

Descendants
BOOK ONE - INHERITANCE
i. Resurgence

by

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No Such Thing Productions

PROLOGUE

Axel, alone.

AXEL

I keep asking myself if it could have been different. If I'd gone with you. If you had stayed behind... A hundred thousand different scenarios, running through my head. Ticker tape. A hundred thousand things I could have, should have, didn't do. And you. Your face. Your smile. Delight. Interesting eyes.

You might still be here. I could have been the difference. I think about it. I can't stop. And I wish I could be anything more than sorry.

But then they come back. And I haven't got the time to be much of anything anymore.

We hear the unmistakable scream of a Gorgon, echoing and reverberating in the empty dead space.

FADE TO:

Theme.

FADE TO:

SCENE ONE

INT. Axel's Office, Aphelion Industries - DAY

AXEL CRICHTON is seated at his desk. In front of him sits a jar filled with dark green liquid, and CAPTAIN RORI CASSINI of the ARC Juno team.

AXEL

(very quietly) That's it?

RORI

We're still trying to decipher the logs. The communications relay on the Adamantine was nearly destroyed. Some sort of impact, as best we can tell, and there's some kind of... biological growth. Most of the logs are so badly

damaged, it could be a few days before we can start sorting through them. We have what looks like the first entry they made on approach to the planet, but that's all.

AXEL

So we have no idea what happened.

RORI

My team is working as quickly as they can-

AXEL

My brother is dead. There's a ruin of a spaceship with, what we can only *assume* are two dead bodies sitting in a bunker under my facilities, and you bring me one log -- not even a RELEVANT log, and this-

He angrily flicks the jar on his desk, and the glass lets off a sharp, ping.

AXEL

-jar of green goo! We have NOTHING. (beat) The Janus Project is... a complete... failure. And we have no idea what happened.

(beat. distant, almost numb) ... Sorry. (realizing)... I have to call my mother.

RORI

I'm sorry, sir.

AXEL

(rubbing his temples) I sent them, you know. Personally. She was over the moon about it. He didn't even want to go.

He picks up the jar, and examines its dark green contents.

AXEL

Do we know what this stuff is?

RORI

I was on my way to the labs when you called.

AXEL

Right...

RORI

I can bring you the results, as soon as we-

AXEL

No. No, don't worry about it. I'll take it down myself.

He sets the jar down on the desk.

AXEL

... What about Chel? Does she-... Her next of kin, where are they?

RORI

I can find out.

AXEL

Please. Leave it with my secretary. I'll... give them a call. As soon as we get the results.

... We're sure it's them?

RORI

(as delicately as possible) The... matter was fairly decomposed. And it looks like it was... in pretty bad shape before that. We can't be sure until we get the results back from the lab.

AXEL

But you're sure.

RORI

... I'm sure.

AXEL

Right.

He gathers himself and stands, holding his hand out to her, a clear dismissal.

AXEL

You'll let me know. As soon as you find anything else?

RORI
You'll be the first to know.

AXEL
Good. Thank you, captain.

Rori starts for the door. She opens it, then pauses.

AXEL
Is there something-

RORI
There's a bar. Down in the West
Village... Little hole in the wall
place, called the Perseus. I take my
crew out sometimes after it's been a-
... a particularly hard day. ... We'll
be there, tonight.

Axel regards her for a moment. He doesn't quite know what to
say.

AXEL
... I-... Thank you. That's-... That
would be great. If I wasn't... two
years sober.

RORI
Shit. I'm-

AXEL
No, it's-

RORI
I'm sorry.

AXEL
It's fine. I-... Thank you.

RORI
Just... If you need the company...

AXEL
(attempting to force a smile) Maybe
just a coffee.

RORI
Right.

She starts to leave again, and then...

RORI
Sir-... Axel... My condolences.

She leaves, shutting the door behind her. As she steps out of the office, we hear ANDREA WILLOWS, Axel's personal assistant, talking into a headset as she sits at her desk.

ANDREA
Look, it doesn't matter what you tell them. As far as they're concerned, it's business as usual. There is no news. This is just another assignment.

Rori makes her way over to stand by Andrea's desk.

Make sure it's-... hang on. (covering the mouthpiece of the headset with one hand. Not unkindly) Can I help you?

