

Charles Palmer -teenager and student at Aldercon Boarding school, brother to Adam Palmer

Adam Palmer -teenager and former student at Adlercon Boarding school, brother to Chares Palmer

Eric Havendale- headmaster and occasional student advisor for Adlercon Boarding school

Shadowy Figure- random homeless man

1. *INT. LONG HALL-ALDERCON BOARDING SCHOOL-NIGHT*

Counselor Havendale marches down the narrow hall at a determined pace. He reaches a door that looks like every other, but the sign on the door only has one name, Charles Palmer, the second name has been scribbled over until only the letters A, D, and R are still visible. Havendale pauses at the names, sighs, and straightens his face into a stern expression. He throws open the door.

2. *INT. CHARLES PALMER'S DORM ROOM-NIGHT*

Charles Palmer scrambles to stand at a tension next to his bed, his window is wide open, letting in the cold air. Snow can be seen dusting the rooftops outside. Charles's hair is a mess and his face is sullen with rosy cheeks from the cold.

A beat of silence.

CHARLES

Sir.? Is there something you wanted?

HAVENDALE

Curfew was at 9, Palmer. What are you doing up?

CHARLES

Heard you coming down the hall, Sir. Hard to sleep with an earthquake coming to your door.

Havendale frowns. Charles looks unaware of what he said, a very distant look in his eyes shows his mind is somewhere else. Havendale snaps his fingers in front of the boy's face, making him flinch.

HAVENDALE

I know you weren't in your room a second ago, Palmer. Where were you?

CHARLES

Nowhere, Sir. I went nowhere.

Charles looks at the floor.

CHARLES WHISPERS TO HIMSELF

I've been sheltered here my whole life.

Havendale doesn't hear or doesn't care what Charles muttered.

HAVENDALE

Please, you've been sneaking out of this room and off this campus every week for the last 2 months. Now where did you go!?

CHARLES

Nowhere! I didn't go anywhere!

Havendale looks the boy over, then leans in closer.

HAVENDALE

You've got blood on your knees, boy. No one goes nowhere and gets blood on his knees.

3. *EXT. STONE STEPS OUTSIDE AN ABANDONED, GRAFITTIED BUILDING-NIGHT*

FLASHBACK- Charles falls down the steps and scrapes his knees on the gravel path. His face is pale and full of horror.

4. *INT. DORM ROOM-CONTINUED*

CHARLES

(lying)

I fell down the dorm steps, Sir. When I was coming back from classes.

Havendale clearing doesn't believe him.

HAVENDALE

And you sleep in your uniform, do you? Vest and all?

CHARLES

(looking dreary)

It's been a long day, Sir. I didn't feel like changing.

Havendale looks over at the open window as a gust of wind blows the heavy curtains over the boy's desk, scattering papers all over the messy room.

HAVENDALE

It's a cold night to have your window open.

Charles sniffs and wipes some snot running from the cold with the back of his hand.

CHARLES

S'not that bad. I'm a warm sleeper.

HAVENDALE

Explains why you don't have your blazer on, or your tie. Where are they?

5. *EXT. CHARLES'S DORM ROOM ON THE THIRD FLOOR-NIGHT*

FLASHBACK- Charles uses his tie to slide down the loose cable going down the side of the building. The fabric frays and snaps. He falls into a pile of leaves coated with snow.

6. *EXT. 5TH AVENUE-NIGHT*

Charles is running, his sleeve is grabbed by a shadowy figure. Charles yelps and shrugs his blazer off and keeps running.

SHADOWY FIGURE

Hey! You get back here, Rich Boy!

7. *INT. CHARLES'S DORM-CONTINUED*

CHARLES

(lying)

Left them in my gym locker.

Havendale frowns, still not believing him. He glances by the door.

HAVENDALE

And your glasses? You leave those in your locker too?

Charles swallows, and doesn't meet Havendale's eyes. His jaw is clearly clenched hard under his closed mouth.

