

THE OFFICIAL MOVIE NOVELIZATION

RESIDENT EVIL

THE FINAL CHAPTER

EVIL COMES HOME



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BASED ON CAPCOM'S VIDEOGAME RESIDENT EVIL

PROLOGUE

They say that history is written by the victors. This, then, is the history of the Umbrella Corporation.

Formed thirty years ago by two crusading scientists, Dr. Alexander Isaacs and Professor James Marcus, the Umbrella Corporation had the best of intentions, the loftiest of ideals. Marcus had a young daughter afflicted with progeria, a progressive, fatal wasting disease. The same disease that had killed her mother. Marcus had already lost a wife. He couldn't lose a daughter. Marcus was driven to save her, and other children like her, so that no parent would ever have to suffer again. But the odds seemed impossible. And even as he worked desperately to create a cure, the young child's father would record his daughter—her voice, her likeness—saving her for posterity.

* * *

James Marcus sat on a wheeled stool at his daughter's beside, watching her sleep. Although they

were at home, his daughter's room looked more like it belonged in a hospital ward than a family dwelling. A myriad of machines surrounded the bed, connected to his girl by thin wires, monitoring her vital signs. IV bags hung on metal stands, tubes stretching to the needles embedded in the backs of her wrists in order to deliver a steady stream of various medicines.

While Marcus employed homecare nurses to see to his daughter's needs, he had been the one to set up the equipment and select the medicines that flowed into her body, a number of them highly experimental. Not that his efforts had borne much fruit. His daughter's condition hadn't improved in any significant way, and the side effects from the powerful medicines coursing through her veins only served to intensify her misery. He hated further decreasing her already diminished quality of life, but he could not stand by and watch as the same disease that had claimed her mother killed her, too. He was one of the smartest people on the planet—he thought this with no ego; it was a simple statement of fact—yet for all his education, training, and experience, he'd been unable to save his wife, and now it looked like he would fail his daughter as well.

And not just her—all the others who suffered from incurable diseases, and their loved ones as well. He had been working on a cure, not only for her condition, but a cure for *all* disease, and while he'd made some progress, in no small measure thanks to the contributions of his partner in both business and science, Alexander Isaacs, unless they had a breakthrough soon, his daughter would die before they achieved their goal. That's why he was here today.

He had a backup plan. Quite literally.

He'd brought some new equipment with him this visit: a metal cart with a computer monitor and keyboard on the top shelf and an oversized CPU on the bottom. The CPU was like nothing available on the market. For that matter, it was like nothing the world's militaries and intelligence agencies possessed. The machine was enclosed in a black metallic casing with the red and white Umbrella Corporation logo emblazoned on the side. A number of medical leads were plugged into the computer, and Marcus began attaching the other ends to his daughter's head while she slept.

Like her mother, his daughter was afflicted with Werner syndrome, also known as adult progeria. It was a rare genetic disorder, with a global incidence of one in 100,000 births. The rate of occurrence was even lower in the United States: one in 200,000. This form of progeria could be passed from parent to child, and that's exactly what had happened to his poor daughter. But where the disease hadn't begun to manifest in his wife until her twenties, it had struck their daughter much younger, at only six years of age. People with Werner syndrome experienced premature aging and usually died in their late forties. But given how early the disease had presented in his daughter, Marcus feared she had nowhere near that long to live, and if he couldn't save her, at least he could preserve her.

He tried to work as gently as he could so as not to wake the sleeping girl, but he had only attached half of the leads when her eyes slowly opened. They were clouded with the beginnings of cataracts, but she could still see well enough to recognize him, and she smiled faintly.

"Hello, Father." Her voice was hoarse and high-pitched—a symptom of her disease.

Marcus returned her smile, hoping she wouldn't sense the deep sadness hidden behind his expression.

"Hello, sweetheart. How are you feeling today?"

"Tired," she said, exhaling the word more than speaking it. She managed another smile. "But I'm always tired, aren't I?"

