Isolation

by ReedRead0503

Summary

What if Sir Reginald used a different method to control little Number Seven? What if she knew she was extraordinary? What if she knew she was dangerous?
The man sits down at the long mahogany table. At his command, the six uniformed children sit as well. In the background, a low male voice drones on about cold weather camping. The children appear young, perhaps four or five years of age. At times, a well-dressed woman with red lipstick must step in to help them with their breakfast or to wipe off stains or smears of various origins. Until the meal ends, the only sound besides the radio is the clicking of utensils against their plates. As the last of the children finishes, the man speaks up.

“Number Three, You will join me in my study at once.”

There are no other instructions following that command, and the man leaves. He is aware that the children know better than to disobey even at their young age.

One of the children, the only girl of the six, nods her head solemnly, a grave expression decorating her face. Another child speaks up then.

“Three, can you ask him when Seven is coming to play with us again?”

Three doesn’t give an answer, before slipping off her chair and following the man.

As the girl pads up to the doorway, the man sits behind the desk. His head is bowed, hand moving as the scratch of a pen against a page is heard.

“I have an important job for you Number Three. I need you to use your ‘wishes’ for me.”

Three speaks up. “But Dad-” The man interrupts. “Do not refer to me as Dad”.

She continues.

“You told me not to make my wishes anymore.” She shudders as she remembers what her father did when she broke that.

“And that rule stands, however, an exception will be made for training exercises and at times I ask you. Such as right now.”

The man forcefully closes his red notebook and places it into one of his many bookshelves scattered around the room.

“As you no doubt are aware, Number Seven has not been present as of late. I have told you that is is because she is dangerously sick and her health is fragile. Unfortunately, She has not been able to rejoin the Academy as she has been resistant to treatment. I require your aid in helping Number Seven.” The man beckons Three to follow him, and she does, excitement pumping through her veins.

If she did this right, not only would Seven get better, but she might also get da- her father to be proud of her. Maybe he’ll even give her a ‘good job’ like One got yesterday!

Pogo lets out a long breath as he feels the house tremble beneath his feet. It seems that Sir Reginald had gone through with the plan after all. He had advised the man against it, but he tried to keep in
mind his creator was a great man. Not a good man, but a great one. Accomplished in all aspects except for compassion. He must have had a long term plan. He knew what would be coming in the following days.

His master would let a few days worth of time go by before he brought up the news to the rest of the academy. Pogo would be left to comfort the children as best he could, with Grace’s help.

Similar to the routine five days ago, seven beings are sat at a table. After each place is cleared, the monocled man sets his morning newspaper down and begins to speak.

“Number Seven, even with the help of Number Three, has unfortunately succumbed to her disease. Your training shall be canceled for today and tomorrow to give time for a funeral to be held and for us all to mourn her loss.” He pauses for a moment to let his words sink in. Then he continues while the children’s young faces begin to droop, and almost every eye begins to fill to the brim with water. The man continues.

“In her last moments, Number Seven told me what it is she wanted. She knew she would be unable to be what the world needed her to be, so she asked that in her stead, you six children will work hard to be heroes.” With those words, Reginald leaves the room, while Pogo and the robot work to soothe the tears of the children.

Seven is humming to herself. She doesn’t know how long she’s been here, but she knows that it hasn’t been long enough. After all, she still doesn’t have control. If she ever wants to see her siblings again… Well her father was clear enough. Either she stays focused on her training, or she stays stuck in this room.

She barely remembers where she slept before this, but she knows it had been louder. This room forces silence on her. It’s not completely soundless anymore. No, she can make small sounds on the bedpost, and she always has her voice, but it never gets very loud, and she never has any indication of when her three contacts to the world are about to come in. She used to, but then her father had covered the glass on the door that looked into the small gray, sound-proofed room.

So Seven hums. Not any particular song, she just wanted to make some impression into the physical world and prove that she still existed. She wasn’t sure that she did some days. But humming helped. She made sure never to do it when her father, Grace or Pogo was around. They always discouraged the action.

This time, she was humming a happier tune than normal. Her father had stated that since it had already been months since her last incident, she was going to get a special surprise! She really hoped it was going to be a visit from her siblings. Last time she had seen anyone besides her three parents, was so long ago, and Number Three had acted pretty strangely.

“I heard a rumor....”

Still, Seven knew it was for the best. After all, she didn’t want to hurt her brothers and sister. She was dangerous after all. It’s better off that her father keeps her separate.

Seven didn’t know how many hours later her father entered her room. When he did, however, he also rolled in a small box with a screen and three large cardboard boxes.
Even though she knew he was there, she still jumped at the loud bark he let out.

“Number Seven”

“Yes, Sir?” She says as Grace enters. Her Mom begins to rummage through the boxes, and fiddle with the box.

“As a reward for your hard work recently, I have decided to grant you the ability to see your siblings.” He points towards the box. “This screen will show you your siblings from the footage I have collected from around the house.”

The screen flickers on briefly filled with black and white moving pixels. Then it changes to a black and white display of what Seven remembered was the living room. In it sat six children listening to Grace holding a book. There was no sound, but she knew that Grace was reading the book to them aloud. She itched to go up to the box, and get a closer look at the siblings they looked older. Instead of speaking, she looked at her father.

“Should you continue to improve, I shall provide you with more footage. Should you fail to gain control, or fail to meet expectations, you shall lose this privilege.”

