

LOUIS ~~THE MONSTER HUNTER~~ Conservationist

Written by

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Logline:

When a closeted pacifist learns that his destiny as a 'monster hunter' really just means hurting endangered creatures, he rebels against the patriarchal elders who've controlled the world for centuries to protect the very 'monsters' they've commanded him to hunt.

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TEASER

EXT. JOHN WAYNE HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

The tall building casts spindly shadows in the moonlight.
Bela Lugosi would feel right at home.

INT. JOHN WAYNE HIGH - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The empty halls, still and dimly lit. Ominous. Then -

INT. JOHN WAYNE HIGH - CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

- *CRISSHH!!* A window pane shatters, the jagged glass knocked in by a hand that smoothly slides the window open.

This particular hand belongs to a **TEENAGE SOLDIER** (17, crisp and efficient) who dives through it and lands on his feet. He wears a self-satisfied expression and a gun.

INT. JOHN WAYNE HIGH - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

He pads through and jimmies the lock of the door to the-

INT. JOHN WAYNE HIGH - BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

He stalks downstairs, gun drawn. And then, in the shadows-

SOMETHING MOVES! A rat. It's just a rat. He sighs. The rat smells a bit of cheese, darts towards it-

-and there are *eyes glowing in the dark* directly above the rat. For whatever creature lives down here, it's dinnertime.

The soldier lifts his gun, aiming for the creature. He **SHOOTS** into the dark— and misses. He goes to shoot again and-

A **FILTHY SCARRED PAW** reaches out from behind him and **CLAMPS DOWN OVER HIS MOUTH**.

In the dark, another creature's paw nudges the cheese closer to the rat. The rat nibbles on it happily.

Nearby, there's a growing pile of gnawed bones.

Muffled screams. Bones crunch. The wet slurps of eating.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE**EXT. JOHN WAYNE HIGH SCHOOL - BASEBALL FIELD - DAY**

Gym class, a contemporary torture chamber disguised with the fresh scent of Kentucky Bluegrass. The final outcasts are standing trial, judged by the TWO TEAM CAPTAINS.

TEAM CAPTAIN #1

Okay, so we'll go with... Sharry.

SHARRY twirls her hair and stares blankly ahead, oblivious.

TEAM CAPTAIN #1 (CONT'D)

Sharry!

Oh! Sharry finally hears her name, joins the first team.

TEAM CAPTAIN #2

Then we'll take Max.

MAX takes a hit from his inhaler, relieved. Joins team two.

Which just leaves... LOUIS MORETTI (15, meticulous and gentle, Felix Unger with acne).

TEAM CAPTAIN #1

So who gets Louis?

Louis stands wishboned between the two teams. Helpless. A DOVE perches overhead, unseen. It stares at Louis.

INT. JOHN WAYNE HIGH - HALLWAY - DAY

Louis vacuums out his locker with his mini-vac. He doesn't notice CHAD (16, still likes cutting worms in half) and his buddy DUNCAN until it's too late. Chad grabs Louis' backpack.

LOUIS

Chad, can I have that back? Please?

CHAD

Shut up. Duncan, get it.

Chad throws the bag down the hall. Duncan collects the backpack and starts jogging it back.

CHAD (CONT'D)

I meant throw it, dipshit.

LOUIS

Chad-

Chad cuffs Louis lightly on the back of the head, a warning.

CHAD

I said shut up. Duncan, throw.

Duncan throws the knapsack and - the zipper is undone. Books tumble out at Chad's feet. He picks up a postcard mixed in.

CHAD (CONT'D)

"Louis, sorry I didn't say goodbye.
I love you - Mom." That's so sweet.

Chad stares Louis down as he rips the card into confetti, flicking the shredded paper into the air.

Instantly furious, Louis *barrels* into Chad and the bigger boy *crashes* hard. Chad grins, showing his teeth.

CHAD (CONT'D)

See, now I'm gonna kill you.

Whoops. Louis considers his options and bolts.

INT. JOHN WAYNE HIGH - SECOND HALLWAY - DAY

Louis sprints around the corner and searches desperately for someplace, anyplace to hide, and sees - a door. "Basement: Do Not Enter." A split-second decision.

INT. JOHN WAYNE HIGH - BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Louis *jumps* in, *slams* the door, and stands panting. Scuffling feet run past. Retreating. Louis breathes a sigh.

He goes to leave... but the door locked from the outside.
Well shit.

LOUIS

Anybody out there? Hello! Anybody!!

Louis is pounding on the door, getting really frantic, when-

JUSTIN (15, eager and soon-to-be handsome, like an awkward kitten on the verge of cat-dom) opens it. Louis is awestruck.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

Hi.

