

Entry Three - Chel

by

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No Such Thing Productions

EXT. Surface, NCC1701-Delta - DAY

We hear the sound of the Adamantine's engines shutting down as the ship touches down on NCC1701-Delta. A door hisses open. We hear footsteps as Peter steps out of the shuttle. He pauses when he realizes Chel is not behind him.

PETER

Chel? Are you coming?

Chel stands in the doorway, one foot poised, hovering above the rocky earth. She doesn't move.

PETER

(exasperated) Chel!

CHEL

Coming! I'm... I'm coming... Right.  
I can do this...

She takes a deep breath.

CHEL

One small step for woman.

Slowly, deliberately, she steps down onto the surface of the new world.

CHEL

Ho-ly shit.

FADE TO:

EXT. Surface, NCC1701-Delta - Moments Later

Static.

We hear Chel switch on her recording device. We can hear her footsteps as she walks. Her voice is slightly muffled by her helmet as she records through her in-suit comms link. We also hear a soft, semi-methodical beeping which issues from a small black radar device she is carrying.

CHEL

I'm standing on an alien world.

She lets out a soft laugh, unable to contain herself.

(CONTINUED)

CHEL

Holy shit. This is really happening. I'm really walking on the face of a completely untouched, alien world. And in a few moments, I'll be standing at the ruins of an ancient, alien civilization.

And this handy dandy little guy is going to help me find it. Aren't you buddy?

The tracker in her hand continues to beep impassively, but Chel seems to take it as an affirmation.

Yes you are! Good boy.

Ah. Okay. The surface of the planet is surprisingly more complex than it appeared from orbit. A series of imposing mountain ranges stretch from horizon to horizon, dipping in and out of the thin grey rags of clouds, their jagged, broken peaks like the fangs of some starving animal jutting up towards the pale purplish sky. There are valleys. Craters. Huge, gaping chasms in the earth dozens, sometimes hundreds of meters across. Possibly the result of some long passed volcanic disturbance, or a particularly violent asteroid impact. And not entirely barren either. The ground is mostly thick, black dirt, heavily mixed with a pale blue-grey sediment. But here and there, there are patches of short white grass and these trumpet-shaped speckle brown things that might be flowers, or some kind of a fungus. The whole scene looks like a washed out photograph. Like all the color's been leached away, leaving a layer of dust and blues and grey. You have to wonder what kind of natural chemical makeup and evolutionary trails could have left a place looking so... haunted. Desolate.

I've taken samples of both flora, as well as the dirt and blue-grey rocks for closer examination back on the Adamantine. It's days like

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CHEL (cont'd)  
 this where I am SUPER glad I  
 listened to Dr. Eurus and took that  
 double major in biology. Because  
 "You have absolutely no business  
 running around on some other planet  
 if you can't understand the basics  
 of this one!" ... What would she  
 say if she could see me now... I  
 don't think anyone ever believed  
 I'd make it this far. Well... she  
 did. And look at me now.

Static.

FADE TO:

3

SCENE TWO

3

EXT. Surface, NCC1701-Delta - Continuous

We fade in, mid-transmission.

CHEL  
 We're coming into a slightly  
 forested area now. The trees are  
 tall, some reaching up to thirty,  
 maybe forty feet. I call them  
 trees, but none of them have  
 leaves. If I didn't know any  
 better, I'd say they were dead.  
 They're a skeletal yellow white,  
 with sharply angular branches. Most  
 of them are covered in thick, dark  
 green vines that loop and drape  
 over the bony branches in heavy  
 coils. But they don't seem to be  
 part of the trees themselves. Or at  
 least, not all of the trees have  
 them. They look a bit like snakes.  
 Sort of... glistening, and oily. I  
 wish I could get a cutting, but  
 they're too high up. I'll have to  
 see if there's a ladder back on the  
 ship.

Static.

