the ground and drops his bags.

Clutching his head, he looks up to see Victoria is doing the same.

Embarrassed, Silas collects his bags as she stares at him like a zoo animal.

SILAS  
(to Victoria)  
Sorry, I'll be more careful.  
'Course, if I tip over like that again, I'll be careless. Right?!  
Cause I'd be missing...

Without saying a word, Victoria continues on.

Silas lets out a stress-filled SIGH and slogs after her.

SILAS (CONT'D)

So, where are you from? I've never left Santa Barbara before. I've been to Tijuana once with Vic. Nothin' like this place. Nothin' like this Houndsmoth-guy...

Victoria whips around and puts her hand over Silas' mouth.

THOMP! A herd of kids stampedes around the corner. Seeing Victoria, they stop running and disperse.

SILAS (CONT'D)

Cold hands.

She then lets go of him and continues on.

SILAS (CONT'D)

So what're you in for? Seems like everyone I've met isn't a fan of this place.

VICTORIA

Why is that?

They turn another corner. Silas struggles to make the turn.

SILAS

I don't like this place.

VICTORIA

You haven't been here a day.

SILAS

Sentenced here for holding onto a backpack. I know how it sounds. We were at this kid's house party, selling some homegrown grass when he met this babe. Being a good wingman, I offered to hold the backpack while he worked his moves when the cops came and busted the party up.

VICTORIA

So?

SILAS

So?! We got separated all over a misunderstanding. I gotta call him so he can straighten this out.

VICTORIA

Your friend left you.

Taken aback, Silas nearly drops one of his bags.

SILAS

(irritated)

Why does everyone keep saying that? He wouldn't do that! We're like brothers.

VICTORIA

Did he message back?

Silas tries to rebutt but remains speechless.

**INT. ROOM 216 - DAY**

Victoria opens the door to a small room with two beds.

Pin-up posters and crushed energy drink cans litter one side of the room.

The other has an empty desk and a clean bed. Silas heaps his stuff into a pile on his side.

SILAS

(collected)

I got it! Vic's probably laying low. My guess is, this whole situation was cooked up by...

Victoria tosses his room key to Silas.

VICTORIA

Willie needs all hands on deck for the storm. You and your roommate'll help with storm prep since you did a bang-up job this morning.

Silas looks out the window and spots Johnston at pump house with his pickup truck. Distant THUNDER rumbles just as:

RING! Silas clutches his ears as glowing yellow eyes pepper the treeline.

After a beat, the RINGING stops. The eyes are gone.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)  
Wear something you can get dirty  
and be down in twenty minutes.

SILAS (O.S.)  
What is he?

Victoria looks back at Silas, staring out the window.

VICTORIA  
Who?

Losing all composure, Silas turns around.

SILAS  
(frantic)  
You know who?! My ears have been  
ringing since all this started,  
sending me on vision quests. You  
were in some of them. Stalked by  
Scooby-Doo and a pack of glowing-  
eyed devil dogs. Friggin teachers  
talking about plans for me in this  
rich prick's "Final Solution" or  
whatever. And these damn keys...

Silas opens his backpack, only to find Mrs. Quartermaster's  
keys are gone.

VICTORIA  
You really wanna know.

Before Silas can answer, Wyatt and a group of muscleheads  
BURST through the door.

WYATT  
Hey, brah?! What're you...Holy  
shit! Welcome to casa de Me,  
roomie?!

Wyatt wraps his arm around an agitated Silas and pulls him  
over to his side of the room towards the other guys.

WYATT (CONT'D)  
Let me introduce you to the bros.  
Sonuvabitch with the glasses is  
Colton. Over there's...

VICTORIA  
(interrupts)  
Hate to break up orientation. But  
you and your cronies are helping  
with storm prep tonight.

Wyatt turns to Victoria.

WYATT

You're still here? Don't you have a wall to talk to or something?

Wyatt sits down on his bed and pulls out a vape pen.

VICTORIA

Someone told Manuela you snuck outside during...

While Victoria and Wyatt ARGUE, Silas notices a Sierra Squad comic poking out of Colton's back pocket.

The two meet each other's gaze. Colton looks down at his back pocket and smirks at him. Silas clenches his fist.

COLTON

The new kid would've seen Wyatt if he snuck outside. He was helping Johnston at the pump house this morning. Isn't that right?

Everyone stares at Silas.

WYATT

Yeah, roomie. You didn't see me skipping out, did you?

