

HOLDING SOUTH

Issue #1 "Going Alone"

PAGE ONE (FIVE PANELS)

Panel One: (WIDE PANEL) An old, abandoned farmhouse turned post-apocalyptic, military headquarters. Out front, three soldiers stand guard: MAE, 15, her make-shift uniform is far too big for her and she has an innocence that is sharply contrasted by PAULA, 23, tough in physique and attitude, with buzzed short blonde hair, and JOE, 18, the hardened remnants of a farm boy turned soldier. In the distance, a drone carries a plain boxed package across the blue sky as it heads straight for the farmhouse.

1 CAP:

Somewhere south of Santa Fe.

2 CAP:

Day 4,821 since the arrival. The Guard is quickly running out of soldiers, and the new recruits are getting younger and younger.

SFX:

WHIRRRRRRRR

Panel Two: The drone looks enormous in the foreground as it lowers toward the ground with the package in its grasp. Mae watches with fascination while Paula and Joe aim their guns at it, ready to shoot.

SFX:

WHIRRR

JOE:

What the hell is it?

PAULA:

On my **mark...**

Panel Three: Gunfire blows the drone to pieces as the package tumbles to the ground.

PAULA: (OP)

Fire!

PAGE ONE, CONTINUED

SFX:

FRRRRRRRRRAK!

Panel Four: Mae bends down beside the package, her hand about to touch it. Destroyed pieces of the drone litter the ground around her. Paula and Joe stand behind Mae with looks of terror on their faces.

MAE:

What do you think it could be?

PAULA:

Wait!

JOE:

Don't touch it!

Panel Five: Package in her hands, Mae turns back to them with an expression of hope and excitement, but Paula and Joe are already walking back toward the farmhouse, with looks of disgust on their faces.

MAE:

It could be from Hank! **He said** he'd send help.

PAULA:

Hank's dead.

PAGE TWO (FIVE PANELS)

Panel One: The living room inside the farmhouse. Windows have boards across them, the furniture is old and ripped, and the overall feeling is that the old farmhouse may be a shelter, but it hasn't been a home in a very long time. The package sits on the table in the middle of the group. Mae sits alone on the couch. Paula sits in one arm chair while Joe glares at Mae from the other arm chair.

MAE: **(COMMENT)**

I think we should open it.

JOE: **(RESPONSE)**

No way.

MAE: **(COUNTER-RESPONSE)**

But Hank said --

Panel Two: Joe stands, the package appears smaller on the table before him, as he towers over it. Everything around him appears much darker now.

JOE:

Hank said, Hank said. That's all you ever say...

JOE:

...Another troop got one of these packages... they opened it and **everyone died!**

Panel Three: Mae, still seated on the couch, has one eyebrow raised as she looks up at Joe. The package still on the table between them.

MAE:

How'd you hear about it then? I mean if **everyone** died?

Panel Four: Joe's face reflects his anger as he holds Mae by the shirt. The frame is a tight medium two-shot.

PAGE TWO, CONTINUED

JOE:

You callin' me a **liar**?

MAE:

It's just that Hank said he'd send help.

Panel Five: Paula stands, all her tough coolness on display, a look of disgust on her face.

PAULA:

Hank abandoned us... and you let him do it. If he isn't dead, he **should be!**

PAGE THREE (SEVEN PANELS)

Panel One: (WIDE PANEL) Flashback. A purple tint over the whole page. The old farmhouse sits in the far distance as HANK, 36, scruffy, a seasoned soldier, probably the oldest one left, stands beside Mae out in the dry, yellow field. Hank's powerful frame dwarfs Mae as she holds her gun up under her chin and aims at a makeshift monster, built out of junk, in front of them.

HANK:

Keep it tight. Don't let the kickback knock your teeth out.

Panel Two: Mae falls backward onto her ass as the gun fires.

SFX:

BAM!

Panel Three: Hank laughs as Mae stands up, angry.

