

Homecoming
A Janus Descending Mini-Episode

by

Jordan Cobb

No Such Thing Productions

SCENE ONE

EXT. Barren Wastes, Outside Rossetter Moon Colony - NIGHT

An icy wind whips across the craters of the moon. The atmosphere of the terraformed colony is thin, but enough to carry the soft sound of crunching footsteps as CLAY and ROSE clamber unsteadily across the deserted plains in their exosuits.

CLAY

Come on! This way!

ROSE

Clay, slow down! This suit's too big, I can't go as fast as you!

CLAY

It's not that much further.

ROSE

(grumbling) You said that fifteen minutes ago! Aren't your brothers gonna be pissed when they find out we took their exos?

CLAY

It's not like they need them. Everyone's going to be down at that stupid bar, nobody has to head into the mines until tomorrow morning, and we'll be back WAY before then.

ROSE

But-

CLAY

Just... trust me, okay? This'll be worth it.

They walk in silence for a moment, anyway.

ROSE

How'd you find this place, anyway?

CLAY

(a little embarrassed) Oh... I was... sort of ditching school.

ROSE

Really?

CLAY

Yeah.

ROSE

Why?

CLAY

(kicking a rock) 'Cause I didn't want to go, okay? It's not like I'm learning anything useful. I'm not gonna be one of those stupid wiz-kid scientists. ... no offense.

ROSE

(gently) You could be... I've seen your grades. You're really smart.

CLAY

When did you see my grades?!

ROSE

You leave your papers and stuff lying all over your desk, and you never shut your backpack. It's not exactly like you're making it hard.

CLAY

Yeah, well... My family are diggers. First generation, from the original Aphelion drop-ship. My mom's a miner. All my brothers. My dad was, before the-... It's just stupid, okay? Why should I be in school, when the stuff I've got to be learning is out here! Moon rocks, and dirt, and how to find the best veins...

ROSE

So geology.

CLAY

Yeah.

ROSE

And physics? Engineering, that sort of thing.

CLAY

Exactly.

ROSE
(grinning) So, science and math.

Clay pauses, realizing he's been caught.

CLAY
... Shut up!

Rose laughs, and the sound mingles with the thin whispers of the wind. Unnoticed by the two children, a high, ethereal ringing begins to filter through the air.

Rose looks around.

ROSE
Do you believe them?

CLAY
Believe what?

ROSE
The stories... About Rossetter...

CLAY
About the secret projects?

ROSE
No, not that... This place... The moon. Do you think they really had to terraform it, the way everybody says? That it didn't have an atmosphere, or anything?

CLAY
(shrugging) I guess.

ROSE
I just don't see it...

CLAY
You just gotta use your imagination.

ROSE
I AM using my imagination... All I see is the city, and the stars, and the trees... It's always been this way...

CLAY
Yeah... Maybe...

They walk, staring at the stars in thoughtful silence.

ROSE
... How much further?

CLAY
Just over the lip of that ridge there.

ROSE
We have to climb that thing?!

CLAY
Uh, *yeah*, duh.

ROSE
Clay, I don't know... We're getting kinda far from the colony... What if something happens?

CLAY
I'm not gonna let anything happen to you. I promise! Come on! I'll help you climb up. ... Just trust me, Rose.

He starts to climb. Rocks slip under his boots, and he turns back, grunting as he helps haul Rose up the unsteady edge of the crater.

ROSE
(nervously) Was this here before?

CLAY
(grinning) Nope.

ROSE
(studying the dirt, realizing) Is this an impact crater? Clay! We have to get down! This is so unsafe-

CLAY
Not before you see!

ROSE
See what- (and then she spots it) ...
Oh... wow...

We hear the groan of metal and the uneasy creaking of a hull settling as it adjusts to the slight atmospheric shifts in pressure. The ruined spacecraft lies in the center of the impact crater, still smoking, its twisted hull lying crushed into the earth. The two kids slide down the inside of the crater. The ringing sound is louder now.

ROSE
It's... it's...

CLAY
A spaceship...

ROSE
It's a wreck...

CLAY
You remember that big tremor that went
through the colony two nights ago?

ROSE
They said it was a problem with the
gravity well generators...

CLAY
I think it was this.

Rose moves closer to investigate, as Clay stares delightedly up at the hull. She runs a hand over the metal, reading the name on the side.

ROSE
(reading, to herself) The
Adamantine...

CLAY
I'm gonna take her apart, and hide the
pieces back in the woods. I know a
spot, a grove, where there's this big
patch of open sky. There's plenty of
space to put her back together! I can
borrow parts from down in the mines,
and out of the maintenance shafts if I
have to!

ROSE
You're gonna fix her?

CLAY
Yeah.