She was dressed in a white silk nightgown, the most comfortable that Marcus had been able to find. Her blondish-brown hair, once healthy and thick, was straw-like and graying. Her skin was thin and wrinkled, the veins visible beneath. She'd always favored her mother, but now she was coming to look like his wife had in her final days, when the disease had stolen away her youth and vitality, leaving her little more than a scarecrow made of flesh and bone. The resemblance was almost too much for him to bear, and he had to force himself not to look away from her.

"It's only to be expected," Marcus said, trying to keep his voice steady. He continued attaching the leads to his daughter.

"What are you doing? Is it a new treatment?"

There was a note of hope in the question that nearly broke Marcus's heart.

"I'm going to make a record of the electrochemical activity in your brain."

His daughter was highly intelligent and would likely surpass him when... *if* she grew up. But as bright as she was, the slight frowning of her brow told him she hadn't understood his explanation. He continued talking as he turned to the computer and began typing commands.

“I’m going to take a picture of your brain. Or more precisely, of how your brain works. Everything that makes us who we are is up here.” He paused in his typing to raise a hand to his head and tap his index finger against his temple. “Our thoughts, our experiences, our dreams...”

He typed some more and a display came up on the screen—a three-dimensional rendering of his daughter’s brain with constant lightning-like flashes of light coruscating across the surface. For a moment, his breath caught in his throat. He was a man of science, someone who relied on reason and evidence, not faith, and yet he couldn’t escape the feeling he was gazing upon his daughter’s soul.

“Why do you want to do that?” she asked.

Her eyes were half closed and she sounded sleepy. She had difficulty staying awake these days, mostly because of her weakened state but also because drowsiness was one of the primary side effects of the medicines she was taking. The recording of her brain patterns would be completed just as effectively whether she was awake or asleep, and he’d already made numerous recordings of her facial features and vocal patterns during previous visits, so if she returned to sleep, his work could continue. It might be a blessing if she slept—more for him than for her. He didn’t know how much longer he could keep talking to her without breaking down. And if he cried in front of her, she would know he’d lost hope, and in turn, she would lose what little remained to her. He was her father, and he had to be strong for her, if only for a little while longer.

“I’m testing a new computer program I’ve invented,

and I couldn't think of anyone who is better equipped to help me than you. After all, you *are* the smartest person I know."

Her smile was so faint it was almost undetectable. Her eyes closed further, although because of her condition, they couldn't close completely. She reached a trembling hand toward him, and he quickly took hold of it before she lost what strength she had, and her hand flopped back down onto the bed.

"You've done so much for me, Father. I'm happy to..." Her voice trailed off, and for a second Marcus thought she'd dozed off, but then she continued. "... help you in any way I can."

That did it. Tears began streaming down Marcus's face, and he continued holding his daughter's hand, careful to grip it lightly so he wouldn't hurt her. She lay still and her breathing deepened, and Marcus knew she had fallen back to sleep. Now that there was no longer any need to hide his grief, he let it pour out of him in great, wracking sobs as the computer continued making a virtual copy of his dying daughter's mind.

* * *

But then the breakthrough came. Marcus and Isaacs discovered the Progenitor Cell. Once injected, it would detect and repair damaged cells within the body almost instantaneously. It was a miracle. The life of Marcus's daughter was saved.

The Progenitor Cell had a myriad of applications, treating a thousand different diseases. Overnight, it seemed that a new era was dawning. A world without

the fear of infection, sickness, or decay. But it was not to be. For the Progenitor Cell had certain unforeseen side effects...

* * *

TWENTY YEARS AGO.
CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

Dominic Robertson enjoyed the dropping sensation in the center of his stomach as the Rotair cable car ascended toward Table Mountain. He'd first made the trip when he was a school boy, and although he was now a teacher and had escorted students on many class outings to the mountain's plateau, every time the cable car began its ascent, he was just as excited as he'd been that first time.

