

Darkest Night 2x03

"Initiation"

Written by

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Final Draft (1)

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DARKEST NIGHT

SEASON 2

EPISODE 3: Initiation

Characters

Katie Reed - Mid 20s. Impulsive and spontaneous. Quick learner who isn't afraid to speak her mind.

Dr. Lionel Ricketts - 30s. Younger member of Project Cyclops, working independently from Dr. Kinsler. Extremely cold. Soft-spoken but menacing. Guarded.

Corey - 18. College freshman pledging Omicron, a distinguished black frat. Not sure if this is all worth it.

Moses - 18. Corey's friend and fellow pledge. Cocky, aggressive, and dutiful to Omicron.

Hill - 21. The Omicron pledgemaster who takes it too seriously and gets off on the power.

Effi - 18. Scrawny freshman who hasn't made much of a mark at college besides dealing weed to people.

James - Early 50s. Corey's overbearing father who has very strong opinions about what a strong, successful black man looks like.

Locations:

1. Dr. Ricketts' Lab at The Roth Lobdow Center for Advanced Research
2. Corey's Dorm Room
3. College Campus / Off Campus
4. Car
5. Forest

Time of day:

Evening

INTRO BUMPER

Efx: recorder button/tone

KATIE
(whispering)
Roth-Lodbow Center for Advanced
Research. Project Cyclops, Day 13,
about to begin. Entering the
laboratory now.

Efx: keycard beep. A loud buzz, a metal lock unlatched. Door
opens, footsteps.

DR. RICKETTS
Morning.

Efx: Ricketts eating an enrgy bar.

KATIE
Dr. Ricketts. Are you eating? After
Yesterday, I could barely keep any
food down.

DR. RICKETTS
Katie, don't dwell on what you see
in Project Cyclops. The only thing
of concern to us is our work.
Many of the greatest scientific
advancements of mankind, were born
in the most unfortunate of
circumstances.

Efx: Walking up and breathing

DR. RICKETTS (LEFT HEAR) (CONT'D)
Ever heard of the drug
tretinoin?.... It was created in a
series of violent tests on
unwilling prison populations.

KATIE (TIMID)
What are you trying to say?

DR. RICKETS (RIGHT EAR)
Tretinoin is what is keeping your
uncle alive.

KATIE
What do you know about my Uncle
Tim?

DR. RICKETTS
 Enough. We don't have time for
 personal matters... Who do we have
 today?

Efx: sheet being thrown off a box.

KATIE
 At least there's one eye left.

DR. RICKETTS
 You only need one to see. The other
 only provides perspective.

Efx: Wet popping noise.

KATIE
 Withdrawing blood from the optic
 nerve. Depositing into the box.
 Locked and loaded.

DR. RICKETTS
 Project Cyclops. Trial 7-zeta-3.
 Timestamp is registering correctly.
 Initiating playback in 3...
 2...
 1...
 Initiate.

INSIDE A DORM.

Efx: Rhythmic stomps and claps are punctuated by guttural
 shouts as Corey practices step. The rhythm goes awry.

COREY
 Damm! It's uh...

Efx: The stomps and claps start again, but the beat is off.

COREY (CONT'D)
 It's...

Efx: The stomps and claps peter out quickly this time.

COREY (CONT'D)
 You're going to get your ass
 whooped if you don't figure this
 out!

Efx: Corey smacks himself on the head a few times.

COREY (CONT'D)

You can't let that happen. C'mon man.

Efx: Corey dials a cell phone. Dial tone.

JAMES

Corey. How are you?

COREY

Hey dad.

JAMES

Is this the call where you tell me you're in?

COREY

Not yet.

JAMES

They're really dragging it out then. Making you guys suffer.

COREY

You have no idea.

JAMES

I have some.

COREY

Was it like this in your day?

JAMES

I'm pretty sure it was worse back then. These colleges are all over these frats now. Trying to make sure nobody gets hurt.

COREY

So you were hurt?

JAMES

Oh yeah. I got smacked around with that paddle. They put a burlap sack over my head and practically drowned me at one point.

COREY

Jesus.

JAMES

I can take a beating. That shit made me a man. You hear me?

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

(beat)

I said you hear me?

COREY

I hear you.

JAMES

You sound scared son.

COREY

I'm not scared. I'm just... Is this really worth it? I'm barely getting my work done. I feel like my thoughts aren't even mine anymore, you know? It's all Omicron all the time.

JAMES

Hell yeah it is! Because being an Omicron means something. You're joining a brotherhood of distinguished black men. You're not going to end up like the others living down to expectations.