RORI
Hi. Yes. Captain Cassini. Recovery Crew Juno.

ANDREA
Of course. Is there-

RORI
I'm just heading back down. But Axel-... Mr. Crichton wanted me to ask you to look up any emergency or family contacts Dr. Stadler has.

ANDREA
... I see. Oh... god. So... it's-... they're-

RORI
He said he wanted to make the call himself. When we have final confirmations.

ANDREA
I... of course. Yes. Yes, I'll get right on that.

Rori nods, and walks off, disappearing down the hall. Shaken, Andrea returns to her phone call.

ANDREA
... Sandra? I-... are you still-... um. I need. I need you to-... yeah,

just one more thing. Dr. Stadler's family contact information. Yeah. Chel. ... Yeah. It's them. You know you can't say-... yeah... yeah, I'm okay. I just-... It's gonna be a long day.

FADE TO:

SCENE TWO

INT. Axel's Inner Office, Aphelion Industries - DAY

Axel paces, talking on the phone with his mother, ARIEL. She's in such a state of hysterics that we can hear her through the phone.

ARIEL

NO.

AXEL

Mom-

ARIEL

NO! (savagely) *I will not let you take him from me!*

AXEL

I'm not-... He's-... I'm sorry-

ARIEL

You promised-

AXEL

I-

ARIEL

YOU PROMISED ME! He would be safe! Nothing would happen! You said you'd take care of everything!

She starts to sob.

AXEL

... I know. I'm-

ARIEL

(through tears) You killed him.

AXEL

(stunned, not fully registering what

she's just said) I-... Mom, it was an accident-

ARIEL

*Why did you always have to push him?! Ever since you were little! I should have separated you when I had the chance! And I just stood by, let you try to push yourself under his skin, take over his whole life like some sort of- Always taking advantage! Pushing, and pushing, and PUSHING HIM because all you ever had was ideas! You couldn't ever be brave on your own! You wouldn't go! You sent *him*! You should have been the one-*

AXEL

You're right.

a beat. The clouds of grief clear enough for Ariel to realize what she's just said.

ARIEL

Oh-... No... No, nonono, Axel, sweetheart, I-... I didn't mean-

AXEL

(stiffly) No, it's... Fine. ... I gotta go.

ARIEL

Axel, please, WAIT-

AXEL

Bye, ma.

He hangs up. A heavy, awful silence.

a beat.

And Axel hurls his phone at the wall. It shatters spectacularly. He tries to get a hold of his breathing. Tries to push down the rising swell of emotions.

He glances at the ruined phone. Nudges it with his foot.

AXEL

(a bitter sound, half a laugh, half a sigh) ... Shit...

Behind the closed door to Axel's office, we hear the muffled sound of breaking glass. He looks up.

AXEL

Who's there?

No one answers.

AXEL

Andrea? Is that-... (sighs, frustrated) Look, I don't know what you heard, but I'm-... It's-... It's fine, okay?

When she doesn't respond...

AXEL

I mean it, I'm-... Can you-... I need you to clear my schedule for the next couple days. Book a shuttle out to Luna. I have to head home. My parents-... But it's fine. I'm fi-... Everything's going to be okay.

Still, silence. Something is... off.

AXEL

... Hello?

Inside the office, something large and heavy crashes to the floor. We hear a strange, muffled cry.

AXEL

What the hell-

He moves over to the door to his main office and pushes it open. Glass covers the floor, something thick drips off of the desk onto the floor, and-... was that a slither? Axel steps cautiously into the room. There is no sign of Andrea.

AXEL

Hello? ... Is someone in here? (to himself) ... Jesus, what a mess.

ANDREA

(calling through the door) Axel?

The door to the office opens, and Andrea steps in. She gasps.

ANDREA

What on earth-

AXEL
(sharply) Are you alright?

ANDREA
I'm fine! I heard-... What happened-

AXEL
I don't know. Bookshelf's been knocked over.

ANDREA
What's this glass and green stuff all over the floor?

Andrea bends and starts picking up glass from the floor and throwing it into the trash can beside Axel's desk.

We hear a slither. Axel tenses, suddenly alert.

AXEL
Did you hear that?

