Entry Eight

by

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No Such Thing Productions

1 PROLOGUE

INT. Bridge, Starship Adamantine - NIGHT

We hear static. And then, bursting through comes Peter's voice -- panicked and desperate.

PETER ... It came out of nowhere. We had no warning no- Please! Goddamnit

warning, no-... Please! Goddamnit. Please! Axel- Someone! ANSWER ME! We need help-... It took her. Goddamnit, Axel, someone, help me, please-... It took Chel. She's gone.

FADE TO:

2 SCENE ONE

2

INT. Bridge, Starship Adamantine - EARLIER THAT DAY

Chel sits at the controls with a cup of coffee and a small bowl. We hear the clink of her spoon on the side of the bowl as she eats. We hear the muted sounds of her music blasting inside her headphones. From outside the ship, we hear the continued sounds of wind and rain.

The door behind her opens and Peter enters. She takes off the headphones.

CHEL Morning sunshine.

PETER Morning. No food on the bridge.

CHEL Where am I supposed to eat? You've taken over the mess with your notes.

PETER What are you eating?

CHEL Mm! Bubblegum ice-cream. (offering her spoon) You want some?

PETER It's six in the morning!

CHEL

Time is irrelevant in space. (beat) Oh don't look at me like that, I made coffee!

Peter makes a soft noise of disgust and sits down, shaking his head. Chel switches off her music. For a moment the only sound is the storm beating against the Adamantine's hull.

> CHEL (CONT'D) How much time? PETER Until what? CHEL How much time left, Peter? PETER 26 hours, 42 minutes... give or take a few dozen seconds. CHEL Peter-PETER No, Chel. CHEL But-PETER

I said no! Not with this storm! It's pitch black out there. You're lucky the wind didn't pick you up and carry you away!

CHEL It's just a bit of rain!

There is an earth-shaking boom of thunder.

PETER It's too dangerous. We wait it out, and if there's time-

CHEL If there's time?! This is all the time we have!

PETER There will be other expeditions.

CHEL

No there won't. Not if we screw this up. You think your brother couldn't find a better use for his time and money than to send the two of us hurtling into space to look at some abandoned buildings he doesn't even know don't exist anymore? What the hell do you think he's going to do if we go back to him with our tapes, and some pictures of a cave wall, and say "Sorry! There isn't actually a city for us to study! Oh, and we didn't get to accurately scan the soil for mineral properties, or bring back more relics, or do anything of consequence really! It started raining! Here's a shiny bit of rock I found though! Put that in your billion-dollar scrapbook!" Peter, there is a whole lost civilization waiting for us in those caves. A whole alien world waiting for us! Don't you want to know what happened to them?

PETER

We know what happened.

CHEL

But WHAT really happened? If we don't go back, no one will. It will be lost. Forever. Our little secret, until the heat-death of the universe.

PETER (quietly) Is that such a bad thing?

CHEL I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU!

PETER

Chel, you almost DIED yesterday! Died!

CHEL

I'm fine!

PETER Are you? You almost fell off a pyramid.

CHEL

But I didn't.

PETER You're hearing things.

CHEL I told you that was nothing.

PETER

Seeing things.

CHEL

That statue wasn't there before!

PETER

You're in shock. You had a near-death experience. You're shaken, that's fine, I understand. I need you to calm down. Just wait for the rain to stop-

CHEL And watch it wash all my dreams away.

PETER

Chel, I promise-

CHEL You don't understand what you're asking of me.

PETER

Yes, I do.

• Created using Celtx

CHEL So you're just an asshole!

PETER

No! I'M practical! Why can't you just dream smaller? Want less!

CHEL

(more surprised than hurt) What?

PETER

I don't mean "stop," I'd never want you to- I just-... You have the biggest mind, the wildest imagination of anyone I know. And you let yourself just... just fly away chasing after NOTHING! After dreams! When there are real things, real people all around (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PETER (CONT'D)

you!

CHEL

I know that! And they're out THERE, Peter! Why do you think I'm trying to get outside?

PETER

Why are you SO ANXIOUS to run off and get yourself killed?!