The man leaves without a word. Grace sticks around long enough to offer the girl a rare smile. The woman spoke with a sweet and cheerful tone.

“I have some more textbooks for you, Number Seven! Your father thought it was time you moved on to the next level. I shall see you again for dinner.” She waved goodbye, and exits the room, the heavy metal door closing tightly behind. With it goes Seven’s only contact to the world. Once again, she sits alone in her soundproof room, accompanied only by her bed, a few books, and the images of her siblings. At least, she can talk to them again.
The Truth, a Few Dares, and the Birth of a Bee

Chapter Summary

The Academy has some fun, possibly gets some names and Sir Reginald gives Seven a gift.

Far above the basement, in the mansion, six children were having a great time. Their father had disappeared, Mom was charging herself, and Pogo was nowhere to be found. For the children, it was practically paradise.

Of course, they had immediately abandoned the work they were assigned, papers sitting abandoned on their desks. Instead, all of them sat in a circle on the floor, giggling and playing a game Number Six had found in one the library’s books.

“Okay, Okay,” Number Three tried to talk over the other’s laughter. “I choose…. Number one!”

Four leans over to Six, and mutters an under his breath comment ‘Of course she does”. Six elbows him in the side, shushing him.

“One! Truth or dare?”

One pauses for a moment considering his choice.

“Uh. I guess I’ll pick truth.”

Three’s face screws up in disdain. She speaks again, and her voice ripples through the air. “I heard a rumor you picked Dare.”

So he does. Three dares him to do 20 push-ups with all of the group sitting on his back. He easily does so, although Five glares at Three for such blatant misuse of her ability. Then One gets Two to admit that Six is his favorite sibling, and Two is able to choose his own victim next.

“F-f-f-four, truth or-r-r Dare?”

Since Four is too comfy to move from his spot leaning on Six’s shoulder he chooses truth.

“Ha-ha-have you ever seen Seven?” The room goes quiet. All the giggles have stopped, as they each intently look at Four.

“I, uh… well… um, no I haven’t. I’m… not sure I want to see her either” Four finally answers quietly.


“The people I see aren’t nice! They’re always screaming at me, and they look terrifying. Right now, in that corner of the room, some old Irish man is standing there, with his guts hanging out, and a bottle stuck in his head! I don’t want to see a sister I don’t remember like that, and I’m sure you guys don’t want to see it.”
The room stays silent. No one wants to be the first one to break that tension. So Four decides to keep going with the game.

“Five, I dare you to go pop down to the kitchen and grab me a snack to eat!”

The boy scoffs, “You have to ask me ‘Truth or Dare’ first moron.”

And just like that, the tension is gone, and the siblings all go back to their relaxed, happy state. At least until Pogo catches them ditching school work.

Two sites one a stool in the kitchen, watching Mom cook lunch. Today was a Sunday, so Father had vanished as he always did, leaving them to Pogo’s lessons. The chimpanzee usually taught them for a few hours before letting them leave for some free time. Five almost always fled into his rooms to have some privacy or alone time, One and Three went to go play together somewhere, Six usually could be found in the library, and Four would usually be with Six. He always spent the hours with Mom.

Mom was standing over the stove, absentmindedly stirring the pot filled with some type of stem or another. He didn’t recognize what she was humming, but it was soothing.

“Ca-ca-can I help, M-m-m-mom?” She smiles at him.

“As much as I would love your help, I’m afraid that the only thing left to do is let this sit for a while.” Two feels his face fall, and Grace hurries to add on to it. “Why don’t you set the table for me? That would be a great help.”

With that, Two hops off the stool and eagerly rushes towards the cupboard that holds the plates and such. He grabs six plates, six bowls, and six cups. They balance precariously in his arms. With slow, but sure steps, he begins to walk towards the dining room. Then the unspeakable happens. As he wobbles in the doorway, Numbers One and Three fly right by him, accidentally clipping him in the shoulder.

There is a loud crash, as all the tableware smashes into the floor. The silence is palpable as the three children look in shock at the shattered ceramic plates. Before he could even try to process it, his Mom briskly walked over and began to pick the pieces up.

“Children, Why don’t you go play in the other room for now? I’ll clean this up.”

“Bu-t-t-t, Da-Da-Da-”

“Picture the word in your mind Two,” she says gently.

“Da-Dad will be angry.” He doesn’t look at One and Three, but he can feel his hands shaking. The last time someone had broken a plate was Four, and they didn’t see the boy again until a week later. When he finally came back, his face was ashen, and he kept muttering under his breath.

“Well, I don’t see why he has to know. Do you two?” She asks the other children in the room. Knowing they were at fault as well, the two kids frantically shake their heads no. “Perfect, then while I finish up with lunch, you three can go have fun together. Off you go now children!”

That night Sir Reginald sat in his study. So far, his plans were progressing at an acceptable pace. Each of the children now had some semblance of control over their abilities. He had three monitors on his desk, flickering between the seven children. Six of them were asleep, but Number Seven was still awake. That wasn’t a surprise. Her schedule was delayed by a few hours.
to allow Grace time to serve her without any disruption to the others. At the moment, Number Seven was reading one of her textbooks, he believed it was her algebra book, while she had the videos of her siblings playing in the backgrounds.

Those videos were the idea of Pogo, to provide her with some companionship in her quarantine. He would admit they were proving a very successful tool for motivation. However, he has begun to realize that simply ignoring Number Seven’s growing abilities would simply lead to a potential disaster. Obedience was no longer an issue thanks to Number Three’s gift.

