

The Clubhouse Chronicles-Chapters 5-6

By : JMarshallstory

Welcome to the Modern Saints Clubhouse. On a new world where the last surviving people from Old Earth are kids the fight for survival and the continuity of the species is on.



Published on
Booksie

booksie.com/JMarshallstory

Copyright © JMarshallstory, 2015
Publish your writing on Booksie.com.

The Clubhouse Chronicles-Chapters 5-6

Chronicle #5

August 15, 2400

At *midday*, with every part of his small body worn down from his journey toward the enemy clubhouse and the cloud-free sun blazing down on him like an open oven in the sky, Carlos lied down on the soft green grass of the endless field, countless miles away from home, and went to sleep. His new horned dog, Trooper, stood by his side. Carlos's legs felt like strings of latex rubber, his neck stiff like it had been injected with a fast-acting plaster. Sweat had been pouring from his body in salty streams at its worse when it leaked into his eyes and although he had been monstrously thirsty for the last three days, he had somehow managed to find a way to keep trekking forward.

Trooper licked the sweat off the forearm Carlos had buried his head in, plopped down on his stomach with a small grunt, closed his eyes and tried to sleep as well.

For a long time Carlos lay with Trooper, sometimes whimpering for his mother while tears leaked from his eyes and other times as silent as the windless day.

Around 3pm a shadow fell over him like a blanket, a relief from the sun, but frightening just the same. Trooper woke up and began to growl almost immediately, getting up on all fours.

Carlos sat up with a start, his heart nearly jumping through his throat. He was frightened and he wasn't sure why. The person looking down at him didn't give him reason to be.

It was a girl, maybe thirteen. Probably Hispanic like him, Carlos thought.

"Hi," Carlos said, looking up at her, wide-eyed.

The girl had long hair that seemed to contribute heavily to the shadow that was cast over him and wore an expression Carlos couldn't quite read.

"Hi," the girl said, sounding matter-of-fact. "Want to tell me what you and your dog are doing out here, little boy?"

Carlos associated the tone of her voice with that of his mother when she had asked him to tell her the truth about something maybe if he grabbed an extra cupcake or not and thought he better answer her quickly.

"Just out alone on an adventure. Nothing to do." Something told him not to tell her what he was really out here for. That she was someone he couldn't trust.

The Clubhouse Chronicles-Chapters 5-6

The girl smiled, her dark brown eyes never leaving his like a toddler's eyes on his favorite cartoon. She knelt down, the hem of the brown dress she wore spreading out on the grass as she did. It touched Carlos's hand and felt cool.

"That dress helps keep you from getting all hot doesn't it," Carlos said.

The girl said nothing and un-shouldered a large brown bag that looked something like the traveling version of an oversized woman's purse. She unzipped it and handed him a dark blue bottle shaped like a large apple.

"You shouldn't be out here alone," she said, zipping the purse back up. She brushed her hair out of her face with an absent swipe of her hand.

Carlos took the lid off the water and had it a third of the way finished in under thirty seconds. His eyes remained on the bottle when he pulled it away from his lips, feeling a bit ashamed. He extended the bottle back to the girl.

"I'm sorry," he said. "Drank too much."

The girl didn't take it back and instead chuckled, looking over her shoulder toward the horizon behind her. She looked back at him, the same indifferent expression on her face, her lips flat. "It's just water. Nothing to make a big deal out of. You can drink as much as you want."

Carlos didn't hesitate, tilted the bottle back to his lips and filled his mouth with more of the cold liquid, feeling the sadness that had been with him from the start of the journey begin to diminish as fast as his thirst. Maybe he *would* get back home or if not maybe he could go wherever this nice girl stayed. He didn't want to be out in this field anymore. He didn't think that Trooper did either.

He looked at his dog, saw that Trooper no longer looked aggressive and was no longer growling. He had his tongue out, and was in a sitting position, his eyes bright almost like a happy puppy. Carlos knew that Trooper liked this girl and he liked this girl more because of it. He'd heard that horned dogs were a good judge of character. Now whether it was true or not was another story.

"What's your name little boy," the girl asked.

"Carlos," he said, gasping after another fresh chug of water. He burped then wiped his wet lips with the back of his hand. "What's yours?"

