

THRE RISE BEFORE

Written by

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RUMBLING, LOUD and DEEP, echoes through the empty void.

INT. CRUMBLING BUILDING - BREAK ROOM - DAY

Two large pale doors. Closed. Flickering lights. Shaking with the rest of the building. Large cracks creep closer from the side wall. WE CLOSE ON the doorknobs, rustling...

WHAM! The doors blast open. One man leads, ATLAS (30's), holding a sharp blade. Face unkept, dirt under the eyes, baggy clothes, stains all over. Behind him follows WARDEN (30's) - eyes locked ahead, pistol poised high. They continue forward to reveal:

PETE (50's) and JANE (30's) escorting an injured TANNER (30's).

FOCUS ON: a handcuff, connecting Jane and Tanner's hands. Tanner screams in agony as he's dragged to a close wall - a messy blood trail follows.

JANE
(to Pete; motioning head)
Here.

They place Tanner down, as:

ATLAS AND WARDEN

scope out the kitchen. Getting closer to the FAINT, CONSTANT BANGING they hear. They notice open cans, scattered along the countertop. Noodles, soup, beans.

More rattling. More shaking. More rumbling.

WARDEN
We need to get out of here man.

They come across a lone

DOOR

A label: "Pantry." The source of the banging.

Atlas and Warden share a knowing look as Warden steps to the side, hand on handle.

ATLAS
On three.
(a nod from Warden)
One... Two...
(MORE)

ATLAS (CONT'D)
 (locks eyes on door)
 Three!

The door swings open.

REVEAL: A man, thin, maybe too thin, clawing at the air. Eyes sunken back: gray, locked straight ahead: no thought in sight. His pale dry skin peeling. His legs slowly buckling. His breath raspy. Rotten brown meat clouds his teeth. Clothes torn to shreds, soaked in blood and... a large GAPING HOLE through his chest.

This man is dead.

Not sick. Not dressed up for Halloween. Dead.

Pieces of small intestines slip through the bits of visible bone, landing on the floor. This is Anatomy 101. He snarls, croaks, pushing past the doorway, beelining towards Atlas.

The man raises his arms up high, reaching out, shuffling faster. Atlas grips his blade tightly. The man closes in, opens his jaw wide.

SCHUNK! Atlas rips the blade out of the man's skull. Dark liquid flies everywhere.

No light gets snuffed out, no pupil's dilate, but the raspy breathing comes to a halt. He was just a reminder, of everything that's FALLEN.

Warden steps out. Looks at body... unfazed. They turn towards the open pantry, as:

TANNER

groans. Fidgety. Still handcuffed. A small circular wound punches through his right leg, bleeding profusely. Jane sits beside him.

TANNER
 (re: handcuffs)
 Is all of this really necessary?

Pete turns to him. Back pointed towards door.

PETE
 Not my choice. Besides...
 (leaning in)
 You did this to yourself.

Tanner scoffs - knows he's right.

PETE (CONT'D)
I wish things were different
Tanner, you know I do but... we
can't take chances anymore.

Jane agrees with her silence.

ATLAS AND WARDEN

stuff their bags with pantry items. Atlas grabs a small first
aid kit.

WARDEN
What are we doin?

Atlas, confused. Stops filling his bag.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
Tanner's dangerous, why are we -
why are we still carrying him
around?

ATLAS
He's not dangerous, Warden-- Taking
food supplies isn't dangerous... We
got it under control.

WARDEN
Do we? Is cuffing one of our own to
him really the best idea? You
notice how every single time
there's a fuck-up we ignore the
problem like it won't bite us in
the ass later?

ATLAS
It's not like - It's not like he
can get up and run away. He's
monitored! Jane's done this stuff a
million times before! Wayy before
the outbreak. She can handle it.

WARDEN
Not this.

A beat, then:

WARDEN (CONT'D)
Listen, he's not gonna make it. We
all know that, okay. No matter what
I think of him, it's clear he's
dragging us down. We (can't get him
the medical attentio)--

ATLAS

(over)

He's gonna make it.

