

Hope in a Bottle
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SCENE 1: Bodies

INT- The Moratorium - Day 6 fo these deaths
Jared is working in a lab with his assistance Hope Stills. It's midnight. A bright moon shines through the window of his lab.

Hope walls to Jared & places a gift by him.

Hope
"Happy Birthday!"

Jared(suprised)
"Oh! Thank you!"
Jared looks at the gift for a few seconds and returns to work.

Hope
"Why don't you take the day off? Go spend time with your family. I can run the lab tonight."

Jared (somberly)
"I'll see them eventually. They're on a trip with their mother."
Jared's voice hid sadness in his tone. Something isn't right with him.
Hope notices this, but doesn't inquire more.

Hope (amicable)
"I hope you get to see them soon."
Officers can be heard in the hallway. The Officers open the doors.

Detective Harris
"Got another one for you doc. Just like the others."
She opened the doors allowing the stretcher to roll in. They place the bodybag onto the table. It's lifelessness rolls as Harris and Jared placed it on the table. They unzipped the bag revealing the corpse of a young female. Her torso has multiple stab wounds and was torn open revealing her intestines. The smell was horrible. But they were all used to it.

Harris (contin)
"A 25 year old biology student in grad school with no history of depression or substance abuse. None of her family members saw

this coming."

Hope (quietly)

"Most people don't show outward signs of depression before suicide, so it fits the pattern with the other victims."

Jared (to Harris)

"Any witnesses?"

Harris

"No. She lived alone. No one heard any screaming. We found her 8 hours after she was already dead."

Jared looks at the layer of skin that exposed the intestines. The cuts are jagged and rough. She was torn apart quickly, no surgical precision.
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Jared

"She must've been in agony."

Hope

"Look at her face. She enjoyed peeling herself apart. Just like the rest."

He looks at the face. The woman's face shows no sign of terror or pain. A slight grin is on her face. Almost as if she found pleasure in her death. It seems she found euphoria in the end. Just like the rest of the victims.

Harris

"Most of the people who we've found were addicts, so she could've been high to mute the pain. Anyway, I've got to write up a report."

Harris leaves the room. Jared gets his tools to begin autopsy and Hope grabs his arm. Her face is stern and worried. She's never looked this nervous before. Jared turns to face her.

Hope (whispering)

"What if it's a disease?"

She spoke so quietly, a quiet confidence, as if she worried Harris might over hear or someone. Something was definitely bothering her.

Jared considered her idea. We can't hear his thoughts but his face says enough about what his mind is thinking. The lab is quiet as Jared thinks. After sometime, he speaks.

Jared

"What kind of disease causes its host to commit suicide?"

Hope

"Not a disease, but a virus. A parasite maybe."

They look at the corpse on the table and the similar cadavers in the

cabinets from the previous cases. The cadavers in the cabinets share similar bruises and lacerations on their body. Though some did not use jumping out of buildings as their means of suicide, that was the most common form.

Hope realizes something. She rushes over to the most recent body and examines it.

Jared (worried)

"What's wrong? What are you lookin-"

Hope (fearful)

"Call Harris. Let her know we have a possible outbreak on our hands"

Jared rushes over to Hope. She proceeds to grab a scalpel and begins to cut open the head.

Jared (stopping Hope)

"whoa whoa whoa, shouldn't we verify your guess first?"

Hope calms down.

Hope

"You're right. We need to run some tests, but we need to seal off this lab in case I'm right."

Jared & Hope seal off the lab. Just the two of them and the dead bodies in the moratorium. The suicide victims are stored in the shelves.

Hope (contin)

"If this is a disease. Then it causes people to commit suicide, so we need study the brain and look for any abnormalities and patterns in all of the bodies."

Jared

"Right, so I'll study this one. You study the old Cadavers."

They hurriedly examine the brains of all 7 cadavers. Hours pass. The cleanliness of the lab is gone now. Papers are everywhere and bodies with their brains cut-out are placed throughout the lab. It's almost morning and the doctors are tired.

Jared (frustrated)

"We haven't found anything that suggests this is a virus."

Hope ignores him and continues to work. Jared walks over to her.

Hope

"It's there. I know it."

Jared

"We haven't found it. There is no disease."

Hope

"Maybe we're not thinking about it the right way."

Jared shook his head. He choose his words carefully and his tone more so.

Jared

"The easiest explanation is that these people choose to take their life. No one coerced them to."

SCENE 2: Alive

INT- Hospital.Day 14

Harris stands at the head of a hospital bed of a 12 year old child. The child is unconscious, but his arms and legs twitch as if they have a mind of their own. The parents are watching from outside the room.

