

Angel nods slowly, then smiles.

INT. BEDROOM- MORNING

DAVION PARKER (13) sits on the side of his bed, dressed for school, with his feet on the floor. His face is solemn, focused, and angry. He watches his iPhone screen sideways.

CLOSE ON: The phone screen- playing news footage of a scowling man in handcuffs being escorted out of a court building.

Davion pulls the phone closer, looking intently at something.

CLOSE ON: on the side of the man's neck is a tattoo of the MS-13 hand symbol.

ELLIOT PARKER (11), sensitive and nerdy, walks into his brother's tiny bedroom, already strapped into his backpack.

He sits next to Davion on the bed.

ELLIOT

What are you watching?

He looks at the phone in Davion's hands.

CLOSE ON: Now reporters are hounding family members of the victims as they exit the court building. One woman in particular, a middle aged African American lady wearing church attire, wipes her eyes with a handkerchief as a younger woman guides her out with an arm around her shoulders, trying to shield her from the crowd.

ELLIOT (cont'd)

That's Aunt June!

Davion glances sideways at Elliot before turning his phone off and standing up. He walks to the wall and picks his backpack from the floor.

DAVION

It's nothing.

He grabs his hoodie as he walks out the room.

DAVION (cont'd)

Come on let's go.

INT. HALLWAY- MORNING.

Elliot and Davion are walking out the front door when a deep voice calls out.

DAVID PARKER  
Davion. Come here.

INT. KITCHEN- MORNING

DAVID PARKER (44) is Davion and Elliot's dad. He sits at the kitchen table wearing worker's pants and a white t shirt.

Davion walks in, backpack draped off one shoulder, and the same angry expression on his face.

DAVION  
Sir?

DAVID  
You see the verdict?

Davion nods silently.

DAVID (cont'd)  
I don't know how DeMarcus got caught up with a gang like that. June took good care of that boy... That neighborhood is no good.

He sighs, rubbing his forehead.

DAVID (cont'd)  
This is a helluva world to raise kids in.

David looks back towards the front door to make sure the house is clear. Then he looks deep into Davion's eyes.

DAVID (cont'd)  
I know you're smart Davion. I don't worry about you. But you need to look out for Elliot.

Davion looks sideways in discomfort.

DAVION  
I will.

He sounds slightly exasperated, ready for this conversation to be over.

DAVID

No. Look at me. Elliot is different. Kids will pick on him. Alright he's an easy target. Easy to take advantage of. He needs someone to watch out for him. You hear me?

Davion meets his dad's eyes and nods. David nods back resolutely. Davion starts to walk away and then turns back to his dad, raising his arm.

DAVION

Uh I forgot. Can you sign these?

He pulls out two crumpled papers from his backpack.

DAVID

What is this?

DAVION

Field trip permission slips.

David pulls out a pen from his pocket.

DAVID

Starved Rock? That's over 2 hours from here... Y'all gonna be back by 3?

Davion nods, hopeful for that signature.

DAVID (cont'd)

Alright.

David hands him the signed forms and Davion walks out the door without exchanging another word.

EXT. SIDEWALK- MORNING

Davion walks out the front door of the house and onto the front lawn. Their neighborhood straddles the lower and middle class, shabby houses lining both sides of the road.

Elliot is laying in the grass, hyper focusing on a leaf he holds in front of his face as he raises and lowers it for the perspective change.

DAVION

What are you doing?? Elliot, let's go!

Davion starts the walk without him as Elliot scrambles to get up and run after him.

EXT. SCHOOL- MORNING

Davion walks down the sidewalk, towards the school entrance with Elliot trailing behind him. He sees his two best friends, MANUEL (12), known as Manny, and TRAVIS (13) talking to each other and he walks up to join them, giving the first half smile of the day.

DAVION

Sup.

Elliot hangs back, giving a wistful look before heading inside the school alone.

MANNY

Yo, what's up?

Manuel is chill and confident. Travis is the personality of the group, always the class clown.

TRAVIS

Shit! I didn't get the permission slip signed.

DAVION

Just sign it yourself. You know what your mama's handwriting looks like?

TRAVIS

Dude I cannot write like her.

DAVION

Give it to me.

MANNY

Ms. Simmons ain't even gonna look at these.

Travis pulls out the sheet and hands it to Davion, who rummages in his backpack for a pen. He pulls one out with a folder to write on.

TRAVIS

Hold up. Practice first- let me see how you're gonna do it.

Davion rolls his eyes, but tears a piece of paper out of his folder and obliges.

CLOSE UP: Davion writes an impressive forgery of Travis' mom's name.

TRAVIS (cont'd)

Are you sure you aint a 40 year old woman?

Davion slams the paper into Travis' chest.

DAVION

Shut up.

With the pen and practice paper still in his hand, he closes his fist and places them in his pocket.

INT. CLASSROOM- DAY

The class is buzzing with the kind of restless energy you only find on Field Trip day.

Their teacher, MS. SIMMONS (27), a nice but no nonsense brunette, stands in front.

MS. SIMMONS

Alright, everyone get out their permission slips please.

She begins to walk around picking them up one by one.

She stops at Travis, studying the signature on his permission slip, then looking at Travis for a tense moment before moving on. He exhales.

Ms. Simmons shuffles the papers and sets them down, leaning against her desk.

MS. SIMMONS (cont'd)

Okay, everyone. We are going to Starved Rock Park. Can anybody tell me the history of Starved Rock?

A cute kid with blonde shaggy hair and a sweet face raises his hand. This is CASH (12)

CASH

Native Americans lived there for centuries before the French built a fort there in the 1600's. They call it Starved Rock because the Ottawa tribe surrounded the Illinois tribe and starved them out to avenge the death of their Chief.