WARDEN

He's NOT GOING TO FUCKING MAKE IT!
I'm not saying we kill him - I'm
not saying that... But maybe we
leave him behind.

ATLAS

He's Gonna Make It.

WARDEN

Jesus fu... Atlas! He's gonna die,
and he's gonna turn, and he's gonna
get someone killed! You want that
(on your conscience?)--

ATLAS

(over)

HE'S GONNA MAKE IT!

Warden backs down, grabs more items as:

Jane looks towards the door. Sees: A man. Is this Atlas?
Warden? Someone else we know? No, it's--

JANE

A FALLEN!

Pete turns around frantically, reaches for his knife as:

A once living husk of human skin, a fallen, lunges, growling,
grabbing onto his front, knocking him down. Knife still
holstered. Pete squeals.

ATLAS AND WARDEN

turn around. Alert. They stop, zipping their bags up to rush
back in Pete's direction as:

Pete grapples with the undead, keeping it at a distance. The
fallen chomps it's teeth at his face, gnawing at the
emptiness of the air between them as:

Jane launches forward - yanked back towards Tanner's cuffed
hand. He smirks, slowly rising his cuffed arm in Jane's view.

Pete struggles. Pushes. Its teeth inch closer to his cheek.

Jane, frustrated, frantically scrambles her pockets. She
pulls out a HANDCUFF KEY. Tries for the keyhole.

Pete grunts, holding up this fallen with all his might. Atlas and Warden run in, far. Its jaw opens wide, its teeth slide down to his neck, SINKING IN.

WHACK! A BLOODIED BAT sticks to the base of its skull. The bits of blood and brains clump together like an adhesive, as it rises back up, dripping down onto Pete's face.

ELLE (40's) walks out with her bat, along with BOLOCK "BO" (30's) and ALEXANDRA (30's) from behind the door corner.

Jane unlocks the handcuffs. Tanner sighs in relief. Everyone noticing Pete's gushing red neck as he coughs up blood.

JANE

Pete!

Jane crawls over to Pete, using her hand to cover the bite mark on his neck. Holding his head up. He coughs words, but none clear enough to make out.

JANE (CONT'D)

(sobbing)

Pete, hang in there.

Alexandra stands near, covering her mouth, her eyes watering.

Warden unholsters his gun - Atlas noticing.

Pete's choking becomes softer. His eyes drift away.

JANE (CONT'D)

Pete. Pete?

His breathing stops. His muscles relaxed. His body motionless. Pete lies in a pool of his own blood, dead.

Jane takes this in, leaning into Pete for a moment, holding him tight. Everyone looks at each other, somberly... waiting.

A moment, as Pete's face grows pale, then: His lips twitch. His fingers scratch the floor beneath him. His light breath moving through the air. His full eyes turn dull and gray, looking directly at Jane.

Everyone is tense. Warden walks forward, cautious, but ready.

Jane tilts her head up, staring into Pete's lifeless eyes. His weak body brushing against hers as she pulls out her knife and stabs Pete in the skull.

Everyone relaxes.

LATER, Warden and Atlas carry Pete's body into a small nook where the Pantry Fallen lay.

WARDEN
What happened to Pete...
(he grunts)
...wasn't anything we could do.

Atlas looks down for a beat, taking in this loss.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
But tell me things wouldn't have
been different if Tanner wasn't
here.

ELLE AND JANE

stand above Tanner.

ELLE
You're just letting him go?

Jane pockets the handcuffs. Wipes her eyes.

JANE
Look at him, even if he wanted
to...
(looks at Tanner,
helpless)
...he's not going anywhere.

LATER, Atlas and Warden's bags: laid out on a table. Half a dozen cans of food. Two empty bottles.

Jane wraps Tanner's leg with a bandage. The first aid kit lay beside her.

TANNER
(weakly)
pete... pete... pete was... a good
man.

JANE
(biting her tongue)
Yes... he was.

TANNER
it... should... it should've been
me.

JANE
You're right. It should've.

Atlas walks to Bolock.

They launch into a loving hug.

ATLAS

Glad you're back safe little brother!

(looks to Alexandra)

Alexandra.

(then Elle)

Elle.