Although preliminary tests with Number Seven indicated that providing an outlet for the power to drain would decrease the amount of accidental usage or incidents, providing a conduit to the girl could prove a fatal mistake. He needed a way to suppress her emotional outbursts as well as control her abilities. Perhaps medication could prove helpful for that task, although he still needed her to use her abilities. There was only so many times he could excuse the trembling of the house as a simple earthquake.

His eye fell on a case sitting abandoned on a shelf across the room. That may do it. It had been unused since his wife had passed. Perhaps this may be the answer to the problem.

Number Seven had fallen in love. It wasn’t a person, but an object she had fallen in love with. Made of wood, hollow and decorated with four strings. Her father had given it to her along with strict instructions about using it. For at least two hours every day, she was to practice her music. Along with this gift, she also got another rule. In order to make her a little less dangerous, she was to take two pills a day. Knowing that this would help her keep her emotions in check. Seven readily agreed to take the medication. She would do anything to keep her siblings safe from her.

She wasn’t very good at first with the instrument, but when Pogo came to teach her on her regular classes, he also provided her a basic understanding of how to read music sheets and gave her a few pointers on how to hold the violin. He knew enough of the basics to set her on the right track. She could hopefully tech herself the rest.

So yes, Seven was in love. And she needed to give her love a name. So Seven chose a name for it based off some of she’s read in her textbooks. She called it Bee for short, based off this really famous guy in music.

Bee kept Seven company all hours of the day, helping to remind her to take her pills or encourage her to play him. When she found she couldn’t sleep when the lights dimmed in her room, she would also practice on Bee instead. She wasn’t amazing by any means, but she and Bee liked to put concerts on her the rest of her siblings.

Strange things happened when she was playing Bee. The first time she got super absorbed into playing she had looked up to find that she was hovering about two inches off the floor. Another time, her long hair had been tossed gently around by a breeze. Then there was the time, that she had accidentally blown apart her bed. While she waited for a new one, she had to sleep on the floor. Of course, it was better than before Bee was there. Before, she used to feel the room shake around her, and at those points, Pogo or Grace would usually come in to calm her down. She misses the extra time she got with them when that happened, but Bee was here for her now. Sure she didn't get that human, or in Pogo's case, a chimpanzee's touch, but Bee was much better at conversation. Six and Three get her attention from the screen.

“Seven, can you play us that Tchaikovsky piece?”
She looks at the footage, and sees Six and Three playing some sort of clapping game together.
“Good choice, Six! I love that one. Can you Seven? Please?”
"Well, since you said please...". With a small smile, Seven holds her violin up to her chin and brings her bow down on the stings.

Grace left her room, feet silent on the floor. And Seven fingered the red irritated lines on her wrist. She both hated and loved the mark. She had seen her siblings sporting the same one in the videos, and loved that she had another connection to them. But she hated the pain that came with it.

At first, she felt something pleasant inside her, as she felt the warmth of Grace’s fingers holding her wrist still. But then, there was a searing pain, worse than anything she’d ever experienced. The closest thing to it was when she dropped her violin on her foot one day. But the pain that came with that needle was worth it. She now was truly part of the Umbrella Academy. She had the brand to prove it.

“Mom?”

“Yes?” The robot in question looked at small Number Four with a gentle smile gracing her features. “What is it, darling?”

The boy swallowed hard before asking.

“Why don’t we have names?”

“You do have names. You’re Number Four, silly.” Grace’s processors began to whir silently in her head. Four shook his head before she finished speaking.

“That’s not a name though. It’s just a number. Five says that people out there have real ones.” Grace thought about it before she responded.

“Well, do you want a name? I can ask your father about it.”

Four’s face brightened considerably. “Can you? Thanks, Mom!” He began to run off. He shouted through the house. “She said she’d ask, Six!”

If Grace could laugh, she probably would have at Four’s antics. The boy was always so happy, she hoped he never changed.

After the day’s chores, and putting her six children to sleep, Grace went to Sir Reginald’s study. The man was reading through a stack of reports before she interrupted.

“Sir, the Children are starting to wonder if they might be granted names.”

He waves his hands dismissively. “They don’t need them. It would just be a distraction from the mission.”

Grace’s smile wobbled for a moment, before returning to normal. “But surely, having a name would—” He interrupts her before she can finish. “It doesn’t matter. Just do...” Sir Reginald makes a vague hand gesture before returning to his reading.

Grace lets herself out, making a plan in her head. After all, it wasn’t a no. Maybe the children can help her pick the names out.
One Can Learn Much if They Open Their Eyes to the Truth

Chapter Summary

Number One has some realizations.

It was raining today. One glumly sat in the window, palm resting against his cheek. The others had pressured him recently into thinking about having a name. He knew that his father wasn’t thrilled about them getting them, so One had said no but Thre-no. Allison was ecstatic about it. She had talked to him last night before bed. Told him that if he didn’t have one chosen by the end of today, she’d pick one for him. Knowing her, she’d make him go by ‘Eugene’ or something like that.

A quiet cough knocked him out of his reverie. Two stood in the doorway. So far he, along with Five, were the only ones of the group that still haven’t had let Mom pick a name out, or found one for themselves. One raised an eyebrow at Two, a silent question of what he was doing there.

