

Entry Seven - Chel

by

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No Such Thing Productions

We fade in on a hiss of static. The file glitches at the start, but begins to play.

COMPUTER

Warning. Atmospheric pressure change.
Warning. Atmospheric pressure change.
Warning. Atmospheric-

The recording suddenly glitches again, and we hear an insistent error message and beeping.

DATA PAD COMPUTER

Error. File Corrupted. Error. File corrupted. Error. File-

Static.

CHEL

Peter? ... Hey... you okay?

PETER

... We're leaving. Now.

COMPUTER

Warning. Atmospheric pressure change.
Warning. Atmospheric-

Static.

FADE TO:

INT. The Tunnels, NC1701-Delta - EVENING

Peter and Chel's footsteps reverberate faintly as they move quickly up through the caverns, when:

CHEL

(low, urgent) Peter... Stop.

They both stop. We hear the sounds of the caves and tunnels echoing around them. Was that a crunching footstep?

PETER

... Chel? What's wrong?

CHEL

Are you-... Are you sure this is the right way?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PETER

What? Yes. Positive.

CHEL

Have you seen that before?

PETER

What?

CHEL

That. That... statue. There. In the tunnel, up ahead. In the middle of the passageway. Was that there before?

They both stare at the large, crystal statue.

PETER

... it must have been. There's... only the one tunnel down to the Den.

CHEL

I know that.

PETER

So it must have been here before.

CHEL

I don't remember-

PETER

(attempting to make her smile) Well it was either there before, or it came up before we did.

CHEL

You're not funny. (beat) You're sure we're going the right way?

PETER

I'm positive. (seeing she's still upset) But I'll turn on my locator.

He does, and his suit begins emitting a steady, soothing beeping.

See? This way. ... Chel?

CHEL

(sound fading) I... I'm coming...

PETER

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

(fading) Come on. Keep moving. Let's get back to the ship.

We hear the hiss of static. Another transmission can be heard faintly, Chel's words barely distinguishable.

CHEL

(rising) I can't make my hands stop shaking. The little statue is alive in my hands, shivering and twitching, and I can't make it stop. I feel... unbalanced. Adrenaline's a bitch.

Static, and then the secondary transmission overwhelm the first.

EXT. Surface, NCC1701-Delta - EVENING

We hear wind and the distant rumble of thunder- not quite a gale, but certainly on its way to becoming one.

CHEL (CONT'D)

(fully audible) The storm just blew up out of nowhere. Not entirely unexpected. Preliminary scans showed that the planet's atmosphere was in fairly frequent flux.

Chaos. Likely to do with the different gravitational pulls of the twin suns, and the constant volcanic and meteoric upheaval. We're headed back to the Adamantine now. Out of the caves and passing by the ruins now.

When we arrived, it was early afternoon? We spent most of the morning getting here. The sky was a gorgeous, forlorn, layered lilac, with streaks of blue-grey clouds. There's something in the atmosphere that must be mirrored in the chemical makeup of the earth and the plants, because this whole planet exists in gradient shades of purple and blue. It's reaching the end of the first day-cycle, and with the onset of evening and this rising storm, the sky is becoming a nebulous bruised black.

There is a crack of thunder, so violent the earth shakes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Chel stumbles, and scrambles up to her feet.

The... dust is rising on the wind.
 Little pebbles keep flying up out of
 nowhere and cracking against my
 helmet. I can't stop thinking my
 visor's going to crack. I can see, for
 now. But if this keeps up-

Static. We fade back in mid-transmission.

CHEL (CONT'D)

-reached the forrest. It's not much
 better here. But at least the tree
 roots keep most of the dirt from
 flying up and pelting us in the face.
 So now I just have to worry about one
 of these things coming down and
 impaling us. Or accidentally getting
 strangled by the-... vines... Or I
 would if- Where did they go? There...
 were vines on these trees. Peter?
 Peter! Stop! I need to get a look at-
 (to herself) They must have some sort
 of communal warning system. Like
 sagebrush... Something telling them
 the storm was coming. But where- Peter-

She is drowned out by a huge explosion of thunder. The skies
 open, and rain begins to pour down.

Chel stops stumbling her way forward, and turns to look up at
 the sky, letting out a shriek that turns into a peal of
 laughter.

It's RAINING! Ho-ly hell. The sky just
 opened up and... Peter! Peter are you
 seeing this?! (laughing) It's gold!
 It's raining gold! You are... never
 going to believe this back home...
 It's gold.It's... water, according to
 the suit... icy, and bright... but it
 looks like-... Peter, are you seeing
 this?! Peter!

Peter! Don't be a pill, the ship's not
 going anywhere! It's just a little
 rain! Peter, come and dance with me!
 Peter-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Another clap of thunder.

Static.

CUT TO:

2 SCENE TWO

2

INT. Laboratory, Starship Adamantine - NIGHT

We hear the storm raging violently outside. Inside, the soft background beeps and hums of the lab fill the air. Chel sits alone.

CHEL

We can't leave. I was right. About there being something in the atmosphere. We got back to the Adamantine, and the whole bridge was going haywire. High electro-magnetic interference in the clouds and upper atmosphere is making our navigational equipment fritz, so until the skies are completely clear again, we are effectively trapped on the surface of the planet. It's fucking with the recorders, the exo-suits, the data pads. And Peter... is in an absolutely foul mood about it. He'll have calmed down by the time it passes, but-... I don't know. I've never seen him so-... If it weren't for this storm, I think he would have strapped me down and set a course straight for home as soon as we got back. Instead, he got a middle finger from the universe, and somehow, that's my fault. If it's going to rain, and you have to get wet, then fuck it, right? You might as well dance.