ROSE
And then what? (when he doesn't
answer) ... You're gonna leave?

CLAY
(shyly) ... Well... Yeah. I mean...
maybe... if this works out, I might

not even have to go down to the mines at all... Not for a while, anyway. I could see the Empire. Go exploring, get rich... But... I thought... I mean... it's a big job... And I thought maybe... if... if you wanted-

From inside the crashed ship, there is a sound like cracking stone, and a horrible wet squelching noise.

ROSE
(alarmed) What was that?

CLAY
What was-

ROSE
Shh!

Both of them freeze. The squelching turns to a strange, almost inquisitive burble. Inside the ship, we hear a few more cracks and... was that a high pitched rasping cry?

ROSE
(whispering) Something's in there!

CLAY
(whispering) No way. Look at the hull, nothing could have survived in there...

ROSE
(whispering) So what's that noise?

CLAY
(whispering) ... I don't know...

ROSE
(whispering) It's moving...

CLAY
(whispering) Are you getting that in your helmet too? That... sound?

ROSE
(whispering) It sounds like... singing...

beat.

Clay makes a decision.

CLAY
 (whispering) I'm gonna check it out!

He takes a few steps closer to the ship.

ROSE
 (whispering) Oh, Clay, DON'T!

Clay inches closer to the ship. The ringing is louder now. From inside, we can hear something thick dripping onto the shuttle floor. Clay's breathing is loud inside his suit helmet.

He reaches the door... Reaches up a hand... And knocks softly on the hull...

RORI
 HEY!

Clay and Rose both shriek in alarm. Three figures in exosuits appear at the top of the crater, and start climbing their way down.

RORI
 Get away from there, you little-

CLAY
 RUN!

The two kids turn and bolt away from the crash site, scrambling up the side of the crater and away through the trees, back towards Rossetter Colony.

RORI
 (calling after them) YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT, YOU BETTER RUN!

DECLAN
 (laughing) Holy shit, Cap! They're just kids!

MOLLY
 (disapproving) You didn't have to scare them.

RORI
 (irritable, she is Right!) They're *trespassing*, and interfering with my crash site! God... *damnit!* I KNEW we should have set up a guard and a perimeter!

Declan starts to move around the hull, inspecting it. The air is still, and silent -- the sounds from inside the ship, and the ethereal ringing have stopped.

MOLLY

(trying to soothe) The governor said he'd sent out an alert, and put the colony on a temporary lockdown so we could work. This place is off limits. We should have the site to ourselves.

RORI

(scoffs) And yet it's still crawling with children! (under her breath) Typical backwater asteroid bullshit. How are they supposed to terraform a planet, if they can't keep their colonists under control?

DECLAN

Doesn't look like they did any damage to the hull.

MOLLY

Any *more* damage, you mean.

RORI

She hasn't been breached?

DECLAN

Not yet.

RORI

Good. Then we'd better get started, before anyone else from town gets any bright ideas. Looks like we'll need to cut our way in. Declan, Mol, take up your positions.

Declan and Mol move to take up positions on either side of the twisted door jamb.

DECLAN

(quietly) Think we'll find anyone?

Mol doesn't answer.

RORI

Alright. Cutters ready on my mark.

There is a soft hissing pop as the crew produce three small

plasma tools, and flick them on. The flames sizzle and crack.

RORI
(adjusting her visor) Switching to
infrared overhead visual.

DECLAN
(also adjusting) Confirmed.

MOLLY
(also adjusting) Infrared confirmed,
Captain.

RORI
Okay. (pressing a button on her comms)
H.Q. this is Captain Rori with
Aphelion Recovery Crew Juno,
responding to Beacon Code Salvation
13: Alpha-Alpha-Indigo, outside of
Rossetter Moon colony. Repeat, this is
ARC Juno, with an Alpha-Alpha-Indigo
outside of Rossetter Moon colony, we
are preparing to engage.

She waits a moment. There is a crackle of static from the
comms unit, and then an "all clear" signal.

RORI
(grim, but resolute) Engage.

The team begins to cut away at the door.

A few moments later, we hear the sound of a metal door being
forced open. After several loud bangs, the door comes
crashing off its hinges, and the three crew members step onto
the bridge.

The Adamantine's bridge is a ruin of scattered and broken
equipment. Small pieces of something that might be glass or
crystal crunches underfoot in a small greenish pool, and
something dark is splattered across the walls and floor.

MOLLY
(in a very small voice) Jesus...

RORI
(turns on a walkie talkie) H.Q. this
is Captain Rori with Aphelion Recovery
Crew Juno, onboard the Adamantine.
Repeat, this is ARC Juno onboard the
Adamantine. We-... (steadying breath)

We have a code Violet. Repeat. Code
Violet.

FADE OUT.

END.