It was well-known amongst the Academy members that Two and One usually didn’t get along. One’s body was decorated with small scars from Two’s knives, and Two has suffered through many bruises and broken bones courtesy of being pushed into and through almost every wall in the mansion. So for Two to seek out One…. Well, it doesn’t happen very often.

“One, M-m-m-mom’s asking for you.”

“Why?” He answered succinctly. Two silently thought he learned that tone from their Dad.

“Something about how Dad n-needs you for some sp-sp-special training.”

That gets One moving. Anytime that his father needs him, One is more than willing to be there. Sure, training may be hard and difficult, but it’s all for the benefit of the world. It may be raining today, but maybe tomorrow the two of them could sit beneath the tree in the courtyard.

“Did Mom say where?”

Two shrugs his shoulders, before leaving. One figures he may as well try Sir Reginald’s study first, before searching the entire house.

“Ah, Number One! There you are, I have been waiting for you.” Sir Reginald stands in the training room, in front of a line of square metallic cubes, organized by size. The largest is twice is his father’s size, while the smallest would fit perfectly into the palm of One’s hands.

“My apologies, sir. I was not informed of where we were meeting.”

“You shall endeavor to do better in the future. Tardiness as well as being unprepared is a slight and dishonor against one’s character.” The man picks up his clipboard, as well as a timer. “Now, Number One, please lift each cube individually, and throw them into the target using all of your strength.”

The billionaire gestures towards the back wall of the room, where a crude circle is painted on the wall in black. One moves towards the end of the line, picking up the tiniest cube. It’s dense and feels very sturdy in his heads. He bounces it a few times to get a feel for it, before rearing his arm back like he’s seen the baseball players do on the few times he’s been allowed to watch television. He lets go of the cube. It shatters on impact, and the wall lets out a large groan in protest.

He continues down the line, doing the same to the next five blocks. When he reaches a cube, a little
smaller than his own height, One struggles. It was less him not having the strength to lift it, and more than he just wasn’t large enough to handle its bulky size. Still, he managed well enough. When it was just a few centimeters off the ground, he just attempted to push it towards the target. Unfortunately, it didn’t make it the whole way.

What happened next would stay with One for the rest of his days. His normally unflappable father, a man whose scowl was as infamous as it was permanent, showed something different in his eyes. A primal emotion. He wouldn’t call it fear exactly, just a sort of show that his father felt something other than disdain, or the occasional pride One has seen before.

Shrapnel from the hunk of metal flew everywhere as it shattered against the ground. A particularly large piece flew right by his father, the sharp edge briefly grazing his cheek. It all happened so fast, One had no time to react. He himself had been hit by a few pieces, but besides a couple of scrapes, his own immense durability, let him escape any large injuries. But his father…

Sir Reginald is many things. People don’t usually describe him as a man though. He seems more… inhuman. Almost monstrous at times. Fou-Sorry, Klaus once told the others his theory that he was an alien, but all but Five quickly brushed it off. But at this moment in time, One was very much reminded that although Sir Reginald wields such great power over the six of them, he was at the end of the day, just a normal man formed of flesh and blood. The messy scratch across one cheek, raining crimson droplets was proof enough.

Quick as the cube has exploded, so did Sir Reginald. The back of his hand rang with a sickening thud across the side of Number One’s face. It didn’t hurt much, with One’s own abilities helping him, but the shock of it was enough. His pale skin was reddened by his father's effort. One’s eyes began to shine, flashing with betrayal or perhaps unshed tears. It wasn’t clear.

Sir Hargreeves composed himself and purposefully ignored One’s trembling form. He adjusted the position of his monocle and looked at the boy with a cool expression.

“Again Number One.” And so, One moved on to the next block. This time, however, he was stopped by his father before he could throw it.

“Since in the last trial, you failed to complete it, it appears there has been some lapse of judgment by us in your training. You simply are not ready for the more challenging tasks, that require finesse. As such, we must go back to basics.” He paused, before issuing his command. “Number One. You shall lift the training cube into a position above your head and hold it there. Any faltering, or mishaps shall result in time starting over. You may begin.”

In the end, it took One a little over six hours before his father let him go. Even then Sir Reginald’s sneer promised more brutal retaliation later. One had never seen his father like that before. He’s heard his siblings talk about his father like a monster, but before today, One had never had to deal with it. Training accidents just resulted in an awkward pat on the head, and a simple ‘try again’. And after the sessions, when One made some kind of breakthrough, the two of them would go pass some time underneath the oak tree in the courtyard.

Now… Now One felt something bitter in his mouth. His entire body was trembling, and he felt like even the smallest of winds would blow him away. He could barely walk straight, swaying from side to side.

If he was a good Number One, a good son- No. A good soldier, he would listen to his father’s orders. Straight to bed to prepare for team training tomorrow. But for tonight, One didn’t feel the overwhelming need to obey every single one of his father’s whims. His face throbbed with a reminder of pain. There was nothing there, of course, he had healed already, but even so, he still felt
the sting. So before, he curled up in his bed, he stopped in Alison's room. He said a few simple words, and One faded away. His sister, the one person in this house who truly cared for him, gave him a great gift. His sister made him an army. His sister made him Luther.