JUSTIN

Hi.

They grin at each other.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
Hold that thought.

He closes the door, leaving Louis in the dark once again.
Wait, is this yet another form of casual cruelty?

CHAD
(muffled)
New kid, you see anybody run by
here?

Louis listens for Justin's reply. At the bottom of the stairs, GLOWING EYES stare up at him, watching. Waiting. Louis doesn't notice them.

JUSTIN
(muffled)
He went into that new wing. The one
under construction.

The sound of feet running. After a moment, Justin opens the door again. Louis can't think of anything to say, so:

LOUIS
Hi.

JUSTIN
Hi.

LOUIS
Thanks for that. I'm Louis.

JUSTIN
Justin.

They grin again, both just a bit dopey.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
You should probably go before they
come back.

LOUIS
Right. Okay, yeah, bye.

Neither one moves.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Louis trudges home, exhausted. Looks up and notices -
- The dove, in the tree overhead. Staring at him.

Louis ignores it and walks past the tree. The dove flutters to a branch on the next tree in front of Louis. Goes back to staring.

This has been a rough day and now a bird is literally stalking him.

LOUIS

What? What do you want?

In response, the dove swoops down, trying to land on Louis. Louis starts running, thrashing ineffectually to keep the bird at bay.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

Get away! Stay away! I do not want to catch the Avian Flu!

With all his spastic flailing, the dove can't land on Louis -
- So it poops on his head.

INT. LOUIS' APARTMENT - ENTRYWAY - DAY

Louis enters the dingy apartment and bends down to pet CORY THE CORGI, his bulbous rescue dog. Cory is so ungainly that he makes all other corgis look like doberman pinschers.

He notices a scrawled post-it note on the table:

Sorry Lou, I know I promised we'd eat together but there was an extra shift open. Here's \$ for a pizza. Love you - Dad

And under the post-it note, a crumpled \$20 bill. He smooths it out.

Disappointed, Louis grabs the bill, goes to the-

INT. LOUIS' APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

-silverware drawer, and lifts up the plastic to reveal: a large stack of similarly smoothed crumpled bills. He adds it to the pile.

Louis preheats the oven, pulls out a mixing bowl. Notices his hair in the mirror, still sticky with white poop. He turns on the kitchen faucet and ducks his head beneath the water when-

BZZZ

The doorbell crackles. Louis sighs. He hastily dries his hair with a dishtowel and, hair sticking up, returns to the-

INT. LOUIS' APARTMENT - ENTRYWAY - DAY

-and opens the door to:

FRANCES GALSWORTHY (53, primly British). She wears a floral-print robe that looks like it was stitched together from household curtains. Which it was. And on her shoulder:

That same goddamned dove.

Cory barks at the dove, incensed that birds exist. In response, the dove flutters into the apartment and preens regally on the bookshelf. Pure pandemonium.

Frances looks Louis up and down, assessing him.

FRANCES

Oh my.

LOUIS

Hi?

FRANCES

No, this can't be right.

LOUIS

Can I help you?

FRANCES

I don't think so, no.

The dove flutters down and lands on Louis' shoulder, defiantly making a statement to Frances. Louis, defeated, doesn't even bother trying to push it off.

FRANCES (CONT'D)

(can hardly believe it)

Apparently, yes. It seems as though
- you - have been selected to
protect the world from the Forces
of Evil. The monsters and the like.

What religion is this lady trying to sell exactly?

LOUIS

...I think maybe you got the wrong
apartment.

FRANCES

You're Louis Moretti, are you not?

LOUIS

How'd you know that?

Cory keeps right on barking. The dove pretends not to notice.

FRANCES

It's on your buzzer. Louis, I've come to inform you that you have been chosen to - will you *please* stop that animal's incessant noise?

LOUIS

I can't stop my dog from barking. And your bird pooped on me.

FRANCES

Odd, she's never done that before.

Frances pulls out a small whistle and blows into it. No sound comes out, but Cory immediately stops barking and lays down, docile. The dove promptly returns to Frances' shoulder.

Frances hands Louis a business card with **the Ancient Ones' symbol at the top** that says:

FRANCES GALSWORTHY

ORDER OF THE ANCIENT ONES

LOUIS

...what is this?

FRANCES

Oh, do you like it? I printed it myself.

LOUIS

Um, yeah, it's - sturdy. What's the Order of the Ancient Ones?

FRANCES

You can think of us as centuries old mentors. We're responsible for guiding and helping the Chosen Ones. That's you.

LOUIS

...right... Okay. So do you have a free book you want me to read?

FRANCES

No, there is no free book.

