

DIPA: Observer Pictures presents Apollyon. Written and directed by Faith McQuinn. This is Episode One. The Destroyer.

Theo: Are we running late?

Reese: No. Why?

Theo: Because you still walk too fast.

Reese: Sorry.

Theo: (Laughs).

Reese: They're excited you're here.

Theo: I doubt that.

Reese: Well, they're excited not to have normal lessons for the day. Anyone else would be happy to get out of work for an afternoon.

Theo: Yeah. Maybe I should send a lab tech next time?

Reese: Please, don't.

Theo: (Laughs).

Reese: Wait here. I'll see if Alex is ready. They're ready for you. I'll be back in an hour. Good luck.

Theo: Okay.

Alex: Class, today we have a very special visitor. This is Dr. Ramsey, and she works for the ICRS.

Class: Good morning, Dr. Ramsey.

Theo: Good morning, everyone. Today, I'm gonna tell you a brief overview of AVS, and the role the ICRS plays in all of your lives. I promise not to be too boring (laughs).

Class: (Laughs).

Theo: Does anyone know what this is?

Student 1: It looks like a giant, bumpy ball.

Theo: Definitely. But this is a very, very enlarged picture of a virus. The virus that causes AVS, in fact. Who can tell me what AVS stands for? That's okay. That's why I'm here. AVS stands for Apollyon Viral Syndrome. It's a mouthful, hence AVS.

Student 2: Or the destroyer.

Theo: Ahem. Yes. That's what my father used to call it. Do you know why? I bet your teacher knows.

Alex: Oh. Putting me on the spot, I see? I believe it's Greek?

Theo: You are correct. See, he does know things, kids.

Class: (Laughs).

Theo: Apollyon is Greek for destroyer. Scientists do like their Latin and Greek. But my father, he thought, "destroyer," was an appropriately frightening name all on its own. While all of you have heard of AVS, you probably don't know how it all started.

Theo: Roughly 30 years ago, a young man named Lucas Soto was bitten by a rare snake in the Monteverde Cloud Forest. That's in Central America, in what was formerly Costa Rica. The snake bite was treated. But what Lucas didn't know, what no one knew actually, was that the snake was carrying a virus, making Lucas sick. It wasn't like a cold or a rash, but what we now call AVS had infected him through that snake bite. And even though he didn't look sick right away, he was still contagious.

Theo: Lucas went back home and back to work, and in that process, infected loads of other people. Before the ICRS, most countries had their own public health officials. Those officials were called in to contain the spread. Everyone who survived was quarantined. When they all tested negative, they were allowed to go back home. But AVS is slow to develop, and it was new.

Theo: It turned out that, just like with Lucas, some people were infected even though it was undetectable. And those people didn't all live in Costa Rica. They lived in all parts of the world. Soon, people in every corner of the planet were showing the same symptoms. Fever, fatigue, muscle weakness, and sometimes paralysis. What we learned is that by the time some of those symptoms were severe enough for a person to seek help, it was too late.

Theo: In the span of just three years, the world's population went from 8.2 billion to just under three billion people. Most of the world's governments thought they were prepared for a pandemic, but this was like no other we'd ever seen. It spread like an old disease called the measles, and most people didn't know they were infected right away. Entire cities were wiped out.

Theo: I'm sure you've learned in your civics classes that there was a lot of upheaval. The answer to all of that strife was the ICRS. Who knows what ICRS stands for?

Student 3: I know. The International Conglomerate of Research Scientists.

Theo: Yes. The ICRS worked with remaining governments to establish clean cities and universal healthcare all over the world. This year marks 20 years since the ICRS was established, and 18 years since the development of Redevere. Who can tell me about Redevere? Redevere is an antiviral that suppresses AVS replication and prevents person-to-person spread. That means that someone can now live with AVS and also not infect those around them. While it is not a cure, it has helped millions of people live full lives.

Theo: The ICRS was behind the development of this drug, and that along with their stringent policies on quarantining and care, led them to becoming the world's largest governing body. Scientists and leaders working together to keep the entire world safe. See? That wasn't so boring, right? Who has questions?