And so Luther went to bed.
Silence is a Gift

Chapter Summary

Wherein Vanya asks a question, and the others lose another

It was dark. No, it was beyond dark. Was there a word for that? Seven planned to find out. If there wasn’t she should invent one. A name for the utter nothingness her room becomes. Vaguely Seven recalls how she used to be afraid of the dark. Before the room, she used to fear the monsters that would hide in the shadows. Then she realized that she was what the monsters should be afraid of. It was impossible to know how much time had passed. She had tried counting the seconds off in her head, but she soon lost track after she got somewhere in the three thousands.

If the passage of it means nothing, does time itself have a meaning? She supposes it must. After all, time meant nothing to The Room, but she still had grown taller. Not by much, but enough that her father had ordered Grace to find her new clothes to replace her own. Now, Seven could reach up and touch two whole rows higher than she could before. The foam spikes were still uncomfortable to touch, but she still loved touching them. They felt brittle to her fingers, and like they were bleeding her of her life, but they broke the monotony of the feeling her clothing fabric and bed frame provided.

Seven wondered if it was normal to be as obsessed as she was with touch and texture. But a small little voice inside her cried out who cares? She was hearing the voice more and more. It encouraged her to do things, sometimes terrible things, but she still listened to it. It was the most stimulating conversations Seven has had since…. Well as long as she could remember. Bee tried, oh he tried so hard. But the violin spoke only of music, and it tended to only sing its notes as loud as possible. But Seven listened to the little voice and learned to love it just as much as she did Bee.

So when that voice pestered her to ask a question, Seven had to know the answer too, she did.

When her father had walked in, a strange tension in his step, accompanied by a freshly bandaged cheek, her will had almost faltered. Still, the videos aren't enough anymore. She missed her siblings, and the warmth and love she scarcely remembered from her toddler days. So Seven did something she hasn’t done in years. She asks her father a question.

“Father… When will I get to really see my siblings?”

The response had been immediate. A cold hard voice that told her
As long as you remain extraordinary, you are too dangerous to set loose. You could easily kill or cause irreparable damage the others. Not to mention the distraction it would bring to both your own and their training…”. The last statement was added almost like an afterthought. “Now be quiet. Quiet is a virtue, but in your case, silence is a gift.”

Later on, Seven was ashamed of how she had reacted. It was too impulsive, too quick, it was every reason why she could never leave the room. So in the end, she proved her father right.

Her temper tantrum following his dismissal was impressive, even to herself. She didn’t know she could release that much power, and judging by the gas that quickly filled the chamber, neither did Sir Reginald, and that scared him. She’s had meltdowns before, but this time she didn’t know what it was but she could swear she heard her siblings laughing far above, and the pounding of their feet. Before she falls to the ground unconscious, Seven sees a large crack in the door to the room. It almost looked like it was smiling.

Still, she still regretted the tantrum after. When Seven woke up things felt different. She realized why almost immediately. The small screen, the box that held her only hope was gone. With it, had gone the impressive stack of videotapes. The scariest thing about that, was the voices of her siblings, her six lifelong companions, had vanished as well.

But it wasn’t just the room that was different. She felt different as well. She didn’t have the reflective nature of the screen to look at herself anymore, but she knew somehow, deep inside herself that she had changed.

She tried to get up, only to discover she couldn’t. There was something, multiple somethings, laying tightly across her body. The most she could do was jerk her body a little bit to each side.

A whimper escapes her as she struggles against the invisible force. But even that whimper was different. Something was stretched across her mouth, stopping her from making a noise. She was stuck. And in her mind all she could see was that crack in the door, taunting her.

Deep within her, Seven could feel something aching to be let out. The darkness of the room shifted and she could see it. And it was beautiful. Something besides the drab grays that her world existed in. It was rich and deep and stretched across everything that surrounded her. It was almost like the strings of her violin. Every time she shifted from her captive location, the strings were plunked very gently, the quiet shuffling, creating a mosaic in front of her.

Then the strings exploded in blue and sung to her. It sang her a song of goodbye, and she knew. Somewhere above, one member of her family had left. So Seven let out the loudest noise she has ever made. As she wailed, there was a prick in her neck, and the world went black.
Allison remembers the day Five left. She missed him, but what she was the most upset, was how little him running away actually affected the academy. They still got up at seven each morning, training and studying for hours upon hours, each Sunday had half an hour of free play and went to bed at 9:30 each night. On the days they have a mission, they still ship out. They just have to be more aware of each other.

The third night that Five didn’t return home before she went to bed Allison tried something. She faced herself in the mirror and spoke.

“I heard a rumor...” She pauses here, feeling the power building in the air around her. “I heard a rumor that Five came back”

She waited. Nothing happened. She shoulders slumped a little bit before she shook off the defeat and pulled on her pajamas. So what if it didn’t work, she would just have to try again tomorrow. And the next night, and the night after that. One day, her power would be so great she could bend the world around her just she could bring her brother home. With that thought in mind, Allison went to sleep already determined to apply herself extra hard the next day.

In the room next door, Klaus was struggling to sleep a bit more than his siblings. He was staring at the ceiling as he contemplated his own failures. First Seven, a sister he didn’t even remember, and now Five, a person he trusted more than anyone else save Ben. Klaus would like to say that he wasn’t dead, but he didn’t have a great track record for conjuring their family members. Seven has been dead for years, but he has never even managed her voice. Unlike her, Klaus would never truly know what happened to Five. Maybe he did time travel. But… if he went through time why did he never come back to the present?