HANK:

You're too little to be part of the Guard. Christ! Now, they're sending us **babies!**

MAE:

I was the **oldest one left.**

Panel Four: (WIDE PANEL) Mae paces, arms in the air, obviously throwing a fit as Hank watches, a much more serious expression on his face now.

MAE:

Everyone knows being chosen for the guard is a death sentence. No one ever returns.

HANK:

I'm still alive.

Panel Five: Mae's big eyes look up at Hank as he towers over her.

PAGE THREE, CONTINUED

HANK:

If you trust me and **do exactly as I say...** I promise you'll survive.

Panel Six: Hank sits with his gun resting on his lap and a piece of straw grass between Hank's teeth while Mae goes push-ups in front of him.

HANK: **(COMMENT)**

If we don't protect the people of the south... everyone will die.

MAE: **(RESPONSE)**

But we have no idea how to beat them.

HANK: **(COUNTER-RESPONSE)**

We **use our heads** until we figure it out!

Panel Seven: Hank's face fills the frame as he winks.

HANK:

And **always count to 500.**

PAGE FOUR (SEVEN PANELS)

Panel One: (WIDE PANEL) Exterior farmhouse. Panic fills the frame as several more SOLDIERS, all under 25, race across the grounds, armed but terrified. Joe stands in the open doorway, mouth agape. Red lights bounce across the frame, indicating an alarm going off.

SFX:

WHHHHOOOOOP. WHHHHOOOOOP.

SOLDIER #1:

Code red! **Code red!**

SOLDIER #2:

They're right on our tail!

Panel Two: Inside the farmhouse. Paula points as she gives orders while Joe, Mae and Soldiers work together to build up blockades in front of the windows. Some Soldiers kneel at the windows, guns aimed outside at an unseen enemy.

PAULA:

Prepare for **attack!**...

PAULA:

...Move that chest in front of the window!

Panel Three: Mae reaches for the package. Joe grabs her arm before she can touch it.

MAE:

It was sent here for a **reason!**

Panel Four: Joe's eyebrows furrow as he yells at Mae, her arm still in his grasp.

JOE:

For all we know it lead those things right to us.

PAGE FOUR, CONTINUED

Panel Five: Mae yanks her arm out of Joe's grasp, a look of shock on his face.

MAE:

You don't know what you're talking about.

Panel Six: Mae reaches again for the package, still on the table. A look of determination on her face.

MAE:

I'm not afraid of a box!

Panel Seven: Paula, deadly serious, aims a gun directly at Mae's head.

PAULA:

Touch it, and **I'll kill you.**

PAGE FIVE (THREE PANELS)

Panel One: (WIDE PANEL) It's too late - they're under attack. Paula, Joe, Mae and Soldiers all shoot at an unseen enemy just outside the farmhouse.

SOLDIER #2;
They're here!

PAULA:
Shoot the bastards!

SFX:
FRRRRRRRRRAK!

SFX:
FRRRRRRRRRAK!

Panel Two: (WIDE PANEL - Chopped into smaller tilted panels to show the action moving from left to right. Each small panel reflects a piece of the action. See attached example). A Clawed arms wipes out the giant blockade with a single swing. Soldiers shoot as wood and glass fall around them.

MONSTER:
RAAAOOOORRRR!

SOLDIER #1:
Look out!

SFX:
FRRRRRRRRRAK!

Panel Three: (WIDE PANEL) The farmhouse collapses around them as the massive clawed arm reaches in and grabs Paula. Mae stares eyes wide, gun aimed but in shock.

MONSTER:
RAAAOOOORRRR!

PAULA:
Shoot, Mae! **Shoot it!**

PAGE SIX (THREE PANELS)

Panel One: (WIDE PANEL) Tears stream down Mae's face as she screams and shoots out of what's left of the window frame.

MAE:

Ahhhhh!

SFX:

FRRRRRRRRRAK!

Panel Two: (WIDE PANEL) Paula's mutilated body flies through the air as it is thrown back in through the window and glass shatters over Mae and Joe, Mae shields her head and ducks down. Joe stares at Paula's body in the air, devastation on his face.

