

THE ONES WHO RUN
PILOT

WRITING SAMPLE

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FADE IN:

EXT. NEVADA QUARANTINE FACILITY - NIGHT

An ALARM BLARES, muffled by a set of heavy double doors. The doors SWING open, revealing a group of exhausted, panicked KIDS (among them are SKYLA (15), intelligent and empathetic, and ISLA-GRACE (13), sassy yet sweet, but we'll meet them later).

Feet SCRAMBLE down the stairs to the dead grass.

Kids accidentally push each other as they sprint for the large metal gates that loom before them.

EXT. NEVADA QUARANTINE FACILITY - GATES - NIGHT

The children claw at the fence in desperation. Some try to start climbing it, but don't get far.

Tears stream down a few AGONIZED KIDS' faces.

Some kids SCREAM and hit the gates with all the strength they have.

Desperation and panic is in the air. It's like drowning.

Isla Grace looks back. BLACK FIGURES with guns surround the building, aiming at the kids.

Her eyes widen when she hears --

CUT TO BLACK.

MAIN TITLES

INT. MAY HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY

SUPER: 12 HOURS EARLIER

Skyla and PHOENIX (16), naive but the life of every party, sit on the couch. Skyla messes with her protective mask, pressing a button to make it change color.

Phoenix holds an open textbook, quizzing Skyla.

PHOENIX

When was the Procreation
Prohibition Act passed?

SKYLA
November 10, 2025.

PHOENIX
When is World Adoption Day?
(to himself; scoffing)
Every day.

SKYLA
November 9th.

PHOENIX
Approximately how many children
were in the foster care system
before the Procreation--I can't
believe you're tested on this every
year. Even I can recite this stuff
in my sleep by now.

Phoenix flips the page and finds a bright orange pamphlet. It reads "HAVING INAPPROPRIATE FEELINGS TOWARDS YOUR ADOPTED SIBLING(S)? HERE ARE FIVE THINGS TO REMEMBER."

Phoenix holds up the pamphlet to Skyla.

PHOENIX (CONT'D)
(teasing)
Why, Skyla, I'm touched. I didn't
know you felt that way about me.

SKYLA
They...they gave them to all of us
in class!

PHOENIX
(looking at the pamphlet)
Unfortunately, our love must remain
a secret because, according to
this, it's illegal to be
romantically involved with your
adopted sibling--hey, at least you
could still date Braxdon.

SKYLA
Give that back!

Skyla launches herself across the couch and wrestles with Phoenix to get the paper back. Phoenix finds this hilarious.

The sound of their rustling and arguing drowns out the sound of POUNDING footsteps coming down the basement stairs. BRAXDON (17) bursts into the basement, out of breath.

BRAXDON
 Sorry I'm late, my siblings were--

Braxdon sees the wrestling match going on and sighs to himself -- this has happened before.

Braxdon walks over and lifts Skyla off of Phoenix. She's grabbed the pamphlet from Phoenix and starts tearing it up.

SKYLA
 (to herself)
 Stupid--can't believe they gave these out--

PHOENIX
 Oh, hey Braxdon, nice of you to show up.

BRAXDON
 (to Skyla)
 Sorry I'm late.

SKYLA
 It's fine. Get your mask on, let's go.

PHOENIX
 Wait, wait! I have something to show you!

Phoenix grabs for his laptop and opens it, TAPPING around.

PHOENIX (CONT'D)
 Come on, sit down.

Braxdon sits down and Skyla scoots closer to see the screen.

PHOENIX (CONT'D)
 And without further ado, I present to you, our summer.

Phoenix starts a video.

MUSIC plays as the background to photos and videos taken of the three of them from summer vacation. The video evokes smiles and LAUGHS out of the trio.

When the video ends, Braxdon and Skyla CLAP. Phoenix dramatically bows from his seat.

PHOENIX (CONT'D)
 Thank you, thank you.
 (to Skyla)
 I showed it to mom.
 (MORE)

PHOENIX (CONT'D)

She said as long as this ADRS virus thing is over by next summer, we could actually go somewhere.

