

YOU WILL NEVER WALK ALONE

[KELSER COVENANT: CHAPTER 3]



Suggested Listening: “*Call Me Little Sunshine*” by Ghost

[Music]

Off-Camera

The first day of summer break was supposed to feel like freedom.

Instead, it felt like punishment.

The rain came down in endless sheets, swallowing the parking lot in silver streaks. Puddles rippled at the curbs, cigarette butts and soggy candy wrappers swirling into the storm drains. A flickering streetlamp buzzed above the old wooden bench at the edge of the lot, its glow warping through the downpour like a failing halo.

Two small figures sat side by side, backpacks drooping like wet sandbags at their feet. Practice was long over. Teammates had been claimed by parents in warm cars, laughter muffled behind rolled-up windows. The coaches had locked the doors an hour ago. The janitor's cart had squeaked back inside. Now, there were only the twins. Waiting.

Chance Kelser sat stiff-backed, sneakers darkened by water, his small hands clutching his battered Batman figure. The toy's paint was still chipped along the cowl, and one arm was still sagging loosely in its socket. The cape clung to the plastic body, plastered wet. He rubbed his thumb across the mask again and again, as if the simple motion could keep him steady. His jaw was set, gray-blue eyes fixed on the empty lot where headlights refused to appear.

Beside him, Hannah hunched into herself, blonde strands sticking to her cheeks, pink hoodie already soaked through. Her oversized headphones sat crooked on her head, the silver CD player blinking red in her lap. The music faltered, "1979" dragging into a warped, ghostly moan before the batteries gave up completely. She tapped the casing with her tiny fist, but the silence pressed in heavier than the rain.

She shivered.

Chance pulled the zipper of his rain jacket down with a stubborn yank, shrugged it off his narrow shoulders, and draped it over her head.

Chance Kelser: "Here, Hannah, please put this on. Do not let the rain soak through to your hair. *[he paused briefly, worried and with a sigh]* You know you get sick very easily."

The jacket swallowed her, slipping down past her ears and nose until she looked like she was peeking out from inside a cave. She clutched the edges in her fists anyway, pulling it tighter against the storm, trying hard to both cover herself and shield her book. Her lips parted, trembling with words she wasn't sure she should say.

Hannah Kelser: “What if nobody comes?”

Her voice cracked, small but sharp in the hollow air.

Chance didn’t look at her. He didn’t blink. His thumb kept circling Batman’s mask, his eyes locked forward into the blur of water and asphalt.

Chance Kelser: “Then we walk home. Together. Even if I have to carry you.”

The rain hissed louder against the pavement, as if sealing the promise.

For what felt like forever, there was only that – the downpour, the flickering streetlight, the sound of their own breathing muffled under the rain jacket. Time stretched, cruel and heavy. They were too young to call it what it was, too young to know what a wrong text could do – Dominique texting 7 p.m. to their mother instead of 6 – but old enough to know what it felt like to be forgotten.

Headlights finally cut through the storm. Tires hissed against the wet pavement. A familiar car swung into view, wipers thrashing like frantic arms. The driver’s side door flung open, and their mother bolted into the rain, hair plastered to her head, voice raised just enough to be heard over the storm.

Misty Starks: “Hannah! Chance! I’m here! I am so sorry!”

She grabbed Hannah’s backpack first, slinging it across her own shoulder, then reached down to pull them both close, her arms wrapping around their small, shivering frames. She tried to pry the Batman figure from Chance’s wet hands so it wouldn’t fall, but the boy’s grip was iron, knuckles white against plastic.

Misty’s expression was a storm all its own – guilt, pride, fury, fear – carved across a face already shaken from the road and conditions.

Misty Starks: “I’m sorry. Your father gave me the wrong time. You should’ve never been out here this long. Not like this.”

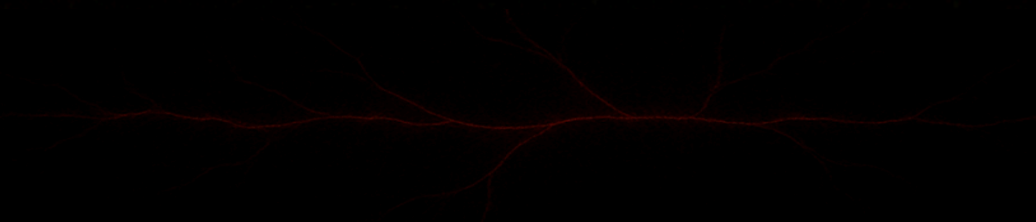
The rain didn’t ease. The bench was still wet. The streetlight still flickered. The line didn’t even make sense, considering their father was on the other side of the country.

