

COMETH THE HOURGLASS

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INT. DARK PASSAGEWAY - DAY

SOPHIE (35, the least intrepid of explorers) and BEN (25, always fronting it) creep along, using torches to guide them. They round a corner, light emanates from an opening. Ben drifts towards it like a moth to a flame.

SOPHIE

Careful, Ben! There could be, like, a million angry fireflies in there.

BEN

You know most of those films about your dad were largely made up by a bunch of overexcited writers, yeah?

Ben chuckles as he ducks through the opening. Sophie edges along the wall, brandishing her torch like a gun. She scooches through the opening.

INT. ANCIENT CHAMBER - MOMENTS LATER

Sophie and Ben survey the dusty cavern - boxes, ornaments, an hourglass. Ben makes a beeline for the latter.

SOPHIE

Stop! That's probably a handle.

BEN

Why even be here if you're not gonna actually explore?

Sophie paces. Ben edges closer to the hourglass.

SOPHIE

You make it sound like my dad doesn't still dictate my entire life. He knows I'd rather be in the lab but oh no, someone had to continue the goddamned Jones legacy.

BEN

Weren't you gonna rope Mason in?

SOPHIE

Slipped last night. Think he might've broken his ankle.

Frustration flashes across Ben's face. He shrugs it off.

BEN

Ha! Stupid twat, probably drunk. Might take him a little souvenir.

His fingers close around the hourglass.

BEN (cont'd)
 Besides, haven't had a decent boiled
 egg in months...

Sophie glimpses Ben just as he turns the hourglass. Both are transfixed by the tumbling sand inside it. A handle-less door THUNKS into place, blocking the exit. Sophie groans.

Approaching sounds of gusting wind. A draught blows through the chamber. The draught grows to a gale, which whips into a small TORNADO above one of the boxes.

SOPHIE
 Get back! The floor could give way
 any minute to a pit full of snakes!

Sophie backs against the wall. Ben rolls his eyes. The last grain of sand falls, the tornado vanishes.

A message flashes on the hourglass. Ben squints at it from a safe distance: 'Open the box'. He approaches the box.

SOPHIE (cont'd)
 I'm sorry, am I invisible?

Sophie tugs on a lock of hair. Ben uses his foot to knock the lid off the box. He peers inside: a steaming egg in an egg cup, with some toast fingers. Ben howls with laughter.

BEN
 Sweet! I was feeling a bit peckish.

He wolfs down the egg and toast. Sophie gapes with horror.

SOPHIE
 Now can we please get out of here
 before you start reacting to whatever
 was in that thing?

BEN
 Chillax, Soph. Haven't had a decent
 shag in ages, either.

Ben laughs as he reaches for the hourglass. Sophie leaps to stop him, her finger brushes the hourglass. She's too late.

The ground rumbles, wind whips into a larger tornado. As the last grain of sand falls, the whirlwind clears, revealing a HANDSOME MAN (25). Ben blanches as he surveys the man.

BEN (cont'd)
 Erm. That's not mine.

Sophie looks between the Handsome Man and Ben. Ben gulps.

BEN (cont'd)
I mean, you touched it too. Right?

SOPHIE
A smidge. But I didn't ask for... that.

Sophie feels the stone door - no handle. She growls.

SOPHIE (cont'd)
This is fucked up, Ben. You're a
bloody liability!

BEN
Look, you go summon your dad. I'll
deal with this, yeah?

SOPHIE
Oh yes, I'll just shuffle out through
that *sealed doorway* with my tail
between my legs, shall I?

BEN
Fuck! Sorry, Soph.

Handsome Man clears his throat. Nods to the hourglass.

SOPHIE
Absolutely no way I'm touching that.

BEN
Then allow me. Get her out of here,
will ya?

He turns the hourglass. More rumbling, another tornado. No Sophie!

Ben crumples to the floor, sits on his trembling hands. Handsome Man perches beside him. Ben recoils.

BEN (cont'd)
Hey dude, do you, er, hablo ingles?

Handsome Man beams at Ben.

HANDSOME MAN
Thought you'd never ask.

Ben startles, clutches his chest. Nervous laugh.

BEN
Jesus, dude, you're going to finish
me off at that rate.

Handsome Man raises his eyebrows.

BEN (cont'd)
Ew, not like that. Wait... do I have to shag you to get outta here? Coz I'm pretty sure that's illegal.

HANDSOME MAN
Quite apart from the fact that the law only applies to tangible beings... I'm here to help you get your deepest desire. You decide what that is.