ALEXANDRA

It was my fault. I let that fallen get away. If I had gotten it sooner, it-- that's what got Pete killed.

ATLAS

Alexandra... that's bullshit. What took you guys so long?

ALEXANDRA

There was a herd of them.

ATLAS

Since when are there herds this high up?

ALEXANDRA

That's what I was thinking... until we came across where they all came from.

ELLE

Hundreds of them, stuck to the walls... windows blown out...

BOLOCK

...The blast.

They all glance outside through the large window panes: A large crater. Deep in the middle of the city grounds. It's desolate. Empty. Devoid of life, even fallen.

The ground crumbles, sending cracks rippling through towards the building. The shockwave causes the building to shake.

ALEXANDRA

(to Atlas)

Follow me.

INT. CRUMBLING BUILDING - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

A set of double metal doors. Constant banging. Constant growling and groaning and snarling and croaking.

Thick wooden planks, wedged in between the door handles. Vending machine propped against it.

Bolock, Elle, and Alexandra watch as: Atlas rests his hand on the vending machine. Jolts back when the vending machine jumps.

ATLAS
How many fallen?

BOLOCK
(looks to Elle)
At least a hundred.

ELLE
Maybe more.

ATLAS
Will it hold?

BOLOCK
It'll hold.

Atlas looks around, contemplating. The banging intensifying.

ATLAS
We need to leave.
(hard)
It isn't safe. We can't stay in
this building much longer.
(looks down)
I guess we'll just have to find
some other way to get there.

Atlas looks back up, past Alexandra, not fazed by his last comment. Spots an identical set of double doors at the other end of the hallway, ahead of the T-junction leading back to the break room.

Atlas walks toward them, curious. The rest follow. He opens the doors to reveal:

A glass skybridge, connecting the interior of this building and the next. He looks up through the clear ceiling to the roof of the next building. He spots helicopter blades peering over the edge.

ATLAS (CONT'D)
(elated)
It was right here?!

He looks back, they all smile.

ATLAS (CONT'D)
I didn't know we were this close.

ALEXANDRA
Neither did we. We couldn't see the
bridge from the angle we we're all
looking at earlier... but Bolock
saw it when we cleared the rooms
ahead of y'all.

Atlas grins wide, kisses Bolock on forehead.

ATLAS
My brother!

INT. CRUMBLING BUILDING - BREAK ROOM - LATER

A pistol without its magazine sits on a table.

JANE (O.S.)
Eight.

WARDEN (O.S.)
Five.

Jane and Warden insert the gun clips on their pistols. They
both sigh, cocking the hammer back.

JANE
We're just gonna have to make it
work.

ATLAS

picks up the first aid kit off the ground.

TANNER
Hey, I'm sorry. About Pete. I'm
sorry.

Atlas looks at him, sparingly.

ATLAS
(fiercely, sarcastically)
"We all do what we have to do, to
survive," right?

TANNER

Hey don't say it like that man, I never meant no harm.

ATLAS

Yeah, well, it doesn't matter what you meant. You try that shit again, you'll be wishing all you had to worry about was a little bit of rebar.

He walks over to Elle.

ATLAS (CONT'D)

Warden thinks we should leave Tanner behind.

She turns to him.

ELLE

And what you don't?

ATLAS

Fuck, Elle, he's a living breathing human being! We can't just leave him to rot alone.

ELLE

He chose that path the moment he decided it was himself over all of us.

ATLAS

So we just forfeit his right to live now?

ELLE

I didn't say that.

ATLAS

Well that's what it feels like. He deserves a second chance. Where would we all be without second chances?

BOLOCK AND ELLE

help Tanner stand as he uses a long wooden plank to assist.

BOLOCK

That work?

TANNER

Yeah.

INT. SKYBRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

A long hallway. Glass along the ceiling and its two side walls, lined with benches that lead down to the exit.

The whole group stands at the entrance, Warden glances up. The helicopter blades.

WARDEN

You sure you can fly that thing?

ATLAS

I'm sure.

They continue inwards. A fallen walks their way, standing halfway through the bridge.

ALEXANDRA

I got it.

BOLOCK

Wait.

