

Descendants
BOOK ONE - INHERITANCE
vi. Inheritance

by

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No Such Thing Productions

SCENE ONE

INT. Conference Room, Aphelion Industries - DAY

Clang. Something strikes dully against metal.

CLANG. Again, a strike, more forceful this time.

CLATTER! The metal grate over the air vent hits the floor. A second later, Rori drops out of the duct, closely followed by Axel, who pauses to catch Simon, who drops down after him.

RORI

Which conference room is this?

AXEL

C? Maybe? I don't know, they all look the same.

RORI

How're you holding up, Simon?

SIMON

I'll be alright. J-just... stiff.

RORI

Can you walk?

SIMON

Sure. Just don't ask me to run. (grim smile) I might shatter...

AXEL

It's so quiet...

They all pause. The chorus of the damned has stopped. No alarms sound. We hear the distant cracking of what might be ice... might be glass... but otherwise? An eerie, cold silence.

SIMON

Are we the only ones left?

AXEL

No... We can't be.

SIMON

Are we just going to leave them?

COMPUTER VOICE

Dousing will begin in T-Minus 15

minutes. T-Minus 15 minutes...

RORI
(quietly, resigned) You can't save who
you can't see.

SIMON
But-

AXEL
No, she's right. We're here. We're
breathing. Let's stay that way. Simon,
come on.

They move towards the door.

RORI
Okay... Declan says that the panel
should be at the end of the hall,
opposite to the elevators. That's
about... what... Two, three hundred
feet?

AXEL
So why are we just standing here?

RORI
It's too quiet.

She's listening intently. The silence is deafening.

RORI
I don't like this.

AXEL
Rori, come on! We're so close-

RORI
So now's not the time to get cocky!
THIS. The home stretch. This is when
accidents happen. This is when people
get killed.

AXEL
Okay! Okay...

RORI
Something's wrong...

COMPUTER VOICE
Dousing will begin in T-Minus 14

minutes. T-Minus 14 minutes...

RORI
(frustrated, to herself) We're running
out of time...

AXEL
Look, it's a straight shot down an
empty hallway. Less than a minute to
freedom.

SIMON
(softly) Not empty.

AXEL
What?

SIMON
Look... Out there.

They push open the door. Axel and Rori move to look.

SIMON
(grimly) ... I think I know why
everybody's stopped screaming...

AXEL
Jesus... There must be... What,
twenty? Twenty five statues out there?

Simon lets out a soft hiss of pain.

AXEL
Hey-... Whoah... Doc, you okay?

SIMON
Y-yeah, just... (they cough) h-
headache... I don't feel so hot...

RORI
Goddamnit! I just... There's a fire
exit RIGHT THERE. Right at the end of
the hall. Straight onto the roof. If
we could just get it open-

AXEL
But we can't. That door's not gonna
open from the inside.

RORI
It's right there... (refocusing)

But... so's the panel. Okay... Same formation as always. I-... I'll go up front. Simon?

SIMON
(sighs) We have to run again, don't we?

RORI
We might.

AXEL
Just stay close to me.

SIMON
What are you going to do? Pick me up?

AXEL
If I have to.

RORI
We get to the panel, we climb up the exhaust tube, we meet Declan and Mol up on the roof.

AXEL
In 14 minutes...

RORI
(grimly) In 14 minutes...

AXEL
Piece of-

RORI
I swear on the sainted soul of David Bowie, if you say "cake" right now, I'm going to smack you.

AXEL
(grins) You love me.

RORI
You are a child!

COMPUTER VOICE
Dousing in T-Minus 13 minutes... T-Minus 13 minutes...

AXEL
Lucky number 13...

RORI

No time like the present. Come on.

She pushes the door a little wider, and they head out into the hallway. The door snaps shut behind them.

No one moves.

RORI

Okay... Come on...

AXEL

We're following you.

RORI

Right. ... Just... Stay with me.

AXEL

Every step of the way, captain.