Looking around at everyone, Silas loosens his clenched fist.

SILAS

No, I didn't.

WYATT

You see. Now, if you'll excuse me...

Colton and the rest of the group turn their backs on Victoria.

Wyatt pulls Silas into the group.

WYATT (CONT'D)

Thanks for the save, roomie. You're one of us now. So no one messes with you without...

AHH! Everyone turns around to see Colton scream in pain as Victoria jams a finger into a nerve pocket in his neck.

VICTORIA  
 (irritated)  
 Get your asses downstairs before I  
 turn four eyes into no eyes.

WYATT  
 Alright, you crazy bitch! We're  
 going.

Wyatt and the others rush out of the room.

Silas notices flecks of frost collecting on Colton's neck and cold breath visibly rushing from his mouth. Victoria lets Colton go, watching him stagger out of the room.

Stupified, Silas just stands there staring at:

Victoria's glossy ice finger. In an instant, the slender ice chunk falls off her hand and SHATTERS on the floor.

Staring down at the floor, Silas looks up to see:

Mrs. Quartermaster's keys in Victoria's hands.

VICTORIA (O.S.)  
 I know why Houndsmoth chose you.

She looks back and strides towards Silas as he backs up.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)  
 I've seen smart, talented, athletic students teeming with potential come here. All with something to prove. Every last one of them failed to make the cut.

She tosses Silas the keys. He lets them drop to the floor.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)  
 It was a test, stupid. One you failed over and over. Most of his candidates would've found these in their bag and given them back to Manuela by now. But you...

Silas backs in to the wall. She presses her hands on the wall right next to his head.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)  
 You didn't even try to do the right thing, hero. That's why Houndsmoth saved you from Vic.

A wave of frost creeps from her hands across the wall.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)  
 Silas Yamane doesn't know what he  
 is. Too kind to be a villain, too  
 cowardly to be a hero, and too  
 delusional to call out the lies.  
 Like I was before, when I stared  
 into the abyss the first time. I'll  
 tell you this, Houndsmoth's not a  
 Nazi.

Victoria leans in. The frost creeps onto Silas' face.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)  
 (whispers)  
 He's a force of nature. And  
 tonight, he has one final test.  
 Whether you'll be reborn or die  
 clutching your old life is up to  
 you!

She releases her hands, leaving a frost pattern on the wall.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)  
 Downstairs, twenty minutes.

Victoria tosses something on Silas' bed and leaves the room.  
 Shaken up, Silas looks down at a burner phone on his bed.

#### **INT. CASTLE BASEMENT - NIGHT**

CRASH! A loud crack of thunder shakes the damp stone  
 corridors of the castle basement, used to store of old crates  
 and school equipment covered in white sheets.

An army of students dry up water seeping through the stone  
 walls with mops, vacuums & CIRCULAR FANS.

Mrs. Quartermaster walks down the halls, inspecting the work.

MRS. QUARTERMASTER  
 Schon gemacht, my worker bees!  
 Thank you for all your hard work.  
 Once we suck up all the large  
 puddles, you'll be free for the  
 evening.  
 (to Silas)  
 Silas, hallo! Keep up the good  
 work.

She pats Silas on the back, startling him as he pushes a mop.  
 Wiping the cakes of mud and sweat from his face, Silas sinks  
 to the floor and pulls out Victoria's burner phone.

Silas DIALS the number. After a beat of indecision, he hits call. It RINGS.

VIC (V.O.)  
(from phone)  
Hello?

SILAS  
(into phone)  
Vic, thank God it's you. Bud, you  
won't believe...

VIC (V.O.)  
Haha! Gotchu fool, leave a message.

Silas' smile fades. After a beat of dead air, he forces the words out of his mouth.

SILAS  
(somber)  
Goodbye Vic.

He hangs up and cradles his head in his arms when:

PSST! Someone tries getting Silas' attention. He ignores it. PSST! Irritated, Silas looks up. He doesn't see anyone in front of him.

Looking around the stone basement, Silas spots an old fireplace where he sees a soot-caked Bengee.

SILAS (CONT'D)  
Bengee?! What're you doing here?

BENGEE  
Hello, my friend. I didn't realize  
how much soot was still in these  
old fireplaces.

SILAS  
(look over shoulder)  
Are you crazy? If Wyatt sees you  
down here...

Silas helps Bengee up.

BENGEE  
I wanted to thank you for your  
generous gift.