"I'm Brenna. You know Carlos, you're quite a brave boy to be coming out here all by yourself for an adventure. Aren't you scared that you might get hurt? Or robbed for equipment. Heck, you can get eaten by a field monster, which would be really bad. They're big creature's that come up as quickly as an Earth shark or Earth dolphin out of water. Getting eaten by a field monster is a horrible way to go."

Carlos thought that Brenna may have encountered a few field monsters before. He had never seen one but had heard plenty.

"I don't really think about that. Ti's a friend told me not to think about those things because it wasn't good. And..."

The Clubhouse Chronicles-Chapters 5-6

Trooper suddenly tensed up, shooting back up on all fours, one paw up in the air and his horned head pointing north like an arrow.

“Trooper it’s okay,” Carlos said, petting the dog’s head. But a moment later Carlos saw three shapes on the horizon, much too far to know what they were, but whatever they were they were closing the distance fast. If it wasn’t for Trooper Carlos wouldn’t have looked up at the horizon and as a result wouldn’t have noticed them coming.

“Who are they,” Carlos asked.

“They,” the little girl said, looking over her shoulder at them, “are a few of the people you don’t want to make mad little kid. You see, I’m out here on a mission just like you, and them back there—” she looked at Carlos and cocked a thumb back at the shapes, “—they are too.”

Carlos was confused. He nodded though, trying to act grown up like Tim had told him to so many times before. “Okay.”

Carlos noticed that Brenna’s expression had slightly changed somehow. Carlos noticed, but couldn’t think of what it was.

“You’re not mad at me, are you,” Carlos said, and instinctively extended the bottle back toward Brenna with his two small child’s hands, bowing his head.

“Relax,” Brenna said, and placed a cool hand on Carlos’s chin and lifted it up slightly. Her wide eyes looked into his brown ones. “You’re a good boy. I wouldn’t be mad at you.”

Carlos nodded slowly, giving a relieved smile, the lines on his face fading and returning the light brown of his skin back to its natural, calm exterior. Brenna smiled down at him and recognized the look he was giving her almost at once. His thick eyebrows were up slightly and his eyes were wide, locked on her face like teeth locked into the thick center of a large apple. He was looking at her like she was the authority. Like she was—like she was his mother.

“Do you want to tell me the truth about where you came from Carlos,” she said, making a concerted effort to keep her expression calm. Sometimes it was hard for her to do—sometimes even damn near impossible—but something about the boy’s genuineness, innocence and sheer age made it less of a challenge.

Carlos looked down at his legs, his eyes slowly shifted to his left and touched on Trooper who was sitting with his tongue out again and looking from Carlos to Brenna, and then Carlos’s eyes shifted back down to his legs then back up at Brenna. Brenna thought it was cute—cute enough to almost make her lips curve into smile—but still a bit irritating. Like a puppy pissing on the rug and then giving a soft whine and looking up at the owner with apologetic eyes when it was caught.

“I’m on an adventure,” Carlos told her again, the fingernails of his right hand scratching the surface of the almost empty bottle of water. He stopped it almost at once, then repeated it, his voice steadier, “I’m on an adventure. I had nothing to do so I went out alone to have an adventure. I’ve been alone for some time and I have no memory of where I come from but where I was staying was in an underground tunnel that I dug for myself. That’s the place I left which brought me here now.”

Brenna blinked. She figured he must’ve been telling the truth. A lot of kids were out alone and eaten by field monsters as a result. Carlos, her new young friend, just hadn’t had the misfortune of

The Clubhouse Chronicles-Chapters 5-6

meeting that fate yet. No reason to hold that against him.

“You’re telling me the truth?” Brenna said.

Carlos, who was finishing off the bottle of water, pulled the bottle away from his lips and when he spoke some water spilled out of his mouth.

“Huh?” he said and hiccupped right after. He had no idea what she was talking about. And now, like before, he just wanted to go back home. Brenna’s nice expression was becoming cold. He knew what a cold expression was as well as he knew his favorite cartoons, and the narrowing of Brenna’s eyes and the tightening of her mouth was a clear display of coldness.