Too bad most of the boys didn't appear to share his excitement. Most were too caught up in reading comic books they'd brought or trying to solve their Rubik's Cube puzzles. He sighed. The ride to the top took only five minutes. Surely the mountain's majesty should be enough to hold the boys' attention that long. But he supposed that when you grew up in Cape Town with the mountain a constant presence, it wasn't that special. Dominic had grown up in Johannesburg, and while he'd lived and worked in Cape Town for over a decade now, he never grew tired of the mountain.

He glanced at Rachel Sulelo, the other teacher chaperoning this excursion, and she gave him a knowing smile accompanied by a faint shrug. Her silent message was clear. *Children. What can you do?*

He returned her smile and then looked out the

car's windows, determined not to let the students' indifference spoil the ascent for him.

One of the things he enjoyed most about the Rotair cars was the rotating floor that provided passengers a 360-degree panoramic view as they rose. Not only did you get to see the mountain as you approached, you also got to see Cape Town recede behind you. Both views were spectacular, though as much as he appreciated seeing Cape Town spread out below them, the bright blue of Table Bay and Robben Island to the north, and the vastness of the Atlantic seaboard to the west and south, for him, none of it could compare to the sight of the mountain.

Table Mountain—named for its famous flat surface—was a level plateau three kilometers from side to side, edged by impressive sheer cliffs. The mountain top was often covered by what was colloquially referred to as a “tablecloth” of clouds. Dominic knew that this cloud layer was formed when south-easterly winds were directed up the mountain where they hit colder air and produced moisture that condensed. But during his first trip here as a school boy, one of the teachers had told the students that according to legend, the cloud cover was caused by a smoking contest between a pirate called Van Hunks and the Devil himself. Even as a young boy, Dominic had known the story was nothing but a fairy tale, but after hearing it, he couldn't help thinking there was a certain sinister aspect to the tablecloth's beauty, and he'd wondered what would happen if someone were to breathe that foul devil smoke in. What havoc might it wreak on a human body? What might it do to one's soul?

Dominic shared much information about the mountain with the students he brought here, but he never shared the story of Van Hunk's contest with the Devil. He refused to say anything that might mar the mountain's beauty in the children's eyes as it had been marred for him.

Rachel stifled a yawn and then, when she saw he was looking at her, gave him an embarrassed smile. Dominic had insisted they begin their outing at sunrise—partly so they would have as much time as possible to spend on the mountain, but also because he loved making the ascent this early. Not only did sunrise enhance the view a hundredfold, but getting an early start meant that there would be fewer people on the car, giving him and his students a nearly unobstructed view as the Rotair car carried them upward. It didn't hurt that he was a morning person, either. He was awake, full of energy, and ready to go. He sometimes forgot others didn't feel the same way he did upon awakening. Rachel—and likely most, if not all, of the students—would've preferred to trade an early start for a couple more hours of sleep. Well, they'd feel differently once they'd reached the top and the mountain had a chance to work its magic on them.

The dozen students ranged in age from nine to ten, and the group was a mixture of black and white. Each boy wore the school uniform—blue jacket, white shirt, light blue tie, blue pants, black shoes—along with a backpack for carrying water and snacks, not to mention their puzzles, comics and toys. Dominic knew he should've checked their packs for distractions like these and insisted they be left behind, but he'd been so excited to get going that he'd forgotten.

One of the few students who seemed to appreciate the view as they ascended was Callan Williams. He was a quiet, thoughtful boy, more interested in reading and drawing in the notebooks he carried with him wherever he went. He stood close to the glass, gazing outward as the floor slowly rotated, munching on a bag of peanuts as the car bore them skyward. He didn't contribute much in class. Oh, he'd answer a direct question whenever he was asked, and he typically provided the correct answer. But he never volunteered information if he could avoid it, and he didn't seem to have any friends. Not close ones, at any rate. His marks were good, if not stellar, and although Dominic worried about Callan's apparent lack of social skills from time to time, he reminded himself that some flowers took a little longer to bloom than others, and that Callan would find his way in time.