Reese: Good class?

Theo: Uh, yeah. Great.

Reese: Lots of questions?

Theo: Loads. And get this, not one child in that class knows someone with AVS.

Reese: Every year it's getting rarer and rarer that the students are exposed to it. It's amazing. Why don't you look happy?

Theo: It's nothing.

Reese: Something at work?

Theo: No.

Reese: Do you have a few minutes?

Theo: Hmm.

Reese: I've brewed some tea in my office.

Theo: Of course. I can't believe you still brew your tea.

Reese: I can't imagine doing it any other way.

Theo: The synthetics are actually pretty good.

Reese: Oh, god. I'll simply pretend you didn't say that.

Theo: (Laughs).

Reese: I don't know what I'll do if my grandmother's teapot ever breaks. I wouldn't even know where to buy another one.

Theo: The United Kingdom, possibly?

Reese: Yes. I'll just hop right on over and pick up a new teapot. I can see the paperwork now. Honey?

Theo: Just a touch. Thank you. Oh, wow. That ... That is perfect.

Reese: Because it's actual leaves and not that synthetic shit.

Theo: And you teach students with that mouth?

Reese: You can go to hell.

Theo: As long as I can take this tea with me.

Reese: Damn straight, (laughs).

Theo: How'd that date go?

Reese: No.

Theo: What?

Reese: I didn't ask you to have tea in the principal's office so you could ask me about my love life.

Theo: Am I getting detention?

Reese: Seriously, Theo. What's going on? I thought you enjoyed doing the class speaker engagements?

Theo: I-I do.

Reese: Was the class uncooperative?

Theo: No, they were great. As I said before, they asked loads of questions. They were more talkative than last year's class.

Reese: But?

Theo: One of them asked why the ICRS was still doing research when AVS isn't even a problem anymore.

Reese: Okay.

Theo: They legitimately don't think it's a problem anymore. You see nothing wrong with that?

Reese: They're eight.

Theo: That's not an excuse.

Reese: It actually is. We shouldn't have known as much as we did at that age.

Theo: We had no choice.

Reese: But these kids do. Doesn't it make you happy that they aren't going through what we went through?

Theo: It does, but ... No matter my response, I'm gonna sound like an asshole.

Reese: How is your mother?

Theo: Good. I spoke to her last week.

Reese: When do you get to see her?

Theo: I applied for a week-long visa. I should know in the next couple of days.

Reese: Good god. I sometimes wish I'd taken that position at ICRS. I've been waiting for three months for a day-pass to see my sister.

Theo: I'm sorry. I can try to-

Reese: No. Thank you, but it's not urgent.

Theo: ... It really is no problem. I'm- I'm sure you'd like to see her before your nephew arrives.

Reese: He'll be my third nephew. It's no longer that exciting. I might call in that favor so the boys can come visit.

Theo: What? Really?

Reese: I'm surprised too.

Theo: That's wonderful. I've always wanted to meet them. In person, I mean.

Reese: Hopefully, they'll be okay once they get here. Phoenix and Atlanta are very different places.

Theo: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Reese: And they've never traveled before. I don't want them to hate being here.

Theo: They won't hate it, because they'll be with their mom. And teenagers think everything is an adventure. Right?

Reese: (Laughs).

Theo: Do you remember family vacations?

Reese: My grandfather used to take us across town to the Biltmore for Christmas weekend, but I doubt that's what you mean.

Theo: When I was five, my parents rented a beach house in Florida. I so vividly remember the ocean and sand.

Reese: I've never seen the ocean in person.

Theo: I was fascinated. And my father, promising that we'd come back every year.

Reese: Did you ever go back?

Theo: No.

Reese: I barely remember my parents. I still find it a little strange when I see these kids with two parents and multiple siblings. You think I'd be used to it by now. We'll take them to the aquarium. We used to go to the aquarium all the time when they were little.

Theo: I've never been.