BRAXDON

Seriously?

PHOENIX

She said it'd have to be somewhere private where no one could see me, but I was thinking somewhere with a beach?

SKYLA

I've always wanted to go to the beach.

A voice from upstairs interrupts them.

ADELAIDE (O.S.)

Skyla, you're gonna be late!

SKYLA

(to Phoenix)

Do some vacation research while we're at school, okay?

PHOENIX

Yes, ma'am.

Braxdon pulls his mask out of his bag.

Braxdon and Skyla put on their masks, then walk up the stairs.

PHOENIX (CONT'D)

Stay safe, my star crossed lover!

SKYLA (O.S.)

Shut up!

INT. MAY HOUSE - BASEMENT STAIRS - DAY

Braxdon walks behind Skyla.

BRAXDON

Should I ask--?

SKYLA

Nope.

Skyla just barely opens the closed basement door and--

CALEB (O.S.)
You're not taking this seriously.

Skyla stops.

BRAXDON
What--

Skyla frantically motions for him to shut up. She peers through the crack in the door to see her adoptive parents, ADELAIDE (37) and CALEB (39), arguing in the front hallway. Braxdon looks through the door over her head.

INT. MAY HOUSE - FRONT HALLWAY - DAY

Adelaide and Caleb speak quietly, trying not to be heard.

ADELAIDE
The school will take care of Skyla,
and Phoenix is hidden. They'll have
no reason to come looking.

CALEB
They will check **every single** house,
Adelaide. Protecting him is not
worth losing our lives.

ADELAIDE
He is my **son**, Caleb.

CALEB
Then I'll deal with him. We have to
stay safe. This is the only way.

ADELAIDE
If you lay a finger on him...

Adelaide doesn't finish. She turns towards the basement door.

ADELAIDE (CONT'D)
(yelling)
Skyla! Get up here!

INT. MAY HOUSE - BASEMENT STAIRS - DAY

Skyla stops Braxdon from opening the door fully, and STOMPS her feet on the stairs a few times to sound like she's just coming up the stairs. Braxdon STOMPS too.

Skyla opens the door and walks out, Braxdon following her.

SKYLA (O.S.)
 Sorry, Braxdon, uh... couldn't find
 his textbook.

EXT. PALO ROJO HIGH SCHOOL - ENTRANCE - DAY

Skyla and Braxdon walk towards their high school. Cacti line the walkway to the building. A few other STUDENTS are still outside, all wearing masks.

SKYLA
 Deal with Phoenix? You two didn't
 do something I don't know about,
 right?

BRAXDON
 They probably just want to talk to
 him. She mentioned the school
 taking care of you. Maybe they're
 telling us something today that
 Phoenix needs to know too. But hey,
 the beach this summer! I need a
 vacation. Maybe I can convince my
 mom to let me come along.

Skyla stops Braxdon.

BRAXDON (CONT'D)
 What?

Braxdon follows Skyla's gaze and sees it.

MILITARY SOLDIERS are stationed at the school's front doors, guns held pointed towards the ground. The school's loudspeaker CLICKS ON.

PRINCIPAL JEFF SALIS (O.S.)
 (over loudspeaker)
 Once again, all students are to
 report to the gym for an emergency
 morning assembly. All students,
 please make your way to the gym.
 Thank you.

Braxdon looks at Skyla, who has gone pale.

INT. MAY HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY

Phoenix flops down on the couch and turns on the TV. A NEWS REPORTER (26) is just finishing up her report.

NEWS REPORTER

--President gave a press conference this morning on the status of the Adolescent Degenerative Respiratory Syndrome virus.

The screen cuts to PRESIDENT LYDON (53) giving a press conference.

PRESIDENT LYDON

As of this morning, September 24, the number of ADRS cases in our country has reached over 700,000, and the virus shows no sign of slowing down.

The clip of the press conference ends, and the News Reporter reappears, gruesome and horrifying pictures appearing behind her.