CHEL

I'm... I'm not-

PETER

Yes! You are! You want to lose yourself, FINE. But don't just fly off where I can't follow you!

CHEL

You've managed to follow me this far.

PETER

And it was probably a mistake. I am not risking wandering out into the middle of that storm, for some fingerpaintings and a couple of statues hidden in a cave. It's not worth it.

CHEL (getting up) Then I'll go by myself.

PETER

Absolutely not.

CHEL

You didn't want to come. You're afraid. You don't want to be here. I get it. But this is... everything to me, Peter, and I will be fucked if I miss it because of a few clouds. (beat, then, softer) ... Please don't make me do this without you.

PETER

(weakly) ... if we just wait-

Chel turns away, and we hear the door to the bridge whoosh open.

PETER (CONT'D) TWENTY MINUTES!

Chel stops and looks at him. Peter breathes a sigh, half frustration, half relief, and runs his fingers through his hair.

> PETER (CONT'D) Twenty minutes. Just... wait twenty minutes. If we're doing this, we're doing it properly. We need our gear... And we're going armed. Both of us. If there is anything down there... I mean it's just... I want to be fully prepared... and I have to prep the suits.

Chel jumps into Peter's arms, hugging him tight and nearly knocking him off balance.

PETER (CONT'D)

Oof!

CHEL

Thank you.

She kisses him on the cheek, and buries her face in his shoulder.

PETER (startled) I-... Chel-...

CHEL

I'm sorry.

PETER No, I-... Just... (sighs) Just... be safe. I don't-... (flustered) That suit's expensive.

Static. We fade in on Peter as he records a personal note.

PETER (CONT'D) Personal addendum... She insisted that we go back, and I... couldn't make myself say no. I couldn't make it stick. I can't even make myself pretend to be angry about it. She's not wrong. There's no point in staying on the Adamantine. We can't leave. And even if we could, we can't go back. (MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

Our timetable would be screwed up, and Axel would have a fit if he thought he'd sent us out here for nothing. At this point, we don't even have a story to tell. And... I'd be lying if I said I wasn't curious. That I didn't want to go back, to see those caves, and dig through the ruins of someone else's life. It's morbid, but... hey. I'm a xenoanthropologist. It's... satisfying. I guess because I never get to do this part of it... getting my hands dirty. I haven't been out on a dig... left the lab, since.. I can hardly remember. I don't know how to explain it. At this rate, I don't even know that you can really call what I do 'science,' I've gotten so far away from my roots. I'm just the synthesist. I just take what Chel gives me, all her hard, down in the dirt findings, and find a way for Axel to sell it. She's the story teller, the big picture painter, the dreamer... I just want to see how the puzzle turns out.

We hear a door slide open.

CHEL Gear's checked. Everything's charged, and I've laid out a couple fresh tanks of oxygen. You ready?

PETER (takes a deep breath) ...Yeah. I'm ready.

Static.

FADE TO:

3 SCENE TWO

INT. Caves, NCC1701-Delta - DAY

We hear water dripping in the cave, and the wailing of the wind outside fading away as Peter and Chel move deeper into the tunnels. There's a moment's silence between them as they walk. 3

CHEL Peter?

PETER

Mmhm?

CHEL

I'm sorry.

PETER Why? You were right.

CHEL I know. I didn't have to be an ass about it.

PETER You weren't being an ass. You were...

CHEL (a little hopeful) Scary?

PETER

Passionate.

beat.

CHEL ... would you have done it?

PETER

What?

CHEL Left. Packed up and flown us home. Never looked back.

PETER ... I don't know.

CHEL You really don't want to be here, do you? ... So why did you come?

PETER

I don't know.

CHEL You always know.

PETER

That's not true.

CHEL

Yes it is.

PETER Maybe I just don't have a backbone.

CHEL

You wouldn't be out here if you didn't.

PETER

Sure I would.

CHEL

Bullshit.

Peter doesn't reply for a moment.

PETER

Maybe I just...can't see things the way you do.