“You were lying,” Brenna said in the disappointed motherly tone that Carlos yearned for as much as he detested it. Her hand shot out and snatched the blue bottle from Carlos’s small hands. Trooper growled, his body tensing. “I can’t believe you were actually lying to me.” From the north came a faint humming sound like a swarm of bees and when Carlos looked back in that direction he realized that the shapes he’d seen just a minute ago had grown alarmingly quick, now clearly three girls on Moto-Crafts’ vehicles that looked like an Earth motorcycle with the wheels removed and replaced with a flat bottom. Basically a more dangerous version of a hovercraft.

“I wasn’t lying,” Carlos said.

Brenna watched him closely, studying the twitching of his lips, the quick side to side movements of his eyes, and listened to the unsteady sound of his breaths as he struggled for something to say. He was clearly unaware that his youth made him helpless against all the tell-tale signs of lying, and as a near expert in detected the truth she almost felt sorry for him and how he was making it so obvious to her. Then suddenly, just like before, it hit him, and his answer came out as smooth as a melody.

“I came out for more food,” Carlos said, getting slowly to his feet, the nervousness gone. He tossed her the bottle and she caught it in both hands, her mouth open. Carlos stepped toward her, his eyes solemn and dark and she shot up and took a step back. “That’s why I’m on this adventure. I’ve been underground for a long time, eating bugs and relying on rainfall for something to drink. Yeah, I know this is the new way of life and all, being on Little Earth, but there’s no joy in eating bugs and drinking mud water. I have no reason to lie about my adventure. Honestly, Brenna, I have no reason to lie to anybody, about *anything*. I’m alone out here.” Carlos sighed and looked down at the grass, his posture strangely adult. “*All alone.*”

Trooper was still growling when the three approaching girls brought their Moto-Crafts to halt two feet away and dismounted them. He began to bark in their direction, up and ready to jump at them, seemingly oblivious of his companion Carlos for the moment.

“Carlos,” Brenna said, stepping toward him and clutching his arms by the elbows. Her grip was strong and Carlos gave a whimper, something the person from a minute ago that had been speaking about the reason behind his solo—well almost solo—adventure would have never done. This fact made Brenna angrier.

“Tell me,” she demanded in a soft yet harsh voice that sounded nothing like the voice of his mom, even on her worst days. “Where do you come from?”

“I—I—I—” Carlos could only think of the images he had of his mom as he sat wrapped in her warm arms in the evening, his head back against her chest as they watched TV in the den while his dad

The Clubhouse Chronicles-Chapters 5-6

was in the office finishing work. He was very familiar with those images, as familiar as he was with his favorite toy spaceships, and yet they seemed so far away. And that wasn't where he was from. He'd thought so but Tim had told him that the clubhouse was where he was from, but not to tell anyone that.

It suddenly came to him again. "I told you lady," Carlos said, the confident, completely un-childlike voice returning with a vengeance like an itch from a mosquito bite. "The damn hole. And if you don't take your hands off me I'm going to put you in one."

Brenna wondered what she was dealing with. Maybe she should have studied the fine points of her given lessons when she had the chance because she had no idea what was going on. And it was freaking her out. This boy Carlos and the way he looked at her now, his gaze unwavering, and his eyes as adult as the plus seventeen crowd that she hadn't seen since she'd been back on *real* Earth. It was almost too much to handle.

"Are you going to let me go," Carlos said calmly.

"No," Brenna said at once, leaning close enough to touch noses with him.

"Trooper," Carlos said coolly. "Attack."

Trooper growled and darted toward Brenna, his lips wrinkled back and his large and razor sharp teeth bared and gleaming, his horns aimed directly at her thin body. He set his back legs to leap on her and before he became airborne, there was the sound of a blast and he abruptly disappeared inside a puff of black smoke, instantaneously reduced to ash from an unseen weapon. Carlos looked around Brenna pretty face to see where it had come from. One of the girls, one that was the size of a mountain with a gut pushing the middle of her white dress out in all directions, held a silver pistol-like object, aimed at the spot Trooper had just been. Ash sprinkled down like snowfall blanketing a scorched patch of grass.

This firearm, Carlos believed, was called an ash gun.

"NOOOO!" Carlos screamed, and burst into tears, Brenna still holding onto his elbows. "You shot my dog! You shot Trooper! You're mean! You're a butthole! I'm going to tell my freaking mom on you, I swear I will!"