We hear Rori power up her gun. They move forward.

Something cracks, ominously.

AXEL

Captain...

RORI

Keep moving...

Somewhere else, we hear something dripping.

AXEL

Rori...

RORI

Just-... Pretend it was Simon, and keep walking.

SIMON

Oh, gee! Thanks!

They move on, very slowly. Something slithers out of sight.

SIMON

Oh I hate this... I hate this... I REALLY hate this... I HATE it...

AXEL

Is that the panel?

RORI
What? Where?

AXEL
Behind the statue.

RORI
It-... No, it can't be.

SIMON
Oh Jesus fucking-

AXEL
(laughs) Of course. Of... of course.
Of COURSE.

RORI
That's... no...

SIMON
What do we do?

AXEL
We're gonna have to squeeze past it.
Get the panel off, somehow...

RORI
We can't fit through there!

AXEL
You and Simon could.

SIMON
No, I really couldn't. Maybe on a good
day, with a little lube and a lot of
encouragement, but I'm having enough
trouble STANDING, let alone bending
over backwards to fit through that
bullshit.

They exchange a look.

AXEL
So that settles it then.

RORI
Settles what?

AXEL
You're gonna have to go it alone.

beat.

RORI

What? No.

SIMON

Rori-

RORI

NO! I'm getting you two out of here.
We'll find another way-

AXEL

Look, even if that thing WASN'T
standing right in front of the access
panel, I was never going to fit
through there, not with these
shoulders. If you can pull Simon along
with you-

SIMON

(wincing) No, she can't. I'm...
It's... getting harder to focus, and I
can feel myself stiffening up... I'd
be dead weight. She'll get out of here
faster without me.

RORI

We'll find another way.

SIMON

You don't have the time.

We hear a sound of rending metal. Axel has moved past Rori,
and is pulling the cover off of the panel.

AXEL

There. That should give you enough
space. Climb through.

RORI

NO!

AXEL

Rori-

RORI

No! We made it this far. Together. The
three of us. I don't leave a man
behind, let alone two. Not now, not
ever- I won't-

AXEL

You have to go find your dad. Find your crew. Simon and I never would have made it this far without your help... Look, if anybody can stop this, fix it, it's you.

RORI

Don't do that... Don't-... Don't say that. Don't put that on me. Don't leave me behind, to clean up your mess!

AXEL

I-... I'm sorry.

RORI

I said that I would get you out of here. Both of you.

SIMON

You got us this far.

RORI

It's not far enough!

AXEL

There comes a point in every gamble, where you look at the hand you've been dealt and the best thing you can do is to cut and run. We've reached the end of the line, Rori. We spun the wheel, we lost this round... You get to keep playing.

RORI

This isn't a game. This isn't a- a business or a game of cards! Axel, if I leave you here, you'll die.

AXEL

And if you stay, you will. Everyone loses.

RORI

Simon-... Simon, come on, TALK to him. Don't be STUPID! Mol is waiting for you just on the other side of that door there, with a cure! We'll get you through this! Here! Give me the acid, we can-... We can melt the fire door.

Give me the vial, I know you still have it.

AXEL

You might get through the door, but the quarantine shields will still be in place on the other side.

SIMON

You wouldn't have enough acid to get through both anyway... One maybe... but... not both...

RORI

Then we'll think of something else!

COMPUTER VOICE

Dousing will begin in T-Minus 10 minutes. T-Minus 10 minutes.

AXEL

Rori... There's just no time.

Rori stares at them, helps but defiant. Simon moves forward and presses the vial into her hand.

SIMON

Here... You can take the acid, if... if you want it. Never know when it might come in handy.

She takes it, putting the vial in her pocket.

COMPUTER VOICE

T-Minus 10 minutes... T-Minus 10 minutes...

SIMON

It's now or never.

AXEL

It's now, captain.

RORI

Please don't make me do this...

AXEL

I'm sorry.