CHEL What's that got to do with anythi-

PETER

You see stars, Chel. I see the dark. I don't see the point in racing off to die so far from home. Sticking my nose out the front door, just to see it cut off. But I was never going to leave you out here on your own.

CHEL

So... You came for me? (when he doesn't answer) Because we're friends?

PETER

(rolling his eyes, but avoiding hers) Because I don't want to train some new intern who's only going to do your job a tenth as well as you do. YES, because we're friends.

Again, they are quiet for a moment.

CHEL

Be honest. Are you ever going to think of anything else? Ever? For the rest (MORE)

CHEL (CONT'D) of your life. PETER ... Probably not. (to himself) I'll probably spend the rest of my life, walking the length of these tunnels with you. ... Chel? CHEL Yeah? But he changes his mind. PETER ... nothing. We should be coming up on that statue in a minute... Are you sure you're-CHEL I'm fine. PETER It's just a lump of rock. CHEL I know. I'm... I'm fine. Promise. PETER I'll go first. CHEL (relieved) Thank you. PETER Stay behind me. We hear their footsteps on the cave floor. PETER (CONT'D) There he is. CHEL It's closer. PETER Chel. As they approach the statue, Peter reaches out and taps it.

It pings hollowly.

CHEL (agitated) What are you doing?! Don't touch it!

PETER He won't bite. I can't say I blame you. These things are... creepy.

We hear the sound of something slither across the floor. Chel turns abruptly.

CHEL Peter? Did you-

PETER Chel, if you're not up for this-

CHEL No! I just... You're right. He's creepy. Can we go now?

PETER

Yeah. Come on.

They move past. Their footsteps fade away.

FADE TO:

4 SCENE THREE

INT. The Gorgon's Den, NCC1701-Delta - DAY

Chel clicks on her personal recorder. She speaks softly.

CHEL

He's not letting me out of his sight. We've been sifting through dirt and crystal fragments for over an hour, and I can't take two steps without Peter shuffling around, pretending to see something interesting, and taking two steps after me. He thinks he's being subtle. I think he's being ridiculous. What am I going to do? Run off and fall down a cliff? That was yesterday. I'm having all new accidents today.

It's... sweet. In an irritatingly
overbearing sort of way. I think I'd
be angry if it was anyone else. He
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

4

CHEL (CONT'D)

treats me like I'm made of these crystals. Sometimes I just don't know what to do. I'll never understand him. A whole new world to explore, and the only thing he wants to look at is me. I mean-... It's not like... you know. He's always been like this. I remember he used to hover like this when I first started working at Aphelion. I'd look up from scanning an artifact or digitally mapping ruins from a photograph, and there was Peter, standing over my shoulder, squinting down at me, and frowning in that owlish way. Quick to criticize. Slow to praise. Not that I gave him much to criticize. It's no wonder he's had so many assistants. He still hovers. Frequently. But now it's less of a trust thing, more of a he loves his job thing and everything we do ends up coalescing eventually, he just likes to watch it happen. ... and I did almost break my neck last time we were down here.

And... to be honest, the way things have-... I mean with how I've been-... If I am losing my mind... And the way he's looking at me... the way things have been... I'm starting to think I might be. I'm starting to think I shouldn't be down here alone... I shouldn't be down here at all.

Static.

We cut back in on the sound of Chel's footsteps. We hear Peter shifting through artifacts somewhere nearby.

CHEL (CONT'D) Find anything yet?

PETER As a matter of fact... Hold on... I think I've got something... (blowing dirt off something) ...It's a ring.

CHEL Are you serious?! PETER

As a heart attack.

CHEL

No way.

PETER See for yourself!

CHEL

Oh my god. Oh my god! It IS a ring! That's- Peter! Look at the decoration! This is-... This is HUGE! They wore jewelry!

PETER

Or something a helluva lot like it. But it's definitely SOME kind of adornment. It's too small to be anything else.

CHEL Is that-... I'm not crazy, am I? That's definitely made out of-

PETER -A single piece of gem-stone.

