

WHO WRITES YOUR STORY?

Panic, available May 28 on Amazon Prime Video, depicts a dead-end town where each summer graduating seniors play a legendary game called Panic. The stakes are high, and the payoff is even higher. In the opening episode, viewers meet the narrator, Heather, who never thought she would compete in Panic. But then she finds something, and someone, she wants to fight for.

As the show begins, Heather's mom gives her a snow globe for graduation and then bums a twenty dollar bill, which does not seem to be like the first time this has occurred. Viewers then get their first look at Carp, a small town with dilapidated buildings and cracked roads, surrounded by thin woods and dried brush. We meet a bully named Ray, as well as Heather's closest friends, Natalie and Bishop. Natalie expects to win Panic, claim the \$50,000 prize, and depart for Hollywood. Heather and Bishop are not going to compete because they have plans for college. But their outlook changes when the games begin with a nighttime challenge to jump from a cliff where students gather with torches around a swimming hole. At the last minute, Heather joins in, having just learned that her mother has taken her hard-earned college savings. Natalie is angered because this means she will have to compete against Heather. Bishop is shocked.



HEATHER



RAY



BISHOP



NATALIE

PART 1. Partner with a classmate and highlight or underline details that reveal information about Heather and Carp's culture. Discuss these details and the picture they paint.

PART 2. Now, invent a high school character, setting, and something that could happen to launch a story about them. Describe your ideas in writing on separate paper. To brainstorm details, ask yourself questions like these:

- What is the character like?
- Where does the character live? What is the place like?
- Name one or more ways the character could be challenged.

PART 3. In addition to outside forces, *Panic* depicts inner forces that people face—like the characters' flaws and strengths. Through characters, storytellers help us recognize truths about ourselves. Read the following passage about character development and then react with details from your own life. Answer this question in a written reflective response: *Who writes your story?*

Characters encounter outside forces, but those forces do not determine everything that happens next. Just as in real life, people have agency—that is, they can make choices. People create their own stories. And everyone is somewhere along the arc of their story, neither at the beginning nor at the end.

THERE'S JUST ONE RULE HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS NEED TO FOLLOW TO SURVIVE THE ANNUAL GAME: DON'T PANIC. CAN THEY DO IT? FIND OUT IN PANIC, AVAILABLE MAY 28 ON AMAZON PRIME VIDEO.

**Panic* contains some material that many parents would find unsuitable for children under 14 years of age. Parents are strongly urged to exercise greater care in monitoring this program and are cautioned against letting children under the age of 14 watch unattended. This program may contain one or more of the following: intensely suggestive dialogue (D), strong coarse language (L), intense sexual situations (S), or intense violence (V).