COREY

Why you always gotta bring this up? It's always about being better than other people.

JAMES

If you don't want this, then drop, quit. It wouldn't be the first time for you.

COREY

I just feel like--

JAMES

Like what? Like a pussy? 'Cause that's what you sound like. Can't believe a son of mine is going to pussy out of pledging.

COREY

I'm not!

JAMES

You going to make it?

COREY

I will.

JAMES

Good. How you think I got this cushy job? You know 75% of black male lawyers are Omicrons. And who do you think introduced me to your mom? Being an O is worth it.

COREY

Right. Imma keep practicing my steps.

Efx: Through the phone. James stomps, claps, and shouts out the beats perfectly. Ending in a resonant...

JAMES

Omicron!
(laughs)
See you son.

Efx: Phone hanging up.

COREY

Ok, c'mon. You can do this.

Efx: The rhythmic stomps, claps, and guttural shouts. He's almost to the end.

Efx: KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK

COREY (CONT'D)

(catches his breath)
Shit!

Efx: Opens door.

MOSES

What's good, bruh?

COREY

'Sup Moses.

MOSES

Ready?

COREY

Ready as I'll ever be.

THE NARRATOR

Corey and Moses left their dorm and stepped out onto campus. Corey clung to his hoodie in the crisp, fall air. Tonight was the night. He could feel it. It was do or die.

COREY

So you're not worried at all? You think this is all just-- cool?

MOSES

Yeah man. We've been putting in the work. Tonight, after we get inducted, we're going to be somebodies.

COREY

You think it's definitely going down tonight then?

MOSES

It better be. I might get some PTSD if this goes on any longer.

Efx: A boy bumping into them. Books falling on the ground.

EFFI

Sorry.

MOSES

Watch it man!

EFFI

I said I was sorry!

Efx: Effi picks up his books and leaves.

EFFI (CONT'D)

(sotto)

Dicks.

MOSES

Say it to my face!

THE NARRATOR

Effi paused for a moment and looked at Moses and Corey. After a brief moment, he started to run.

MOSES

Look at that Effi kid. You want to be him? He's not smart, he's not cool, he's not funny, he's not anything.

COREY

I thought he dealt some of the brothers weed.

MOSES

Maybe he does, but he's definitely not an O. And you know he tried. Hill would never let him happen.

COREY

I guess you're right.

MOSES

Yeah, I'm always right. You ever hear this one? "Greatness is never on sale. You always got to pay full price."

COREY

That shit's whack man.

MOSES

Shut up! It's cool. We're cashing in on greatness tonight.

THE NARRATOR

The boys meandered away from campus. The brightly lit bars and shops were replaced by boarded up windows and graffiti.

MOSES

You know where we're going right?

COREY

I'm following the directions.

MOSES

Oh yeah? 'Cause we look lost.

COREY

We're not lost. This is the way.

MOSES

I never should have let you lead. Tyrell is going to kill me if I'm late again.

COREY

I wish Tyrell was my big. Michael spit in my eye when I couldn't get all those facts straight about Omicron's history.

(sighs)

Damn. We can't be late. Have you seen these directions? Turn left where the stop sign used to be?

MOSES

It's supposed to be hard. That's the point. Let me see those. Man, you're lucky your dad was an O.

COREY

What are you trying to say?

MOSES

You know what I'm saying.

THE NARRATOR

Corey balled his hands into tight fists.

MOSES

You're not going to hit me. Let it go.

Efx: Screeching tires.

THE NARRATOR

The boys turned to see masked men getting out of two cars. The men came right at Corey and Moses tackling them to the ground.

MOSES

Get off me!

COREY

What the hell!

THE NARRATOR

The men binded the boys' hands behind their backs with zip ties. Corey watchex as the men shovex Moses' head into a burlap sack. The world world then went black as they did the same to him.

COREY

Moses! Moses!

THE NARRATOR

Corey struggled against the men as they lifted him off the ground. He hit a flat surface with a hard thud.

Efx: Trunk shutting.

THE NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Corey slid around in the trunk as the car took off. He took deep breaths in and out. In and out.

(MORE)

THE NARRATOR (CONT'D)

He knew this is most likely a part of the initiation process. So why wouldn't the fear subside?

COREY

(sotto)

Relax. You're cashing in. You're just cashing in.

THE NARRATOR

Corey filled the time quelling his doubts about joining Omicron. He imagined his father's pride. He remembered Effi running away on two thin legs. Omicron is a better fate than that.

Efx: Car parking. People getting out of the car and opening the trunk.