RORI

I'm not-... I'm not going to leave you

here. You know that right? You're my priority. I made a promise. I'm coming back for you.

AXEL
Of course you are.

RORI
I AM.

AXEL
I know. (beat.) Thank you. For everything.

She hugs him, then Simon.

RORI
Just-... just stay here, okay? Both of you. Stay here.

SIMON
Because you're coming back for us...

RORI
Because I'm coming back.

AXEL
Right.

Rori looks at them. Hesitates... but only for a moment. Then she crawls into the access panel, and disappears from sight.

AXEL
(softly) Still time, you know. You could still go with her.

SIMON
I know. I'm just... too tired. I think I've gotta sit down...

AXEL
You okay?

SIMON
Yeah just... (laughs) Damn, I thought she was never gonna leave! My legs have been aching since we got out of the tunnels, and I kept thinking "This is it. This is when I'm gonna fall. Just collapse. I can't go any further." But I mean... There's

just... something about Rori, y'know?
She's the kind of person you just
wanna stand up for, you know? And you
don't know why, but... she just...
Makes you want to try? ... Do your
best... Live. Survive. You know?

AXEL

Yeah. I know.

SIMON

She said she's coming back...

AXEL

She won't. She-... she can't.

SIMON

I know. (beat) Was she on the ship?

AXEL

Who, Rori?

SIMON

Yeah... She's part of the Aphelion
Recovery Crews, right? She said she
was on the Adamantine... her and her
crew.

AXEL

Right.

SIMON

How do we know they're not infected?
She could be... y'know, like me.
Just... taking her time. If they were
first contact- patient zero, I mean...
how do we know we didn't just... let
it out? Damn the whole world?

AXEL

... We don't. But... she wasn't.
Rori's okay. I trust her.

COMPUTER VOICE

Dousing will begin in T-Minus 8
minutes. T-Minus 8 minutes...

beat.

SIMON

What's gonna happen to us?

Axel stares up at the ceiling.

AXEL

... The sprinklers will come on... It... might not hurt, at first. Not for the first few seconds. Maybe a minute. But I guess that's when the burning will start. I don't know if it'll be like in the movies... where you can see the steam rising off the skin... if we'll smell it... but the softer parts will be the first to go. Eyes. The backs of our necks... flesh between the fingers... You'll have to hold your mouth shut. Try not to scream, or you'll swallow it. Lose the tongue, the back of your throat... I don't know how long it'll last. Minutes... hours... if we're lucky, we won't last until the sprinklers turn off. After that... it'll be quiet. Quarantine will move to Phase Three. Cleanup. This place'll get a dose of chlorine gas, and then doused in bleach... kill off... whatever's left. Hopefully.

SIMON

That's horrible.

AXEL

Yeah, well. Nobody was supposed to be in here when it happened. Not unless they were already dying.

SIMON

(snorts) You mean YOU weren't supposed to be here when it happened. ... I-... Sorry. I don't-

AXEL

(amused) No. You're right. Peter and I should've been long gone. Things like this don't happen to people like me.

SIMON

Just happens to the rest of us.

AXEL

Fuck me, right? ... Jesus, I used to think I was invincible. But... even if

it had... we would've been here...
Peter and me. Fixing it. We could've
done... something.

SIMON

What if Peter got infected?

AXEL

No, that wouldn't happen. He wouldn't.

SIMON

Yeah, but what if?

AXEL

That's not- Don't be stupid! He just
wouldn't, okay?

beat.

SIMON

... You looked up to him. (when Axel
doesn't respond) ... your baby
brother?

AXEL

Shut up.

SIMON

No, I-... that's sweet. Your brother
was your hero.

AXEL

... Peter could've figured a way out
of all this. He's always been the
smart one. Good at puzzles... My
brother was a genius. He could do
ANYTHING. ... except talk to girls, or
come back home to me.

