

THE PLANTED : MUSHROOMS

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FADE IN:

Vines from a giant man-eating weed -like tree wrap around remains of a dead woman.

They constrict on arms and legs. Silky enzymes pump into the skin and bone like a corrosive acid.

The headless corpse breaks apart like soft dough.

Blood falls on a severed thumb next to a cell phone at the trunk of the tree.

TED (30's) rushes to JOI (20s) fast, covers her mouth.

She doesn't protest. She looks around.

A section of this forest is devoted to these monsters.

He slowly releases his hand over her mouth.

Together, they carefully take a few steps back.

Thick vines slide around on varied monster plants.

Insect-like legs sprout from the ground.

The farther back Ted and Joi go, the closer together the deadly giant weed trees bunch together.

Joi turns around...

JOI

Ted...

Ted glances behind them; two of the giant man eating weed things close in.

Vines from the monsters spread out. They block the narrow escape.

Ted and Joi don't stick around. They run east.

The uneven terrain, covered in smaller plants and lumps of grass makes a tough getaway.

The monster plants form a crooked wall of doom.

Three sets of vines perform different functions:

- Those that interlace with other vines around them to form a vegetation version of barbed wire;
- Those that act like cracked whips around Ted and Joi;
- And the few far behind Ted and Joi that toss an yet unidentified object to one another. That mystery item catches up to the fleeing couple...

...until one vine makes a pitch...

And the SEVERED LEFT ARM of the dead woman flies in front of the escaping pair.

It slaps against Ted's shoulder. Some of the milky enzymes from the body part splatter over his sleeve.

While running, he strips off his shirt sleeve, leaves it behind.

On the ground: the cloth sizzles, the acid smokes it up.

Three mantis-like legs emerge out from under various monster plants from all sides.

The things make the path more narrow and zig-zagged with each moment.

Vines twine up, block the end of the path.

Joi rushes ahead of Ted, ducks. She gets through.

Ted has to slide.

As he gets through, his right foot taps on an invisible wall.

He looks around for Joi, already ahead of him.

He finds himself in a tug of war. His shirt-sack of cell phones yanks backward, pulling him with it.

He glances back. A vine has wrapped around the shirt-sack.

Acid burns away the fabric, the cells and the granola bars spill out.

He reaches for them, but the vines are too close- and closing in. He scrambles up and leaves them behind.

TED

Hey-! There's something here-!

He runs, lightly reaching out to his right. His fingers tap the invisible wall.

He gets closer, knocks on it with his fist.

TED

Joi!

With each glance towards the unseen but solid wall, Ted notices that there are no vine monsters on the other side.

Instead, a valley of giant fungus.

While a few do vines ease alongside the wall in pursuit, they are on the outside of it.

The giant vine plants form a closing line between themselves and the wall. Joi is a short distance ahead.

TED

Go to your right! Your right!

Joi doesn't look back, but she does hear him. She flushes right... And runs alongside the invisible wall.

Now she looks back, confused.

TED

Feel the wall! Feel the wall!

Ted rubs his hand across the unseen wall.

He trips on something, falls right down to the ground.

Stunned, he backs up, feels around. He finds an opening, about three feet high and two feet wide.

TED

Stop! Stop! I found an opening!

Joi stops, comes back to him. The things are almost on top of them.

Ted waits for her.

JOI

You dummy! Get going!

Before he can move an inch, she squeezes past him and bumps her head on the top of the opening in the process. He follows.

EXT. SECTION B GREENHOUSE - DAY

Almost as soon as they are on the other side, the giant mushroom fungi around them are numerous.

The mushrooms hog most of the light, it might as well be total darkness, with a scattered break of sun.

Both Joi and Ted are out of breath.

TED

Those vine things aren't following.

JOI

Because we're around a whole bunch of different things.

(beat)

What do these things do?

TED

No idea. I'd keep low though, try not to bump them or anything.

(pause)

What I'm more curious about...

Taps the invisible wall with his shoe.

JOI

The wall.

TED

And what's behind it. The vine things. They secreted that milky acid. Look- it's all over the place. But it's not going through this barrier, wall, whatever it is.

JOI

And they aren't coming through
the opening you found.

(thinks)

How tall you think those
things were?

TED

The Fly traps are thirty feet
high; the things we just
escaped from, I'd say between
that and fifty.