CHEL

But the design's so intricate! So complex. Peter, do you know what this means?! They must've had access to mines... complex tools... There could be veins of stones like this all around us, right now! If they could make rings like this-

PETER There's something caked on it here...

CHEL

Is that... blood?

PETER

I don't know. I saw the same, or at least a similar substance sprayed over the wall, last time we were down here. But I think I can scrape it off of the ring easily enough.

CHEL

Leave it. We can study the flakes, whatever they are, back on the ship. Besides... makes it look... I don't know, vintage.

PETER (holding it out to her) ... here. You take it.

CHEL (teasing, but still blushing) My dear doctor, are you proposing?

PETER

(flustered) I-... That's-... I-...

CHEL (laughing) Hold onto that thought. Maybe... take a girl to dinner first. (taking the ring) ...Thank you. For this. For-... today. This place.

PETER I couldn't let you go home empty handed.

Static. We cut in to another of Peter's personal logs.

PETER (CONT'D) It's everywhere. Splattered across the walls. Dripped over the crystals. Buried in small, coagulated lumps in the soil. This... substance. The closer we look, the more of it we find. Every alcove is stained. All of the tools we've found, the ring... All coated in the dried, cracked remains of fluid, streaks and drops of green so dark they're almost black. And all I can think is "blood." And the shadows are moving in my mind -- vague phantom figures tearing each other to shreds. I can see the killing ground.

Our humanity is getting the better of us. We fight to pull together incoherent pieces... place ourselves within some greater picture. The human brain is conditioned to see faces when there aren't any. Meaning, and sense, and connections when there aren't any.

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

We see blood in stains, and screaming faces in solid stone... because it's easier to recognize the worst of ourselves in the dark. And even if it is the worst of us, there's a comfort in the familiar. Because even a twisted mirror image feels closer to safety and home. Better to see a bloodstain than something beyond comprehension or recognition. Seeing things that aren't really there makes it feel like maybe, we aren't a billion miles from home. Coincidence helps us to think that maybe, we're not alone. But we are.

Static.

CHEL It's just... Don't you think it's odd?

PETER

What?

CHEL

This place. If these creatures, these people were driven down here by volcanic disturbances, or a plague, there should be bodies. Bones. But there's nothing. Just... bloodstains.

PETER You don't know that it's blood.

CHEL

Peter.

PETER

(adamant, avoiding) We don't know what their physiological make-ups were like. They might not have had blood, or bones the way we think of them. Or they could have completely decomposed. This all could have happened billions of years ago.

CHEL

Do these artifacts look billions of years old to you? They aren't even properly fossilized.

PETER They could have moved on. Resurfaced.

CHEL

Where's the evidence? Peter, look around. There's too much left here for them to have moved on. These people came down here to die. It's not a refugee camp, it's a burial chamber. ... so where are all the bodies?

She pauses, thoughtfully, and then frowns and straightens up.

CHEL (CONT'D) Can you feel that?

PETER Feel what?

CHEL It's colder...

PETER Don't be creepy, Chel.

CHEL I'm serious. The temperature's dropping.

PETER It's fine over here.

CHEL Come stand by me.

Peter moves to her.

PETER

Whoah...

CHEL

Right?

PETER My temp-gauge just dropped eight degrees.

CHEL (moving out of the alcove) It's colder over here.

PETER (sharply) Chel, your suit's moving.

CHEL

What?

PETER Stand still. ... see that? The fabric on the leg of your suit's fluttering. See?

CHEL I don't feel anything... (checking) It's not torn.

PETER It's a breeze...

CHEL Underground? It can't be.

PETER There must be some sort of fissure or opening...

CHEL It must be coming from below.

PETER

But where?

They exit the alcove.

PETER (CONT'D) ... it's colder over here!

CHEL (half to herself) warm... warm... cold... cold... Ooh! Cold!

PETER (amused and exasperated) Chel.

CHEL I think its coming from around the pyramid.

PETER Chel, PLEASE be careful!

CHEL

Just don't trip or get snagged on the statues, Peter, you'll be fine.

PETER This is where you found the path?

CHEL Yeah. Just over there, see?

