

Descendants
BOOK ONE - INHERITANCE
v. When the Blood Runs Out

by

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No Such Thing Productions

SCENE ONE

INT. Air Vent, Aphelion Industries - DAY

Axel, Rori and Simon crawl along the air vents, their voices and movements echoing strangely in the cramped space.

AXEL

Okay. Okay. Does anyone have any idea how the fuck those things keep finding us?

SIMON

(quietly) They're tracking us.

AXEL

Obviously, doc. I was thinking a little bit more along the lines of HOW?!

RORI

Well that's the question, isn't it.

AXEL

It's like they're deliberately trying to box us in!

SIMON

They are.

beat.

RORI

... Don't say that.

SIMON

Why not? It's true.

AXEL

How do you know-

SIMON

They're playing with us. The creatures in the tunnel... the one that was hiding somewhere in the lab, until we needed a place to hide... the one in the stairwell... They're not just hunting us. They're... looking for something...

AXEL

... What?

SIMON

I-... I mean... (rubs their face, and coughs) No, that's-... Sorry, I don't know why-... It's... They're being... deliberate. Stalking us. With purpose. They're having fun.

A heavy silence lingers.

SIMON

So, does anybody have an actual plan?

AXEL

Well if anybody's got snacks, I figure we can always stay up here for a decade or so. Make a camping trip of it.

The air seems to warp and shimmer slightly, as Axel hears Chel's voice, faint, untethered and reverberating through the vent.

CHEL

You are astonishingly liaise-faire for someone who's trapped in a vent and almost died today.

AXEL

Just part of my charm.

SIMON

What?

AXEL

I-...

CHEL

Hey... Breathe... Focus...

AXEL

(under his breath) I really don't want to be here...

CHEL

You can do this.

The world shifts back towards regular sound as her voice fades away.

SIMON

Axel?

AXEL

... Nothing. Sorry. ... Captain? Plan?

RORI

We'll head as high up as we can go. These vents move through the entire building. At some point, we have to hit access to the roof, or find a window we can squeeze through... some sort of break in the armor.

SIMON

We're breaking the quarantine?

RORI

What other choice do we have?

SIMON

You're going to let those things out of the building?

beat.

RORI

We'll think of something.

Simon coughs.

AXEL

You okay doc?

SIMON

(choking a little) Y-yeah. Sorry. I just... r-running. Falling. Almost dying and climbing into vents. It's not... L-like I said, bad lungs. (they cough) My chest... hurts. It burns.

RORI

We should stop.

SIMON

N-no! I'm fine. I just want to get out of here.

RORI

Are you sure?

SIMON

I'm f-fine! I can do this.

AXEL

... Simon, we're not going to leave you behind.

SIMON

I just... (coughing more violently) I-
I just... n-need a second... Just...
Just give me a second... I'm-... I'm
fine...

They all stop.

RORI

Take all the time you need.

Simon lays down, struggling to breathe.

AXEL

... Can you hear that?

SIMON

S-sorry... That's just me.

AXEL

No... It isn't... listen...

They strain to listen. In the semi-silence, a strange sound can be heard echoing around through the air duct. It undulates, rolling, like thunder... a rising and falling storm of sound...

The realization hits them all, almost simultaneously.

RORI

(voice breaking) Oh my god...

The screams continue to vibrate through the walls of the vent. Women's voices plead prayers into the suffering-choked air. Grown men sob with terror, unseen and alone. Sounds of crystal punctuate, beating out a sharp, staccato rhythm. The chorus of the damned swells, voices suddenly and sharply cut off, one by one, even as others rise to take their places. The whole of the building seems to pulse with the death song. Below it all, Gorgon song rings.

SIMON

Is... is that-

AXEL
... They're everywhere.

SIMON
No, that's... that's not possible.
It's too fast. How-

RORI
All those people...

AXEL
This can't be happening...

A soft sob breaks him from his reverie. He turns.

AXEL
Rori?

She's crying. Unable to stop herself, or hide it. Axel reaches for her.

AXEL
Rori...

RORI
I have to find my dad.

AXEL
He's not-

RORI
No. Outside. When we get out. I have to-... We have to stop this. We have to do something. But I don't-... I don't know what to do. There's nothing we can do!

AXEL
(more to himself than to her, quiet, ominous) Yes there is.

RORI
(to herself) I have to get you out of here.

SIMON
(to themselves) It's too fast...

A burst of static as Rori's comms unit sparks to life. The transmission is fuzzy, barely comprehensible.

DECLAN
(urgent) Captain? Captain, are you
there? Rori, come on, PLEASE!

RORI
Declan? Declan, I'm here! Talk to me,
are you okay?

SIMON
Who is that?

AXEL
That's the cavalry.

RORI
That's my crew... Declan? Declan, can
you hear me?

