

Primordial Deep  
Episode Five - "Days of Night"

by

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No Such Thing Productions

PROLOGUE

Pen scratching on paper. Marella, alone.

MARELLA (NARRATING)

We are drifting through a night that has no end. I can't remember when it started. I have no sense of how long we have been floating here... A few days. A second. A lifetime. It doesn't matter. It is... irrelevant here in the deep.

I had a bad dream. Or... I thought I did. I woke, and waited for the sun to rise... found myself listening for a knock on my door, searching for the sound of a voice, a hint of a smile... They never came. The shadows rolled on. And on. The night stretched. And grew. I was awake... but the night refused to end... and neither did the dream. Like a wave that never breaks.

Small as we are, what else can we do when the dark rolls in, but to let it press us close together? Let the night remind us of our nature. Human as we are... we huddle and seek shelter and shore... or sink.

It's what we have always done come the darkness.

FADE TO:

SCENE ONE

INT. Loire's Quarters, The Tiamat - DAY

The sounds of a fitful, restless sleep -- covers shift, a murmur... a whimper... Loire wakes screaming.

LOIRE

No! NO!

Beside him, Asherah sits bolt upright, and instinctively moves to wrap her arms around Loire -- we hear him struggling against her.

LOIRE  
NO! Do something! We have to-

ASHERAH  
Clarion!

LOIRE  
Help him! We have to do something!  
Help me! You have to let me go!

ASHERAH  
Clarion! Clarion stop. STOP! It's just  
me... It's just me...

LOIRE  
(bewildered) T-Talise?

ASHERAH  
Easy...

LOIRE  
I-

ASHERAH  
It's a nightmare, Clarion. Just a bad  
dream...

LOIRE  
No... no...

Shaking violently, he buries his face in his hands, breathing  
hard and leaning into Asherah, who pulls him close.

LOIRE  
I was-... I-it was Destan... The  
window...

ASHERAH  
I know, Clarion... I know...

LOIRE  
I was so close...

ASHERAH  
There was nothing you could have done.

LOIRE  
(laughs bitterly) You know that's not  
true.

ASHERAH

Hey. (lifting his face towards hers, gently, but firm) Don't. You start blaming yourself... you sink into this, and we'll lose you.

LOIRE

And I'm just supposed to sleep on that? I lead a man to his death- I'm the one who put him in that room-

ASHERAH

And I'm the one who couldn't get him out. If any one person is responsible... (beat, shaken) I was in charge of the structural repairs.

LOIRE

Talise-

ASHERAH

No. Freak accident or no... He was my responsibility. Not yours. There was nothing you could have done.

She releases him, unable to meet his eyes, and forces herself to take a steadying breath.

ASHERAH

We've lost crew before-

LOIRE

Never this early. Never like that.

ASHERAH

But we have lost them. One way or another. And right now, we don't get the luxury of guilt. Guilt kills. It consumes. Meanwhile, your crew needs you, Clarion. I need you. Or none of us are getting out of this alive.

beat.

LOIRE

... (softly) I can't get it out of my head.

ASHERAH

I know.

LOIRE

I keep thinking-... trying to figure out where I went wrong. Where we cut a corner, or took too much time. It just keeps circling around and around in my head, and I don't understand-

ASHERAH

-why he shouldn't still be here.

LOIRE

He should still be here.

ASHERAH

I know. Believe me... I know.

Loire lays back against the pillows with a sigh.

LOIRE

What time is it?

ASHERAH

Late... Early... I don't know.

LOIRE

You always know.

ASHERAH

Do I?

LOIRE

(looking at her) Yes. It's uncanny...  
(beat) You've been crying.

ASHERAH

I'm fine now.

LOIRE

Have you slept at all?

ASHERAH

Someone needed to keep an eye on you.

LOIRE

Who's looking after you?

Asherah lets out a weak, tired laugh and lays beside Loire.

ASHERAH

I think it must be two o'clock.

LOIRE  
You should sleep.

ASHERAH  
Yeah. Okay.

LOIRE  
You have to rest.

ASHERAH  
Yeah... Okay.

LOIRE  
Come here...

Asherah shifts closer, and Loire holds her tight, resting his head on her chest.

LOIRE  
(softly) Stay close...

ASHERAH  
Always.

LOIRE  
(closing his eyes) I just need to feel  
your heartbeat.

FADE TO:

SCENE TWO

INT. Air Lock Two, The Tiamat - DAY

Marella crouches on the floor beside Destan's body, lying half covered in a large black bag. Behind her, we hear the door slide open, and Spinner enters.

SPINNER  
Hey.

MARELLA  
Mm.

SPINNER  
(looking around) You been here all  
night?

MARELLA  
(taking a deep breath, focusing) I...  
yeah. Yeah, I think so. I had some-...

there was... paperwork. Statements,  
and official doctor's records, and...  
autopsies.

SPINNER  
(grimacing) Jesus.

MARELLA  
I needed something to do. My hands-...

SPINNER  
(studying her) You cold?

MARELLA  
What?

SPINNER  
You're shaking.

MARELLA  
Oh... No... I'm... just-...

SPINNER  
I get it.

MARELLA  
I'm fine.

SPINNER  
Yeah. ... I didn't sleep much either.

MARELLA  
Oh.

SPINNER  
Stayed up half the night, trying to  
get Matti to eat something... calm  
down... Think she finally passed out  
around four, right on the table in the  
mess, so I dropped her off in her  
room. She kept right on sobbing  
though, fast asleep and all... I  
didn't think she'd ever stop crying...

