

The Clubhouse Chronicles-Chapters 2-4

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Welcome to the Modern Saints Clubhouse. Tried to post this in chapters in a novel but it wouldn't work. So I will be posting the groupings of chapters separate from each other.



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Chronicle#2

August 13, 2400

A black horned dog with a white stripe that cut down the center of its back caught Carlos's attention, breaking him away from the sadness and fear that he had felt since he'd set out alone on Tim's orders. The night had passed easily, with a silence that was periodically broken only by the rush of the wind. Carlos had slept in the endless field, knees tucked and thumb inserted in his mouth, under a six-mooned sky, the constellations of stars winking down at him like illuminated diamonds. He dreamt of *Earth* soda, different from the unfiltered and sometimes brownish water he had to drink in the cozy and vast confines of the *Modern Saints Clubhouse*. The transporter was on the fritz so he couldn't enjoy that, just like he couldn't enjoy a lot of things lately. When the dog approached him from the north—the direction Carlos was headed—it was the first moment of genuine happiness he'd felt in a month.

"Hey doggy," Carlos said to the panting canine, first touching on the thick but short points of its horns and then kneeling down to pet it. The horned-dog nuzzled Carlos, rubbing its head against his left forearm as Carlos pet it with his right hand. It kind of reminded him of a cat.

"Where did you come from doggy," Carlos asked, with a wide grin, and chuckled as the dog licked his face. "You a nice doggy, huh? So you couldn't have come from no big mean clubhouse, right? No you couldn't have." Carlos petted the dog for an entire ten minutes, before standing up to continue the journey.

"Tim, the third leader, says I have to go to the other clubhouse doggy. You want to come with me?"

The dog looked up at him and barked once.

Carlos laughed. "I take that as a yes boy. Come on."

Carlos continued forward, expecting the black horned dog, with the white stripe down its back to follow. But when Carlos looked over his shoulder, the dog was in the same spot, its mouth closed, clearly hesitating. A horned dog hesitating wasn't a good sign and Carlos knew that. It didn't mean that whatever was ahead was terrible however, it just meant that there could be a storm on the way—a minor one—or that he better start watching out for landmines. Landmines were something he'd been trained to look for since four years old, about two years ago, and a horned dog like this one could sniff one out from up to three miles away and would surely alert him if and when Carlos came close to one.

"Come on doggy," Carlos said, grinning again. "I'll be careful okay?"

The Clubhouse Chronicles-Chapters 2-4

Seeming to approve of what he said, the dog gave a happy bark and ran forward.

“ Good dog,” Carlos said, and they continued north together.

Above the sun was in a near cloudless sky like the day before, when he had left the *Modern Saints Clubhouse*, and that combined with meeting his new canine friend was enough to make him believe that everything would be okay for the moment.

“ I think I am going to call you Trooper,” Carlos said to the horned dog.

The dog barked.

Chronicle#3

August 13, 2400

Tim, the third leader, sat crossed legged in the endless field behind the *Modern Saints Clubhouse*, washing the club hovercraft with a blue rag soaked in hot and soapy water from a white bucket. Thin tendrils of steam rose from the water. He moved the rag in a circle against the craft’s red surface, enjoying the simple comforts of the old school way of doing things. The water scalded the hell out of his hands, but he didn’t care. He had been through far worse pain than this, and had the electric whip crystals embedded in his back to prove it.

The sun pressed down on him and brought sweat from his forehead like water from a sponge, and he wiped at it with the back of one forearm, careful not to let any soap get into his eyes. A large tube, similar to a waterslide at a theme park, ran along the field and past the hovercraft in front of him. This was partially blocked from Tim because the craft hovered in his line of sight. A half mile or so south, the tube sank into the ground like the rest of the tubes that jutted from the clubhouse.

A black boy approached from the direction of the clubhouse, carrying a small black, rectangular device, with a screen that made it look like some sort of complex tablet. Like Tim, he wore a white-T shirt and jeans, but also like Tim had a small tattoo on the left side of the back of his neck, displaying his *Modern Saints Clubhouse* affiliation. The boy moved his fingers above the device as he approached, like performing a silent incantation over the simmering contents in a cauldron, and a second later the hovercraft Tim sat in front of started to brighten from the front end toward the back, like being pushed through an invisible sheet of water and polish. Ten seconds later the craft was clean.

Tim looked up at the boy, blank-faced, then at the hovercraft. He bowed his head and sighed, then got slowly to his feet, the blue rag in hand. He dropped it to the ground.

The Clubhouse Chronicles-Chapters 2-4

“You’re a dick, Cardinal,” Tim said and walked past the boy, intentionally bumping him on the way.

The boy laughed and turned around to look at him. “Hey, I was just trying to save you the trouble, that’s all. Besides, you’re wasting all the good water.”

“No I’m not,” Tim said, looking over his shoulder at Cardinal. “You so dumb you don’t know how to listen to announcements? Water filter’s working again.”

“Oh.” Cardinal was silent for a couple of seconds, watching with a slightly amused expression as Tim walked to the back entrance of the clubhouse. Then he called, one hand cupped on his mouth, “I guess that makes Carlos one unlucky dude than, huh?”

“We can always make another one,” Tim said, and strolled into the tree as the tree bark opened up like an automatic door, revealing a black space within. The bark closed silently behind Tim a second later, sealing like putty and returning the large width of the tree trunk to its original look.