A truck full of BODIES sits outside a quarantine facility.

The body of a YOUNG CHILD lays in the street, abandoned.

DOCTORS rush around a TEEN BOY on a medical table. His skin and eyes are yellowed. He's having a seizure.

NEWS REPORTER

In their official statement released this morning, the CDC states that currently "the ADRS virus only poses risk to children under the age of 18" but "could rapidly become contagious to the adult population." Scientists are also claiming that when a child begins to show symptoms, it's already too late. To find a list of symptoms and information on easiest way to get your children safely to a quarantine zone pick up site, please go to cdc.gov.

Phoenix is frozen in front of the screen, unable to look away. Then he scrambles up to the landline phone hanging on the wall. He dials a number frantically.

INT. PALO ROJO HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Braxdon and Skyla walk towards the gym. A small PINGING sound comes from behind Skyla's ear. Braxdon looks at her, but Skyla's not paying attention.

BRAXDON
You gonna answer that?

SKYLA
Answer what?

Skyla notices the sound, and reaches up to hold down the communication square behind her ear.

SKYLA (CONT'D)
Ignore.

The PINGING stops. Braxdon takes a closer look at her.

BRAXDON
Are you feeling okay?

SKYLA
I can't tell if I'm gonna throw up
or pass out.

Concerned, Braxdon's hands hover close to Skyla, ready to catch her if she falls.

BRAXDON
You'll feel better when we're
sitting down.

They turn around a corner.

INT. PALO ROJO HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY OUTSIDE GYM DOORS - DAY

Skyla falters right as they turn the corner, the gym in sight. More SOLDIERS watch STUDENTS enter the gym.

BRAXDON
We're almost there--

Skyla dashes towards the gender neutral bathroom near the gym.

Braxdon looks at the gym doors, contemplating, then follows Skyla.

INT. PALO ROJO HIGH SCHOOL - BATHROOM - DAY

Braxdon walks cautiously into the bathroom. A toilet FLUSHES. Seeing the only locked stall, he walks towards it and lightly KNOCKS.

BRAXDON
Skyla? You all right?

SKYLA (O.S.)
Go away.

BRAXDON
Can I come in?

SKYLA
No.

Braxdon takes off his backpack and tosses it under the same stall door, then slides under it himself.

INT. PALO ROJO HIGH SCHOOL - BATHROOM STALL - DAY

Skyla's sitting against the wall.

SKYLA
That floor's gross.

BRAXDON
Want some water?

Braxdon grabs a water bottle from his bag and holds it out to Skyla. After a second, she takes it and sips a little.

BRAXDON (CONT'D)
Your color's coming back.

SKYLA
That a good sign?

BRAXDON
You look less dead.

SKYLA
(sarcastic)
Thanks for the compliment.

Skyla hands the water bottle back and pushes herself to stand. Braxdon is quick to steady her.

SKYLA (CONT'D)
(doesn't know how to describe it)
I'm fine. I don't know what happened. I just... got overwhelmed, I guess.

BRAXDON
Those soldiers freaked me out too.

SKYLA
No, it was wasn't them, it was...

Braxdon waits for her to finish, but she doesn't continue.

BRAXDON

We can still make it to the
assembly--

SKYLA

I'm not going. I... can't.

Braxdon doesn't push her, he knows something's off with her.

BRAXDON

(remembering something)
Oh! You picked a good stall,
actually. Hang on.

He presses his hands along the tile wall until he finds the loose one. He pries it off, revealing a small hole.

BRAXDON (CONT'D)

It looks right into the gym. Found
it when I was avoiding running the
mile. Comes in handy when you need
to know what's happening, but can't
run to save your life.

Skyla moves to look through the hole.

In a lab coat, MAJA FENTON (34), talks to PRINCIPAL JEFF
SALIS (45).

INT. PALO ROJO HIGH SCHOOL - GYM - DAY

Maja watches the high school students get situated in the gym
bleachers. She wears a mask, but Jeff does not.