Reese: You can join us? I mean, if you can be away from your lab that long. More tea?

Theo: Sure. I want these kids to be able to go on vacations. And that's exactly why I'm concerned that they're not worrying about AVS. If they don't see it as a threat, they won't care if it's ever eradicated.

Reese: But they're just kids. They worry about book reports and gaming platforms.

Theo: They're kids who will grow into adults who won't care if it's ever eradicated.

Reese: But it is under control.

Theo: Nearly 250,000 new cases with 100,000 deaths last year. That's not under control.

Reese: That's better than the half-million we had 10 years ago. And the billions we had at the start. Plus, we're under a one percent death rate within the limits.

Theo: The people outside the limits are still people.

Reese: That's not what I meant, and you know it. People within the limits have protections. And with those protections, AVS is under control.

Theo: People within the limits still get AVS. They just don't tend to die from it.

Reese: Which is a good thing, Theo.

Theo: You have to file paperwork and wait months to visit your sister who lives an hour away. Your boys have never been outside the limits. Once you've contracted AVS, you have to take Redevere the rest of your life. AVS isn't gone, Reese. We've simply caged it and ourselves. That's not good enough.

DIPA: Good evening, Theo.

Theo: Messages?

DIPA: You have four messages. Two from the ICRS Travel Bureau. One from Savreen Khanna. One from Jamilla Ramsey.

Theo: Play the in order of receipt, please.

DIPA: First message. Received at 09:18. ICRS Travel Bureau.

Travel Bureau: Dr. Ramsey, thank you for submitting your T-86 Form. This is simply a confirmation of receipt. You will receive another message when more information is required.

Theo: Archive.

DIPA: Second message. Received at 10:41. Jamilla Ramsey.

Jamilla: Hello, dear. I couldn't remember what time you'd be available today. Obviously, it isn't right now. Please call when you can. And I wanna see your face, Theodora. No voice messages. Miss you lots.

Theo: Delete.

DIPA: Third message. Received at 13:20. ICRS Travel Bureau.

Travel Bureau: Dr. Ramsey, your T-86 Form has been cleared. Please submit an H-229 Form for Jamilla Ramsey within 24 hours to continue the process.

Theo: Archive and pause. DIPA, please call Jamilla Ramsey. Visual display.

DIPA: Calling Jamilla Ramsey.

Jamilla: Did you just get home?

Theo: Walked in less than five minutes ago.

Jamilla: And you're already calling me back? What do you need?

Theo: I'm returning your call, mom.

Jamilla: Of course. But what do you need?

Theo: The H-229 Form that I sent you. Have you filled it out?

Jamilla: Yes. It's in your inbox.

Theo: Oh. In fact, it is. Thank you.

Jamilla: If it gets you to me faster, I'll fill out a thousand forms. How was your day?

Theo: Good. I had my annual classroom lecture.

Jamilla: Oh. Did it go well?

Theo: It did.

Jamilla: And you're not working this weekend, right?

Theo: I'm not working this weekend.

Jamilla: You better not be lying to me.

Theo: I swear. I'll be home on this couch, for two whole days.

Jamilla: Well, I don't want you to do that either.

Theo: I like my couch.

Jamilla: Which would be fine if you were 25, not 38. You're going to be too old for children soon.

Theo: The age cut-off is 48.

Jamilla: Yes. But I've been 48, and that's definitely too old to have babies.

Theo: Children require time I do not have.

Jamilla: But-

Theo: We are not having this conversation right now. You can berate me and my womb when I see you. I'm tired.

Jamilla: ... Fine. Let me know when your approval goes through. Miss you lots.

Theo: Love you more. DIPA, play final message.

DIPA: Playing final message. Received at 17:05. Savreen Khanna.

Savreen: Theo, my dear. I thought I would catch you, but it seems you're still on, "Do Not Disturb." I hope this doesn't mean you've gone to the lab. You have an entire team who can watch the mice, you know? (Laughs). I thought maybe we could have lunch, Wednesday. I'll be at the campus for meetings and will have a free hour if you're feeling to step away. Send a message and let me know. Be well.