SILAS  
Couldn't it wait till morning?

BENGEE

I found something.

Pulling out a plastic sleeve full of comics from under his shirt, Bengée unwraps them and flips to a page.

BENGEE (CONT'D)

After part of my collection was pilfered, I no longer have "Fear Itself" in its entirety. However, you gave me the last issue in that series. I never thought of it until you asked me to look.

BEGIN INSERT

In the comic, Mr. "S" is chased through a forest by a familiar pack of dogs. The superhero drops to his knees and, in a giant speech bubble, yells: FEARMONGER.

Bengée turns the last page: A full-page spread where Mr. "S" stands before a large lake with a lone figure at the center.

END INSERT

BENGEE (CONT'D)

Many of the features in this series correspond to a number of landmarks around the castle, including rumors of a glowing lake somewhere in the forest.

SILAS

(anxious)

But how do I...I mean, Mr. "S" beat Fearmonger?

BENGEE

I don't wanna ruin it for you.

SILAS

Please! I mean, I don't mind.

Confused, Bengée looks at a sweaty and anxious Silas.

BENGEE

He walked into the trap. After accepting his fears did he defeat Fearmonger. That's when he received his powers. But it's just a story.

SILAS

(distant)

Yeah...

Looking around, Bengee wraps up his comics and climbs back into the fireplace.

SILAS (CONT'D)  
Hey Bengee...Thank you, my friend.

Bengee GASPS.

BENGEE  
You mean it?!

Silas nods. Bengee smiles as he disappears up the fireplace. After Bengee leaves, Silas looks up the fireplace when:

VICTORIA (O.S.)  
Silas!

Startled, he turns around to see Victoria.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)  
(points down hallway)  
Go swab over there.

She tosses him a mop, covered in frost.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)  
He's waiting.

Silas then runs off down the hall.

#### **INT. CASTLE BASEMENT - DUNGEON - NIGHT**

Silas stumbles down the halls until it gets too dark.

He flips his phone light on when he comes across a medieval dungeon full of suits of armor and prison cells.

Seeing water glisten off the stone wall, Silas gets to mopping. He follows the water until he finds:

A massive puddle inside one of the prison cells. He tries mopping it as it keeps growing larger by the second.

SILAS  
(yells)  
Hey! We've got a...

CLANG! Silas turns around to see Colton locked the cell door.

COLTON  
Nighty-night, newbie. Call this an initiation. And some payback.

SILAS

Colton, you sonuva...

RING! Silas falls to the ground, clutching his ears again. The HIGH-PITCHED ringing louder than ever before.

Struggling to look up, he sees the black dog sitting before him with its glowing yellow eyes.

MR. HOUNDSMOTH (V.O.)

Silas!

He scurries into the growing puddle with his back against the brick wall, blood dripping from his ears.

MR. HOUNDSMOTH (V.O.)

The time has come.

With the CLICK of one's fingers, Silas's body starts shaking.

He sees his hands vibrating at an unnatural frequency when:

Silas starts sinking through the wall.

As his body phases through the wall, Silas looks back at the dog.

MR. HOUNDSMOTH (V.O.)

Find me before they find you.

He completely phases through the wall.

ACT FIVE**INT. DARK PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT**

Silas wakes up in a secret passageway, running water lapping his face.

Turning his phone light on, he finds a stone wall separating him from the school's interior.

SILAS  
(pounds on wall)  
Hey! Hey! Someone help. I'm stuck  
inside this wall. Anyone...

Looking down at his hands, he steps back and raises his hands and shouts.

SILAS (CONT'D)  
Houndsmoth?!

Again, nothing happens. Frustrated, Silas punches the wall when:

SPLASH! Silas turns around, hearing something run down the hall away from him.

SILAS (CONT'D)  
H...hello?!

Silas looks down at his feet as the water starts rising.

Looking back at the wall, Silas follows the passageway.

As he walks down the straight passageway, Silas looks at the ancient walls from pre-history.

CRACK! Silas stops and hears the thunder. Walking further down the passage, he sees a flash of lightning peek from the top of a stone staircase with water rushing over it.

Relieved, He climbs up the flight of stairs.

**INT. PUMP HOUSE - NIGHT**

Silas emerges inside an old stone structure with water SPEWING out of every pipe.

He turns to the far wall, spotting an irreparably damaged water pumping machine.

SILAS  
The pump house?!  
(yells)  
Johnston?! Johnston, you out there?  
Something's wrong. The water's not  
pumping out of the...