Andrea pauses. The room is unnaturally silent, except for a faint, reverberate ringing. Axel calmly moves over to his desk and opens a drawer. He pulls a handgun from inside the desk, and primes it.

ANDREA
(uneasily) Axel?

AXEL
(quiet, urgent) Get out.

ANDREA
What?

AXEL
We're not alone.

We hear a slither-... and then a heavy crack, like a footstep on glass.

ANDREA
(panicked) What was-

AXEL
There's something in here...

From behind the bookshelf, The Gorgon lets out a harsh, rasping cry.

CUT TO:

SCENE THREE

INT. Hallway, Aphelion Industries - MEANWHILE

Rori heads away from the suite of executive offices, back down to the hangar bay where the ARC Juno team is waiting. She talks animatedly over her comms unit as she walks, and we hear her crew-mates MOLLY "MOL" BESSEL and DECLAN BOND on the other side of the connection.

MOLLY

I'm sure it couldn't have been that bad.

RORI

I handed him what might have been the liquified remains of one of his top scientists, told him his brother was dead, and then offered to take him out for drinks, which -- FUN FACT! He is a recovered alcoholic.

MOLLY

Oh.

DECLAN

Yikes.

RORI

Yeah. It was pretty bad.

DECLAN

Well, look on the bright side -- nobody's shown up claiming to be your replacement, so that's probably a good sign!

MOLLY

Declan! (hits him)

DECLAN

OW! Damn, Mol, it was a joke!

RORI

(smiling ruefully) Yeah, well, give it 24-hours. A lot can change in a day. (runs a hand over her face, refocusing) What's your status report?

Mol, tell me you've got something we can give the lab on that green stuff?

MOLLY

Not yet. I've been running scans on it since we took that first sample, and I don't know what it is, but it's driving my poor equipment crazy!

RORI

What do you mean?

MOLLY

Well, the initial scan brought it up as bio-matter... but the computer can't seem to pinpoint what it is. One second it identifies it as plant-life, the next a virus... A second later, it's almost human, and then, without warning, it can't be identified as anything at all. I don't understand it.

RORI

Mmm... Try rebooting the scanner. The tech problems the Adamantine was having might not be limited to the data pads and a broken console.

MOLLY

That's what I was thinking. I was about to head back to their lab, see if Che-... if... Dr. Stadler left any notes, or if their equipment has any better luck. But I wanted to check in with you first.

RORI

Roger that. Keep in touch. I'll check in with you as soon as I'm down.

MOLLY

Yes, captain.

Mol passes the connection to Declan, and we hear them leave.

DECLAN

... Think they'll be okay?

RORI

Mol?

DECLAN

Yeah. They... they knew the woman, didn't they? Chel?

RORI

Yeah.

DECLAN

Should I-

RORI

No, leave them be. Mol's a tough person, let them work for now... they'll talk when they're ready. They always do.

DECLAN

Right... Yeah, okay.

RORI

Any progress on deciphering those logs?

DECLAN

Negative, Captain. Well, not really anyway. They're still coming through all jumbled up on this end, not to mention it looks like I've got HUGE blocks of time that have just gone missing. And this console's so damaged, I don't know if I can get 'em back.

RORI

Well, how many have you got now?

DECLAN

I'm up to four. Two of hers, two of his... Sounds like they're on different ends of this thing, though. Apparently there was some kind of... creature, on board the ship.

Rori stops dead in her tracks.

RORI

Declan, did-... Are you saying- They actually made Contact?!

DECLAN

Yeah, and it did NOT go well.

According to this guy, Peter, they found... some sort of tunnel system where the city was supposed to be, and this thing, whatever it was, got Chel. Did something to her. Infected her, Xenomorph style, got itself on the ship, and started hunting him down. And he... he killed her.

RORI

Jesus.

DECLAN

Well, thought he did, anyway. Apparently he was trying to find his way back home, but with all this damage to the console, it looks like their guidance system malfunctioned. Hence the five months late, and crashing into Rosseter. They must have been drifting for weeks... Dude sounded like he was off his fucking nut before he went.

RORI

Declan!

DECLAN

(beat, chastened) I-... Sorry. It's just... he was... on the Adamantine alone. With her body laying right there next to him. For... I don't know how long. But... he lost it. Before... before the end. (beat) That's all I have so far.