DECLAN
Captain! Mol, I've got them!

MOLLY
Oh thank god. Are you alright?!

RORI
Yes, we're fine. What are you talking
about?

DECLAN
We've been hailing you for over an
hour! But I keep hitting some sort of
interference.

MOLLY
We think it might be something to do
with those aliens. It's the same sort
of signal we were picking up back on
the Adamantine. Something about them
is putting our equipment on the fritz.
We thought you were dead.

DECLAN
We managed to find a shuttle. We're
about halfway to the safehouse now.

SIMON
There's a safehouse?

MOLLY
Who's that?

SIMON

Uh... I'm Simon... Dr. Simon Medlin.
Sorry, I didn't mean-

MOLLY

You're Simon?

SIMON

Yes?

MOLLY

HI! Chel used to talk about you all
the time! I'm Mol! Molly... This is
Declan... We're coming to rescue you!

SIMON

Mol? Hi... I-... Chel used to talk
about you too... I-... I'm sorry...

MOLLY

I-... Yeah... I'm... I'm sorry too.

DECLAN

What's that echo? Where are you guys?
How close are you?

RORI

Uh, funny story about that. We're back
at Aphelion Industries-

DECLAN AND MOLLY

WHAT?!

AXEL

And we're stuck in an air vent.

DECLAN

How'd you manage that?

AXEL

Long story. But suffice it to say, the
tunnel is a bust.

RORI

Those things are crawling all over the
building.

MOLLY

We know.

RORI

What? How?

MOLLY

(grimly) Declan hacked into the security cameras.

DECLAN

Hacked is such a negative phrase... I... circumvented the company's security measures... It was all for you captain! We couldn't reach you once you got down into the labs, so I figured we'd better check up on you!

RORI

And?

MOLLY

It doesn't look good.

RORI

How bad is it?

MOLLY

Well, so far as we can tell, there were about two hundred and fifty, maybe three hundred people trapped in the building when the quarantine precautions kicked in. As far as we could tell, there were only three aliens in the building... The two from the ship, and the one in Axel's suite. But then, a little while ago, we spotted a fourth one coming out of the ship. It must've still been in it's gestation period, or hiding somewhere. And that was fine until...

RORI

... Until?

MOLLY

The one you brought up from the ship... The big one. We saw it and the smaller one from the suites chase you into the storage room. The little one managed to get the door open, but when the big one tried climbing over that mass or whatever barricading the door, it started acting... strange.

Simon tries to stifle a cough in the background. No one seems to hear them.

MOLLY

It was moving around the trap door, twisting and... it kept shifting, like it was grappling with something, having trouble holding its shape... Then these two women came into the lab, and it just... (she has to take a breath, shaken) I-it attacked them. It was so fast.

Simon is coughing more violently now. Axel looks at them in concern.

AXEL

Hey, Doc... You okay?

SIMON

I-... I'm fine... S-sorry... I'm-... S-sorry...

MOLLY

They started to change... almost instantly. The screaming was-... That crystal just... grew up, out of them. Splitting their skin, twisting them into-... It couldn't have taken more than... three minutes? And they were gone. A minute or two after that little parts of them started to just... crack, and split off, and more of those creatures just came... pouring out. They're some sort of parasite. And whatever it is they came in contact with down in the lab... it looks like they're mutating.

RORI

Oh my god...

DECLAN

Gorgons... is... what the Janus team called them. I found a quick mention of them in one of the physical files, but... we're still sifting through the data.

RORI

Is there any-... Simon? Simon are you

okay?!

Simon is coughing so violently it seems to make the air duct vibrate slightly. Their face is pale, and rapidly starting to turn blue.

RORI

Simon!

MOLLY

What is it?! What's happening?!

RORI

Oh my god, they're choking!

AXEL

Looks like something's stuck in their throat- Simon... Simon hey, look at me. Just-... breathe, Simon, keep breathing! Rori, help me! Get them up- Simon, stay with us. Hey, you're going to be okay.

Simon wheezes helplessly. Axel wraps his arms around them, and, as best he can in the tight space, attempts a Heimlich maneuver.

AXEL

Come on, Simon, breathe... BREATHE...

For an instant, there is nothing...

And then Simon coughs. Something small and hard flies out of their mouth and hits the floor of the air duct with a soft, high pitched clink. Simon gasps for air, choking and retching.

AXEL

(deeply relieved) Easy, doc! Easy... You're okay... We've got you... You're okay...

RORI

(slumping back) Oh thank god. I thought-

SIMON

(wheezing, trying to speak) D-don't... don't...

Axel catches sight of the object glittering on the floor.

AXEL
What IS that?

He reaches for it, but-

SIMON
(violently) DON'T TOUCH IT!