Alexandra treads forward. Stabs the fallen in the head. Easy. Stares at the fallen. The guilt. Pete. She turns around as:

A second fallen crawls from underneath a close bench, grabbing her legs, tripping her. It climbs atop her.

ELLE

Shit.

The others all pull out their weapons. Rushing ahead. This can't be another Pete situation. Tanner gets left behind.

A third fallen crawls out from the benches. Grabbing Alexandra's side and bites deep into her ribs.

She lets out a loud scream. The blood rushes out from her side as another fallen rips a chunk of flesh from her cheek. Jane rushes in and stabs both fallen in the head.

Elle and Bolock crouch down beside her. They use their hands, trying to stop the bleeding.

Four more fallen crawl out from the distant benches, headed towards them.

JANE

There's more!

Atlas and Warden follow Jane's lead, taking out the rest of them.

ELLE (SOBBING)
No, no, no, no, no.

Alexandra's eyes water in the pain. Breathing rapidly.

ELLE (CONT'D)
Alexandra, not you too.

Everyone stands over them. Bolock grips Alexandra's hand.

JANE
She's suffering.

Alexandra stares outward, agonizingly unfocused.

ATLAS
Elle...

Elle, hesitant, wipes away her tears. She and Bolock step aside as...

Atlas crouches down, stabs Alexandra in the skull.

Warden, saddened but furious doesn't miss a beat. He pulls out his pistol. Treads over to a sunken Tanner as he squirms back, crawling across the ground. Aims it at his head.

ATLAS (CONT'D)
(realizing)
WARDEN, NOOO--

BLAM!

INT. CRUMBLING BUILDING - CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A horde of a couple dozen fallen turn their heads, bumping into one another as they make their way towards a pair of metal doors. They bang and growl.

INT. CRUMBLING BUILDING - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The building begins to groan on the other side of those double doors. The vending machine jumps with intensity, pushed further away as the wooden planks lodged between the door handles snap. An arm sticks out from between the doors, grabbing at the air.

INT. SKYBRIDGE - SAME TIME

Choking. Tanner choking from the hole in the side of his neck. His walking stick lay beside him.

WARDEN

Shit!

Warden scrambles to pull back the hammer. He rests his finger on the trigger.

CLICK! He's out of bullets.

WARDEN (CONT'D)

Fuck!

ATLAS

Warden, why!?

Warden turns around to face Atlas.

WARDEN

He would have killed us! It was either him or us! I can't - I won't let that happen!

ATLAS

Tanner wasn't a killer! What do you-
- He could barely kill a Fallen let alone take on all of us!

INT. CRUMBLING BUILDING - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The vending machine tips over, crashing onto the ground. Several dozen fallen step out from the double doors, climbing over the vending machine.

INT. SKYBRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

WARDEN

We spent so long at a fucking pit stop in that break room for someone that was already dead! If we hadn't taken so long, (Pete wouldn't have died!)

Tanner gasps loudly, trying to remain steady.

ATLAS

(over)

Fuck so we're just putting all the blame on him now?

(MORE)

ATLAS (CONT'D)

You can't just kill someone like
that... (You can't just-- It can't
be that easy!)

Their screaming clouds the growling and shadowy figures
behind them. Everyone else notices - Jane grabbing for her
pistol, Elle and Bolock separating, ready.

WARDEN

(over; pointing at
Alexandra's body)

You think she would've gone out the
way she did if her mind wasn't so
clouded about Pete? We all know the
way she looked at him.

A fallen creeps up behind him.

WARDEN (CONT'D)

We--

Jane raises her pistol. Warden notices.

WARDEN (CONT'D)

Jane?

BANG! She fires, killing the fallen behind him. It lands on
Tanner's squirming body. This startles both Atlas and Warden,
finally noticing the herd of fallen coming their way.

Warden picks up Tanner's walking stick.

ELLE

I thought you said it'd hold!

BOLOCK

(re: Warden)

Well I didn't think he'd announce
our position to half the fallen
population!

Atlas and Warden move back. A charging fallen stops, and eats
into the stomach of a still alive Tanner. Several more fallen
participate.