There is a faint warping-shimmer sound that seems to linger,
as Chel unobtrusively makes an appearance. Once again, her
voice is untethered, but it's stronger this time. Simon let
out a soft noise of pain.

AXEL

What is it?

SIMON

Nothing... This... Headache. 's
getting worse.

AXEL
Anything I can do?

SIMON
No... I think-... I mean, it's...
fine. This won't be the worst of it. I
was never meant to make it out of
this.

CHEL
Hm... Neither was I...

AXEL
Don't say that.

SIMON
Why not? It's the truth.

CHEL
They can't hear me.

AXEL
I know- Stop. Stop. I don't want to
talk to you.

SIMON
What?

CHEL
Well that's not true.

AXEL
Oh shut up. Leave me alone.

SIMON
Axel?

AXEL
No, I don't- You... you have to leave.

CHEL
And leave you behind? You know I can't
do that. ... And you know you can't
stay here.

AXEL
I know! ... I know... We have to go.

SIMON
Axel, who are you talking to?

AXEL

Chel. She says-... She's right. Simon, we can't stay here. It's too open. We need to move. Find a closet, or a table... somewhere away from these pipes-

SIMON

Axe... You... You know she's not there, right?

beat.

Axel glances down the hallway. Apart from the statues, it is empty. Silent.

AXEL

She makes these moments... easier. When I'm falling through the cracks of myself... Slipping out of this place... It used to be just... daydreams... A way out of the world while I waited for good news, but now- I can't... make it stop. The slipping. Standing outside myself. I don't-... She... tethers me... She used to be real. I don't know where I am half the time anymore... but I know her. She's been through all this before. Can talk me through it... She's... she's here to me.

SIMON

Axel... are you-

COMPUTER VOICE

Dousing will begin in T-Minus 5 minutes. T-Minus 5 minutes...

CHEL

(a whisper on the wind) You can't stay here.

She vanishes. Axel stands, suddenly tense.

AXEL

We have to go. Find a better shelter. We're too exposed here. Come on. Get up.

Simon lets out a groan, doubling over and holding their head.

AXEL
Simon?

SIMON
My head...

AXEL
Simon what-

SIMON
(agony, and terror) Something's...
pushing... It's- Stop talking...
God... Make them stop...

Down the hall, we hear a sudden, loud crack. Simon lets out a sharp cry of pain, as if in response.

AXEL
Simon, SHUT UP.

SIMON
He's coming... Th-they're...
pushing... My head... Make it stop!

AXEL
Simon, PLEASE, be quiet!

Another crack. And then another. Something out of sight slithers. When Simon speaks again, something in their voice has shifted -- it isn't wholly theirs.

SIMON
You left me...

AXEL
What?

SIMON (SHIFTED)
You left me... Left me to die... I was
calling for you, and you left me. You
left me behind...

AXEL
I didn't. Simon, I'm right here... I'm
not going to leave you-

SIMON (SHIFTED)
You already did...

We hear the strange and rasping cry of a Black Gorgon.

AXEL

What?

SIMON (SHIFTED)

(fury and pain) YOU LEFT ME!

Simon suddenly reaches out, grabbing Axel by the arm. Axel lets out a sound somewhere between surprise and pain.

AXEL

Simon, what the hell! You're hurting-
Let go of my arm!

SIMON

(surprised, frightened but fighting) I-
... I can't... I can't! (strangled,
pained cry)

AXEL

Simon? What's-

SIMON (SHIFTED)

I won't let you leave me again.

AXEL

(realizing) Oh god...

A Black Gorgon rises up out of the shadows. It cries. And as it does...

AXEL

... It's them...

GORGON

(with great difficulty) Ax... el...
Axel...

AXEL

(stunned) It talks...

Simon lets out another pained moan.

AXEL

(snapped out of his reverie) Simon?
Hey, look at me, doc. Look at me!
You're okay. Just stay with me, just
like we promised, okay? You gotta
fight this!

SIMON

I-... can't-... He won't let me...