... He said that was stupid, and that I was stupid. He actually said that. To my face. Actually, his exact words were-

We hear the faint buzz of static behind the following exchange. Peter's voice is laid in over Chel's:

BOTH

If you can't keep your imbicillic,
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BOTH (CONT'D)
childish-

PETER
-urges under control, you're going to
get yourself and everyone around you
killed, and you don't deserve-

BOTH
to call yourself a scientist!

CHEL
-and that it was a-

BOTH
-fluke of nature-

CHEL
-someone like me had managed to
survive this long.

The static fades.

CHEL (CONT'D)
But hey. Semantics. (beat) ...I-...
Sorry. Um... I think I should turn
this off. I don't want to-

We hear the recorder turned off.

FADE TO:

3 SCENE THREE

3

INT. Laboratory, Starship Adamantine - NIGHT

Chel clicks her recorder back on. Any hint of a tremor in her
voice is gone, though she still may not sound wholly herself.

CHEL
Examination 001 of Artifact A01.
Statue obtained in the underground
cave dwellings known as 'The Den',
located East of the NCC1701-Delta
First Site ruins. Statue is 10 inches
long, 4.8 inches wide, and 6.2 inches
tall. Completely carved out of a
single piece of rough but undamaged,
pearlescent crystal. The figure is
folded over, in a child's pose, with
the four limbs along its trunk tensed
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CHEL (CONT'D)

and twisting as they curve up and back, away from its body. Given context clues of the other statues found with A01, position can be interpreted as one of prayer or great pain.

beat.

(to herself) ...What are you?

beat.

(musing, uneasy) These... four-limbed figures were highly prominent in the statuary found in the Den. It is probably, indeed I would say likely, that these figures are representative of the aliens who built the First Site, and likely carved the murals in the tunnels leading down to the Den. Based on said murals, and the general layout of the Den... as well as the fact that the Den itself is so far removed from the First Site, our going hypothesis is that some sort of plague or infection forced a mass exodus of the city, and the inhabitants of NCC1701-Delta sought refuge below the surface of their world. Without access to the city, it is impossible to tell if the inhabitants were natural burrowers, or simply lacked the resources to rebuild, or if something in the makeup of the city itself was causing the plague... like asbestos or lead-painted walls... What is clear, as evidenced by the pyramid and the statues or grave markers on it, is that death did find them down in those caves. Due to the difference in size between this statue, and the others of its kind... I would assume that this one... was a child.

beat.

... Jesus. Who would-

Static.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FADE TO:

4 SCENE FOUR

4

INT. Laboratory, Starship Adamantine - NIGHT

The storm continues to rage. Chel turns the statue over in her hands. After a moment she pauses, and puts it down on the lab bench.

CHEL

Vertigo. That's the word I've been looking for. A sensation of whirling and loss of balance, associated particularly with looking down from a great height, or caused by disease affecting the inner ear of the vestibular nerve. Dizziness. Giddiness. I am feeling...

I should be scared. I recognize this because Peter is... so angry with me. Alternatively lecturing me about my generally infantile conduct and lack of regard for safety, and not speaking to me at all. All the while fussing over me like I'm made of glass and showing cracks. I didn't know he could get scared like that. ... I think I should be in a state of... nervous distress. Shock. Instead, all I want to do is get back into my exo and head back down into those caves. I'd do it too, storm be damned, but... I don't think Peter's nerves could stand the strain if I just up and went missing. I can't do that to him again.

And who knows. Maybe he's right. Maybe I am having some sort of breakdown. I keep hearing things. Things are... moving. Or not where they're supposed to be. And there's this... presence. Vivid as a cold hand on the back of my neck. I've heard about dig sites like this before--battlefields, and mass graves, and eons-old natural disasters... places so choked with death and ancient unrest you can't help but feel the eyes of the dead on you as you move through the wreckage

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CHEL (CONT'D)

of their world. I do believe in ghosts. Very much. This doesn't feel like that.

It's... vertigo. I have the distinct feeling of being caught out on a ledge. Agonizingly unknown space, swirling at my front and back. I should be terrified. I should want to go home. To wrap myself up in bubblewrap and never go back into that cold, creepy, death-soaked hellhole ever again. I almost died today. But I do. I want to go back. I want to jump, or fall, headfirst into that space. I... almost died... and it was... terrifying. And exhilarating. And the least interesting and important thing that happened to me today. I need to see that unknown space. To explore it. I need to know. What these things are. Who they were. How they died. If anything, I want it now more than ever. I'm going back. I have to know-

We hear the chime of an electronic doorbell, and a swoosh as the laboratory door slides open. Chel looks up.

CHEL (CONT'D)

(beat) Peter... Hi...

PETER

(awkward and apologetic) Hi... Chel, I wanted-... Can we talk?

CHEL

Yeah. Of course.

She gets up and we hear her go into the hall. The door shuts behind her. There is a moment of silence. And then the crystal statue wobbles on the table. It wobbles again, knocking hard against the table, and then again, almost timidly. We hear a sound like the first uneasy hairline cracks in glass. And then a loud, violent crack, as the crystal splits.

FADE OUT.

END.