PRINCIPAL JEFF SALIS

Doesn't having them all together
completely ruin the point of
societal separation?

MAJA

For the record, I wanted individual
classroom meetings, but I was
overruled.

Nearby, the school's political science teacher, MARK CHAZIF
(39), lurks, listening in to Maja and Jeff's conversation.

MAJA (CONT'D)

But they all have their masks,
which eliminates the spread of
infection.

(MORE)

MAJA (CONT'D)
 (looking at Jeff)
 You should have one on too, Mr.
 Salis.

PRINCIPAL JEFF SALIS
 Thought it only affects kids.

MAJA
 For now. We can't track how a virus
 will mutate.
 (beat)
 Are the buses ready outside?

Principal Jeff Salis nods.

MAJA (CONT'D)
 We'll be taking them straight from
 here then.

PRINCIPAL JEFF SALIS
 (almost to himself)
 And were the soldiers really
 necessary?

MAJA
 (equally as quiet)
 That wasn't my choice to make.

INT. PALO ROJO HIGH SCHOOL - BATHROOM STALL - DAY

Skyla turns to Braxdon.

SKYLA
 You had Mr. Chazif last year?

Skyla moves away so Braxdon can look through the hole.

SKYLA (CONT'D)
 He's just standing there.

BRAXDON
 God, he looks awkward.
 (beat)
 Well, he always does, but he really
 does now.

The Principal's MUFFLED VOICE can be heard from the gym.

SKYLA
 Move!

Skyla moves towards the hole as Braxdon moves away from it,
 causing the two to knock their heads together.

Both grimace at the pain, but when they look up, they're close together. There's faint romantic tension in the air.

BRAXDON
Sorry, my bad.

The tension is broken. Skyla presses her eye against the hole to see.

BRAXDON (CONT'D)
Damn, you've got a hard head. I already knew that, but didn't realize it was true physically too--

SKYLA
Braxdon, you know I love you, but shut up.

The three word phrase shuts Braxdon up more than the rest of the sentence. Skyla doesn't notice, focusing on the assembly.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. PALO ROJO HIGH SCHOOL - GYM - DAY

Jeff hands the microphone over to Maja.

MAJA
Good morning, students.

BRAXDON
That's not Principal Salis.

SKYLA
It's the lab coat lady, shh.

MAJA
I'm sorry to take you away from your classes, but we have some very important information that needs to be shared with you...

BRAXDON
What is she saying?

SKYLA
She's just saying sorry for taking us out of classes.

BRAXDON
Sorry? She got me out of my chem test, she's my hero.

MAJA

While most of you were already on your way to school today, President Lydon had an emergency press conference...

BRAXDON

Is she saying anything about why an armed military unit is here?

SKYLA

She might be, but I can't hear her with your voice in my ear.

MAJA

I know this comes as a shock and is likely very alarming to you...

BRAXDON

I hear better if I can see what's going on too.

SKYLA

That makes no sense.

BRAXDON

Yes, it does. Move over, there's enough room for me too.

Braxdon shuffles in beside Skyla, both of them trying to peer through the small hole.

MAJA

You will be boarding the buses in groups of thirty. Only one to a seat, and everyone will be given a new mask they are expected to wear from this point forward. A soldier will take you in your groups...

SKYLA

Buses?

BRAXDON

A field trip we don't have to pay for? Sweet!

Skyla smacks him on the shoulder.

Braxdon moves away from the hole, rubbing his stinging shoulder.

MAJA

Please remain calm and don't move
until you're asked to. You'll be
safer with us, trust in that.

Maja turns her head and seems to make direct eye contact with
Skyla.

Skyla jerks back from the hole, taking a few steps away.
She's pale again, she's got a bad feeling about those buses.
Braxdon's still rubbing his shoulder.

BRAXDON

Do jokes justify punishment now?

Braxdon sees Skyla's face.

BRAXDON (CONT'D)

Are you gonna be sick again?

SKYLA

We cannot get on those buses.