Table Mountain was flanked by two other mountains: Devil's Peak to the east—where Van Hunk's contest with the Devil was said to have taken place—and Lion's Head to the west. Dominic always found himself saddened when gazing upon Lion's Head. According to rock art and fossils, at one time Table Mountain had been home to lions, leopards, and hyenas. But the last lion on the mountain had been killed in 1802, and although there were rumors that a few leopards still survived there, no one ever saw them. The mountain was hardly devoid of life, though. There was the rodent-like dassie (which was actually a relative of the elephant), antelope, porcupines, water mongoose, and numerous birds, lizards, and frogs. But the large mammals—symbols of Africa's ancient heritage—were gone. Lion's Head

was a stark reminder to Dominic of life's fragility, of how closely everything that lived walked with death, and of how swiftly extinction could befall a species before it was aware that it was even in danger.

To distract himself from his melancholy thoughts, and because he was a teacher and should be doing his job instead of becoming lost in his own musings, he turned to the group of boys and said, "Now, who can tell me what kind of animals can be found at the summit of Table Mountain? Anyone?"

The boys looked up at Dominic as he spoke, their attention momentarily diverted from their various amusements, but none of them answered, and they quickly returned to their diversions. Dominic couldn't keep a hint of exasperation out of his voice as he once more said, "Anyone?"

None of the boys met his gaze this time, and Rachel gave him a sympathetic look. She didn't join in his attempt to engage the boys, though. Maybe she knew doing so would be fruitless. Maybe she was right.

But then something unexpected occurred. Callan turned away from the car's window, popped a last peanut into his mouth, and began to speak.

"There are many different ani—"

His voice cut off with a wet choking sound and his eyes went wide.

Without thinking, Dominic rushed toward the boy. "Get out of the way!" he shouted, and Callan's classmates obeyed, expressions of shock and surprise on their faces. Callan's eyes were filled with absolute terror as Dominic reached the boy, stepped behind him, and wrapped his arms around his waist. He made a fist with one hand, then made a quick upward

and inner thrust into the boy's abdomen. Nothing happened, so Dominic performed the procedure a second time, still with no result. Dominic felt himself starting to panic, and he clamped down on the emotion hard. Callan needed him to remain calm right now, and that was precisely what he would do. Time enough to fall apart later—after he'd saved Callan's life. Dominic performed the maneuver again, and this time the peanut that had been lodged in Callan's throat flew out of the boy's mouth, arced through the air, and hit the floor with a soft *plink*. Relief flooded through Dominic, and as he gently lowered Callan to the floor, he said, "You're going to be all right, son. Don't worry." But as soon as he said these words, he knew they were premature. The boy's face had turned waxy and pale, and his body was bucking and heaving, almost as if he were having some sort of seizure.

Rachel stepped over to them and crouched next to Callan.

"He's not breathing!" she said.

That's when Dominic remembered: the boy was asthmatic. Choking on the peanut must have triggered an attack, causing his throat to swell and making it impossible for him to draw in air. But that couldn't be right, could it? His parents had notified the school that Callan had been taking a new treatment for his condition, one that was supposed to eradicate it entirely. Had the treatment failed? Or had there been more than one peanut lodged in his throat and he was still choking?

The other boys crowded around the three of them, motivated by concern, fear, and morbid curiosity.

"Get back," Rachel snapped at them. "Give him room."

The other passengers watched in helpless concern as Dominic slipped off Callan's backpack, opened it, and quickly searched through the contents for an inhaler. But there wasn't one. The boy was even paler now, and the terror in his gaze was dimming, slowly being replaced by a blackness that told Dominic he didn't have much time left. His body stopped convulsing and fell still, no longer able to keep up with its exertions without a fresh supply of oxygen.