RORI
Simon?

SIMON
(hoarsely) Don't touch it... Don't
touch it...

Shaking, wheezing, Simon reaches out and gently scrapes the thing up from the floor, and holds it up for the others to inspect.

Axel and Rori gasp.

RORI
Is... is that-

AXEL
Crystal...

Simon is still staring at the small, glittering obsidian fragment.

SIMON
Black Orion... Look... It- (coughs) I-
it even has the same... same pattern,
as a colony structure...

AXEL
Oh... Simon... Simon no...

SIMON
I think... we have a problem...

MOLLY
What's happening?

AXEL
(softly) Simon's infected.

Axel, Rori and Simon all stare at the hardened crystal.

SIMON
(coughs) I don't... even remember

when... h-how...

MOLLY

Oh god...

SIMON

Well. That answers why that thing in the tunnels didn't kill me... Didn't see any need...

RORI

We have to get out of here.

AXEL

Okay. Simon, just... lay there. I'm gonna climb over and get in front of you, and then you just... I don't know, wrap your arms around me, we're gonna drag you out of here.

SIMON

Wh-what?

RORI

Axel-

AXEL

We are NOT leaving them behind.

RORI

If something happens-

AXEL

(softly) They're here. In front of us. Still alive, still breathing, Rori. We can fix this.

beat.

RORI

... Okay.

SIMON

Wait-

RORI

Mol, if we send you a bio-scan for Simon, can you work out a cure?

MOLLY

I-... I don't know. I don't know if I

have enough information- I still can't
get a handle on exactly what these
things are, and-

RORI

I need a yes or a no answer, Dr.
Bessel. Can you do it?

MOLLY

... Yes. Yes. I can. I will. Just get
them out of the building.

RORI

Okay.

SIMON

NO.

AXEL

What?

RORI

... Simon-

SIMON

I said no.

beat.

AXEL

You'll die.

SIMON

I know.

AXEL

That thing is going to kill you, you
can't just... STAY HERE. You want to
end up like those things?

SIMON

(very calm, matter of fact) No, I want
to keep it. I'm going to merge with
it, and we're going to get you out of
here.

beat.

AXEL

No.

SIMON

You're not going to have a choice.

RORI

Simon-

SIMON

No, listen... sooner or later this... this THING is going to kill me. I won't be able to stop it. But if I was going to change as fast as the others, I would have done it by now! I think the Gorgon might still be trying to grapple with that black Orion sample I inhaled back in the lab! It can't concentrate on fighting with two hosts at once... That means there's time. We still have a chance.

So long as it's a part of me, the Gorgons will leave me alone, right? We saw that down in the tunnels. Which means I can shield you. I can get you to the exit... and then you can escape.

If I can just... keep the creature at bay... you just might make it out of this alive.

RORI

But Mol could cure you-

SIMON

It's not worth the risk.

RORI

Of course it's worth the risk! Simon, you can't just- We're not going to let this happen to you!

SIMON

(not unkindly) I think it's a little late for that, Captain.

AXEL

We're not having this conversation, doc. You're coming with us. We'll figure this out-

SIMON

No! You're not listening to me!

AXEL

Simon-

SIMON

I want this! I can help and I-... I'm not scared. I know I should be... it's not the dying that scares me, it's-... I... hear them. The Gorgons. They're all... One. All the same. This... buzzing hive of voices calling in my head... and that's the way I want it to stay. I won't be torn apart from the inside. I won't be pushed out, let them become me. This is my heart. My body. I am my own.

But... even if by some miracle, we manage to make it out of here alive, you can't take me with you... You can't let this thing inside me get out into the real world... And I'm... I'm not going to be able to keep up with you much longer. I can't breathe. It feels like something's... wrapping itself around me from the inside, and squeezing me out-... it hurts... It hurts, and it just... keeps... getting worse. This is only the beginning. But you can stop it it from getting worse, if I can get you out of here. You can't... fix this thing inside me... but you can help me fight to stay myself, at least a little while longer. And I'll keep you both as safe as I can in the meantime.

AXEL

(softly) We promised not to leave you behind.

SIMON

And you didn't. You've... you've been kind. Kept me with you this long. But if I'm putting your lives in danger, when you have a real chance at making it out of this, making a difference... Y-you have to stop this. End it, somehow. The two of you? I know you'll

figure it out. You can't risk that. I won't let you.

MOLLY

Simon-

SIMON

No, it's... it's okay, Mol. Don't-... I'm just sorry I'm never going to get a chance to really meet you...

RORI

If Mol can find a cure-

SIMON

Do you know what you're risking if they can't-

MOLLY

I can.

SIMON

But-

MOLLY

But you have to give me a chance.