(understands fast)

Are you suggesting maybe this
"wall" is at least that high?

JOI

A glass wall, something a fast
acid can't eat through,
something that a fifty foot
monster can't pass through.

(pause)

An army of fifty foot
monsters. On either side.

TED

That's right.

(light smile)

That's right.

JOI

You say you don't know what
these..mushrooms do, but we
can guess as to what the end
result might be.

Ted nods in agreement.

JOI

We stay low, like you said. We
also stay close to this wall.

TED

Question is, left or right.

JOI

Wait. How did you find this
again?

TED

Ran into it.

(dawns on him)

It's a corner. Ten to fifteen feet from our right.

JOI

Another wall. Same height, width?

TED

I'd go with that. You a science whiz or something?

JOI

Yep. But I flunked college math.

(pause)

Left?

TED

Left it is.

EXT. SECTION B GREENHOUSE - DAY

Sometime later...

The vines thin out against the invisible wall; aside from forest like area and some of the monster man-eating plants randomly about.

There is nothing on the other side.

Ted knocks the wall with his foot, making sure the unseen structure is still there.

In front of Ted and Joi: an endless journey ahead. Behind them, at least a mile of crawling on hands and knees.

They move at a steady pace, but do not exert themselves.

Sweat and more light dirt cover most of their bodies.

JOI

So, what's your best wild guess?

TED

What's yours?

JOI

(light joke)

We died, we got booted out of Heaven, went to hell.

TED

Except there's no burning lake of fire, and no sign of a big red guy with horns and a pitchfork.

JOI

Day is young.

TED

Okay. My best wild guess. I would like to say alien abduction. But I really can't.

JOI

Why not? I'd buy that.

TED

Well, let's say it was just that. We are then talking not only an abduction of at least ten people. We are talking about breathable air, sunlight, and what appears to be regular soil under us. Even the crackpots have one thing in common: they were taken, studied and released so they can get a book deal.

JOI

But given what we know, it is plausible. Because they are crackpots. What if x amount of people were taken, from different walks of life, complete strangers, and put into a place like this by aliens?

Ted slows down, gives her a puzzled look.

JOI

Testing us. Or..food for
pets...or plants. Why are you
looking at me like that?

TED

You aren't one of those
crackpots, I hope.

JOI

That was my second cousin,
actually. Die hard Roswellian.

TED

Really? She live in New
Mexico, too?

JOI

Darn right she does. I see her
every other Christmas. Or when
there's a family gathering,
weddings. Stuff like that. She
tells a good story, spins it a
little different each time.
But yeah, big time UFO
conspiracy geek.

She crawls past Ted a little, takes a break.

JOI

That doesn't make me one, but,
all I'm saying is: aliens.
That sounds wild but
reasonable.

(pause)

Look at it this way: if it was
hell, we couldn't get out and
are in eternal damnation. If
it's something else, we can
make it out.

As she looks ahead...a small smile.

JOI

And...someone else might still
be alive.

The sight in the distance sixty yards ahead prompts her
extra boost of energy. Hard to see, but it is the shape

of a man in a business suit, sitting down, leaning against the invisible wall.

JOI

Hey!

Her pace quickens, she ignores the fact that she gets more dirty in the process.

TED

Wait...

As Joi gets closer to the sleeping man, she gets more determined...

JOI

(loud, to sleeping
man)

Can you hear me?

Her frenzy slows down moments later, as the sight becomes more in focus. Ted catches up to her, and shares her sudden disappointment.

The man's entire head is composed of a SPINACH like substance and a rotten mold.

The open, non blinking white dead eyes stare directly through them both as if they don't exist.

His hands are covered in the same plant and wart like substance. The rest of his exposed skin wrinkles like a dried raisin.

With each move Ted and Joi make forward, the less alive the SPINACH MAN becomes.

Finally they are near Spinach Man enough not to make out his age, which is nearly impossible to tell, but to see what he stares at.

His frozen brown eyes look up.

Joi slowly looks up.

Nothing to see but the dark bellies of the big mushrooms.

Ted comes up beside Joi.

He moves ahead, carefully avoiding Spinach Man.

JOI
Think he left a clue?

TED
Yeah.

Ted looks back to her. Sees her glance around.

Ted snaps his fingers. He has her glance in his direction.

TED
You're right. Someone's out
there. Alive.

FADE OUT.