If the boy couldn't breathe on his own, Dominic would just have to try and breathe for him. He knelt next to Callan's neck and shoulders, bent over, took hold of the boy's chin with one hand, tilted his head, and with the thumb and forefinger of the other hand he pinched the boy's nose shut. He then lowered his face to Callan's and pressed his lips to the boy's open mouth. When he thought the seal was tight, he gave a short breath lasting one second, then glanced sideways to check if Callan's chest rose. It didn't, so he gave the boy a second breath. Still no result.

Callan's eyes fluttered and then closed, and then Dominic was nearly overcome by a wave of despair. He feared the worst, but he couldn't give up on the boy. They were nearly halfway through their journey to the top of the mountain. Two-and-a-half minutes, three at the most, and they'd be there, and they could summon medical aid. A doctor or at the very least a staff member who was better trained in life-saving techniques than Dominic was. If he could get some air into Callan, even just a little, it could mean the difference between life and death for the boy. He inhaled and prepared to deliver another breath into Callan.

But before he could do so, the boy's eyes snapped

open. The whites had become fiery red, and the irises were now an eerie bright blue that almost seemed to glow with internal light. Dominic barely had time to register this bizarre transformation before Callan let out an animalistic snarl, opened his mouth wide, and clamped his teeth down on Dominic's lips. Blood gushed from Dominic's savaged flesh, spilling onto Callan's face like thick, crimson rain. The pain was excruciating, and Dominic tried to cry out in agony. Reflexively, he tried to pull away from the boy, but Callan's teeth were sunk too deeply into his lips. With surprising strength, the boy grabbed hold of Dominic's head to prevent him from trying to escape, and then he bit down harder, sawing his teeth back and forth, and whipping his head furiously, as if he were a dog trying to tear a hunk of meat from a bone. Tears streamed down Dominic's face, and he flailed at Callan, punching and slapping in a desperate attempt to force the boy to release him. But the blows seemed to have no effect on the boy whatsoever.

Dominic heard a wet tearing sound then, and his head snapped back, the sudden motion freeing him from Callan's grip. He scrambled to his feet and backed away unsteadily. The boy moved into a crouching position, unearthly eyes fixed on Dominic, grinning with blood-slick teeth as he chewed Dominic's lips and then swallowed.

Horried, Dominic reached a trembling hand to his mouth, but his fingers found only blood and exposed teeth. His stomach dropped once more.

Callan's attack had happened so fast that the other passengers could only watch in stunned silence. But now Rachel screamed, and Callan's head snapped

toward her, as if he were an animal that had suddenly become aware of fresh prey.

Like a lion, Dominic thought, feeling numb, detached, and more than a little insane at that moment. *Or a leopard*. The ancient predators of Africa might have been extinct on Table Mountain, but that was okay. They were bringing an entirely new type of predator to take their place.

Callan—or rather, the thing Callan had become—leaped to his feet, snarled, and rushed toward Rachel, hands outstretched, fingers curled into claws, teeth gnashing and snapping, eager to tear into her soft flesh. Callan attacked her with inhuman ferocity and she shrieked in terror and agony. The paralysis that had gripped the rest of the passengers broke then, and everyone began screaming, shouting, and sobbing, huddling together and pressed against the car's windows in a desperate attempt to get as far away from Callan as possible. Not that it would do any good, Dominic thought, fingertips moving back and forth over his exposed teeth.

Rachel died quickly, and Callan rushed toward the next person closest to him—one of his fellow students. Dominic looked away as the boy screamed and turned his attention toward the window. The rotating floor turned him toward his beloved mountain, and the view was so beautiful, so comforting, that he would've smiled if he still possessed lips. He continued gazing out the window as he listened to one person after another die, until there was silence. He realized then that he was the only one still alive, but he knew that wouldn't be the case much longer.

He told himself that if he had to die, he couldn't

think of a better place to do it. But then Callan leaped upon him, and all thoughts were driven from his mind as the boy tore into his abdomen with hands and teeth and began pulling out fistfuls of internal organs.

A good place to die? Perhaps. But a good *way* to die?

Not even close.

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CHAPTER OF**



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