RORI

Well... Keep... keep digging. See what you can-

Muffled in the background on the far side of the comms, we hear something crash to the floor.

RORI

What the hell was that?

DECLAN

I don't-

And then, the unmistakable sound of a scream.

DECLAN

Mol?! MOL!

We hear him bolt towards the laboratory.

RORI

Declan! What's going on?! What happened?!

Mol's screams rise in both panic and pitch.

DECLAN

Mol?! Mol- JESUS CHRIST! What the fuck is that thing?!

RORI

Declan, WHAT'S HAPPENING?! Are they alright?!

We hear the hissing roar of a Gorgon.

MOLLY

Declan!

DECLAN

Get away from them!

Gunshots. The Gorgon roars again. Mol continues to scream.

And then the line goes dead.

RORI

Mol?! Declan?! MOLLY!!!

From the hallway behind her, far too close for comfort, we hear the roar of another Gorgon, and the sharp crack of gunshots.

RORI

(to herself) FUCK!

She turns and runs back towards Axel's office.

CUT TO:

SCENE FOUR

EXT. Hallway, Aphelion Industries - CONTINUOUS

We hear the muffled *crack! crack!* of gunshots through a closed door. Andrea screams, and is cut off, choking. A

Gorgon lets out a hissing roar, and Axel bursts out of his office.

AXEL

Get away!

He yells, firing a pistol as he runs backwards out of the room. He stumbles, hitting the ground hard. We hear the Gorgon slither closer, hissing. Axel yells again, throwing up a hand to ward the creature away-

BANG! BANG!

Rori is suddenly standing over Axel, gun drawn. BANG! BANG! BANG! The Gorgon screams in pain and frustration, and retreats as Rori hauls Axel to his feet.

RORI

Axel! You alright?

AXEL

What the hell is that thing?!

RORI

No fucking idea. But it looks like they came down in the Adamantine.

AXEL

WHAT?!

The Gorgon slithers closer, hissing. Rori fires again.

RORI

(into comms unit) ARC Juno to Aphelion Security Team SDE. Repeat, Juno to SDE. Initiate full quarantine protocols, level 8 lockdown security measures. Aphelion authorization code S-D-E-Alpha-Beta-3.

Alarms begin to blare. All around them, doors begin to slam shut, and at the end of the hall, we hear a heavy metal door grinding against its track as it rolls slowly down.

COMPUTER VOICE

Warning! Quarantine Protocols engaged in the Executive Suites. Total building lockdown in 5 minutes.
Warning! Quarantine Protocols engaged in the Executive Suites. Total building lockdown in 5 minutes.

RORI
The stairwell! Before the shields come
down! MOVE!

AXEL
No, wait! Andrea-

RORI
What?

AXEL
Andrea! My- my personal assistant.
She's still in there. I was in the
back- I came back into the office-
That jar- There was glass and this
green stuff, and that thing- It- It
was on her- On her face- She was
screaming-

RORI
She isn't screaming anymore.

AXEL
But-

RORI
MOVE.

The Gorgon spills out of the office and into the hallway with
a terrible, rasping cry. It almost sounds like...

GORGON
Aaaaaaaah...

Axel freezes, transfixed. Rori roughly shoves him forward.

RORI
MOVE!!!

Axel stumbles, then forces himself to turn and run. The
Gorgon screams in rage and squelches down the hall after
them. The grinding of the door grows louder as Rori and Axel
get closer.

RORI
DIVE!

She launches herself under the door, and Axel follows,
rolling into the stairwell beyond. And not a moment too soon.

BOOM!

The quarantine door slams shut. The Gorgon lets out a frustrated burbling hiss, and throws itself against the door.

It pauses, calculating. As the alarms continue to blare, we hear a faint hiss of moving air. The Gorgon burbles, slithering over to the wall. An air vent hums away quietly.

COMPUTER VOICE

Warning! Quarantine Protocols engaged in the Executive Suites. Now sealing all ventilation shafts. Total building lockdown in 5 minutes. Warning! Quarantine Protocols engaged in the Executive Suites. Now sealing all ventilation shafts. Total building lockdown in 5 minutes.