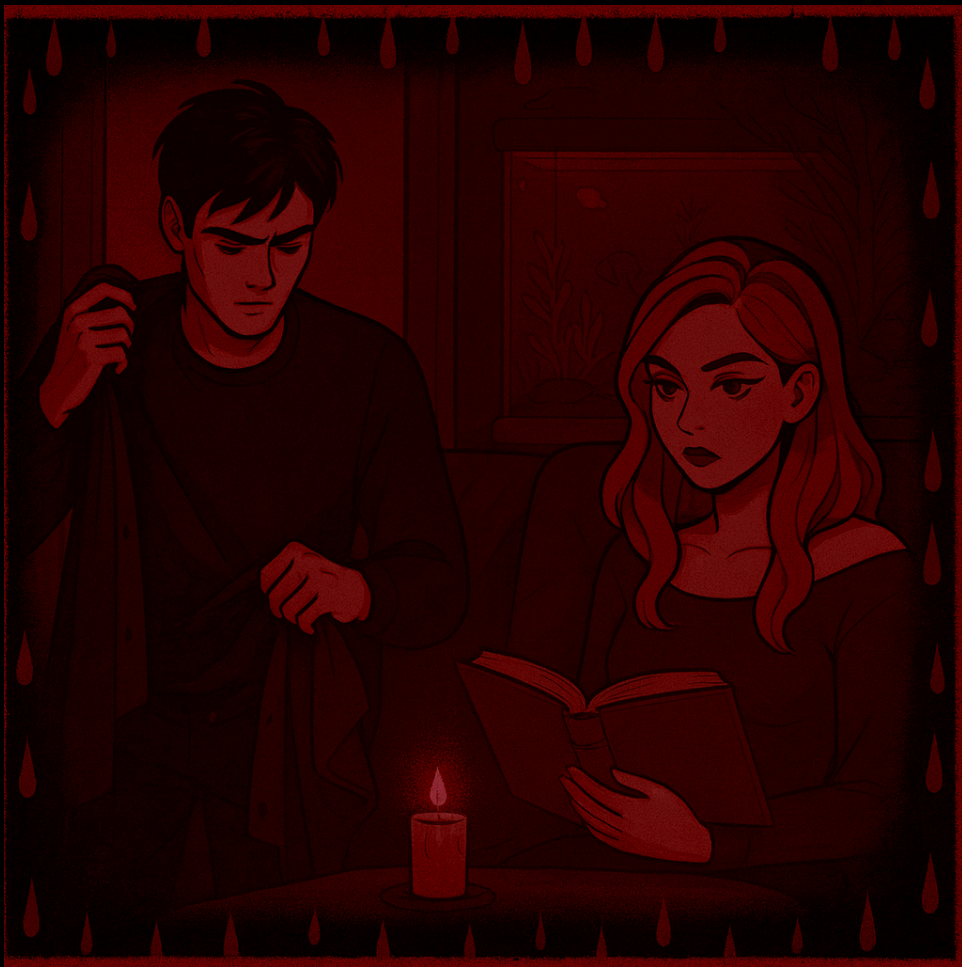
But to the twins, the damage was already done.

The car door slammed, the engine roared, and warmth would come again. Yet the memory lingered like a scar – that bench in the storm, the jacket too big, Batman clutched like treasure.

The first day of summer break began not with sunshine, but with thunder.

And somewhere deep inside, the Covenant was already forming.





Flash Forward - 2025, current day.

The rain hadn't stopped all evening.

It smeared the city lights into bleeding neon streaks across the floor-to-ceiling glass, each drop racing the other down the pane in a slow, relentless descent. The aquarium's blue glow pushed back against the storm, casting fractured patterns across the velvet couch where Hannah sat, her book open but unread, a candle guttering low beside her.

The apartment still carried the faintest trace of perfume — not hers. Hannah had caught it the moment she returned from running errands earlier that evening. Sweet, cloying, foreign. It clung to the air like an accusation. She hadn't said a word, not then, but the knowledge had burned low and steady in her chest.

The front door opened with a sharp click. Chance stepped through, his black shirt plastered to him, water dripping from the ends of his hair. The smell of wet pavement came in with him — oil, rain, city — but the perfume was already here, woven into the apartment's air.

He peeled his jacket off, tossed it carelessly across the arm of the couch, and sank down beside her. Silence stretched. The water still ran down the glass. The hum of the aquarium filled the air like a second heartbeat.

Finally, she spoke.

Hannah Kelser: “Did they enjoy their meal?”

Her tone was even, but the edge was there — razor-thin, a *glint* of steel under velvet.

Chance tilted his head, rain still dripping onto his collar. He didn't answer right away. He leaned forward, forearms on his knees, hands clasped together. His eyes fixed on the storm outside, then on her reflection in the glass.

Chance Kelser: “The rain started when I left. It sounded the same. It reminded me of the bench. How we waited, and how nobody came. Just the storm. Just us. Tonight was no different as I sat there, surrounded by noise and perfume, but it was emptier than that bench ever was. Because at least then, I had you beside me. That was the night I decided I would never wait for anyone else again — not for mother, not for father, not for friends, not for lovers. Only you.”