Ben finds a stick. Uses it to prod the man. It rebounds.

HANDSOME MAN (cont'd)
OK, so I do have substance right now. But when your deepest desire is satisfied, I cease to be.

BEN
And if it isn't? Satisfied?

HANDSOME MAN
I can't leave. I perish in here, as you would without food or water.

BEN
Sophie's right, this is fucked up.

HANDSOME MAN
'Sup? Not your type, huh? Any better?

He cycles through multiple guises.

BEN
I'm not just gonna sleep with some random weirdo.

HANDSOME MAN
How about now?

He assumes the likeness of MASON (25, geek). Ben tenses.

BEN
Don't you dare! You are not him. You're just some bullshit 3D fucking copy or whatever. You're NOTHING!

Ben balls his fists. Handsome Man resumes his original appearance. Long SILENCE. Ben stares into space.

BEN (cont'd)
He thinks I'm a dick.

HANDSOME MAN
That's coz you act like a dick.

Ben glares at Handsome Man, who remains unflinching.

HANDSOME MAN (cont'd)
Your choice, *dude*. Go back to having
pointless situationships with
whatever unfortunate woman stumbles
into your path, being reckless on
your assignments to fill the void-

BEN
-You don't know me.

HANDSOME MAN
I literally came from you.

Ben paces, his eyes flicker to the hourglass.

BEN
So there's no point talking to you.

HANDSOME MAN
Great! Talk to him instead.

BEN
And say what, smart-arse?

HANDSOME MAN
Well, you could start with "hi, I'm
not a dick".

BEN
You're doing my nut in. I'm off.

Ben turns the hourglass. A whirlwind whips up. Ben regards Handsome Man through the whirlwind with pitiful eyes.

BEN (cont'd)
Sorry, dude.

As Ben fades, Handsome Man gives him a cheery wave.

INT. DARK PASSAGEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Sophie waves a detector over the wall where the cavern entrance had been. Ben materialises behind her. Taps her on the shoulder. She JUMPS, the detector CLATTERS to the floor.

She turns slowly. Sees Ben. Exhales with relief. He gathers up the detector, avoiding her probing gaze. She drags him into a hug that goes from awkward to genuine.

SOPHIE

Where the bloody hell have you been?
Why didn't you just follow me?

BEN

And leave the guy in there? What if
he needed help?

SOPHIE

Oh. Right. That's unusually
thoughtful for you. He OK?

BEN

I don't know. It's complicated.

SOPHIE

Wanna talk about it?

BEN

Yes, but not to you. No offence.

He grabs a torch from Sophie's supplies. Strides away.

BEN (cont'd)

You coming?

He pauses, turns. Sophie dithers.

BEN (cont'd)

Wait, you weren't just trying to get
me out, were you?

Sophie's face twitches as she searches for words.

SOPHIE

That hourglass manifested what you
wanted, right? It could be my way
out... Of all this bullshit.

A stone door slides aside, allowing Sophie to slip through.

BEN

You said it yourself, it's fucked up
in there. You're coming with me.

SOPHIE

It's fucked up everywhere, Ben.

Ben tries in vain to stop the heavy door sliding shut.

BEN

And they say I'm the reckless one?

He shakes his head. Trudges down the passageway.

EXT. MASON'S TENT - LATER

Ben loiters by a utilitarian tent. Takes a steadying breath. Leans forward. Calls into the tent.

BEN
Mason? Dude, you in there?

Shuffling sounds from inside. A zip inches open. Mason pokes his head out. Ben fidgets, self-conscious.

MASON
I'm not slacking or anything. Been at the medical centre all day.

BEN
I'm not on your case, M. Listen, can I come in? Can we, you know, talk?

He gives Mason a crooked smile. Mason titters.

MASON
Thought you'd never ask.

Mason opens his tent door wider. Ben ducks in.

INT. ANCIENT CHAMBER - SAME

Sophie hovers by the hourglass, wrings her hands. Handsome Man perches on a rock, scrutinises her.

HANDSOME MAN
Sure you wanna do this?

SOPHIE
Nothing else has worked.

HANDSOME MAN
OK, well sometimes to get our deepest desire, we have to slay a few demons.

A whirlwind gathers around him. Sophie freezes, aghast.

HANDSOME MAN (cont'd)
Atta boy, Ben!

He vanishes. Sophie blinks. Reaches for the hourglass.

SOPHIE
I wanna control my own life. Please.

She turns it. A tornado whips up, clears to reveal her demon: INDIANA JONES (60).