
INTRODUCTION

HALTED will be an eight-hour post-apocalyptic audio drama.

Set across the North American state of Georgia and beyond during the early 2000s and inspired by sci-fi comics, dystopian and post-apocalyptic TV dramas, films, video games and podcasts, where survival becomes less important than saving family...

...But you can't do anything if you're dead. So stay alive.

The feeling of fear and isolation after waking up from a coma spurred Officer Rick Grimes into a world full of death to find his family... the thirst for vengeance spread across Gotham City like a plague clashes with Batman's deep-rooted desire to bring criminals to justice... the embodiment of courage demonstrated through Katniss Everdeen against the Capitol... the trials and tribulations of Luke, Han and Leia's leadership to rid the galaxy of the Empire... **they all need to save someone else.**

Crackling audio, deep characters, and emotional from the get-go, HALTED is a story woven with firm reminders to stay resilient in the face of adversity, by addressing the importance of keeping your humanity in the darkest of times, even when it's been stripped to its bare bones and all that remains is **persistent grief.**

THE STORY

Months after society crumbled, LUCY OWENS moves on instinct. Revenge drives her forward. An organisation with dark intentions has kidnapped her family, and she will stop at nothing to get them back — even if it means facing the undead alone. After losing her group and being forced to survive in the dark, Lucy's hunt for answers becomes a deadly obsession as this new world has nothing left to give — and everything she has to take.

Her brother, former paramedic, MIKE OWENS, leads what's left of their survivor group in Georgia. Practical and controlled, Mike is determined to protect his young son, HENRY, and give the survivors a chance at something resembling a real life. Survival requires aid... and allies. Loudmouthed fisherman, ANDY BILLINGTON, and once-spirited school teacher, JACKIE FORSTER, each trust Mike's leadership and judgement... until danger closes in.

Mike loses everything within a matter of minutes. An undead herd overwhelms the camp, tearing the group apart — killing his wife, ABIGAIL, and scattering the survivors, including Henry. His grief hardens into purpose, as his mission becomes clear: Find Henry.

But it isn't that simple.

Henry isn't lost.

He was *taken*.

After scouring the forest for hours, Lucy finds his toy elephant and a small stitched label—'NY Medical Center' on a piece of ripped fabric, which, impossibly, is hundreds of miles away from where they stand.

It's their only lead.

Together, the siblings travel north for months across the ruins of America's East Coast, relying on each other as their bond is tested by grief, danger, and clashing instincts. Finally, their leads get them to Manhattan, home territory, a city long collapsed. The streets are lined with the dead. The Twin Towers stand strong in the heart of darkness. Rusted, stripped vehicles sit abandoned like toys. The city is a junkyard, and somewhere inside it is Henry.

Inside an abandoned police station, they find a walkie-talkie — lying next to a corpse in science scrubs. Henry's voice speaks, crying out for help — but before they can act, the siblings are ambushed by masked guards. Mike is taken. Lucy runs, now left alone.

She must survive the undead, hunt down the mysterious forces, and locate this 'Sanctum' that has torn her family apart, alone — all while trying to save the only family she has left. Nothing — not even herself — can stop this.

STRUCTURE

HALTED will be structured as an eight-part series with episodes lasting between thirty to forty minutes. There will be a wrap-around narrative segment at the beginning of each episode, informing listeners of the content and the directed target audience. There will be a definitive beginning, middle and end. The lead characters will have complete arcs, but there is a strong possibility that the series could be expanded in later seasons.

Episodes one and two will be released together. The remaining six will be released monthly to allow time for speculation, audience engagement and high production efforts.

ACT ONE (Setup and Inciting Incident — episodes 1-3) will depict the chaos of the world collapsing, with cities on fire, the population in despair, and the gradual fall of law and order. Then, the story opens later in the timeline with Lucy Owens, a determined survivor, haunted by the loss of her friends and family. She's alone, scavenging for supplies amidst the ruins of Manhattan, before the story cuts back in time to the survivor group with Mike, Abi, Henry, Jackie, and Andy. They share stories; experiencing one night of serenity. Mike talks with Henry away from the camp about his responsibilities, until Lucy screams that an undead herd is attacking the camp. Mike orders her to look out for Henry; Abi dies; among the survivors, Henry runs off and goes missing. By the end of episode two, a simple search becomes a journey across America for the kidnapped boy; leading Mike and Lucy back to home territory.

ACT TWO (Confrontation and Rising Tension — episodes 4-6) will have the duo arrive at Manhattan, raising the stakes as the characters face-off with rogue survivors, intertwined with the discovery of a conspiracy. They come across a police station which contains their next clue to find Henry. This will lead to Mike's capture by the antagonistic group known as 'The Sanctum'. If Lucy wants to save him, she will have to prepare to enter the lion's den herself; The Twin Towers awaits.

ACT THREE (Rescue and Resolution — episodes 7-8) will climax with Lucy confronting The Sanctum's leader in a city she once called home, now overrun by undead and human threats. She rescues Henry, frees Mike, but the ordeal leaves him blind. A stark reminder of the cost of survival. Even in victory, the shadows of death and loss linger as Lucy confronts her new reality with a sharpened sense of the risks that are worth taking and the everlasting cost of her own vengeance against Dr. Iris Walsh.

tone and style

The sound design will be intense, dramatic and unsettling, with abrupt audio cues paired with sharp-witted dialogue. The pacing will be fast at the start, gradually slowing down as the plot unfolds, though change is constantly in motion. I intend for the listener to feel on edge as the narrative explores dark themes of death, loss, and hopelessness—but these all eventually lead to feelings of hope.