SFX:

CRASH

MAE:

Look out!

JOE:

Paula!

Panel Three: (WIDE PANEL) Mae, half buried under rubble covers her head with her eyes closed tight.

MAE: (WHISPER)

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6....

PAGE SEVEN (FIVE PANELS)

Panel One: (WIDE PANEL) Purple tint to entire page for flashback. Hank and Mae examine the edge of the woods. A clear path of broken and smashed trees lays in one direction while the other direction is undisturbed.

HANK:

Ever notice those things only ever head **south**?

Panel Two: (WIDE PANEL) Hank rubs his chin as he looks off in the direction of the undisturbed trees. Mae much smaller in the frame listens at a distance behind him.

HANK:

It has me wondering if there are survivors up there. If so, I figure they must **know something we don't**....

HANK:

...I'm heading to the north wall and **I'm going alone**.

Panel Three: (WIDE PANEL) Mae hangs onto Hank as she begs him. Hank looks down at her with disappointment.

MAE:

No! **You can't leave us**. We'll die without you!

HANK:

Attention!...

HANK:

...**You're a soldier now** and I expect you to act like one.

Panel Four: (WIDE PANEL) Mae stands tall at attention, chin held high, as Hank heads into the woods with the wave of his hand.

HANK:

I promise **on my life** that I will send back help.

PAGE SEVEN, CONTINUED

MAE:

Hank!...

Panel Five: (WIDE PANEL) Hank disappears into the woods as Mae stands at attention alone near the edge of the woods. A tear rolls down her cheek.

MAE:

...Count to 500!

PAGE EIGHT (SEVEN PANELS)

Panel One: Mae stares, eyes wide at Joe who is barely alive, flat on his ass, leaning against the wall with a giant shard of glass sticks out of his neck.

SFX: (OP)
FRRRRRRRAK!

SOLDIER #2: (OP)
Help! Someone help... Ahhhh!

Panel Two: Mae grabs the package from the table. Joe watches, eyes wide, but he can't speak... he reaches an arm out but it's useless.

Panel Three: Mae, determined, tears the package open.

SFX:
RIP

Panel Four: Mae holds up a handwritten note and reads it aloud.

MAE:
"They don't like the sound these make. You won't hear it, but **those fuckers will**. Come to the north wall. - Hank."

Panel Five: Close on Mae's hand in front of Joe's face. In her hands are a bunch of small, black, clip-on devices. Joe's eyes wide as tears well.

Panel Six: A clawed arm crashes through the roof and picks up Joe. Mae too close for comfort, looks shocked as she slips the device on her jacket - a blue light glows from the device.

MONSTER:
RAAAOOOORRRR!

PAGE EIGHT, CONTINUED

SFX:
CRASH

JOE:
Ahhhhh!

Panel Seven: Mae kneels on the floor, arms over her head as the walls of the farmhouse tumble down around her.

MAE: (WHISPER)
...47, 48, 49, 50, 51...

PAGE NINE (SIX PANELS)

Panel One: (WIDE PANEL) All is quiet. Mae sits up and looks around... she is the only survivor. The farmhouse is completely destroyed. Only one partial wall with the front door remains standing. The blue light continues to glow from the device clipped onto her jacket.

Panel Two: Mae empties the box full of devices into her large jacket pocket.

Panel Three: Mae removes a gun from Soldier #2's dead hand.

Panel Four: (WIDE PANEL) Mae picks up a gun, several already collected under her arm and she wears a sack full of extra ammo across her body.

Panel Five: (WIDE PANEL) Through the barely standing farmhouse front door, Mae stares at the path of trees heading north, where she watched Hank disappear.

MAE:
I owe you my life, Hank....

MAE:
...But **I won't follow you** to the north wall.

Panel Six: (WIDE PANEL) Mae follows the path of destroyed trees as she heads south alone.

MAE:
It's my duty to protect the people in the south...

MAE:
...Like you said.

THE END