At that, Klaus’s twelve-year-old brain came up with a brilliant idea. If Five time-traveled, just like he was talking about, maybe… Maybe he was just lost. And he couldn’t find his way back! If that was the case, then Klaus could actually help him. Disregarding his father’s every true about curfew, Klaus threw open his door, and rushed to the landing of the staircase, with the intention of turning every light that the downstairs possessed on. But what he saw stopped him. Since he was curious, Klaus crouched down, partially obscured by the railings of the steps, and look down.

Walking to the end of the hallway was Mom, looking as refreshed as always holding a small silver platter with a plate of food sitting atop it. It was fresh enough there was steam curling up into the air. Next to her, was an exhausted-looking Pogo with what Klaus recognized as a set of the textbooks they use in class. Now Klaus was really interested. He knew his father was in his office. At the other end of the house. And all of his siblings were asleep too. Who, and where could Mom be taking the food too?
Now at this point, Klaus knew he was pushing the limits of breaking curfew. His father might not notice him missing from bed for a few moments, but more minutes might be a bit of a stretch. But a large part of him thinks, maybe, just maybe, that food is for Five. Maybe his father is just keeping him away from the others as a punishment for acting out. Reggie had certainly done worse.

Klaus felt a bit of hope rise within him. He watched as Mom pressed the palm of her hand against one of the wood panels. There was a soft blue glow, and then the wood panels slide away to reveal an elevator. The only two adults Klaus has ever cared about vanish inside, and the doors close.

“This,” he thinks, “requires the full weight of the academy to deal with”.

He’ll spring Five from his jail if it’s the last thing he does. He just can’t do it by himself. He’ll need some way to convince the others…
Chapter Summary

Klaus turns to his brother for help, and Five learns no one is around to help him.

Five’s fists are enveloped by the blue glow he’s grown accustomed too. His eyes are dry but patterns decorate his cheeks, showing where his tears had wiped away the dirt and grime of this place. He traveled too far, too fast. And now he was alone. Twelve years he’d been surrounded by five others for every hour of every day. And now, with no living soul around him, Five regrets all his silly, childish wishes for privacy.

While Five may be grieving, he still needs to explore the place he landed. He can say that while the world is astonishingly quiet, it’s also astoundingly beautiful. When he first traveled here, he didn’t know why the world felt off at first. And then he realized. The beautiful forest, climbing over and around each of the ruins of humanity, was silent. Above him soared life in the forms of towering trees, blooming flowers, and cascading ferns. But there’s no birds, crickets, or anything else to suggest even a hint of intelligent life. Just the crushing silence of green. Tendrils of vines hung off the few remaining structures. And when night fell, the true face of the sky was revealed. Never before had Five seen the night sky without the pollution and light of mankind getting in the way. And right then, in the light of a full moon, Five knew for a fact that he was the last of his kind on the planet.

The ruins of the Umbrella Academy both confirmed and denied this. He only needed to walk a few hundred feet to discover the reclaimed building. There, he found five bodies decorated with the same brand. Five knew them instantly. They looked the same as he last saw them, maybe a little more mature. His siblings sat dead, buried beneath the rubble. Deeper under the debris were three adult bodies. Sir Reginald, who lay decimated. The only real way Five recognized him was that his monocle still lay attached to the pile of gore. Pogo looked asleep, as peaceful in death as he was in life. And Grace looked inhuman. Her mouth was stained with blue liquid, dried where it had leaked out from her, and her limbs were all twisted and broken into impossible angles.

The strange thing is, however, his siblings, and Pogo hasn’t even begun to decompose. His father was nothing but a pile of mush, but even that seemed not to be touched by time. It suggests that all of this just happened. But, a forest like the one that surrounds him doesn’t just spring up overnight.

He spent hours burying them. All of them, except for his ‘father’. That man didn’t deserve to lay at rest with the remains of the Academy. He didn’t have a shovel, so he used his hands instead. When his hands were scraped clean of most of his skin, and his blood mixed in with the dried blood covering his family, Five didn’t stop. He kept digging.
The moon had long since set by the time he finished. The afternoon sun beat down on him, while he gazed at the one massive grave he built. It needed something still. So Five gathered what little bricks he could from the house, and attempted to write something for them. It should have said, ‘Here Lies Allison, Ben, Diego, Klaus, Luthor, Grace, and Pogo’. Instead, all Five could make out of the bricks was ‘M Y F A M I L Y’.

He tried to keep track of time as best he could. The first couple of… weeks, he thinks, it was difficult. With all the vegetation, there was an abundance of food, but figuring out what was edible was more trial and error. His father’s training came in handy a few times in steering him away from more poisonous plants, finding clean water, and crafting makeshift shelters. The silence was the worst thing. He was alone, and something he just couldn’t take it anymore, so he just kept screaming as loud as he could. Every day he walked miles and miles, in the hopes of finding something that would explain why the earth was left for the dead and the greenery.

Then he found her one night, standing over the campfire he had managed to get started.

Dressed in a mockery of the academy's uniforms, she wore a plaid patterned dress similar to the one Allison had, with an embroidered blazer over it. The only difference was its bleached appearance. She shone in the moonlight, her white hair flying around, proof of her existence. And as she reached a hand out to him, his name disturbing the silence of the world, Five saw it. On her wrist, the same tattoo he had been forced into. It’s dark mark stood out against the pale skin it marred.