As the message repeats, we hear the vents up and down the hall beginning to shutter. The Gorgon lets out another ringing, rasping cry, and we hear a horrible squelching, bubbling sound as the Gorgon pushes its body into the vents, slithering wetly forward.

It lets out another hissing cry... and the air vent slides shut behind it.

CUT TO:

SCENE FIVE

INT. Access Stairwell, Aphelion Industries - CONTINUOUS

COMPUTER VOICE

Warning! Quarantine Protocols engaged. Total lockdown in 5 minutes. Total lockdown in 5 minutes.

We hear a door slam open, and Rori and Axel's footsteps echo loudly around the concrete stairwell.

RORI

(urging him forward) Come on!

AXEL

Where are we going?!

RORI

There's a fire exit a few floors down. If it isn't already blocked up with people, then it's our best bet for escape. Why the hell do you executive

types always have to have offices up
so fucking high?!

AXEL

Well, when you spend almost two
decades crushing people underfoot to
get ahead, they start to pile up. I
had to step on a lot of people to get
a view like that.

RORI

Yeah, well, your stupid view might get
us both killed.

AXEL

No, I'm fairly certain you, your crew,
and your alien goo jar got us killed!

Rori stops dead, and Axel nearly slams into her.

Hey! Watch it-

RORI

My crew is dead.

beat.

AXEL

I-... I'm sorry.

RORI

... Might be dead. Probably. There was-
... Something on the ship, and-... I
wasn't there, and they needed me, and-
...

She tries to steady herself with a breath.

AXEL

We-... we can rescue them. There's a
maintenance elevator right on the next
floor! It'll take us straight down to
the hangar bay. If we-

RORI

(firmly) NO. (forcing herself to
suppress the emotions starting to well
up) No... They... stopped screaming.
You can't help someone you can't hear.

AXEL

No, but we could try-

RORI

(blazing fiercely) Mr. Crichton, I'm sorry to break you of your childhood illusions, but there's no such thing as heroes. We don't know what those things are. You racing down to the hangar bay will only get you killed. We don't have the time. And my crew is the best of the best. They know how to take care of themselves. If they couldn't-... I can't help them. But... You are here. Here. Standing right in front of me. You are my priority.

beat. Axel looks at her. Trusts her.

AXEL

Okay.

RORI

Okay.

We hear the blip, and crackle of a comms unit coming to life.

DECLAN

(via comms) Well THAT'S reassuring. You weren't coming to rescue us at all?

RORI

Declan?!

MOLLY

(via comms) Told you she wouldn't. She has more faith in us than that. You owe me 50 bucks.

DECLAN

Y'know, she thought we were dead, so technically, it's not even-

MOLLY

Ah ah ah... Pay up.

DECLAN

(grumbling) Goddamnit...

RORI
Mol?! Oh thank- You- You're alive?!

MOLLY
You didn't think you could get rid of us that easily, did you?

RORI
Are you hurt?

MOLLY
We're alright.

RORI
What happened? I heard screaming and then the comms went dead-

MOLLY
It was on the ship. There was a- a creature. That goo- Captain, it's alive. It attacked us on the ship, we managed to get away, but it's in the hangar bay-

RORI
Where are you now?

MOLLY
We're outside! Where are you?

COMPUTER VOICE
Total lockdown in 3 minutes. Total lockdown in 3 minutes.

MOLLY
Captain... tell me you're not still inside?

AXEL
(realizing) We're not going to make it in time.

RORI
Declan-

DECLAN
On it! I'm pulling up the building schematic now. ... SHIT!

RORI
What is it?

DECLAN

(frustrated, but still focused in on his work) Something's... jamming my computer signal! There's too much interference!

AXEL

(dryly) Have you tried turning it off and turning it on again.

DECLAN

VERY funny.

AXEL

This is a joke, right? We're trusting our lives to the guy who doesn't know how to use the goddamn internet?

RORI

Calm down! Everything's under control.

AXEL

(amused and disbelieving) *Is it?*

DECLAN

I've got a fix on you, I just need to- GOT IT! There's a maintenance pass running through the east side of the building. You'll find an entry hatch on the floor below you. You just have to get there before the shields come down, and I can guide you out of the building. HURRY!