THE NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The men pulled Corey out of the trunk and stood him on his own two feet. One of the men grabbed Corey's hand and placed it on his shoulder, guiding him. Corey's shoes sunk into the mud as he walked. He heard breathing and wet footsteps. The sounds of people. Pairs of hands moved him where he belonged. Bodies shuffled into place on either side of him.

HILL

Take them off!

THE NARRATOR

The bag was whipped off of Corey's head. He looked around and found himself in a clearing in the woods. He was standing in a line with his pledge class, Moses by his side. The masked men took out pocket knives.

COREY

(sotto)

Oh my god.

THE NARRATOR

They cut the zip ties, freeing the boys' hands.

MOSES

(sotto)

Pussy.

HILL

Brothers, you may go.

THE NARRATOR

The masked men, fellow Omicrons, made their way towards the woods. The one nearest Corey grabbed his face in one hand, fingers digging into his cheeks. He forced Corey to look hard into eyes. Corey recognized them. These were same eyes he couldn't look away from when his big, Michael, spat into his mouth. It felt like a warning. Michael let go and followed the other masked men who one by one disappeared into the forest.

HILL

Here we are boys. Here we are.

THE NARRATOR

Hill orated from in front of a tall, roaring fire. His face was shrouded in darkness until he lifted a lighter to a joint. He took a deep drag, before letting the cloud of smoke billow out of his mouth. He boke out into a big, toothy smile that stretched from cheek to cheek.

HILL

Ooh that shit's good. That's damn good.

THE NARRATOR

Hill marched up to the line, so that he was inches away from one of the pledges. With a swiftness that nobody was expecting, Hill landed a punch square in a boy's nose.

Efx: A boy getting punched in the face and holding in his pain.

HILL

(laughing)

God, I love that I can just do that!

(MORE)

HILL (CONT'D)

You boys can't do anything about it. Omicron step right now for me.

THE NARRATOR

The boy instantly went into step, ignoring the blood dripping down his face from his nose.

Efx: The rhythmic stomps, claps, and guttural shouts of the Omicron step that Corey was practicing earlier.

HILL

That was beautiful! Why don't you all do it together. Omicron step!

Efx: The boys in unison -- the rhythmic stomps, claps, and guttural shouts of the Omicron step that Corey was practicing earlier.

BOYS

Omicron!

HILL

(laughing)

Keep dancing for me boys. Omicron step!

Efx: The boys in unison -- the rhythmic stomps, claps, and guttural shouts of the Omicron step that Corey was practicing earlier.

HILL (CONT'D)

I love the sound of this, the way you boys are moving. Don't you dare stop moving until I tell you to.

THE NARRATOR

The boys didn't stop. In perfect unison they continued and continued and continued.

BOYS

Omicron! Omicron! Omicron

THE NARRATOR

They shouted To mark each turn.

HILL

(laughing)

Dance boys! Dance!

THE NARRATOR

One of the boys started lagging behind.

(MORE)

THE NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Hill grabbed him by his hair and flung him to the ground. The rest of the boys kept going like nothing has happened. Hill quickly approach Moses.

HILL

Why are you looking at me like that? Like I'm nothing, when you're the one who's nothing! You're not even a brother.

THE NARRATOR

Hill punched him in the gut.

Efx: Moses taking a punch to the gut and groaning.

THE NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Corey faltered as he watches his friend clutching his stomach. Hill grabbed him by his shoulders and shoved him to the dirt.

HILL

Did I tell you to stop?

THE NARRATOR

He kicked Corey in the stomach.

HILL

Answer me!

COREY

(weak)

No.

THE NARRATOR

Hill stomped his booted foot on top of Corey's head. Corey had never felt more alone as his face was driven deeper into the ground.

COREY

(muffled)

I can't breathe. I can't breathe.

THE NARRATOR

Hill finally lifted his boot off of Corey's skull.

HILL

Did I tell you to stop?

COREY
(yelling)
No!

HILL
That's right.

Efx: The boys in unison -- the rhythmic stomps, claps, and guttural shouts of the Omicron step that Corey was practicing earlier.

HILL (CONT'D)
Every body stooooop!

THE NARRATOR
Still. Nobody moved. They panted and remain as upright as they coul.

HILL
Enough of that. You boys have been through a lot these past few months. It all ends tonight. But it gets worse before it gets better. You see this on my chest, over my heart? This is the measure of the Omicron men.

THE NARRATOR
Hill lifted his shirt to reveal his Omicron branding... raised skin in the shape of an O.

HILL
One by one, I'll take you out into the woods to make each of you a man.

THE NARRATOR
Hill walked toward the fire and grabbed a metal branding rod that had been stuck into the ground. He raised the O-shaped end into the fire until it burned bright red. Hill motioned to the first pledge to follow him.