In the present day, Klaus was trying to get his siblings to listen to him. He’d never been close to Allison and Luthor, but him, Diego and Ben used to be. When he tried to tell Luthor about Five’s captivity, Number One started for a few seconds, before shaking his head and slamming the door hard enough to rattle its hinges. Allison refused to let him get any words out and told him to stop making things up, and Ben just gently asked him if he was sleeping okay, and if his nightmares had been getting worse.

Diego was the only one who let him speak. Klaus told him the story of his nighttime adventure, as well as Mom and Pogo’s weird behavior, and the even weirder elevator. And the strangest thing was that Diego believed him.

“Y-you wouldn’t make that up.” Number Two explained to him. “Plus M-m-mom has been acting different for a while.”

And Klaus knew what he meant. All of the Academy had seen it. Pogo and Mom speedily walking out of a room in the middle of the day or a conversation, Mom making six plates, instead of the five needed, and Pogo seeming to jump halfway into another lesson, they hadn’t even started yet.
“So what now? How do we Two and Four break Five out of jail?”

Diego grimaces.

“We need to t-talk to the others.”

“I tried! Not even, Ben would listen to me.”

“I’m not sur-p-p-prised.” Klaus squawked in indignation. “B-but if both of us g-go, I’m sure they’ll li-li-listen.”

“Can we try it without them first?” Number Four pleaded. “I never get a chance to be the hero!”

“And….?”

“And if the others don’t come, then I can rescue Five myself!”

“With m-me, you mean.”

Klaus waves his hand flippantly.

“Yeah, yeah”

With that, the two boys slowly start brainstorming some ideas. Not long after, they had the basics of a plan.

____________________________________________________

“Do I h-have to?”

“C’ mon De, We both know mom listens to you the most! Just distract her for a few minutes.”

“But I c-can’t lie to h-her!” Diego protested. Klaus let out a huff. Time to try something different.

“Think about Five. Suffering all alone in wherever the heck that elevator goes. Don’t you think a little lie is worth saving out brother” he appealed to Diego’s protective side.

Diego scrunched Up his face but nodded his head.

“Fine. When are we doing this?”

“Tonight, just after dinner.”
Sir Reginald often missed the nighttime meals, and the children had free reign of the house until bedtime, so it was the perfect time to put their scheme into action.
And then it’s time. The kids eat dinner, Grace standing watch with a permanent smile, while Pogo and Sir Reginald are nowhere to be seen. After the five of them finish up, Grace begins to clear the pales away, dismissing the children to get ready for bed. He shoots Klaus a nervous look, and then tug on Grace’s skirt.

“Muh-Muh-mom?”

She hums, “Yes Diego?”

“I ha-ha-have a que-q-e--”

Remember what we’ve worked on sweetie, just picture the word in your mind.”

“Question. I h-have a question for y-you.”

Grace turns to fully face Number Two, and Klaus picks that moment to slip away unnoticed. Ben raises an eyebrow at his suspicious behavior, before deciding he didn’t really feel like getting in trouble alongside Klaus.

As Diego stammers out a ridiculous question, Klaus finds his way to the secret entrance. He stands at the end of the hall, staring at the decorative wood paneling. He knew Mom had touched one of the panels, but… which one? He was wasting what little time just standing here. So he frantically started pressing on the wall randomly. One after another, a little higher, a little lower, maybe over-

“What are you doing?” He hears Alison’s voice behind him. He whips around to face her.

“Ally! My beloved sister, any chance I can just convince you to leave this alone?”

She shakes her head.

“Thought not.” Her eyes harden, and He smiles widely, though he feels like he’s apart to shake
“I heard a rumor that-”

“Wait!” He throws his hands in front of him.” No need to rumor me! Just promise that you won’t tell dad, and I’ll tell you.”

“I’m not Luther,” She says that as if that answers his question. Which it sorta does.

“I’m trying to free Five. Dad’s holding him captive here”

“Five’s gone Klaus, he’s not trapped in the walls.”

“No, no, no! I know he’s not in the walls. But there’s a secret elevator behind here that I saw Mom and Pogo using last night. I tried to tell you about it, but no one ‘sides Diego listened, and-”

“Okay.”

“What?”

“I said okay. You say there’s a secret in this house? Okay. I believe it. Dad’s definitely the type to have a secret room.” Her foot taps impatiently, though Klaus can definitely see the anxiety in her body language. “Even if I don’t think Five is there, still be interesting to see one of his secrets. So show me the door.”

“That’s…. Kinda the thing. I don’t know how to open it. Mom pressed some panel, but I don’t know which one or if only she can open it.” He shrugged.

“It’s not like you have superpowered siblings or anything.” She rolls her eyes.

"Right… but your rumors only work on people...” Klaus trails off.
“Yeah, that’s right.”

“So, Uh…”

“Klaus I hear a rumor that you knew exactly how to open the door.”

And then he knew. Five panels from the left side, Six down from the top. Mom pressed that panel. And then Klaus presses it. But nothing happens.

“Maybe it does have to be Mom who opens it.”

“Or maybe, you imagined the whole thing.”

“No! I swear on the dead ghost in that corner that I’m telling the truth!”

“Well, you lied about stealing my clothes!”

And then Numbers Three and Four both fell quiet. They could hear the click-clack of heels down the hall, and as it got closer, Mom and Diego both rounded the corner.

“Allison, Klaus, please keep your voices down. The others are trying to sleep.” The android gently chided. “Isn’t past time for both of you to be in bed as well?”