Cardinal chuckled, shaking his head, and looked back down at the device. He moved his fingers over the device again, almost like typing invisible buttons on a keypad, and the hovercraft disappeared.

Chronicle#4

August 13, 2400

Around a large oak table sat ten boys in leather chairs, all in the center of a vast, well-lit room that consisted of a large kitchen to the right and several large transparent tubes against the wall to the left. Several girls between the ages of eight and fourteen were in this kitchen, wearing dark blue jumpers and working away with torch blowers and tiny rectangular devices used for most of the clubhouse work. One white girl with brown hair, and a face spotted with dirt moved her fingers rapidly over one of these devices, and changed the island style marble counter top to steel in a matter of seconds. One of the girls with the torch blower slid a protective helmet that sat atop her head over her face and quickly approached, turned the torch cutter on, and began making an alteration at the table’s corner. Glints of flame bounced in the tinted viewing glass of the mask.

Several flat screens flanked the walls around the oak table, and an Indian boy of fourteen, wearing an all-white business suit stood up from the table and approached the nearest one, a small metal pointer in his hand. The screen turned on automatically, and everyone’s eyes fell on it. What came on the screen was the endless green field where they all lived, being viewed through a moving camera that headed north.

They sat in silence—the table of nine now that the boy had stood up—watching the live footage. Tim slumped uncomfortably in his leather chair, and Cardinal, sitting across from him, smiled at him and

The Clubhouse Chronicles-Chapters 2-4

shook his head.

â Man, shut up,â Tim hissed.

â I didnâ t even say anything.â

â Wait, wait, wait,â the fourteen year old boy in white said, putting his hand up. His black hair was slicked back, glinting under fluorescents.

The boysâ eyes went back to the screen. Soon an image of a horned dog came into view, apparently walking next to whatever held the moving camera.

â Okay,â the suited boy said, turning away from the screen and fixing his dark eyes on the table. â I need one of you dickheads to tell me whatâ s wrong with what weâ re seeing.â

Cardinal raised his hand. The suited boy gave him a nod and Cardinal spoke.

â The cyborg has no water Lux.â

â Yes,â Lux exclaimed, extending his arms and looking to the ceiling as if in appreciation of God. â The cyborg has no water! You want to tell me why he doesnâ t have any water Cardinal?â

â Because someone didnâ t give him water.â

â *Because someone didnâ t give him water.*â The dark beads that were Luxâ s eyes fixed on Tim. â Tim, you wouldnâ t be able to tell me why the cyborg needs to have water, would you?â

â I just thoughtâ â

â *What!* Speak up!â

Tim shook his head, his arms folded and his brow furrowed. â I just thought we couldnâ t spare any.â

â For something like this, we can always spare water. It takes a week to build a new cyborg. *A week!* In case you didnâ t know Tim, we donâ t have the best equipment, so come onâ â Lux put a hand to his ear as he approached Timâ s side of the table, and leaned in to listen to what Tim would say. â Tell me why the cyborg needs its damn waa-waa!â

Tim sighed, Luxâ s hand cupped ear only a foot away from his face. He mumbled, â Becauseâ â

â *WHAT!*â

â Because humans need water and if doesnâ t have its water the ones from the other side will know itâ s not a human and in fact, a cyborg. Because a human would need water to make it that far, especially that young.â

â And what does that mean?â

Tim exhaled again. â It means that they will kill the cyborg.â

The Clubhouse Chronicles-Chapters 2-4

â And?â

â And that we donâ t get any information.â

Lux still leaned into Tim, his hand still around one ear. Tim could smell the scent of the cologne he wore. â What else?â

â And we have to make a new cyborg.â

â All right,â Lux said and moved swiftly away from Tim and strolled to the other side of the table. He seemed calmer now. He put his head down as he continued to speak, almost as if thinking out loud. â See, I donâ t mind too much the building of a new cyborg if we get something out of the one we had to lose. But thatâ s probably not going to be the case here. Itâ s almost a lost cause.â He looked back at Tim, stone-faced. Tim was unable to hold his gaze. â Oversee the operation and if it goes bad Tim, abort. Got it?â

Cardinal chuckled.

â Yeah, got it,â Tim said, his head still down.

â Look at me.â

With great difficulty, Tim held Luxâ s gaze.

â *Do you got it?*â

â I got it.â

Cardinal shook his head. â I expect more from a third leader Tim. Do this again and youâ ll be demoted faster than a horned dog catches a scent.â

Tim nodded and said nothing.

â All right,â Lux said, tossing his pointer on the table. He clapped his hands together three quick times, like an aggressive basketball coach, his lips pressed together. â Now everyone get up from the tables and do something with your lives.â He cocked his head towards the kitchen, his eyes fixing on a thirteen year old, mild-skinned black girl. She was one of the girls with a black device and seemed to be having trouble working it, one of her fingers scratching her chin.

â Patricia,â Lux said to her. â Youâ re shaming the rest of the slaves. Come on! Pick it up!â He gave three more aggressive claps.

â Okay Second Leader,â Patricia said, and bowed her head.

Lux gave Tim a dark look as he strutted past him and headed out the room, his hands behind his back. He entered one of the clear tubes and turned around, his eyes down on a smaller, hand-held device of his own. A second later the bottom of the tube opened up and he was gone.

The Clubhouse Chronicles-Chapters 2-4

The Clubhouse Chronicles-Chapters 2-4

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