AXEL

(equal parts relief and urgency) It's okay, Simon. I've got you. But you've gotta let go of my arm, okay doc?
(desperate) Simon, I can't get you out of here, if you don't let me go! Just stay with me, okay? Don't let them in!

SIMON

He's... already... inside. He won't let go...

AXEL

Simon, please-

SIMON

S-... sorry...

Simon grabs both Axel's arms, trapping him in place. We hear the sound of creaking crystals, as the statues in the hall begin to shift and break apart.

GORGON

Axel... Axel...

AXEL

(struggling) No! NO! GET OFF! Let me go! Simon, come back! Move! LET ME GO!

GORGON

(struggling to speak) Ssssssstay!
Ssssssssstay... Trusted... you! We trusted... you! Don't... leave... me!
You left us! You left us! You won't leave me again! I needed you!

AXEL

(still struggling, pleading) Come back... Come back... (soft, almost a prayer) Please don't leave me here...

GORGON

WHERE WERE YOU?

The Black Gorgon lets out a terrible hiss. It slithers forward.

GORGON

We called for you. I called for you!
You left me! It hurts... Axel please... Please...

AXEL

(dim, unwilling recognition) That voice...

GORGON

We didn't stand a chance... We never stood a fucking chance... We never should have come...

AXEL

... I know you...

GORGON

WHERE DID YOU GO?!

The Black Gorgon screams. Axel breathes in sharply and goes rigid.

AXEL

Peter.

The Gorgon lets out another rasping cry. A response.

And it is PETER's voice we hear, through the oncoming mass of Gorgons, which hiss as they slither wetly, ever closer... a cruel parody of speech... One word. Over, and over, and over... a chant... an accusation... a plea...

GORGON

Aaaaaaxel... Aaaaaaxel... Aaaaaaxel...

PETER

Where were you?! I looked for you! I waited for you, and you weren't there! I reached for you and you turned to smoke! I called for you! Screamed for you! You abandoned me! You left me behind... I needed you! You promised it would be alright... You promised and you lied! You lied... You're not coming... You're not coming... She's gone... You're gone... It's slipping through my fingers... There's something underneath... It's moving underneath... It hurts... But you won't leave me again! Don't leave me again! Where were you?

AXEL

Peter...

COMPUTER VOICE
Dousing will begin in T-Minus 1
minute. T-Minus 1 minute.

PETER
It's cold... It's dark... I-It...
hurts... Please... Axel... Help me...
I want to go home... I want to go
home...

AXEL
Peter, I-

PETER
I'm coming home...

AXEL
Peter-

PETER
I'm home... I'm home...

AXEL
I'm sorry.

PETER
Don't leave me!

beat. Axel stops fighting.

AXEL
(resigned) Okay.

COMPUTER VOICE
Dousing will begin in T-Minus 30
seconds. 29... 28...

The Black Gorgon is very close now. It hisses... almost a
purr... But something else is hissing as well.

GORGON
Axel...

PETER
Don't leave me...

Axel shuts his eyes.

BANG!

The fire door behind Axel and Simon slams open, knocking them

both to the ground, and making them cry out in pain. Rori and Declan stand in the doorway, the melted remains of the quarantine shield dripping around them like a glistening halo.

COMPUTER VOICE

WARNING! Quarantine shield breeched.
WARNING! Quarantine shield breeched.
Quarantine protocols disengaged!

RORI

Grab them!

SIMON

(wholly themselves, dazed, and in pain) I-... Wh-what- Where-

AXEL

No, stay back!

SIMON

A-Axel?

AXEL

Simon?

SIMON

(confused) You're bleeding... (groans)
My head...

DECLAN

Hey, Doc... I've got you.

AXEL

Rori?!

Rori wraps her arms around Axel and hauls him to his feet.

AXEL

You came back for us...

RORI

I told you. You're my priority. I don't leave a man behind.

Behind them, The Black Gorgon screams in rage.