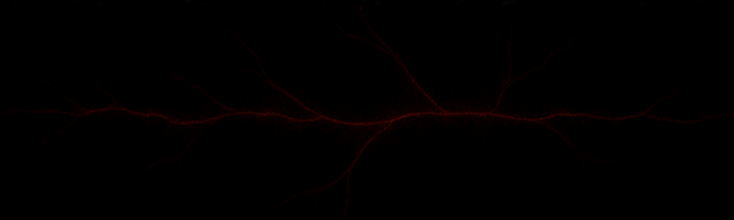
That made her close the book. Slowly. Deliberately. Her green eyes shifted to him, unblinking. Her lips twitched — not quite a smile, not quite a smirk — but the sharp relief of jealousy burned away in the blue glow. She reached out, tugged his wet sleeve, and pulled his hand into hers. The faint trace of that perfume still lingered in the air, stinging her nose like smoke, proof she hadn't imagined it.

Hannah Kelser: “Then do not bring them back here again, dear brother. Let them wait for rides that never come.”

Chance gave a low chuckle, hollow but certain. He raised their joined hands and pressed his thumb against her knuckles, with a light rub.

Chance Kelser: “Not here, ever again. No gods. No kings. Only us. Only Covenant.”

The candle sputtered, the rain tapped harder, and the aquarium shimmered across their faces like the orange glow of another world.



LIVE RECORDING



The rain had stopped sometime in the night, leaving streaks down the glass and puddles reflecting neon below. Inside the apartment, the storm still lingered in silence and ritual. The book lay open on the velvet couch where Hannah had left it, “The Abyss” splayed like a gospel mid-sermon. Batman sat propped against the armrest, his paint-chipped cowl glaring at the ceiling.

They had not left the apartment since Chance returned from dinner. The outside world could wait. The perfume had been scrubbed away, the windows cracked just enough to air out the intrusion. A candle now burned where the scent had clung, smoke tracing thin lines in the dark. Together, the twins had folded themselves deeper into Covenant — the ritual of rain remembered, the promise reaffirmed.

And when the time came for the message to spread, it was Hannah who chose to face the lens.

The camera clicked alive, its red dot glowing. The aquarium shimmered behind her, its glow painting her platinum hair in eerie shades. She sat upright, headband gleaming with its inverted cross, the smirk already threatening at the edges of her lips.



HANNAH KELSER

Hannah Kelser: “Lesson Two: Wings break. Crowns crumble.”

She let the words linger, her gaze unblinking.

Hannah Kelser: "King Oso learned this lesson firsthand, at Zenith Three. He was marked. He fell. His brittle crown cracked beneath the weight of the Covenant, and now his name exists only as a footnote to the beginning of our ascent. And now? Another circus act steps forward, smiling, swinging his bat, not realizing he is just a pinch-hitter in a farm league destined to be forgotten."

Her smirk sharpened.

Hannah Kelser: "Chad Kyle. That name makes me laugh. Brings back memories of someone who did the greatest favor our family ever received. But you, Chad? You are no savior. You are a caricature. You come to the ring with that oversized grin plastered across your ignorant face — and yet for the life of me, I cannot recall the last time I saw you leave with it. Maybe because more often than not, you are laid face down, beaten bloody by men whose stars stopped shining years ago."

She tapped her finger against her chin, tilting her head. She points her finger towards the camera.

Hannah Kelser: "Chance is going to break you. Literally. He will diminish you in ways you have never imagined, and he will do it with a smile of his own. And you will go out with a whimper, not a bang."

Her tone hardened, slicing through.

Hannah Kelser: "I have seen you in the back, Kyle, clutching cans of poison like they were holy relics. Taurine. Sugar. Caffeine. Manufactured adrenaline to convince yourself that you are good enough to belong here. You drink until your heart rattles, and still it does not drown out the truth. The truth that you are the punchline. The butt of every joke. A man so desperate to fly that you metaphorically staple paper wings to your back and call yourself a hero."

She leaned forward, her voice tightening into venom.

Hannah Kelser: "But heroes are lambs for slaughter. They promise flight, but always fall. They claim crowns, but crowns always crumble."

Her lips curled into something darker.

Hannah Kelser: "You have already proven this. Just weeks ago, you stepped into the ring with Corey Lazarus — the same broken man who lost to a Full Nelson the following week. Let that sink in for a moment. And he crushed you. He smeared whatever pride you had left across the mat, and still you came back smiling the next week. Still calling yourself a hero through nothing more than song."

She shook her head, almost pitying.

Hannah Kelser: "And that is why you were chosen. Because, unlike Oso, who at least carried history, you are an empty vessel. A hollow shell for us to crack open. You will be remembered only for the beating that begins our true rise. You will be remembered for the way that false grin crumbled beneath Chance Kelser's hand."

The aquarium light shimmered, flickering like flame. She leaned closer, voice coiling into a whisper meant to sear.

Hannah Kelser: "There will be no eagles. There will be no heroes. And there certainly will be no flying away. Only falling from the pinnacle and into the pit. That is where you will find yourself, Chad Kyle."

Her hand lifted, brushing the inverted cross on her headband like a benediction.

Hannah Kelser: "Lesson Two is finished. Next comes the pain."

The camera lingered on her eyes, the faint curl of her lip, the inverted cross gleaming against her forehead. The red dot blinked once. Twice. Then faded to black.