Jared & Hope rush into the hospital room.

Harris seeing them enter.

Harris (points to the boy)

"glad you could make it. We were able to stop him before he jumped. Had to sedate him and strap him down. He's been here for 8 hours. He sustained injuries when my guys tried to restrain him."

Jared studies the boy with his eyes. Hope looks at the medical history and the brain scans.

Jared

"He looks normal. Healthy."

Hope

"He's not. Look at his brain. It's growing throughout."

The scans revealed a growth throughout his brain. Like a grape vine growing around a fence, the disease formed around the brain of the boy.

Hope (to Harris)

"We need you to shut down the area where you found the boy and the hospital. We need to contain this."

She shouted orders to the hospital staff and called her superiors. Her voice can be heard throughout the hallways.

Jared (to Hope)

"Why didn't we see this in the cadavers."

Hope (slight panic)

"Maybe it dies out? Or it goes away somehow?"

Jared doesn't respond. His face is deep in thought. Hope goes back to the medical charts. They don't notice the boy slowly regaining consciousness.

The doctor enters the room.

The Doctor

"I heard what's happening. What do you need me to do?"

The doctor notices the boy is regaining consciousness. She approaches the boy.

Hope

"No! Wait, you need to stay away from him."

The boy broke the bonds that held him. He tore the IV tubs in his arm out. He lunged towards the doctor and held her neck in a vice grip with the strength of a bear. Hope calls the security

Security team rushed in.

Security (taking out a taser)

"LET GO OF THE DOCTOR!"

The parents rush in.

The boy loosens his grip around the doctors throat. His eyes frantically searching the room for something. His eyes land on the window.

Hope notices this and stands between the boy & the window.

The boy's face grows noticeably deranged. Animal-like glaring at Hope. Before boy lunged towards Hope, the father was able restrain his son for the doctor to sedate him once more. The boy's arm was scrapped in the struggle.

The Doctor (breathing heavily)

"He's never done this before."

The security helps the doctor secure the boy to this bed.

Jared
"The disease must be progressing"

Hope
"But we can't stop this unless we know the disease. There are parasites that affect animals."

Jared
"But none of those parasites can affect humans."

A security personnel stays in the room.

Hope (epiphany)
"The Toxoplasma parasite has been shown to affect cats and rats. And it is in most people's brain."

Jared
"But there's never been any cases of toxoplasma controlling people."

Hope
"It's mutated. We can run tests."
(to doctor)
"Are there any labs open?"

SCENE 3: The Lab

INT - The Lab. The lab is in a dull yellow light while the station where the doctors are is in the dark except for the blue light emitting from the computer monitors.

Jared & Hope are in the lab. The boy is placed in an MRI. As the boy's head runs through the scanner, an alien growth is seen in his head. But it's less than before. It's going away? Where?

Jared (noticing this)
"Where is it going? The growth is decreasing?"

Jared began to remove the boy from the MRI machine.

Hope notices a slight blood stain on the bed as it came into view. She looks back at the scans from the MRI and notices the growth decreasing in each image. She stops the bed from moving.

Jared (restarts the bed)
"What're you doing?"

Hope
"It's escaping through the cut."

Hope rushes towards the boy and Jared quickly follows. They examine the boy and notice a scab that is bleeding.

Jared (looking at boy's arm)
"It must've been from earlier today. I don't see anything. Are you sure it's escaping through the cut?"

Hope
"It wasn't decreasing earlier today when we first examined him. So it has to be exiting somewhere."

Hope runs to grab a vial.

Jared
"If it is escaping through the cut that means..."
He paused. As if he's afraid of speaking. Hope finishes the sentence for him.

Hope (returning with vial)
"It's airborne. Spores are too tiny for us to see. But not for other people."
Hope covers the wound with a vial to capture some spores. She closes the lid and carefully places on a table.

Both are quiet. Absorbing what has happened.. The parasite uses spores to spread. No idea who's infected or how many.

Hope feels exhausted.

Hope (to Jared)
"We need to alert Harris and shutdown this hospital. And that we have sample."
Jared doesn't move. He's frozen. From fear. From impending doom. His face stuck on is he infected? How many are? How long do I have? As if he's relieving a previous traumatic event.

Hope sees him frozen and calls Harris right away to alert her.

Hope (on phone)
"Detective Harris. We have an outbreak. Shutdown the hospital."

Hope hangs up the phone. She looks to Jared who is sitting on the floor in defeat and exhaustion. She grabs the vial and goes to Jared.

Hope (to Jared)
"We need to analyze this sample."