Warden stabs a close fallen through the eye with the wooden
stick. Atlas pushes another one down, stabs it in the back of
the head.

He shoots a dismissive look towards Warden as he pulls his
blade back out.

ATLAS
(to all)
C'mon let's move!

As everyone turns around, towards the entrance to the new building:

A couple dozen more fallen emerge from the new entrance. This stops everyone in their tracks.

BANG! BANG! BANG BANG! Jane shoots her pistol at the fallen in the frontline. They drop dead, deader than they already were but it's not enough.

Everyone makes their way toward the middle of the skybridge, sandwiched by the two hordes of fallen from both directions.

ELLE
What do we do?!

ATLAS
We stay tight!

JANE
Don't let anything get through!

Both hordes grow nearer. Everyone huddles together, weapons out, backs to each other as:

They all hear a loud cracking.

BOOM! A large vibration seizes through the skybridge. The connecting side of the skybridge near the crumbling building destabilizes, disconnecting, dropping down.

The jolt of this downwards incline launches the fallen on that side out through the open exit. They plummet to the ground as:

Everyone begins to slide down.

Atlas tumbles, dropping his blade. Jane reaches out, grabs onto a nearby side bench. Elle tries for a side bench, continues to slide. The fallen from the new building scatter in the air, falling towards them. Bolock is able to pull himself to a side bench, just as two fallen land right on him. Warden tries grabbing a side bench - misses.

In Elle's panic, she waves her arms around trying to grab onto something. She presses her hands, deep into the floor, clawing at the ground before she can't any longer. She slips out, the sun hits her full body, falling straight to the ground.

Warden watches this, hurriedly - he wedges the wooden stick in-between two benches, stopping himself.

Bolock struggles to push the fallen off of him. They grab onto one another, clawing at his face.

Opposite to him, Jane notices. She scrambles for her pistol with her one free hand, looking down at her holster. She spots a relentless fallen climbing up to her from several benches below her.

Regaining focus, she pulls out her gun, shoots one of the fallen. It releases, dropping down.

Atlas eyes this fallen fly past him. He looks up for a moment, before reaching out, finally gripping onto a side bench. Two benches above certain doom, two benches below Warden.

Warden climbs along his stick, moving himself on top of his own side bench. He looks down at Atlas struggling for dear life.

Bolock shoves the remaining fallen off of him. It falls to the ground.

Warden looks down at a struggling Atlas, contemplating...

INT. BUILDING - FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

The skybridge is empty. Tilted downwards where the death pit lay.

Atlas, Warden, Jane, and Bolock all stand in front of the entrance.

WARDEN
(under his breath)
We should've left him behind, man.

ATLAS
What?

WARDEN
We should've left him behind!

ATLAS
Tanner? That wouldn't have - that wouldn't have changed anything!

WARDEN

We would've made it across before
(the Fallen came and wrecked the
bridge!)

ATLAS

(over)

You don't know that! It's certainly
not worth leaving someone (to die
alone!

WARDEN

(over)

You wanna talk about worth? You
value Tanner over Pete, Alexandra,
Elle, Jane's lives?

ATLAS

(quickly)

I never said that.

WARDEN

...Over your own brother's life?

On Bolock, a beat, then:

WARDEN (CONT'D)

...My life?

ATLAS

Strongly leaning towards that, yes.

Warden's look stiffens.

JANE

Okay... what's the next move?

Bolock scratches at his side, nervously.

ATLAS

Same plan as before: we go up... we
get the chopper. Simple.

BOLOCK

Are you sure, you're fit enough to
fly this thing?

ATLAS

I'll manage.

INT. BUILDING - STAIRWAY - LATER

They all walk up the stairs, Bolock leading.

JANE
(exhausted)
If I had to choose between going
against stairs or fallen, I'd
choose fallen - every time.

They all laugh, Bolock wheezes, though unnoticable.

They make their way to the top of the steps, Bolock
struggling to open the roof access door, but eventually gets
it open and stumbles onto the--

EXT. BUILDING - ROOF - CONTINUOUS

--aimlessly wandering into a single Fallen, lurking at the
city from above. He shoves it aside into Warden, entering the
area.