Ms. Simmons nods.

MS. SIMMONS  
VERY good, Cash.

MANNY  
Nerd.

Manny throws an eraser at Cash. With catlike reflexes Cash catches the eraser with his right hand, without even looking, then pretends to swallow it making an exaggerated gulping motion.

CLOSE ON: Davion smirks in admiration.

Elliot, sitting in the front of the classroom far away from Davion, raises his hand.

ELLIOT  
Ms. Simmons, may I please use the  
restroom?

He speaks in breathy clipped sentences. A few kids giggle at how incredibly nerdy it comes across.

MS. SIMMONS  
Yes but hurry back. The bus is  
almost ready for us.

Elliot gets up from his desk and exits.

CLOSE ON: Davion looks away in embarrassment.

INT. SCHOOL BUS- MORNING

The class walks onto the bus, loudly talking among themselves.

STEVE TRENTON (58) African American gentleman with a bright personality, sits in the driver's seat greeting the kids as they come one.

STEVE  
Hey hey. Good morning. Welcome  
aboard Annie! Alright.

Ms. Simmons walks on the bus and sits in the first aisle across from the driver's side.

STEVE (cont'd)  
Heyyy Ms. Simmons!

She sets her bag down next to her, panting from the walk.

MS. SIMMONS  
Steve. It's just us today.

STEVE  
No chaperones?

MS. SIMMONS  
She went into labor.

STEVE  
Did she now?? Oh, that's alright  
then. That's alright.

Elliot sits towards the front of the bus. He keeps his backpack on, sitting nervously on the edge of his seat.

Davion walks on with Travis. Elliot looks at Davion excitedly, but Davion ignores him, walking past him towards the back of the bus.

Halfway down the aisle walking towards the back, a leg sticks out, blocking the path forward. LOLA DIAZ (12) a cute and sassy classmate smirks at Davion.

LOLA  
Password?

Davion looks at her for a moment.

DAVION  
Karate chop.

He feigns a quick karate chop to her outstretched leg. She makes a buzzard sound.

LOLA  
EHHH.

He pushes forward against her leg as she laughs and then gives in allowing him to pass.

CUT TO:

INT. BACK OF BUS- DAY

Travis and Davion sit next to one another on the left side of the bus (left if you are facing the back). Both of them play on their phones, Davion with connected earbuds in.

Manny sits in the row in front of them, taking up the seat with a relaxed slouch.

Cash walks towards the back, pack of starbursts in his hand, chewing on a red one. He makes eye contact with Manny.

CASH

Want one?

Manny grins and holds his hand up. Cash tosses a yellow starburst and Manny catches it.

MANNY

Thanks.

Cash sits on the row across from Manny, on the right side of the bus. He sits on the edge of the seat, leaning forward and surveying the bus.

(SEE MAP BELOW)

INT. FRONT OF BUS- DAY

Ms. Simmons stands up and faces the rowdy bunch.

MS. SIMMONS

HEY. Listen up! This is going to be a fun day. But if you get too loud or too rowdy I WILL NOT HESITATE to have Steve here turn us back around and do worksheets for the rest of the day.

The group quiets down considerably at this.

MS. SIMMONS (cont'd)

Is that understood? I want you on your best behavior. If ONE of you misbehaves at the park, I will take the whole lot of you back. So keep it in line!

She sits back down facing the front. Steve closes the door and cranks the bus up. The kids are subdued, no one is yelling now. Ms. Simmons pulls out a novel from her bag and settles in.

EXT. SCHOOL BUS- DAY

The school bus pulls out of the parking lot and onto the open road.

EXT. HIGHWAY- DAY

The school bus drives down the interstate, headed away from the skyscrapers of town. Tense music plays.

INT. BACK OF SCHOOL BUS- DAY

Travis stands with one knee on the seat so he can lean forward and talk to Manny. Manny is in a similar position, facing the back of the bus.

TRAVIS

Here. Downlaod this app. And then we can all play.

Manny looks sideways at Cash, who is looking at his own phone.

MANNY

Wanna play Cash?

CASH

Play what?

MANNY

It's called Demolition.

Cash smiles.

CASH

Nah.

MANNY

Whatcha reading over there?

CASH

The news.

Travis and Manny laugh. Davion just looks at Cash with the same admiration as in the classroom.

TRAVIS

What's going on in the news Cash? Educate us.

CASH

Russia is closing in on Ukraine. People are saying it's going to be World War 3.

TRAVIS

We should settle wars the same way they did in the old days.

(MORE)

TRAVIS (cont'd)  
Each country puts up their best  
fighter. Like David and Goliath  
shit.

Cash puts his phone down and turns towards Davion and  
Travis.

CASH  
So who should America put up to  
fight?

MANNY  
The Rock.

DAVION  
Hell naw. We need a Bruce Lee kind  
of fighter. With ninja skills.

CASH  
Can they use weapons?

TRAVIS  
No, hand to hand combat.

Cash looks at Davion.

CASH  
Who would you choose?

DAVION  
Nate Diaz.

MANNY  
That scrawny motherfucker!

TRAVIS  
Jake Paul.

They all fall out laughing.

DAVION  
Shit, he's crazy enough that it just  
might work.

MANNY  
Yeah, he'd psych 'em out.

The boys continue to laugh and joke.

Pull back: the entire bus is full of happy, loud kids.

CLOSE ON: In the middle of the laughing and joking, Davion  
looks towards the front of the bus at Elliot.