Hope shows him the vial. Small yellow spores float in the bottle. Humanity's last hope is in that bottle.

SCENE 4: Pandemic

INT: the Lab. Day 14

Hospital is in chaos outside the lab. Panic stricken patients and doctors trying to calm each other down without going insane. Chaos has consumed the hospital and the Spores continue to spread. Jared & Hope are quarantined in the yellow iridescence lab. They sitting against the wall in exhaustion and defeat. The boy has been strapped down to the MRI table. He continues to struggle to free himself. His exhaustion will be the end of him.

Jared stares at the struggling boy.

Jared
"I'd hate to go like that"

Hope (studying the sample)
"They were feeling euphoric before they died, so they didn't feel the pain."

The boy's arms are growing red from the rubbing against the restraints. Veins are jutting from his forehead.

Jared (point to the boy)
"Does that look painless and euphoric?"

Hope doesn't respond.

Jared (contin)
"It must be horrible. Knowing that you are not yourself anymore and no one can save you."

Hope
"We might not be able to save ourselves. But we can save others."

Jared
"We haven't gotten much information using the equipment in the lab."

Hope
"We need to try something. We owe it to others."

Jared
"Why? We didn't create this virus. And if the virus kills us off, there will be no human left to tell the tale. There is no point. It's over. We're dead. It's only a matter of time."

Hope doesn't respond. She's actively analyzing the spores.

Hope (to herself)
"it's similar to pollen.."

Jared (hearing her whisper)
"what?"

Hope
"We can create a treatment similar to treating allergies. I'll let everyone know."
Hope calls Harris. Jared stays sitting. He glances around the room. Until he sees a being in the corner of the room.

Jared (frightful)
"who the hell are you?"
The being doesn't look at Jared. It holds a notebook filled with names and begins to flip through it.

Being (calm whisper)
"Someone forced to witness the end of times."

Jared
"How did you get in here?"

Being
"I appear when it's time."
Being looks at the young boy. Hope continues to talk to Harris in the back.

Being
"Like it was for this boy."

Jared
"are you here for us?"

Being
"yes"
Hope ends her call.

Jared (trouble breathing)
"how much longer"

Death
"soon"

Hope notices Jared talking to someone. Jared slumps on the floor in depression. A million thoughts running through his head, missed opportunities, old friends, family. The being looks at the boy.

Being (whispers to self)
'It ate him from the inside out'
The being then looks towards Jared's dying figure.

Being (to Jared)
"You're afraid."

Jared begins to tremble slightly as if he's fighting something internally. The being walks to Jared. Its walk was seamless as if it floated to Jared. The being looms over Jared.

Being (calm voice)
"Don't be afraid. You have nothing to fear."

Jared (whisper)
"What's after this?"

Being
"I don't know."
The being's spoke heavily as if its disappointed that it doesn't know what's next. Is death human or supernatural if it feels emotion?

Jared notices Hope hasn't said a word. She looks confused.

Jared (to Hope)

"Are you ok?"

Hope

"are YOU ok? Who are you talking to?"

Jared (to being)

"Why can't she see you?"

Death

"Because she's not dying."

Jared(to Hope)

"I'm talking to- "

Hope (interrupts)

"You're talking to Death. I've heard of this before. People seeing death holding a notebook before their death. Where is he?"

Jared ushers to his right. Hope stood to Jared's left. The decomposing boy lain on the bed in front of Jared. And death stood to the right of Jared. The three stood in silence. Jared, Hope, and Death in a lab with a decomposing body in the room.

Jared (remembering something)

"What do you mean she's not dying? She was exposed to the parasite"

Death

"I am only seen by those close to death. She is not."

Jared begins to think. Hope hearing this dialogue thinks why she isn't dying. Hope isn't dying even though she was exposed to the parasite as much as Jared. Why isn't she dying?

Jared (epiphany)

"You're immune."

Hope

"What?"

Jared begins to cough. He's being fighting the parasite and its been eating him alive from the inside.

Jared (coughing)

"for-for some reason you are immune."

Jared begins to scream in pain.

Slowly the parasite harvests on Jared's organs while he's alive. He can barely tolerate the pain and falls to the ground. Death takes out his notebook.

Hope runs over to Jared.

Hope

"What do you need me to do?"

Jared (shallow breaths)

"You're immune. You can stop this."

Hope (verge of crying)
"What about your family?"

Jared (dying breaths)
"I'll see them soon"

Hope breaks down crying cradling Jared's dead body.
Death crosses Jared from the notebook. Hope tries to look for Death but she cannot see the being.

Death sees the vial on the desk that contains a strain of the parasite.

Death
"They still have Hope."

THE END