Before Silas can finish his thought, he sees bloody handprints over the knobs on the motor.

CRACK! A flash of lightning peeks through the torn tarp door of the pump house, along with a drag trail of blood leading outside.

RUSTLE! Something runs past the tattered door.

SILAS (CONT'D)  
H...hello?

He stands to his feet and slowly walks to the entrance.

**EXT. PUMP HOUSE - NIGHT**

Silas pulls the tarp back and sees the manor off in the distance, speckled with lights through the DOWNPOUR outside.

DING! DONG! The final lock-up bell rings through the sheets of rain. One by one, each light in the large house shuts off.

Silas looks at the truck parked a distance away. Its emergency lights are Silas' only source of visibility.

SILAS  
Johnston?! Are you out here?

Mustering his courage, Silas darts out into the rain and rushes over to the truck.

**EXT. TRUCK - NIGHT**

Silas examines the rusty truck: the rear bumper is smashed against a tree, construction materials are strewn around the site, and large gashes are slashed into the truck's side panels.

He opens the truck door, finding a bottle of painkillers and a roll of duct tape lying in the driver's seat.

SILAS  
Johnston?! We have a...

Something grabs Silas' ankle from underneath the truck. Terrified, Silas desperately fights against it.

Looking up towards the school, Silas HONKS the horn insistently. Several lights flick on.

Grasping his leg and YELLING for help, Silas pulls away from a bloody human hand.

He looks under the truck and finds an injured Johnston.

SILAS (CONT'D)  
Johnston! What happened to you?

Silas carefully pulls Johnston out from under the truck and grabs the items in the driver's seat.

**INT. PUMP HOUSE - NIGHT**

Silas and the injured groundskeeper hobble back inside the pump house. Johnston sinks to the ground, covered in scratches, bite marks, and blood.

Silas tries to help. Johnston shoos him away.

Johnston takes a swig from the bottle of pain-killers and removes his belt to make a tourniquet for his leg.

Silas tosses the pipe wrench at Johnston's feet.

SILAS  
Mr. Johnston, sir. I didn't turn  
the valve. I swear, it was an...

Johnston RIPS off one of his sleeves and hands it to him. Silas hesitates. Impatient, Johnston wraps the sleeve and a strip of duct tape around a gash on his arm.

The old man takes the wrench and holds it up to Silas with his other arm.

SILAS (CONT'D)  
N...No I can't. Someone more  
qualified should go.

Johnston shoves it into Silas' chest and tries to stand.

SILAS (CONT'D)  
People are coming! They can take  
care of this. What if those things  
come back? I can't go into the  
forest in these conditions. I'm  
just a...

JOHNSTON  
(abrasive)  
Then don't!

Taken aback, Silas looks around at the water streaming down the stairs, the school lights flicking off in the distance, and the injured groundskeeper bleeding to death.

After a beat, Silas tucks the wrench into his belt loop.

**EXT. TRUCK - NIGHT**

Silas helps Johnston out of the pump house and into the truck. He tries to buckle Johnston's seat belt. The groundskeeper smacks his hand away.

VROOM! The truck jumps to life. Johnston nudges him and gives him a flashlight and a poncho.

The groundskeeper gives him a stern nod before SLAMMING the door shut, NOTCHING the truck in gear, and racing off towards the school.

Silas stands in the rain as everything grows dark.

FADE TO BLACK

**EXT. DARK FOREST - NIGHT**

CRACKLE! An unseen figure lumbers through the dark forest, SNAPPING limbs and RUSTLING leaves with each footstep.

From a distance, an UNSEEN CREATURE watches Silas as he trudges through the dense brush in the pouring rain.

Silas follows the pipeline with one hand while the other holds a flickering flashlight.

SNAP! Silas ducks behind the pipeline. He looks up and sees nothing. He stands to his feet and continues on.

SILAS  
(mutters)  
I hate this. I hate this. I hate  
this. What did I do to deserve  
this? Sure I did some bad things.  
I'm not perfect. I'm a teenager.

Silas' flashlight flickers on and off. He smacks the flashlight against his hand a couple of times.

After a beat of following the pipeline and ducking behind trees, Silas

PING! A jet of water shoots up from behind a tuft of tall grasses, revealing the final valve of the pipeline.

SILAS (CONT'D)  
Oh, thank God!

Silas fastens the wrench to the RUMBLING valve. He pulls on the wrench with all his might. After a beat, the valve turns with a loud SQUEAK.