Theo: DIPA, transcribe. Savreen, I would love to have lunch with you. The campus cafeteria has lobster bisque on Wednesdays, and I know you're a sucker for a good bisque. Let's meet there around 12:30. All my best, Theo.

PSA Announcer: A baby's laugh. Their first words. Their first day at school. These are just some of the joys of parenthood. Don't you want to experience them for yourself? There's no time like the present to begin your journey into parenthood. You could be bringing the next great mind into the world. Check your fertility today, so you can help build a better tomorrow.

Speaker 14: Next stop. ICRS Headquarters. South Entrance.

Theo: Oh, thank god.

Gabriel: Good morning.

Theo: Holy shit. You're on time.

Gabriel: Holy shit. And I have tea. It's not Reese's, so don't make too many faces.

Theo: It's hot and that's all that matters. Wait ... This is from the commissary.

Gabriel: Yeah. I've been here for about an hour.

Theo: Why? Did something happen?

Gabriel: No.

Theo: Why wasn't I notified?

Gabriel: Theo.

Theo: It was the refrigeration system, wasn't it?

Gabriel: Okay.

Theo: We've been working with that damn new tech, and I told Elliot I didn't trust it. But he would definitely call you instead of me, because he knows-

Gabriel: Theo? Chill. Nothing's wrong. Lincoln had a presentation at school, so I dropped him off early. For the love of all, you need some time off.

Theo: ... I stayed home the entire weekend.

Gabriel: And if I checked the remote logs, I won't see anything from you?

Theo: Oh. (Laughs).

Gabriel: (Laughs).

August: Good morning, again. Dr. Larson.

Gabriel: Morning.

ICRS Computer: Larson, Gabriel. Clear.

August: Good morning, Dr. Ramsey.

Theo: Morning, August. How's your day been so far?

August: Good.

Theo: Well, I hope it stays good.

August: You have a good one too, ma'am.

ICRS Computer: Ramsey, Theodora. Clear.

Gabriel: August?

Theo: What?

Gabriel: That guard has been here maybe a week, and he'll rotate out in the next month.

Theo: And that means I shouldn't learn his name?

Gabriel: I'm just saying that you make a lot of effort to be nice.

Theo: It's only a lot of effort if you're dead inside.

Gabriel: Wow. You sound like my last date.

Theo: Good god. Is everyone dating but me?

Gabriel: Yes.

Theo: I saw the new fertility ad on the train this morning.

Gabriel: The one with the creepy baby laugh?

Theo: That's the one.

ICRS Computer: Level two security verification required.

Theo: Ramsey, 9-5-Zulu-6-Tango.

ICRS Computer: Ramsey, Theodora. Clear.

Gabriel: Larson, 0-4-Charlie-7-Oscar.

ICRS Computer: Larson, Gabriel. Clear.

Theo: I swear the ads are targeting me, specifically.

Gabriel: I mean, they kind of are.

Theo: Don't start.

Gabriel: I'm not starting a damn thing. I'm the last person who thinks it's weird that you're 38 and childless.

Theo: Gee, when you put it that way.

Gabriel: Seriously, I don't care, Theo.

Theo: My mother asked me again about dating.

Gabriel: She does know you don't have to do it that way, right?

Theo: Oh, she knows. But she also knows that I'd need another person to actually watch the children she wants me to have.

Gabriel: Ah, yes. Because there's definitely no amount of offspring incentive that would keep you out of the lab.

Theo: Says the man who spent his free time this morning on campus?

Gabriel: But I wasn't in the lab. You would have been in the lab. If you had someone at home with you, you ... You probably wouldn't be.

Theo: Oh, yeah. You're absolutely not starting a damn thing.

Gabriel: (Laughs).

Theo: Let's get this day started. Okay, my lovelies. It's time to get tested.

Gabriel: You know, I really wish you wouldn't talk to the rodents like that.

Theo: Like I said, you're dead inside.