They don't need to be told twice. Axel and Rori bolt down the stairs to the next level. Rori wrenches open the door.

COMPUTER VOICE

Total lockdown in 2 minutes. Total lockdown in 2 minutes.

RORI

Declan, which way?!

DECLAN

Left! It's at the far end of the hall.

RORI

I see it!

They run.

AXEL
We're gonna make it... We're gonna
make it!

Above them, something bumps and slithers in the air duct.

RORI
What was that?

AXEL
What-

RORI
STOP!

They skid to a halt. The slithering continues from the air duct. We hear a muffled, rasping cry.

AXEL
Jesus Christ, it's in the air vents.

MOLLY
What?!

The Gorgon's scream comes again. Axel turns to Rori, grimly determined.

AXEL
Give me your gun.

RORI
(as he takes it from her) What are you
doing?!

AXEL
(under his breath) Being brave for
once.

RORI
(realizing) No, wait, Axel DON'T-

Too late. Axel raises the gun and begins firing up at the air vent. The angry Gorgon screams, as Rori snatches her gun back.

RORI
Are you out of your goddamn mind?!

AXEL
I was trying to kill it!

RORI

What EXACTLY did you think bullets were going to do this time, that they weren't doing before?!

AXEL

(faltering) I-... I was just trying to help-

RORI

Congratulations! You just helped it find us!

The Gorgon slams its body furiously into the side of the vent. The comms line crackles.

MOLLY

Captain? Captain, what's going on?!

RORI

We've got another one of those things up here in the executive suites.

MOLLY

What? How?

RORI

That sample I scraped up from the Adamantine decided to grow a mind of its own.

MOLLY

It replicated that quickly?

BANG! BANG! The Gorgon screams again.

AXEL

(realizing) It's gonna get through...

COMPUTER VOICE

Total lockdown in 1 minute. Repeat: 1 minute.

RORI

We have to get out of here.

Axel dashes to one side of the hall and yanks open a wooden door.

AXEL

Closet. NOW.

RORI

But-

AXEL

We're not gonna make it, Rori! But that thing can't kill us if it can't find us! GO!

They duck into the closet. Axel pulls the door shut sharply behind them.

RORI

This is a bad idea... This is a bad idea-

AXEL

(listening hard) Shhh...

Outside, the air duct groans. We hear the splitting of metal, and the Gorgon begins pouring itself out of the vent. Axel and Rori speak in hushed voices.

RORI

... It's in the hallway...

AXEL

Shit...

MOLLY

Captain?! Captain, can you hear me-

AXEL

(alarmed) The comms!

RORI

Son of a-

She rotates a dial, the volume of the comms unit drops.

MOLLY

Captain?

DECLAN

Are you guys okay?

AXEL

For now...

DECLAN

(sighs) So now there's two of them.

MOLLY

Three. We have to assume whatever was on that ship killed the Adamantine's crew. We know it got Chel, we know it probably killed Peter too. That green stuff was everywhere -- and given it survived the whole trip back, sounds like two people, dead or alive, would've served as more than enough nutrients for it to reproduce. So at least two on the ship, one birthed from the sample up in the suites...

DECLAN

... and more on the way. There must still be other people trapped in the building... How fast can these things spread?

CRASH! Everyone freezes as the shattered section of airlock comes crashing down to the ground. There is a horrific squelching, and a ringing begins to fill the hall as the Gorgon lets out a hissing scream.

AXEL

Rori-

For an instant, there is a whisper. Something not quite there; familiar and unearthly.

CHEL

(simultaneously) Breathe...

RORI

(simultaneously) Breathe...

AXEL

(disoriented) I-... Wh-what?

The world shifts back into focus.

RORI

Breathe. You're okay. I've got you.

AXEL

It's getting closer...

RORI

Just... Stay behind me.

COMPUTER VOICE
Initiating Quarantine, Stage One.
Repeat: Quarantine, Stage One.

We hear a slithering right outside the door. The high ethereal ringing is louder now. The Gorgon growls.

RORI
... it's gonna be okay. It's gonna be-

AXEL
It's outside...

The Gorgon hisses, and lets out a terrible rasping cry.

FADE OUT.

END.