WARDEN
Oh shit!

The Fallen grapples with Warden, before he takes out his
blade and stabs it in the skull.

Jane and Atlas enter. They all spot the helicopter they'd
only seen from below before, in all it's glory.

Warden looks back at them all, specifically Atlas, in an
accomplished way. Warden pauses, then aims a gun at Bolock.

ATLAS
Warden, what the hell are you
doing?

WARDEN
(almost sincere)
I'm saving him - from a slow and
agonizing death. I'm saving you -
from a slow and agonizing goodbye.
Wouldn't you want that?
(normal)
He's been scratching at his side
this entire time, haven't you Bo?

JANE
Warden, put the gun down--

WARDEN
First stages of an infection,
excessive scratching, mild fever,
loss of muscle control... have to
get rid of it.

ATLAS
(quickly; desperately)
Warden... you're seeing things
alright - you're tired. He - He's
fine.

WARDEN
We can't keep everyone alive, we
just can't. We all die sooner or
later.

ATLAS
(Warden)--

WARDEN
(over)
I was wrong. It doesn't matter what
we do, who we bring, how much ammo
we have, who we leave behind-- We
ALL die!

JANE
So... what? You're gonna kill us
now? Take the helicopter, go at it
alone?

ATLAS
You can't make it alone man, none
of us can.

WARDEN
I was fine before I joined you
guys, I'll be fine now.

Warden hops into the pilot seat of the chopper.

ATLAS
Do you even know how to fly one of
those things?

WARDEN
No...
(flicks switch; chopper
blades begin to spin)
...but I'm gonna find out.

He tosses his gun on the ground as the helicopter begins to
hover. The helicopter blades whir loudly and create wind at
their faces.

WARDEN (CONT'D)
I HOPE YOU SURVIVE ATLAS, I REALLY
DO!

Warden flies further away, swerving awkwardly in the air until he can't be seen.

Jane and Atlas turn to Bolock, as he's actively holding his side, sweating constantly, weak legs.

ATLAS

Oh shit.

He rushes toward Bolock, grabbing him, placing him down on the ground. Atlas lifts his shirt, a clean bite mark can be seen on Bolock's lower left side.

BOLOCK

(crying)

I'm sorry Atlas.

ATLAS

(teary-eyed)

It's okay Bo... it's okay. Let's get you up.

Atlas reaches around Bolock.

BOLOCK

No, no, stop, just leave me here.

ATLAS

Don't make me argue with you too now, I'm not leaving you behind.

Bolock pulls him back in.

BOLOCK

You're not leaving me behind. I want this... I want this. I don't want to turn into one of those things, and I don't want to drag you down so just let me stay here. Let me - let me go my own way.

Jane looks down, saddened.

ATLAS

(tearing up)

Warden was right. We all die.

A long moment, then:

BOLOCK

No... No. He wasn't. You see, Alexandra, Elle, Pete, Tanner... they're not dead. They're not dead because we're still here.

(MORE)

BOLOCK (CONT'D)

We keep going, to keep them going.
(a beat)
And now you'll be here to keep me
going.

ATLAS

You keep me going Bo.
(crying)
I don't know if I can do this
without you.

Atlas sobs as he looks at Bolock.

BOLOCK

Don't worry brother. You'll have
help.

Bolock glances at Jane. Jane gives an understanding smile.

BOLOCK (CONT'D)

Now get me that damn gun.

Atlas turns to spot Warden's dropped gun. He wipes his eyes,
and heads for it.

He returns back to Bolock. He holds the gun out, hesitates,
then:

They embrace in a deep hug.

ATLAS

I love you.

BOLOCK

I love you too.

Atlas presses the gun to Bolock's chest as he stands up. Jane
comforts him.

Bolock grabs the gun.

JANE

(to Bolock)

Say hi to everyone for me.

Bolock nods. Atlas and Jane head to the stairway door. Bolock
smiles.

INT. BUILDING - STAIRWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Jane and Atlas head down the steps.

BOOM! A gunshot echos throughout the stairwell. They stop, for a moment, then they continue heading down.