Brenna chuckled, pulled Carlos toward her then shoved him back hard. Carlos shouted in surprised pain as he flew backwards, landed on his butt then fell back and banged the back of his head on the field. It didn't hurt that much, but still made him cry louder.

The girls regarded Carlos with a dark look—the big girl's look the darkest—then huddled together, several feet away to talk to each other. From Carlos's view they looked like brides maids discussing how they planned to catch the bouquet. Carlos watched them, his vision blurred with hot and stinging tears, his body trembling from his sobs. He was so mad at the big girl for killing Trooper and what was worse was he wanted to do something but knew he couldn't. It was worse than when that bully Thomas took his coloring book from him when he was in first grade and he had been too small to do anything. He just wanted to go home.

"All right," Brenna said, giving one hard clap, and the group broke up and approached Carlos. Brenna pointed to the heavysset girl to Carlos's right. "That's Big Jen. The one in the green dress is Samantha and the one in the red is Jessica."

The Clubhouse Chronicles-Chapters 5-6

Carlos glanced at all the girls, took in Jessica and Samantha's long blonde hair. Then his eyes fixed back on Big Jen, and her short hair bunched into a stupid bun in the back. "Freaking meanie."

The group of girls exchanged glances, then broke into giggles, their fingers bent and pressed against their mouths like they were indeed regular school girls back on regular Earth.

"I knew a little boy just like him," Big Jen said to the others. "All small and a crybaby and kept trying to be tough when he knew he that he wasn't. It was funny. Me and my sisters would mess with him whenever we saw him in the playground and his Dad would tell him to toughen up and stop crying. Would say 'you going to let a bunch of girls make you cry?' And that always shut him up."

Big Jen had an accent, reminding Carlos of certain actors he saw in movies. For some reason it made him more upset.

When the girls stopped laughing Brenna, standing slightly in front of the rest with her hands on her sides, asked again, "Where did you come from Carlos?"

Carlos said nothing. This time he hadn't really heard her. His eyes had fixed back on the scorched grass where Trooper had last been. His mind on Trooper's happy face and the way his tongue hung from his mouth.

Brenna threw the bottle of water at his head then, and it connected with a clunking sound. Carlos's head snapped back

"Ow!" Carlos cried, putting his hand up to the spot the cup had hit. "You freaking butthole!"

The girls burst into laughter again, as easy and joyfully as if they were laughing about a good, clean joke.

Big Jen chimed in, mocking Carlos's words. "You freaking butthole!"

Carlos clenched his fists then and screamed and the top of his lungs, "Shut up, you big, ugly FATASS!"

All the girls mouths clamped shut that instant, wearing expression of genuine surprise. Big Jen seeming to be most surprised of all. Carlos, sensing the approaching danger, scrambled to his feet and darted away. Ten seconds later he was hit from the back with a force like a brick wall and was tackled hard, landing on his stomach and losing his breath. He felt a big hand push against the back of his head and force his face into the ground.

"You like that," he heard Big Jen taunt. Carlos tried to think of what he had done to deserve this. Racked his brain for reasons why it was happening to him and not anyone else. He thought that he had always been a good boy.

Carlos endured the misery of having his face shoved into the grass for a whole of two minutes and was flipped over on his back, breathless, his face caked with dirt.

He broke into a coughing fit. Spit out a few pieces of soft dirt and grass. "I'm sorry," Carlos said to the four faces looking down at him.

The Clubhouse Chronicles-Chapters 5-6

Brenna and Big Jen helped Carlos sit up, the two others only watching.

“You still killed Trooper though,” Carlos muttered, shaking his head. His bottom lip puckered out then he began to cry again, shaking where he sat. “You killed my dog! Why did you kill my dog!”

Brenna’s hand fell on his shoulder and clenched it hard, her small nails digging painfully into his shirt, and he looked up at her pretty and cold face. She was smirking now and though it was a pretty face it was on Carlos thought it was the ugliest smirk that he had ever seen in his short life.