And so long as there's hope, there's a chance. Even when things are dark, and the whole world seems to be pointing to the fact that... there's no such thing as a happy ending. But a cure could make a difference. And Simon... you holding onto your personhood is the only hope we've got. If we lose you, if we leave you behind... it's gone. You're allowed to be scared right now. You're allowed to not want to make this... very hard decision. We won't make you. If you say no... then it's a no. But... we need your humanity. We need you to make it out of this, Simon, or I don't know if any of the rest of us will. If those things escape, if we can't come up with a way to stop them-... There's no chance of tomorrow without you. YOU, Simon, all your own. All we need is for you to fight for yourself long enough for us to get

you. None of us are going to abandon you. Let us fight with you, and I promise, we won't let you go.

beat.

SIMON

... okay. Just-... promise-...
(steadying themselves, trying to be brave) Promise you won't let it take me.

AXEL

Simon-

SIMON

I mean it. ... It's taken me a lifetime to find myself. To figure out... all that I am, who I want to be. To want to BE... all parts of myself. It's taken decades to find a way to love who I am inside my own skin. To understand I'm more than just the wrappings. That I exist as more than blood and bone, no matter how much I love my outsides or how long I've spent crafting them to reflect my truest Me. And I can't-.... I've lived outside of myself before, and I-... I can't go back. It's taken... everything to get here. To be me. But... life is nothing, if not change. So if... if you can't save me-...

Axel and Rori look at one another.

AXEL

(softly) Okay. Then we're going to save you. (cold, resolving) And then I'm going to wipe these things off the face of the fucking Earth.

SIMON

And if you can't?

AXEL

We're going to save you.

SIMON

But if you can't. ... don't-... (with all the bravery they can muster) ...

don't give up on me? Just... hold onto the real me? Hold out for the person I am... the Me beyond the body... even if I change?

(trying to make light of it) Save my brain! That's where all the most interesting bits are anyway. Or keep me around in a jar or something.
(smiling weakly) Who knows... Maybe you'll find a way to bring me back.

AXEL

You-... You think there's a chance-... They might still be-

SIMON

The Gorgons are a Hive Mind, right? Anything's possible.

AXEL

(deeply unsettled, not daring to hope) Right...

SIMON

So... if this goes sideways? (beat) ... Promise me. Please.

beat.

AXEL

Okay. I'll-... I promise.

SIMON

(relieved) Thank you.

AXEL

Let's get you out of here.

SIMON

O-okay...

AXEL

Come here. We'll get that scan going and send it to Mol.

SIMON

Okay.

We hear the sounds of a bio-scan going in the background, and then a confirmation beep as the scan is sent off.

SIMON
(quietly) Thank you.

AXEL
Just hold onto me. Rori, I'm following
your lead.

A sudden sound echoes through the vent. A piercing alarm.

COMPUTER VOICE
Initiating Quarantine Stage Two.
Initiating Quarantine Stage Two.
Beginning Preparation...

DECLAN
Oh hell, what now?

RORI
The building is moving into the next
stage of the quarantine procedure.

SIMON
Meaning?!

AXEL
(quietly) Meaning we're about to go
through a cleanse...

SIMON
A what?

AXEL
We-... There's an emergency procedure
in place... in case the building was
ever under threat from a biological
contagion... Right now, the quarantine
systems are releasing a chemical
cocktail into Aphelion's pipelines.
All the water in the system is about
to get mixed with intensely
concentrated acid. In a couple of
minutes time, the fire suppression
system is going to turn on.

SIMON
A-and?

AXEL
When was the last time you decided to
dance in acid rain?

RORI

We have to get out of here.

DECLAN

We'll circle back around to Aphelion and find a way to pick you guys up.

AXEL

Great, but we still don't actually have any way to get to you.

DECLAN

I'm pulling up the building schematics now... There should be a small access panel that leads to an exhaust shaft, up on the top floor of the building... by the executive conference rooms.

Axel laughs.

AXEL

Of course. Of... of course! We go all the way down to the basement-

RORI

The Universe is such a bitch.

DECLAN

This-... INTERFERENCE! Sorry. The best I can tell you is that it's at the end of the hall, opposite to the elevators. There should be some sort of panel. You're gonna have to shimmy maybe ten or fifteen feet up the exhaust tube, to get up to the roof.

AXEL

After this? Piece of cake.

RORI

Oh DON'T jinx it.

DECLAN

We'll see you on the other side.

MOLLY

Stay safe! See you soon, Simon!

SIMON

Yeah... See you...

RORI
(smirking) Bye Mol...

MOLLY
Oh! Right! Bye, Captain!

The line fizzles into static.

COMPUTER VOICE
Beginning Quarantine Phase Two.
Preparation complete. Distribution
will begin in T-Minus 3 minutes... T-
Minus 3 minutes...

FADE OUT.

END.