HILL
You'll know when it's time for the next one. Just walk straight ahead into the woods.

THE NARRATOR
They disappeared into the forest. Corey looked at his fellow pledges.
(MORE)

THE NARRATOR (CONT'D)
Their blank faces revealed that he
wasn't the only one feeling lost.

COREY
I'm fine thanks for asking.

MOSES
That's right. I didn't ask.
(sighing)
Sorry. It's just that you need to
worry about yourself more.

Efx: A screaming boy from faraway.

THE NARRATOR
Crows burst from the tops of the
trees all at once as the echo of
the scream died out.

COREY
I guess that's the cue.

THE NARRATOR
Without hesitation, the next boy in
line walked the straight path into
the woods.

COREY
I can't believe we're getting
branded.

MOSES
You've known that! Your dad is an
O.

COREY
But that was years ago. I can't
believe they still do that. We're
not animals.

MOSES
Aren't we? Eat or be eaten man.
That's this school, this world.
It's everything. Get on board or
get gone.

Efx: A screaming boy from far away.

THE NARRATOR
The next boy disappeared into the
darkness.

MOSES

What are you so scared of? Hill already kicked your ass. A brand? It's just a little more pain, and then you're in. No pain, no gain, right?

COREY

What is with you and all these dumbass idioms? No pain, no gain? Greatness is never on sale? What does any of that mean.

Efx: A screaming boy from far away.

MOSES

I guess I'm just looking for some words that will make you understand what it means to be a man, but I don't think you're ever gonna get it.

COREY

Get what? I just got beat up in the name of brotherhood. What is that? These guys aren't my brothers.

Efx: A screaming boy from far away.

MOSES

Well they're mine.

COREY

Don't go!

MOSES

Get off me.

THE NARRATOR

Moses shoved him off and marched into the woods. Corey wanted to run away from there, from fire and branding and boys who thought these actions would transform them into men. Instead, he found himself running after Moses.

COREY

Moses? Moses?

THE NARRATOR

His eye caught the red glint of the branding rod. He saw Hill raising it high in the air.

(MORE)

THE NARRATOR (CONT'D)
Moses knelt in front of him. His eyes shut and tears slipped down his face.

MOSES
Just do it. And please don' tell the others I cried. Please don't.

HILL
Don't you worry.

THE NARRATOR
Corey watched, bracing for the branding until he noticed the sharp, stake-end of the metal rod pointing at Moses.

COREY
(yelling)
Nooo!

THE NARRATOR
Corey sprinted at Hill. The branding rod went flying as Corey tackled him to the ground. Hill landed a hard punch on Corey's face. They grappled, but Hill easily gained leverage.

CEDOREY
Help me!

THE NARRATOR
The muscles in Hill's biceps rippled as his thick fingers squeezed tighter and tighter around Corey's neck, choking him. Corey sucked in what little breath he could as he stared into Hill's cold vacant eyes. Corey's arms flailed on the ground around him. They were searching, reaching for anything.

(Efx: snapping twig)
Hill released Corey's neck, grabbed a rock and spun around. Moses sneaked up behind Hill with the branding rod held high in his hand. Hill whipped around and smashed the rock into Moses' face.

(Efx: rock into head)
again.

(Efx: rock into head)
again.

(MORE)

THE NARRATOR (CONT'D)
(Efx: rock into head)
And again.

Blood covered Hill's entire body.

COREY
(crying)
Please don't kill me. Please don't.

EFFI (BEHIND)
You're asking the wrong guy.

THE NARRATOR
Effi stepped out from behind
Corey.

COREY
Help me! Please help me.

EFFI
Again. You're asking the wrong guy.

THE NARRATOR
Corey ran to Effi's side as Hill
turned away from Moses' lifeless
body. Hill's teeth shined bright
through his blood covered face as
he leered at the two boys.

EFFI
I'm not afraid. I'm not smart or
cool or funny either. I'm nothing.
Hill, if you will?

THE NARRATOR
Hill grabbed the metal rod off the
ground and tossed it to Effi. He
caught it and in one swift motion
jammed the rod through Corey's
kneecap.

Efx: Rod through knee. Corey screaming.

COREY
What the hell is going on?

EFFI
He's acting weird right? That must
have been the weed I sold him. I
cut it with this shit my dad was
working on. Check this out.

COREY (SURPRISED)
Professor Igwe?!!!