Gabriel: (Laughs). Yeah, I thank the gods that you stopped naming them. I don't know if I could live through another week of depressed Theo.

Theo: It was college. I'm sure my depression wasn't over euthanizing mice. Can we work now?

Gabriel: Oh. You haven't been working? Because I've been working. Look at all the spreadsheets I have pulled up already.

Theo: I have no idea why I've put up with you this long.

Gabriel: I honestly don't either.

Theo: Let's begin with 410. Specimen 410 was injected with two does of mRNA-6129. 80 micrograms each. 410 was exposed to AVS on Friday morning at 07:00.

Gabriel: 410 shows decreased movement in the rear legs. 410 has had a body temperature increase from 36.4 degrees Celsius on Friday at 07:00 to 39.1 degrees Celsius on Saturday at 07:00, and stayed steady on Sunday at 07:00. Body temp is currently 39.2 degrees Celsius.

Theo: Damn it.

Gabriel: It could be an adverse reaction to the mRNA injection.

Theo: Paired with the leg? I don't think so. I thought this was the one. I felt it in my gut.

Gabriel: We haven't even taken samples yet.

Theo: I know.

Gabriel: And we have nine more to examine.

Theo: I know.

Gabriel: Are you good?

Theo: Yeah. Let's get going.

Gabriel: Excuse me. Is that yours?

Theo: You never eat your carrots.

Gabriel: And what if today is the day that I eat them?

Theo: Do you want it back?

Gabriel: No, keep it.

Theo: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Gabriel: Theo, no matter how hard you wish for it, the results are going to be the results.

Theo: Doesn't this feel like last year, though? We were so close. And then, poof.

Gabriel: We have nine out of ten showing no symptoms. That is far better than last year.

Theo: For now.

Gabriel: When did you become such a pessimist?

Theo: Okay. Changing the subject. What was Lincoln's school presentation?

Gabriel: The beginnings of farm-free food in the 21st century.

Theo: That's different.

Gabriel: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Theo: Are we no longer on the civic engineering train?

Gabriel: Well, he did build a holo-model of a lab. But, yeah, I was a little surprised too.

Theo: He could be trying to impress a classmate?

Gabriel: I don't know. He really got into it. He's been spouting fun facts to me for weeks. I think he's getting serious about bioengineering.

Theo: Hmm. I mean, if he really wants to do it, he'd have to move to Fresno.

Gabriel: Ugh. Don't remind me.

Theo: That's three years away. You'll be all right.

Gabriel: Three years goes by in the blink of an eye when it comes to kids.

Theo: And how would I know anything about that? Right?

Gabriel: Oh, come on, Theo. I talk about parenting all the time. What is it with you today?

Theo: I've just ... I've just been bombarded by babies this week. I had to write zero offspring on the travel form to go see mom. And then, she asked me if I was seeing anyone. And that creepy baby laugh fertility ad on the train this morning. Oh, and Reese's sister is having another baby. Plus, she's talking about the boys coming to visit.

Gabriel: Really? That's cool. When are-

Theo: Focus. We're talking about me, right now.

Gabriel: ... Right. Sorry. You're not the only person without children.

Theo: Who else do you know?

Gabriel: (Coughs).

Theo: I thought so.

Gabriel: Um ... Elliot. He doesn't have kids.

Theo: Elliot is 18.

Gabriel: What? Really? How do we have an 18 year old lab tech?

Theo: He graduated from college at 15. He's working on his doctorate now.

Gabriel: Oh, wow. Good for him. How did you know this and I didn't?

Theo: Because you're ...

Gabriel: Dead inside. Right. I remember.

Theo: I was actually going to say you're not one to make conversation with the lab techs, but dead inside works too.

Gabriel: Excuse me? I talk to the techs all the time.

Theo: I mean, outside of what their tasks are.

Gabriel: But that's what they're there to do. I don't actually care what they do outside the lab.

Theo: See, maybe pretend to, and they'd like you more.