LOUIS

So... a pamphlet?

FRANCES

I'm informing you that you have been chosen by fate to save humanity from evil, there is not a 'pamphlet'.

LOUIS

Save humanity from the monsters.

FRANCES

Yes. And the demons.

Louis looks at Francis, in her full floral regalia.

LOUIS

Can I help you call somebody? A family member, or a doctor maybe?

FRANCES

Oh, this is absurd. I'll prove it. Come with me.

LOUIS

Come with you? Oh. Um, well, no, not right now. Maybe some other time. But not now. Okay, bye!

He quickly shuts the door in Frances' face and locks it. Both locks. Plus the chain.

Louis returns to the fridge and starts collecting ingredients for batter.

BZZZ

The doorbell rings again. *BZZZ*. And again.

Louis ignores it.

INT. JOHN WAYNE HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

The busy time before classes start. Louis is once again vacuuming out his locker. Justin approaches.

JUSTIN

Hey, I just wanted to check in after yesterday - are you okay?

LOUIS

Hi! Thanks, yeah, I'm fine.

JUSTIN

It seemed kind of intense.

LOUIS
I'm used to it.

JUSTIN
You shouldn't have to be. So, look,
could you maybe show me around
today? This is my first time in
public school and I keep getting
lost.

LOUIS
Yes! Though actually... you
probably don't want to be seen
talking to me. Someone might
notice.

Justin scans the hallway: nobody is paying attention to them.

JUSTIN
I'll take my chances.

Justin grins. Louis smiles, basking in Justin's warmth. He
pulls a tin out of his locker.

LOUIS
Okay. Okay great. Um, so, actually
last night I was baking, and I made
way too many cookies so I brought
you some as a thank you. And it
seemed like the neighborly thing to
do. You being new and all.

Justin takes the tin and opens it.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
They're lingonberry.

JUSTIN
Nobody's ever made me cookies
before.

LOUIS
Oh, well - come to think of it,
yeah, that is super weird. Who
bakes cookies? Not me. Actually I
bought those.

Justin picks up a misshapen one.

JUSTIN
They look homemade.

LOUIS
Because I bought them that way.
Homemade.

JUSTIN
You purchased me homemade cookies?

LOUIS
Yes. No. Okay, so I did bake them.
I'm sorry. I don't know what I was
thinking. Here, just-

Louis tries to snatch the tin back.

JUSTIN
What do you think you're doing?
These are *my* cookies.

He takes a bite of one. Bliss.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
Thank you.

INT. JOHN WAYNE HIGH - ART CLASSROOM - DAY

Louis and Justin walk into art class. On the blackboard,
written in massive shaky handwriting, a name: MS. GALSWORTHY.

And standing in front of the blackboard, in more formal
curtain-robos, is Frances.

LOUIS
Oh no. Why is she here?

JUSTIN
Do you know her?

LOUIS
No. No, I definitely don't.

FRANCES
Hello everyone, settle down please.
And Mr. Moretti, hello again.

Louis, mortified, tries to pull his head into his shirt like
it's a turtle shell. He can't, so he avoids meeting anyone's
eye and slinks over to his chair.

LATER

The bell rings and kids start filing out. Louis sidles up to
Frances as discreetly as he can.

LOUIS
This is illegal.

FRANCES
Mr. Moretti, art in this country is frequently vulgar, it is often profane, but it is thankfully not 'illegal'.

LOUIS
I meant you stalking me. First your bird and now you.

FRANCES
Don't be ridiculous, I'm hardly 'stalking' you. I'm merely informing you that the world is in grave danger and you are the only one who can save it.

LOUIS
Where's Mrs. Walters? If you hurt her, I'm calling the police.

FRANCES
Really, Louis, your imagination. I gave her a large sum of money and now she is on a cruise liner.

LOUIS
Okay, so I guess that's okay then. But the stalking is still not okay!

FRANCES
Louis, if you would just let me show you-

LOUIS
I gotta go, I have Physics next period.

FRANCES
I'll write you a note.

LOUIS
No thanks. I'm just going to-

Louis turns to leave - and sees Chad waiting for him in the hallway. A shark biding his time among the guppies.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
-go in a moment. I'm leaving in a moment.

Frances notices Chad standing in the hallway.

FRANCES

The beefy boy can come too. He'll
act as an example.

LOUIS

An example of what? No, don't-

FRANCES

You there! Come in here, please.

Chad saunters in.

LOUIS

(under his breath)

What are you doing?

FRANCES

A demonstration to prove to you
once and for all that you are the
Chosen One, so that we can begin
our training.

LOUIS

I don't need you to prove-

FRANCES

(to Chad)

What's your name?