Water RUMBLES down the pipes back to its source.

SILAS (CONT'D)  
(shouts)  
Take that, you supernatural  
bastard! Problem solved, school is  
saved. I'm going to bed.

Following the pipeline back, his flashlight flickers off and on once again.

SILAS (CONT'D)  
Piece of shit! Come on.

He puts his hand back down to the pipeline, only to find it isn't there. He retraces his steps. The pipeline is gone.

SILAS (CONT'D)  
(horrified)  
B...but it was right...

He trudges around the area to find the valve and the pipeline have disappeared.

Silas then wanders around in the dark. Several beats pass, pushing past branches and climbing over boulders.

He gets snagged on branches and slogging up muddy slops caked in more mud than before.

Frustrated and exhausted, Silas pushes back a tree branch only to get smacked in the face.

Furious, Silas attacks the branch and slips onto a set of jagged rocks.

Reeling in pain, Silas lays on the ground face up in the pouring rain.

SILAS (CONT'D)

(yells)

Is this what you want, you miserable sack of shit?! To make my life a living hell?! What more could you possibly take from me?

He waits for an answer. No response.

SILAS (CONT'D)

Big surprise! You can call me all you want. But when I need help...

Frustrated, Silas covers his eyes.

SILAS (CONT'D)

(emotional)

I...need help, Houndsmoth! That's it. I need your help to get outta here. Is that what you wanna hear?

He waits for an answer. Again no response.

SILAS (CONT'D)

(mumbles)

I don't care if I pass your stupid test. I don't wanna die out here. If you get me out of these woods. I...I'll be nicer to people. Stop smoking pot, out of the business for good. I'll start working out, not every day. Don't get me wrong, I want to improve myself. But I'm not a crazy person. Five times. No three...two times a week. Deal?

Still no response.

SILAS (CONT'D)

Not good enough? I'll...start calling Janice and Robert...

Just then, The flashlight POPS back on. Surprised, Silas turns around and spots the pipeline.

Silas let out a joyful CHEER.

SILAS (CONT'D)

Thank you, sir. I take back half the bad things I said about you.

He painfully stands to his feet as he turns:

The black dog is in front of him. Silas jumps back.

Staring him down with its yellow eyes and licking its blood-soaked fangs, the demon dog stalks towards Silas.

The teen backs up when:

Another set of eyes appears from the woods. Then another.

Soon the forest becomes a sea of glowing yellow eyes.

Silas drops to his knees when:

The flashlight flickers off again. The forest is pitch black.

**EXT. CHASE SEQUENCE (PERSPECTIVE) - NIGHT**

- Leaves RUSTLE in all directions. The rain picks up as it douses the pitch-black forest.

- CRACK! Lightning streaks across the sky. Silas and the packs' SHADOWS stretch across the trees as he runs for his life. The pack is not far behind.

- The flash of lightning fades away. The forest is dark as the SOUNDS of the pursuit continue.

- Silas' flashlight flicks on before he runs into a tree. Following the narrow beam of light, he dodges around rocks and trees.

- Off in the distance, a WHEEZING Silas sees an orange blur twist and turn through the woods. He follows after it.

- After several beats of following it, the orange blur disappears. The flashlight flicks off.

- BAMM! Silas runs into a tree. A brief flash of lighting reveals he's on the ground. He CRAWLS into a bush as he holds his BREATH.

- CRACK! Another flash of lightning lights up the forest, revealing the dogs SNIFFING around Silas' hiding place.

- Before they find him, something catches the pack's attention. All the dogs run off into the woods.

- The forest is still again. Once the dogs have left, Silas SMACKS the flashlight to get it to turn back on.

- RUSTLE! An unseen creature drags Silas away.

**EXT. BRUSH - NIGHT**

Silas claws at the ground as he's dragged through the brush at a fast pace. He covers his face from the whipping branches, KICKING and SCREAMING all the way.

SILAS  
(yells)  
AHHH! Someone help! Please! Stop!

At the word "stop," Silas' unseen kidnapper lets him go.

**EXT. BUBBLING CREEK - NIGHT**

Silas opens his eyes to find himself at a BUBBLING creek.

The rain stops as the moon peeks out through the clouds.

Covered head to toe in scraps and mud, Silas goes to the stream to clean himself off.

Something RUSTLES in the bushes on his side of the creek. Silas points his flashlight at the sound. The flashlight's head dangles from the handle.