PETER

Breeze is getting stronger. It's definitely coming from this direction. (noticing) The ground's been smoothed out here, around the base. Looks like your road less traveled goes two ways, Chel.

CHEL							
Only	one	way	to	find	out.	Are	you
coming?							

She starts walking, her footsteps crunching against the ground.

PETER Do I have a choice?

CHEL You can hold my hand if it'll make you feel any better?

PETER

Very funny.

CHEL I'm just saying. If you need it.

PETER This is disgusting.

CHEL Oh come on, holding hands isn't THAT bad!

PETER No, the ground. The pyramid. It's those stains again, they're everywhere.

We hear him brush his hand against the stone side of the wall. Peter frowns.

CHEL

Maybe it was their idea of decoration? Like the fungus in the carvings. Maybe it was some sort of paint.

PETER

It's sticky.

CHEL

What?

PETER

The stains on the pyramid... they're sticky. So's the stuff on the ground. It's mucus-y, and... wet... (half to himself) This is fresh...

CHEL

Peter. (she points) Look. Another tunnel. Looks like it's carved into the base of the pyramid.

PETER Well, at least we know where the breeze is coming from.

CHEL Give me some light?

Peter and Chel both switch on the exo-suits' headlamps. We hear the soft, eerie moaning of wind moving through the tunnel. The two scientists look at each other.

CHEL (CONT'D)

That's...

PETER A long way down.

CHEL

I was going to say dark and terrifying.

PETER Oh. NOW she's scared. That's reassuring.

CHEL So what do we do?

PETER

19.

Well, we can't climb down there.

CHEL Not unless we crawl.

PETER

Our reception to the Adamantine is barely holding as it is. If something happened down there-... No. It's too much of a risk.

CHEL

Well we can't just leave it.

PETER

Let's set up a probe. We can have it scan on the way down. It might pick up enough that we can map out whatever's down there.

Chel drops her pack and unzips it. We hear her rummaging through it.

CHEL I've got models E, M and S. Which one do you want?

PETER S. She's easier to maneuver remotely.

CHEL Euryale's got the better picture.

PETER And Sthenno is more durable.

CHEL

Just checking.

Chel starts setting up the probe.

CHEL (CONT'D) Running diagnostics on SX-3N0 probe... Systems look like they're all functioning normally. Connection to remote and the Adamantine are a bit fuzzy... but generally both okay... We should be-

There is a sound from behind, like the crunching of something heavy on glass. Chel looks up.

CHEL (CONT'D)

Peter?

PETER

I heard it.

CHEL That wasn't you?

PETER No. (and then, quiet, uneasy, but firm) ... Chel. Stay where you are.

CHEL

What?

PETER Don't. Move. No! Don't turn around-

Too late. Chel turns.

CHEL

Peter... (standing) I'm definitely not hallucinating, am I? I'm not crazy. That... that statue wasn't standing there before.

PETER No. It definitely was not.

CHEL You're not messing with me.

PETER I don't have a sense of humor.

CHEL So how did it get there?!

PETER I don't know!

CHEL (taking a half step closer) But... this proves it, doesn't it. They really do move.

PETER

Chel, stop.

But Chel continues cautiously moving towards the statue.

CHEL You thought I was freaking out and making it up!

PETER Okay. Okay! You were right. I was wrong. Okay? Please don't get any closer-

CHEL They move. This one's whole. Peter, what if-...

PETER Chel, PLEASE! Get back over here!

CHEL I think we found the residents...

PETER

It CAN'T be alive. It's a statue. It's made of crystal. You've seen the insides of these things yourself. They don't have organs, or bones, they're shells-

CHEL

(starting to get excited) But something WAS inside of them. Peter, what if that's why they're all broken like this? The crystals all over the floor... Something came OUT of these statues. These are just... the husks. Eggs.

PETER (dawning realization, half to himself) The creatures in the murals...

CHEL

Living beings turned to stone... Like a Gorgon...

We hear a sound like the grinding of stone on stone as the Gorgon slowly but definitely turns its head. It lets out a gravelly whine.