Gabriel: Okay. Well, now I hate this conversation.

Theo: (Laughs).

Gabriel: You ready to head back?

Theo: Yeah. (Silence). Gabriel. Would you come here, please?

Gabriel: What's up?

Theo: Take a look at this.

Gabriel: Is this from today?

Theo: Of course, it is.

Gabriel: And you double-checked?

Theo: I'm about to get insulted.

Gabriel: Sorry. Still nine out of ten?

Theo: Yeah.

Gabriel: Holy shit, Theo. Did we ...

Theo: Just possibly find an effective vaccine for AVS? Yeah. I think we did.

Gabriel: (Laughs). We just found an effective vaccine for AVS. I could kiss you right now.

Theo: Okay. It would take a little bit of time for us to get out of the PALs, so can it wait?

Gabriel: Okay. Why aren't you happier?

Theo: Because you're getting a little too optimistic. We still have to replicate the results.

Gabriel: I know.

Theo: This might be a fluke.

Gabriel: Yeah, but it's ... It's not a fluke we've ever seen before.

Theo: We'll have an eye on their T cell count.

Gabriel: Of course.

Theo: And then, we still have to move to macaques, which the board will only approve if-

Gabriel: Theo, stop. This is our first stable and effective result. Take the win.

Theo: ... This puts us that much closer to human trials.

Gabriel: Yeah. You did it. This was your formula. That means, if this is it, you get to name this bad boy. Or good boy. Probably not a boy, but whatever the hell.

Theo: (Laughs).

Gabriel: There it is (laughs).

Theo: I wish I could tell my mom.

Gabriel: Now, who's getting optimistic?

Theo: Shut up. And we did this. Okay? I wouldn't be here without you.

Gabriel: And I wouldn't be here without you. We're a team.

Theo: Damn straight.

DIPA: You have an incoming video message from Jamilla Ramsey.

Theo: Play on my tablet. Hey, mom. I was just reading the novel you recommended, and it's ... Wait. Where are you?

Jamilla: Please don't panic.

Theo: Are you in a containment vehicle?

Jamilla: Yes.

Theo: What happened?

Jamilla: I woke up about half an hour ago and I couldn't move my legs.

Theo: Were you taking your Redevere? Mom?

Jamilla: I was taking it, but-

Theo: Shit. That means it's mutated. Everything we've done is meaningless.

Jamilla: ... Theodora. I told you not to panic.

Theo: This is not me panicking.

Jamilla: I was taking it, but I ran out.

Theo: What?

Jamilla: I haven't had a dose today or yesterday.

Theo: How did you run out? You're not a strict schedule. We set up the delivery so this wouldn't happen.

Jamilla: It was only two doses.

Theo: Missing one can kill you, mom. I'm sorry.

Jamilla: I know you are, honey.

Theo: I'll see if I can fast-track my visa.

Jamilla: Don't do that. You can't see me anyway. All right. Thank you. We're at the facility. I have to go.

Theo: Okay. I'm still gonna fast-track that visa.

Jamilla: I know. Miss you lots.

Theo: Love you more.

DIPA: This episode featured the voices of Marquita Richardson as Theo Ramsey. James David West as Gabriel Larson. Marisha Tapera as Reese Williams. Janet Simmons as Jamilla Ramsey. Pamela Paul as Savreen Khanna. Bjorn Munson as The Teacher. Aaron, Agnes, Alexandra, Austin, Dani, Lillie and Macy as The Class. Marta da Silva as the ICRS Computer. Rue Dickey as August. Bryan Huey as the PSA Announcer. Courtney Holly as the Travel Bureau Rep. And me, Drea Silvertooth as DIPA.

DIPA: Producer, Amanda Lorraine. Sound Design and Mix, Joshua Suhy. Original theme, Katherine Seaton. Additional music provided by Soundstripe Music. Virology consultants, Lindsey B. Crawford, Ph.D. and Peter Krug, Ph.D. For more information, please visit [apollyon.observerpictures.com](http://apollyon.observerpictures.com).