FADE TO:

EXT. Surface, NCC1701-Delta - Continuous

CHEL

Nearly there. According to these readings, the ruins should be a few minutes further north. We had to land the Adamantine about six miles back. It was the only spot anywhere near the ruins that seemed stable enough to reliably leave her. No fissures, reasonably clear for takeoff and landing. And it afforded us with a lovely, scenic walk. God, I hope I'm still transmitting. At this distance from the ship, we SHOULD be okay, but between some minor atmospheric interference we caught on the way down, and Murphy's law, you never can tell. Hopefully this will all have uploaded to my data pad by the time we're heading back. And from there I can uplink it to Aphelion's systems -- though this far from Earth, it'll take a couple weeks for a transmission to get back to HQ. So we probably won't send anything until we're on our way home. No point, y'know? Out here, we're on our own. A little lovely, alien paradise. I could do without the exo-suits, to be honest. I know it's helping me -- you know, BREATHE, but still. I've never been exactly graceful? And this suit is awkward, and bulky, and between the terrain and being unable to properly maneuver my feet, I think it's safe to say I look kind of insane right now. But, it's better than freezing to death or being slowly poisoned by the atmosphere. The gravity here is similar to Earth's, slightly lighter. Temperature is currently 30 degrees Fahrenheit, and while the atmosphere is... technically breathable, it's a little higher in nitrogen than is strictly healthy. You could probably breathe it for... maybe two or three hours

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CHEL (cont'd)  
 before it starts to do any serious  
 damage. But Peter won't let me test  
 that theory, and he's in charge, so  
 the suit stays on! I'm being good  
 in the name of survival, despite  
 the siren call of science.

The device in Chel's hands suddenly begins beeping more  
 urgently.

Oh! Oh! This-... This is it! Holy  
 shit! This is it!

She switches on her comms.

Peter! I've got a lock on the  
 probe. This way.

We hear her footsteps crunching on the ground.

Static.

FADE TO:

5

SCENE FOUR

5

EXT. Surface, NCC1701-Delta - Continuous

Wind moves across the empty, rocky plains. The tracker's  
 beeping has stopped. Peter stands at Chel's side as she  
 stares somewhat blankly ahead, unmoving and not speaking.

PETER

Chel, I-... I'm... I'm so-...  
 (beat) Do you want to head back?  
 ... Chel?

CHEL

I... I'm fine. (she takes a deep  
 breath) No. Ah... We should stay.  
 take look around. There might still  
 be-... I just... need a minute. I  
 should log this.

PETER

Right. Sure thing. ... take your  
 time.

We hear him walk away. Chel takes a moment to gather  
 herself.

CHEL

It's... it's gone.

She sighs. Pauses. Struggles to be professional.

(CONTINUED)

We... Aphelion Industries... sent out a probe. About three weeks before Peter and I launched. It took some initial readings of the atmosphere, located the most likely site that would yield favorable results for the dig. And it sent back satellite pictures of what looked like the ruins of an ancient city, before landing and sending up the beacon we've been following to get here. But... in the nine and some odd months since we left Earth... There must have been an earthquake, or a meteor impact. Something. There's... a fissure... a crack about four hundred feet across and... fuck if I know how deep. It's swallowed the ruins, the probe, everything.

FUCK!

Sorry. I just-...

(trying to be positive) The probe is still working. Down there, somewhere, otherwise the signal would have cut out. Even if it had, we probably wouldn't have known about it until the planet was already in our sights. I don't know if we can rappel down there. I'm not sure I would even know how.

(and then, unable to keep from breaking) ... we don't have the fuel to find a secondary site, if one even exists. Or the food supplies, or the time. This-... this was it. This was my shot, and I-... It's too late. I'm too late. It's gone. I missed it.

... Shit.

Peter's voice suddenly cuts through on the communication's link. He is uncharacteristically breathless with excitement.

PETER

Chel! Come in, Chel. Chel, are you there?

(CONTINUED)

CHEL  
(shaking herself from her reverie)  
Yeah. I'm here, Peter. What is it?

PETER  
I found something.

Chel perks up slightly, and then, realizing she can't see him.

CHEL  
Where are you?

PETER  
About 300 yards east, along the fissure. There's a sort of narrow footpath, leading away from what I think would've been the city walls. I'm at the base of the mountain now. There are these... big, black pillars covered with carvings, and... and a cave. I looked inside and- There are huge mounds of crystals, and more carvings on the walls of the cave, and... Chel... you're gonna want to see this. Somebody lived down here.

Static.

FADE OUT.

END.