CHEL (CONT'D)

Peter!

We hear the sound of Peter unholstering and charging a phase

(CONTINUED)

weapon.

PETER

Chel. Back away. Back away right now!

CHEL Peter, put the gun down.

PETER

Not unless you're about to unholster yours.

CHEL This is a scientific expedition-

PETER

That just turned into a safari. This far beyond the rim, there's no way in hell I'm taking any more chances. Consider this just another safety precaution.

CHEL

No, don't! It's not doing anything wrong, Peter, don't shoot it. Please, you can't!

PETER Like hell I can't. Get behind me.

CHEL

It's looking at me.

PETER

I can see that! That thing is almost as big as you, and it is way, WAY too close. Please, PLEASE come back over here.

CHEL God... It looks a bit like a dog, doesn't it?

PETER

Chel, wait!

We hear Peter take several quick step forward, and the Gorgon lets out a hissing snarl. Peter immediately stops.

PETER (CONT'D) (agitated) Chel...

CHEL Peter STOP you're scaring it!

PETER I'M scaring- Oh to hell with this!

We hear the gun's computer systems starting to lock onto the Gorgon. The creature lets out another, much louder growl.

CHEL Stay where you are! Put. The gun. Down. ...Okay... Okay... It's okay. No more sudden movements. See? I'm getting down... on my knees... and making myself small... See? I'm not a threat. And neither is Peter... It's okay. You're okay. I'm not going to hurt you... we come in peace, see? This is my hand... you can smell it... this is my scent... you're okay... we're okay...

We hear the creature turn its head and whine again to examine Chel's hand.

PETER What the hell are you doing?! Don't touch it!

CHEL It's okay Peter. It's okay... Hey there little guy...

The Gorgon lets out another curiously gravely whine.

CHEL (CONT'D) (very quietly) ... what the hell are you?

Without warning, the Gorgon lets out a noise somewhere between a snarl and a scream.

PETER CHEL! RUN!

The Gorgon screams again, and snaps its crystalline jaws at Chel. Chel shrieks and throws herself backwards. We hear her scrambling over the earth as she tries to get away. Peter fires off two or three shots, and we hear the Gorgon let out a bellowing howl of fury that echoes and almost seems to shake the caves. PETER (CONT'D) Shoot it! Chel- Your gun! Get out of the way!

Breathing hard and stumbling to her feet, Chel races towards the safety of Peter, but the Gorgon, snarling, bounds forward and closes its jaws around her leg. Chel screams. We hear her struggling and scraping at the earth as the monster begins dragging her backwards towards the tunnel below the pyramid.

PETER (CONT'D)

Chel!

CHEL Get off me! Get off! Let go of me! PETER! PETER!

Peter grabs hold of her. We hear the Gorgon growl as it tugs on Chel's leg like a chew toy. Peter strains, struggling to maintain his grip.

> PETER I've got you! I've got you!

> > CHEL

My leg-

PETER I've got you!

CHEL (crying) It hurts!

PETER Look at me. Chel! Look at me! It's okay. It's going to be okay. I've got you!

The Gorgon snarls again, shaking Chel, dragging her and Peter forward along the ground.

CHEL NO! No! Peter, don't let it take me! Don't let it take me down there! Peter, please! Please!

PETER (straining to hold her) Chel-

CHEL Don't let go! PETER (realizing he can't hold her) Chel!

CHEL Peter, don't let go!

PETER ("I am so, so sorry.") Chel...

CHEL

Peter!

We hear the Gorgon let out a terrible, snarling scream as it pulls violently again on Chel's leg. We hear the rustle of fabric as Chel's hands slip through Peter's, and her screams echoing and fading, along with the sounds of the Gorgon, as it drags her under the pyramid.

For a moment, Peter sits there in stunned silence. We hear him crawl over to the mouth of the tunnel.

PETER No... no... no... Chel? ... CHEL?!

We hear nothing but the mocking, fading sound of his own echo through the tunnel. Sounds of the cave.

PETER (CONT'D)

CHEL-

He is abruptly cut off by static.

FADE OUT.

END.