“It’s our job to look for people Carlos,” Brenna said. “Our job to look for spies and any kind of enemy that would want to attack our clubhouse. That’s our job and the people who attack our clubhouse can come in all different shapes and sizes. If I can lead a search team like this at just twelve than I know a little boy like you can be sent out to get information for the enemy clubhouse. And Carlos, I think that you’re part of the enemy clubhouse. You can try to explain it all you want, you’ve already shown me who you are whether you realize it or not.”

Carlos looked down and closed his eyes tightly for about ten seconds. Sweat ran down his dirt caked forehead. Then he looked back up at Brenna, the remaining tears running down a face that didn’t look capable of shedding them. Confident Carlos was back.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Carlos said coolly. He glanced at the other girls. “I think you and your lady friends need to turn around and see if you can find hell and go to it.”

Brenna rolled her eyes then glanced at Big Jen, who was knelt down right beside her. Jen reached out and backhanded Carlos in the face, bringing blood from his lip. Carlos turned slowly back and looked at her, his expression angry now, but still strong.

His hand flashed out and backhanded her hard enough to make her fall on her butt. The three other girls gasped. Big Jen held a hand to the right side of her face, looking at Carlos with an expression of shock, her mouth forming a perfect O. It didn’t take long for her to find her resolve though, and seconds later she lunged forward at him. Something gleamed in front of Carlos’s eyes for the briefest of seconds. Then hot, nauseating pain erupted like a fireball in his gut, as Big Jen plunged the blade of a nine inch switch knife into his small belly. His instinct was to suck in air, but he couldn’t.

“Ahhhhhhhhhh,” he gasped, his eyes swelling with a fresh batch of tears.

Mommy, mommy, mommy, mommy, Carlos thought, unable to think of anything else. *Mommy, where are you. I can’t find you.* His body shook violently, and his light brown skin had reddened like the surface of a brick house.

Carlos grunted. Blood ran from the corners of his open mouth, leaked out on either side, and ran down his face in opposing lines until it met at his chin.

“Don’t want to talk now, huh?” Big Jen said, her fat face right in his. “Don’t want to little boy, huh?”

Brenna her face strained, looked at Big Jen and furrowed her brow. “Jesus Jen,” she muttered. “Jesus.”

“It wasn’t like you weren’t trained for something like this,” Big Jen told her.

The Clubhouse Chronicles-Chapters 5-6

Brenna walked hastily away, feeling her stomach curl.

“Does it hurt,” the girl in the green dress said, leaning toward Carlos with a smile. She looked like she was honestly in awe of his predicament, like watching a man try to escape a lion. Carlos thought her name was Samantha. “Does it hurt little boy? Aww. It looks like it does.”

“That’s a mighty large amount of blood coming out of your stomach there,” the other girl said. She reached out and touched the area with the tip of her index finger, brought it up to her face and gazed at the blood on it. Carlos believed her name was Jessica.

The girls broke into more laughter and Carlos was sort of thankful this time because he didn’t have to hear their accents. These girls made the British accent sound ugly. In the old days—the days of regular Earth—it had sounded nice to listen to the actors with the accents. But now, with the sick minds that owned these accents, it disgusted him.

“Tell me,” Big Jen said, her wide mouth spread in its twisted grin, and ripped the knife from Carlos’s gut, make him grunt again. The red on the blade kept it from gleaming in the sun. “Do you want another?”

Carlos, his small hands pressed to his wound, hot blood spilling out over them, looked up at her. Big Jen’s smile, nearly falling off her face, vanished like smoke in a windstorm, her expression of joy and excitement being reduced to a look of utter fear. Her jaw dropped, the knife quivered in her large unsteady hand. The two other girls, who had been looking at Big Jen and were frightened by what they saw on her face, looked back at Carlos and flinched back. Carlos’s eyes, the irises once a dark brown with the common, “Regular Earth” like expression of childlike innocence, had turned jet black, the whites still visible but disappearing rapidly, like the result of a severely dilating pupil. A second later the white was gone and a small red spot of light appeared in the center of each ebony eye, like the point of a laser pointer in the abyss. Carlos’s skin began to jut out as thin tendrils of silver lines spread under his flesh like tiny trails of ink trying to spread its way through the entire human body. He looked like a boy being eaten by thin silver worms from the inside.