AXEL

RUN!

They sprint out onto the roof. We hear the engines of a mid-

sized shuttlecraft.

RORI

Molly! We've got them, get that shuttle off the ground! (to the others) Go! Go! Go!

There's a mad scramble to get onto the shuttle. The Gorgon's enraged screams multiply as more and more of the creatures pour out onto the rooftop -- a wave of screaming, pulsating, black rage.

RORI

COME ON! In! In! Get in!

She slams the door shut.

RORI

MOVE OUT!

The purr of the shuttle's engines rises to a roar -- as does the furious sound of the Gorgon hive mind below...

RORI

Are you okay?!

AXEL

I thought-... H-How did you-

RORI

Acid. Simon was right. Wasn't enough to get through the quarantine shield and the fire door... But I've kicked down a lot of doors in my time.

SIMON

D-don't... don't...

MOLLY

(with Simon, quietly) Simon, do you remember me? It's Mol... Easy, Doc, I've got you... Here. This'll help with the pain... Just rest... close your eyes... You're gonna sleep now... You're okay...

There is a pneumatic hiss as they inject something into Simon's arm.

SIMON

(shivering) A-... Axel...

Axel looks at Simon, who reaches for him... confused, lost, near tears and not wholly themselves... Instinctively, Axel takes their hand.

SIMON

Axel... We didn't... we... We didn't make it...

AXEL

What?

SIMON

We died... We didn't make it... We died...

AXEL

Simon-... Simon, we're not dead... It's okay. You're okay...

SIMON

We didn't make it... The angels... they carried us away... Look... See? Do you see them?

They point. Axel lets out a soft laugh.

AXEL

They're not-... That's Declan... and Mol... We're okay, Simon. We're okay.

SIMON

I see angels...

MOLLY

Easy Doc, just lie still... It's been a long day...

SIMON

No... No... We didn't make it... You are SO beautiful...

MOLLY

Hey, it's okay... I've got you... You're okay... Sleep...

SIMON

I can see your halo...

RORI

Jesus... What happened down there?

AXEL
(dazed) He tried to kill me...

RORI
What? Who?

AXEL
Peter...

SIMON
Axel?

Simon's grip on Axel's hand tightens.

SIMON
(exhausted, struggling to speak)
I'm... I'm...

AXEL
(gently, still shaken) It's okay.
You're okay, doc.

SIMON
(shudders) I couldn't... move.
Couldn't control... There were so
many... so many inside my head... It
was like the were pulling... I
couldn't help them. They wanted to
pull me down. So many... I felt them
all... A thousand worlds were
screaming, dying, drowning me out...

AXEL
(firm, but kind) Not anymore. You're
still here. You're still you. It's
gonna be okay.

SIMON
(haunted) He screamed the loudest of
all... I felt his rage... his pain...
He was so... afraid... He brought them
here... He brought them here to find
you... He'll swallow the world to find
you...

In the distance, the hunt continues. We can still hear Peter
screaming.

GORGON
AXEL?! AXEL!!! NO!!! Don't go... Don't
go! DON'T LEAVE ME!!!

AXEL

I'm sorry...

SIMON

He just wanted... to come home...

AXEL

I'm sorry.

From far below, we hear the scream of a Black Gorgon -- a long, heart wrenching, howling cry of desperation, fury and despair.

DECLAN

Oh my god...

Everyone moves to the windows.

The Black Gorgons swarm. They pour out of Aphelion Industries en masse, hissing and chattering and shrieking, as they slither and drip down the sides of the building, painting the world in vivid shifting, living shades of obsidian.

MOLLY

They're... they're everywhere...

DECLAN

Jesus... look at them swarming... all over the building...

Rori and Axel exchange a look.

RORI

(very quietly) I didn't have a choice...

SIMON (SHIFTED)

(drifting into unconsciousness, begging) Axel, don't leave me...

AXEL

What have we done?

FADE OUT.

END.