THE NARRATOR
Effi looked over at Hill. His eyes
shrank in concentration. Hill
nodded. He took off his shirt,
walked over to Effi and grabbed the
branding rod from him. He lifted
the sharp, pointed metal end and
started scratching lines into his
chest. Streaks of blood followed
the rusted rod as Corey watched the
lines form a name, EFFI.

COREY
Oh my god.

EFFI
That's right. I put a little
something in that weed. That
something makes me the transmitter
-- aka the boss -- and makes Hill
here the receiver -- or as I like
to call him, my little bitch.
Pretty cool huh? I'm going to take
pleasure in this.

Efx: Effi does the Omicron step. As he finishes...

EFFI (CONT'D)
Omicron!

THE NARRATOR
Effi grabbed the metal stake from
Hill and lifted it high to drive it
through Corey's face.

COREY
Don't! Please don't kill me.
Please!

THE NARRATOR
Effi halted, the stake was still
high.

EFFI
Oh. I like that. The begging is
nice.

COREY
Please, let me go. Please. I'm not
one of them.

EFFI

You're here aren't you? You think that makes you better than me?

COREY

No I-- I don't think like that. I swear.

EFFI

Keep begging..

COREY

Please don't kill me. I won't tell anyone. I swear to god. I'll do whatever you want. Just don't kill me. Please.

EFFI

God I love the way you beg. It's not going to save you though.

COREY

No wait!

Efx: Effi jamming the rod through Corey's eye. Corey drops dead with a thud.

EFFI

(laughing)

Omicron!

(laughing)

Omicron? What does that even mean, huh? Why did I even want it so bad?

(laughing)

I wanted to be one before your stupid ass failed my dad's class. Isn't that right?

HILL

Yes, sir.

EFFI

You made sure I'd never be one of you after that.

(laughing)

Some joint, huh?

(laughing)

Omicron!

Efx: Rod jamming through a throat and blood gurgling out of Hill's neck.

OUTRO BUMPER

Efx: Distinctive noise.

DR. RICKETTS

Heard about this one on the news.
They called it a hazing incident
gone wrong.

KATIE

Did they go into detail?

DR. RICKETTS

Not at all.

KATIE

What happened there? I mean how
would you describe that?

DR. RICKETTS

I wouldn't.

KATIE

That kid, Effi... he made Hill do
things.

DR. RICKETTS

We don't know that. Corey could
have easily been... delusional by
that point.

KATIE

Right, but we don't see delusions.
We just see an accurate portrayal
of what the patient saw. Effi was
controlling Hill against his will.

DR. RICKETTS

Maybe Hill was on his side from the
beginning.

KATIE

A normal boy wouldn't start killing
people out of nowhere.

DR. RICKETTS

What are you getting at, huh? You
sound like you want to find
something whether it is or isn't
there. Mind control? Is that what
you're suggesting? Listen to
yourself. You sound crazy. Here's
some advice. Shut up and do the
work. Save your crazy theories for
someone else, ok?

KATIE

How can you just deny, deny, deny day in and day out? Yesterday we saw Carlisle. Today, it's this Effi guy.

DR. RICKETTS

Katie...

KATIE

Effi called himself a transmitter and mentioned a receiver. You heard him say that right? What are those things. How are you not curious?

DR. RICKETTS

Don't--

KATIE

And why is this the first body where we've seen past his death, huh? That used to happen all the time when I worked with Dr. Kinsler, but this is Corey's head... yet we clearly saw past Corey's death all the way to Hill's death.

Efx: Ricketts topples over some equipment. The sound of crashing metal.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Dr. Ricketts!

DR. RICKETTS

(yelling)

Do you want to get us killed?! Stop this now. I am not Dr. Kinsler. I'm not some older friend you can toy with.

KATIE

Screw you.

DR. RICKETTS

(yelling)

I refuse to end up like him in order to entertain your delusions.

Efx: Ricketts picking up a scalpel and placing it by Katie's neck.

DR. RICKETTS (CONT'D)

(sotto)

You feel that blade against your neck. You think I'm afraid to do it?

KATIE

Dr. Ricketts, please stop.

DR. RICKETTS

If we can't coexist, and it has to come down to you or me, I assure you, it will be me.

Efx: The scalpel hitting the floor. Ricketts' footsteps walking away.

KATIE

This isn't the first time someone's tried to kill me. I'm not afraid of you.

(beat)

How much you want to bet Effi's dad, Professor Igwe, worked for the center?

Efx: The footsteps continue. A door opens and shuts. The recorder is removed from the purse.

KATIE (CONT'D)

(into recorder)

Roth-Lodbow Center for Advanced Research. Project Cyclops, Day 13, completed.

Efx: recorder button press/tone.

END OF EPISODE