Carlos grunted again, and the flesh of his body shot from forty degrees to two thousand and sixty in 1.5 seconds flat, and Big Jen, who had placed one meaty hand on Carlos’s shoulder to make sure he stayed put, saw it melt away like ice cream in an oven. What remained was a hand of bone and thick clumps of red tissue. She shrieked yanked the hand away and plunged the knife into Carlos’s gut again with her other.

“NOOOO!” Carlos bellowed in a deafening voice as deep and unnatural as a bottomless pit, and a split second later, just as Jessica, Samantha, and Big Jen were getting ready to turn their heads and start toward their Moto-Crafts, Carlos’s body erupted into a bright, massive ball of white fire and smoke, lifting up and tearing their preteen bodies and anything within a mile radius apart, with a sound like a tanker of gasoline going off in the night. The ball swelled to abnormal size, turning the environment into something out of the pages of an apocalyptic graphic novel. Grass and weeds incinerated and smoke began to blacken a small section of sky.

Then slowly—the ball of fire began to fade.

The Clubhouse Chronicles-Chapters 5-6

August 15, 2600

One hundred and sixty two members of *The Modern Saints Clubhouse* gathered several feet away from the massive tree they called home in the late afternoon, the deep fear building inside their hearts only assuaged by the fact that they stood together and held a bond that was etched in the ten year old clubhouse creed, stating, *All members of the Modern Saints Clubhouse abide to the honor of taking life and giving life for the sake of the clubhouse.*

The fire lit the scene from afar it was the size of a house from where they stood and most looked away at first, hit by the sting of the glare and wanting to give their eyes time to adjust to the large mass of unnatural, dwindling white light. When they thought that they were ready, they looked back, a few with their hands over their eyes as shields.

Cardinal stepped away from the crowd wearing a dark jumper with no name patch, freshly removed from his work on the seventh level down. He had been repairing the air delivery system, hidden down a dark hall flanked with doors, behind what looked like nothing but a titanium wall. Of course, there was a small door about the size of a large textbook that opened with the wave of his Citigon, what the second leader Lux called, "the cellphone that did almost every damn thing one could imagine." Most in the Clubhouse had one if you were a slave you were renting one with limited functionality(for safety's sake) and if you were unfamiliar with it, it might seem difficult to use at first. Cardinal had no trouble with it however. It was in fact the object he had used to clean the clubhouse hovercraft when Tim had been using the old school method. He didn't mess with the teleportation capability however, the story of one *Modern Saint* who had just turned thirteen and had damaged the phone's internal energy conversion system and as a result had turned himself inside out when he tried to teleport himself from his basement dorm to the main floor with the touch of one of the Citigon's holographic buttons. He landed on the main level's carpeted floor in the late morning, a large heap of wet and oozing, steaming internal organs and reversed human flesh. Most of the *Modern Saints* had had nightmares after that.

When Cardinal had heard a commotion down the hall, he left the room with the wind delivery system unfixed, and followed the crowd of Modern Saints to the Wind Ports, his booted feet clomping on the steel floor and the recessed lighting above switching from a cool white to a flickering red as he did. Something had clearly gone wrong.

"Oh boy Tim," Cardinal muttered now, as he stood in front of the crowd of his clubhouse peers. "You blew up Carlos and when you probably didn't need to and put our security at risk, and I'll bet ten Earth dollars, you didn't even get any info out of the deal." He shook his head. "Man, oh man."

It could have only been Carlos and one of the three bombs Cyborgs like him were set to use. Nothing else. And the rule when trying to hide evidence from the enemies was to use the *disintegration* method that would've turned Carlos to dust in under ten seconds downloaded all the previously recorded footage of his trip into a file on the clubhouse computer. Never were you to use the bomb, unless the clubhouse's safety was at risk, because the enemy had a way of tracking the origin of bombs. Never lever a bomb.

The ball of white light was reflected in Cardinal's eyes as he gazed at the aftermath of whatever had happened miles into the endless field.

The Clubhouse Chronicles-Chapters 5-6

“Man, what were you doing Tim?” he said quietly. “What were you doing?”

The Clubhouse Chronicles-Chapters 5-6

The Clubhouse Chronicles-Chapters 5-6

Created from Booksie.com

Generated: 2015-02-01 06:45:12