Set at the beginning of the 2000s, HALTED will reference period details from the 1990s, such as analog technology and station wagons. These details are subtly woven into the story, reflecting a world where people have lost possessions and survival takes priority. A military walkie-talkie (two-way radio) serves as a recurring MacGuffin throughout the series.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

The collapse destroyed society on September 8th 2001. No one knows what caused the outbreak. Time was lost after that day. Husbands lost wives. Brothers lost sisters. Entire families and communities were ripped apart by the undead—rippers, biters, no one knows what to call them. The military effort to contain the infection failed, which spreads through saliva, blood, and most commonly, through bites. Some people have decided to band together and help each other survive. They've formed groups with potential to create lifelong bonds, connected through complex post-traumatic stress and the desperate need to stay alive.

THE SURVIVORS

LUCY OWENS, thirty-three, is Mike's sister and Henry's nephew. Raised in New Jersey. Sharp, expressive, and emotionally transparent. Think Phoebe Waller-Bridge in Indiana Jones. Disputes Mike's choices and at times, is his antagonistic force, but strong moral compass. Cares deeply to find Henry, and becomes increasingly resilient when Mike starts doubting her capabilities, eventually leading to his capture by The Sanctum. She will become the key to saving both Mike and Henry as the conspiracy surrounding this organisation leads her to discover the truth about the possible cause of the outbreak.

MICHAEL 'MIKE' OWENS, thirty-seven, is the father of Henry, the missing boy. Also grew up in New Jersey, and trained to become a paramedic. He made a happy life there, until a family holiday to Georgia coincided with the world's collapse. He was forced to become the leader of a survivor group, until they, along with his wife, were slaughtered by the undead. He is persistent, drinks when he can, and struggles to keep it together, as observed by his sister, Lucy. Despite all this, he is a loving father who would go to incredible lengths to protect his family. Over the course of the series, Mike's desperation will lead him into darker territory with the antagonistic group, The Sanctum, and his loyalties will be tested with Lucy.

HENRY OWENS, twelve, is a sweet, sensitive kid forced to grow up fast. Surrounded by adults, he has picked up their language, their harsh rules, losing much of his childhood along the way. He keeps himself to himself. He used to enjoy drawing, video games, and playing on the swings, but now survival is all he knows.

He has a close relationship with his father, Mike. His auntie, Lucy, loves him very much but comes across as closed off and denies him emotional support, leaving a quiet wound that follows him everywhere. He doesn't know it yet, but his life hangs in the balance — as he might be the key to solving the virus.

ABIGAIL 'ABI' OWENS, thirty-one, is Mike's wife and Henry's mother. She wants the best for her son, supporting her husband's decisions and choices for the sake of finding somewhere better to build a life for her family and the group. Abigail's wish is the overarching theme of the narrative, as her beliefs shape the choices that fuel the conflict between Mike and Lucy on their journey to find Henry and beyond their goal.

JACKIE FORSTER, twenty-nine, used to teach school lessons. The world ended, and so did any illusions about safety. Pragmatic, guarded, and willing to make the brutal choices to keep her people alive, Jackie doesn't flinch at hard choices—because in this world, hesitation gets you killed.

ANDREW 'ANDY' BILLINGTON, fifty-one, came up from the Florida Keys on a road trip to see more of America. He didn't get far. Loves fishing and talking, but the ruins around him were about to show that in this new world, only one would keep him alive. Also a massive gun nut, so he at least knows where to aim if he's cornered.

DR. IRIS WALSH, forty-five, is authoritative and articulate, outwardly empathetic toward her 'subjects'— until her true nature emerges. As head neuroscientist for the Radiological Unit for Strategic Selection, hidden deep inside the North Tower, she began with the genuine goal of saving lives. However, dwindling resources and a

collapse in morale led to a rebellion and the death of her predecessor, forcing her to take drastic measures. Determined in her goal to restructure society, she orders the kidnapping of subjects to harvest their blood for a genetically engineered serum against the virus. However, lately, the program's goals have taken a darker turn, with subjects now being taken for purposes far more sinister. She has now taken to calling this facility 'The Sanctum.'

SERIES POTENTIAL

HALTED is designed as a stand-alone eight-hour post apocalyptic audio drama, but the story has potential to continue with subsequent seasons. The second season would be set months after Henry was saved, with Lucy keeping him in sight at all times. As Mike has impaired vision, he is no longer the one to take risks anymore. He's become a liability, but Lucy doesn't tell him that to avoid demoralising him. After the revelation that The Sanctum is part of a larger network of facilities that abduct people for sinister purposes, Lucy realises that the world may not be completely dead after all. As the trio navigate this dangerous new reality, they must face new hardships, with rival groups, morally ambiguous choices, and the ever-present undead, who aren't going anywhere. We shift focus from survival and revenge to uncovering the truth surrounding this conspiracy, while balancing trust, loyalty, and the fragile bond between old allies and new.