“Uh, Mom, you see…. “ Allison starts. She doesn’t quite seem sure of where she’s going so Klaus jumps in.

“We know Mom.”

“Know? I’m afraid you’ll have to be more specific. You could know lots of things. I know Pogo has been teaching about differential equations lately, and he’s also covered.” Klaus interrupts again.
“About the secret behind this wall.”

Grace blinks once. Blinks again. She processes this information. Then she smiles.

“Do you? Well, that’s wonderful! She’ll be so glad to see the three of you.”

Diego, Allison, and Klaus exchange confused looks. Who is this she, Mom’s talking about? Unanimously, they all decide the same thing. Play along.

“And we w-want to see…. Her… too. But we can’t seem to get the d-door open.” Diego,

“That’s alright silly! Only us adults are able to. I can open it for you.” In a flash, she stepped to the wall and pressed the same panel that Klaus did. And just like he had seen before. There was a wash of blue light, and the door to the elevator opened.

“I ’m afraid I can’t go with you, I have some chores left to do, but the elevator will take you down. Have fun!”

And with that, Mom cheerily walks away. Her smile slips away, as the children disappear into the elevator. Really, they were all such bad liars. It was obvious that they hadn’t known about Seven, but they had figured out the way to her regardless. She was a protector, and she could finally protect the child she had been built for.
Chapter Summary

She was nothing and everything. In the past, she was alone. In the future, she was all that Five had.

It had been weeks. At least he thought so. Keeping track of time was difficult without clocks or calendars. Regardless of how long it had been, she was still there. His little shadow. She didn’t speak, though she seemed to want to. She would occasionally open her mouth, but a frustrated look would come up, and she would stop.

To be honest, Five wasn’t sure how to feel about her. The one bit of sentient life he had seen…. It was suspicious, to say the least. Even more so considering her tattoo. It was exactly the same as his. As far as he knows, the academy tattoo and its placement are unique. For her to have it had to mean something. But the girl wasn’t talking. That first night, he tries everything. Pleading, crying, screaming, even threatening her. And although tears gathered in her eyes, she remained mute. Or not entirely mute. The one thing she was able to say was his name, but at times even that seemed difficult.

Time passed, and they both settled into a routine. Wake up around dawn, scrounge around for leftovers from dinner the night before, make a trip to a nearby stream or pond to drink, and maybe wash themselves up a bit, Five scribbles intently into a random novel, while the girl peers over his shoulder, and then walk as far as they can, gathering useful looking supplies whenever they came across any and stopping any time Five felt a moment of inspiration. After a full day of walking, just before the sunset, the girl would leave and come back a few minutes later her hands full of safe plants to eat. And throughout that whole time, the girl never spoke a word.

The silence of the world disturbed Five, so he tried to fill it as much as he could. He would chatter aimlessly, rambling on and on about his siblings, or the temporal traveling equation, or what he missed most about his life before. Each time he opened his mouth to say anything, without fail the girl's whole body turned towards him, giving him her undivided attention. Sometimes, Five felt like the girl was a figment of his imagination, her footprints, and share of food existing only in his mind. He hoped it wasn’t true. He would like to think his brain would have been smart enough to invent a companion who could at least keep up with him in conversation, not a just a mute girl, obsessively following him around.

Though, her company was nice sometimes. She has an innocent and naive fascination for the world. Her eyes are often wide with wonder, and jaw hanging open with wonder at each sunrise, sunset, rainstorm, or rainbow. A bright laugh at any new experience. A sunburn, a cut, or even the sting of a thorn? She loved those annoyances just as much as she did the natural beauty. Still, as much light, as
she brought him, he couldn't keep going this way.

He brought it up at their nightly interrogation session.

“You need a name.”

Her brow furrows, and her head cocks to the side. An unspoken meaning of ‘What do you mean?’

“I can’t just keep calling you ‘Girl’. It feels wrong.”

A broad smile, as she points to herself, and then holds out both her hands, proudly displaying seven fingers. Five pauses, and then shakes his head.

“No, I’m not calling you Seven. For a lot of reasons.” Her confusion is easy to read. “I had a sister who was Number Seven. I lost her when I was young, and….. What the hell is wrong with you?”

The girl is shaking her head frantically, jabbing herself hard enough in the chest to bruise. She stared straight into his eyes, and let out a strangled cry. She thrusts her wrist towards him, now alternation between pointing at herself and the tattoo.

“Seven?” Five’s eye darted between the two and dots began to connect in his mind.

She smiles and nods.

“But... Oh, I’m gonna kill that bastard.” He rubs the side of his temple, feeling a headache coming on. “Or I would if he weren’t already dead. Still. Doesn’t change the fact, that I can’t call you Seven.”

Her bright expression fell, and shoulders slumped.

“Even our siblings don’t have numbers anymore.”

God, our siblings. Because it was our and not just his anymore. He really should have known the
first time he saw the umbrella mark. Why wouldn't he…? *Allison.*

He remembered now. Pieces clicked into place, and the rumor fell away, his sister's voice echoing in his brain.

*I heard a rumor…. I heard a rumor that… I heard a rumor that we all knew Seven was dead. I heard a rumor…. *

He closes his eyes and took a breath. Now wasn’t the time for that. He could process all of this later.

“"You know, most of us figured out names for ourselves. They even tried to give me a name, but I was fine with Five. It fit me for one, and two I never really liked Vanya for myself anyway.”

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