8. *INT. CLEARLY CONDEMED BUILDING ON 5TH AVENUE-NIGHT*

FLASHBACK- Charles is stepping carefully on wooden boards laid over a gaping hole in a fourth story floor. One of the boards wobbles enough for Charles to lose his footing, he catches himself, but his glasses slip off his face and fall into the darkness. He manages to keep a tight hold on the flashlight in his hand, however.

9. *INT. DORM ROOM CONTINUED*

Charles is visibly panicking; shifting his weight, and looking anywhere but Havendale.

CHARLES
Lost them.

Another cold gust comes through the window, making Charles shiver and Havendale shift uncomfortably. Then he notices something written on one of the papers littering the floor. He picks up a scrap of paper with three lines over a circle sketched on it. The symbol of a local gang. A messy address is scribbled below it. Havendale hold up the paper for Charles to see. Havendale is clearly exhausted.

HAVENDALE
I thought I told you to stop this.

HAVENDALE
These people, they're not a good group. I need you to understand that they would sooner sell you drugs than help you no matter what you give them.

At the mention of drugs Charles gets visibly more upset, even squeezing his eyes shut for a few moments before opening them again. Havendale notices this and takes a deep breath to calm himself.

HAVENDALE
I see you scribbled out his name on your door. And while I should reprimand you for destruction of school property. I understand it might be your way of trying to move on, but I also know you wouldn't do that unless you *knew* he was gone.

10. *INT. DRUG DEN ON 5TH AVENUE-NIGHT*

FLASHBACK- It's just after Charles lost his glasses. He walks down a dim hall, the moon through the partially collapsed roof and his flashlight. He is clearly following specific signs painted amongst the graffiti covered walls. He shivers without his blazer and descends a set of stairs.

ADAM V. O.
It's ok, man. It was an accident.

Charles passes a broken window with cigarette ash covering the sill.

ADAM V. O.

They wouldn't have prescribed so many if they didn't want me to take all of them.

Charles descends another flight of stairs, these walls covered in the gang's symbol. Broken bottles and a couple of spoons can be seen under clumps of snow and next to all the other trash.

ADAM V. O.

Relax, Bro. They're just to help me study.

Charles enters a dark room, bed sheets and other scraps of fabric and duct tape covering the windows. He uses the flashlight to scan the room. The light trailing along the floor until it reaches the far end of the area.

ADAM V. O.

You don't understand! The guys are cool.

The light falls on the body of a teenage boy, dead with bits of him clearly having been chewed off by street animals. Adam's eyes staring at Charles and reflecting the light of the flashlight back at his brother.

ADAM V. O.

They actually look out for me!

Charles stares at his brother's body, slumped and a faint yellow color. It's clear he's been dead for a month at least. A patch of drool and bile on the side of his mouth, the dozens of needle prick points on his arms.

Charles is shocked, he begins to shake his head, muttering no over and over again. He drops the flashlight, but it only succeeds in casting more shadow over Adam's body. A haunting image as Adam's lifeless body continues to stare at Charles.

ADAM V. O.

Look out for me.... look out for me.... look out for me.

Charles stumbles back, pure horror written on his face. A mouse previously eating Adam squeaks and Charles runs. He runs in the dark down hallways with Adam's voice echoing after him. He trips on some ice and falls down the concrete steps to the building, but he gets up quickly and runs off into the night.

11. INT. DORM ROOM CONTINUED-NIGHT

A beat of silence. Charles is blinking rapidly to fight the tears misting in his eyes.

HAVENDALE

(soft voice)

Charles, where is your brother?

Charles shakes his head, tears welling up in his eyes. He gasps, then falls apart completely. He's sobbing, fists clenched.

HAVENDALE

Oh, son.

Havendale pulls Charles into a hug, and the boy buries his face into the man's chest. He sobs harder as Havendale rubs his back.

HAVENDALE

Shhh, I'm so sorry.