CHAD

Chad.

FRANCES

Which is short for Charles, I
presume?

CHAD

Nobody calls me that.

FRANCES

Oh? Why not?

CHAD

'Cause it's a pussy name.

FRANCES

I see, so you go only by the
diminutive?

Chad bristles.

CHAD
What'd you just say to me?

FRANCES
You use only the sobriquet.

Chad doesn't know what that means.

CHAD
Chad. I'm Chad.

FRANCES
Quite. Chad. My name is Frances
Galsworthy. I'd like for you to
join myself and Louis as part of a
demonstration.

CHAD
Lady, I'm not gonna-

Frances pulls out her whistle and blows into it. Once again,
it doesn't make a sound. But Chad's eyes get sleepy.

LOUIS
Wait, so that works on humans too?

FRANCES
Some humans. Come along, boys.

EXT. JOHN WAYNE HIGH - NEW WING UNDER CONSTRUCTION - DAY

Frances, Louis, and Chad (still in his trance) make their way
through the rubble of construction. The bell for the next
period rings.

LOUIS
I don't think this is safe. What
exactly are we doing out here?

FRANCES
I told you, a demonstration.

LOUIS
That clarifies nothing. We're
supposed to be wearing hard hats.
There was a sign about hard hats.

Frances is ignoring him, so Louis continues talking.

LOUIS (CONT'D)
(re: Chad)
He's not going to be stuck like
that forever, is he?
(MORE)

LOUIS (CONT'D)

Whatever you did to him, it's going to, like, wear off at some point?

FRANCES

It will wear off.

LOUIS

Okay. Good. That's good.

(thinks, then:)

But it's not going to wear off soon, though, right? Because, you know, he's not exactly going to be happy when-

FRANCES

Louis. Focus, please.

LOUIS

Focus. Right. Focus on what?

Frances gestures to a **large opulent sword** handle sticking out of a block of concrete, **engraved with the same Ancient Ones' symbol** that was on Frances' business card.

LOUIS (CONT'D)

I should focus on the enormous sword. Of course.

FRANCES

Only a Chosen One can pull the sword from the stone.

LOUIS

So it's like King Arthur? O-kay. Why is there a sword buried in concrete on school grounds? And how has nobody else noticed this?

FRANCES

This is where we keep it. When a Chosen One dies-

LOUIS

Dies?

FRANCES

-the Ancient Ones always put it back here for safekeeping, until a new One is called.

LOUIS

The Chosen One dies? Why are you just mentioning the dying thing now?

FRANCES

Charles, please step forward and attempt to pull the sword from the block.

LOUIS

We're minors. Can we even legally hold a sword?

Chad, eyes half lidded, tries to pull out the sword. He grunts and strains, but the sword doesn't budge.

FRANCES

Enough, Charles. Now, Louis: step forward to receive your destiny.

LOUIS

...no thanks. I don't want it.

FRANCES

You 'don't want it'?

LOUIS

This can't be my destiny.

FRANCES

Louis, there is a portal to the underworld housed beneath this High School which leads to all of the monsters and demons that have ever and can ever be imagined.

LOUIS

Unh-hunh.

FRANCES

That portal is guarded by a race of nearly-indestructible demons born from your worst nightmares. The Inexpugnabilis Antrumterran.

LOUIS

Those aren't words.

FRANCES

Latin derivation. It means "the invincible ones who dwell in the Earth's hollow". Throughout history, they've been interpreted as countless other beasts - monsters, werewolves, Jules Verne even based his 'Morlocks' off of them.

(MORE)

FRANCES (CONT'D)

You are the Chosen One: all that stands between these creatures and the other monster races like them and this world's annihilation.

LOUIS

You're saying *I'm* the only person standing between humanity and some invincible demons? That's insane. I'm not even old enough to drive.

FRANCES

You must fight the creatures, that is foretold. And in order to battle the Inexpugnabilis Antrumterran, I am offering you a legendary sword.

LOUIS

But I'm not who you're looking for! You said it yourself.

FRANCES

In that case, you won't be able to pull it from the - concrete.

Louis looks at the hypnotized bully standing next to him. This all *cannot be happening right now*. But it is happening, so...

Tentatively, he steps forward and halfheartedly yanks at the sword lodged in the concrete.

It slips out like butter.

Unfortunately, it's also way too heavy for him - Louis promptly falls over and narrowly misses committing seppuku.

FRANCES (CONT'D)

Hmm. Well, in any case you've received it. Return to the art room after school and I will train you on how to use it.

Louis looks warily at Chad, still under hypnosis.

LOUIS

Can I at least get my own whistle?

END OF ACT ONE