Silas drops the flashlight and takes out the pipe wrench to defend himself.

SILAS  
(trembles)  
St...stay back! I know how to use  
this poorly.

After a few beats, a pair of yellow eyes glow through the brush. Silas' knees buckle underneath him. He curls into a ball and covers his face.

A large tongue licks his hand.

Silas looks up to see the muddy dog from the pump house, PANTING patiently before him.

SILAS (CONT'D)  
What do you want? Food? I don't  
have anything.

The dog continues attacking Silas with its tongue.

SILAS (CONT'D)  
Haha. Stop it! I'm supposed to be  
scared.

Silas slowly reaches both hands out to the muddy dog and pets her for a beat.

SILAS (CONT'D)  
 What're you doing out here, girl?  
 You lost or something...

He notices clumps of red fur peeking out from under the cakes of mud on the dog's coat.

Looking into its eyes, he sees a flash of yellow.

Silas stands to his feet. The dog looks up at him.

SILAS (CONT'D)  
 It's you! In more ways than one.

The muddy dog trudges to the other side of the creek and looks back at Silas.

After a beat of indecision, he relents.

SILAS (CONT'D)  
 Lead the way!

Silas crosses the creek and follows after the dog.

**EXT. DARK FOREST - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT**

Rain coming down in sheets, Silas follows the unusual dog through the same forest he'd been lost in for hours.

The dog went down a dirt path. Silas followed.

The dog then meanders where it pleases, SNIFFING everything with no discernible pattern. Silas reluctantly follows.

The dog rolls in the fresh mud. Silas reluctantly waits for it to be done before going further.

After a beat of following, the dog breaks off into a sprint.

SILAS  
 Hey! Wait up!

Barely keeping up with the nimble dog, Silas runs after it for a beat until:

The dog stops.

Standing at the top of a steep hill, Silas spots the castle on the left through the trees. The moonlight peeks through the clouds.

SILAS (CONT'D)  
I never thought I'd be so happy to  
see that musty castle again.

He starts down that path until he looks to the right.

Silas sees a dark spot in the forest the moonlight can't  
penetrate with no discernible footpath inside.

SILAS (CONT'D)  
No. Not when I'm this close to a  
warm bed.

The dog just sits there.

SILAS (CONT'D)  
(sigh)  
Let's get this over with. Where to,  
pooch?

It just sits there, staring up at Silas with its tongue  
hanging out of its head.

He tries moving the dog to stand up. The dog is resolute.

SILAS (CONT'D)  
(reluctantly)  
Come on, where do I go?

The dog doesn't budge.

Looking between the castle and the dark spot, an anxious  
Silas looks away from the Castle and heads for the dark spot.

As he descends the hill, Silas looks up at the dog and waves  
at it when:

Something trips him, causing Silas to tumble down the steep  
hill.

**EXT. THE LAKE - NIGHT**

CRASH! Trees, rocks, and debris break Silas' fall until he  
rolls into a clearing.

After a beat, he looks up to see:

The glowing lake with a figure at the center.

Silas pulls himself to his feet when:

The black dogs reappear and pounce on Silas. He covers his  
face with his hands when:

**EXT. ISLAND ON THE LAKE - NIGHT**

CLICK! The snap of one's finger rings through the air. Silas looks up and sees the dogs making a path for him towards the glowing lake.

Silas trembles as he crawls down the path, several of the dogs quietly SNARLING at him.

He kneels down at the lake's edge when:

A second CLICK rings through the air.

Silas finds himself on an island at the lake's center. He looks up and sees the obscured figure of Mr. Houndsmoth.

Silas stares at the ground.

Mr. Houndsmoth circles around Silas, not saying a word.

After a beat, he walks towards the water's edge and:

A third CLICK rings out.

Silas doesn't move.

MR. HOUNDSMOTH (O.S.)

Come.

Reluctantly, Silas stands up and walks over to Mr. Houndsmoth where a brilliant light shines from the lake's surface.

He looks down into the water to see a sequence of fast-moving images of the future whirl around Silas.

MR. HOUNDSMOTH (O.S.) (CONT'D)

You shall receive my authority in  
the coming world. Prepare yourself!  
As Virtue thrives under conflict.  
So shall your service begin, my  
Heretic.

Transfixed, Silas smiles as a green light enters his eyes. The images swirl faster until:

A fourth CLICK rings through the air.

CUT TO BLACK