The door slides open again and Matti enters.

SPINNER  
Speak of the angel...

MATTI  
Hey. (to Marella) You alright?

MARELLA

I'm fine.

SPINNER

(nodding to something in her hand)  
What's that?

MATTI

(uncharacteristically shy) I...  
brought my flute. He kept asking me if-  
... I thought I might play something.

The door opens again, and Loire enters with Asherah. For a moment, they all stare at one another -- no one moves, no one speaks.

ASHERAH

(softly) Well... it looks like we're  
all here. Captain?

LOIRE

(refocusing, sighs) Yeah... Yeah...  
Alright.

... We are gathered here today to  
remember the life of our crew mate-...  
our friend, Dr. Destan Seychelles,  
lost in the line of... of exploration,  
duty, and discovery. His life was...  
unfairly brief. But he was a vibrant  
presence in this community. And he  
will be missed.

Silence. Matti starts to sniffle. Loire hesitates, then glances at Marella.

LOIRE

Doc-... Marella... did you have  
anything you wanted to say?

MARELLA

(slightly nonplussed) Me?

ASHERAH

I think we can all agree you were  
closest to him.

MARELLA

Oh, I wasn't-



But as she looks around at the gathered crew, she suddenly realizes that they are serious. She catches herself abruptly, and takes a steadying breath, trying to gather herself.

MARELLA

I... Uh... yes... alright.

beat.

MARELLA

... I'm sorry... I don't know how to begin. I didn't prepare- but that's just the thing, isn't it? None of us were prepared.

Matti starts to cry. Marella, startled, avoids looking at anyone as she continues. Instead, she watches Destan.

MARELLA

It feels as if a light's gone out, and I'm standing here in the dark. Only, I didn't even know the light had been on in the first place. I just... took it for granted. Him. ... He was just... one of those people who felt... integral to his surroundings. I guess to me too... I just... didn't have the time to figure that out. (steadying breath) But... I like to think he would have been there when I did. He was patient like that. Encouraging. Like... I don't know exactly how to say it... So... He was... really BAD at telling jokes. But he was really good at pretending mine were funny... even when most people would've just thought they were mean. Because I think he knew that I was just as bad at them as he was. And he let me know that it was okay to keep trying. That he'd be there on the day where I finally told one that was actually funny... When I figured out that he was my friend... I, um... I never actually told him that. That he was my friend. I thought I was still on the fence about it. I thought I needed more time, that I'd wait and see... He must've been MUCH smarter than me though, because he already had

that all figured out... and was just waiting for me to catch up. And you know what, I KNOW he would have been there when I did.

Because that's just... who Destan was. He WAS the sort of person who'd come in when you weren't looking, just to leave the light on. Or sit by your side and just... brighten the place up. Like he was always carrying a little personal sun inside him, that he was just... SO happy to share. With anyone. Even if they didn't deserve it. I always tend to keep my best thoughts to myself, but Destan... Destan was... an open book. One I'll never forgive myself for not reading. ... But I know it was a good one. Maybe even then best.

Surprised at herself and overwhelmed, Marella inhales sharply and looks away.

MARELLA

(quietly) Can I stop talking now?

LOIRE

Of... of course.

MARELLA

(exhausted) Thank you.

LOIRE

I'm sorry.

MARELLA

(shaking her head) It's fine. I'm... H-he... He was my friend. It needed to be said.

LOIRE

Do you need a minute before we-

MARELLA

No. No... go on.

LOIRE

(worried) You sure?

MARELLA

Please.

LOIRE

Okay... If everyone would please step out of the airlock... we'll say our final goodbyes.

The crew moves out into the hall, but Marella lingers for a moment. She zips the body bag, covering Destan's form.

MARELLA

(whispering) I'm sorry.

She moves to join the others, and the airlock slides shut behind her, and begins cycling down.

MARELLA

... bye, Destan.

ASHERAH

(softly) Safe travels, doctor.

SPINNER

Keep shinin'.

LOIRE

We'll see you on the other side.

Matti begins to play, the sound of the flute filling and echoing around the chamber.

Marella presses a button, and the airlock hisses open. Water rushes in, and the crew stands together and watches as Destan is borne out into the sea, and slowly disappears.

FADE TO:

SCENE THREE

INT. Mess Hall, The Tiamat - NIGHT

The crew is gathered together around one of the tables. Loire pours drinks and sets them out.

ASHERAH

(gently) Clarion.

LOIRE

Mmm?

ASHERAH  
That's six glasses.

LOIRE  
What? (glances down) Shit. Goddamnit-

ASHERAH  
Hey, it's okay.

SPINNER  
(reaching) I was going to have seconds  
anyway.

LOIRE  
Yeah, but that still leaves-

MATTI  
Maybe she'll change her mind.

SPINNER  
I wouldn't count on it.

ASHERAH  
Has anyone seen her since-

SPINNER  
She went down to the lab. Said she had  
work to do.

MATTI  
We could bring it down to her-

SPINNER  
No, leave her be. Unless you want a  
second body floating around out there,  
I strongly suggest you leave the doc  
alone.

MATTI  
She shouldn't be by herself.

SPINNER  
She'll come around.

ASHERAH  
We'll leave it for her. Just in case.

LOIRE  
Yeah... right...

Asherah lifts her glass.

ASHERAH

To Destan. Brightest of us all.

SPINNER

This rig's about to be a whole lot  
quieter...

MATTI

We'll miss you, doc.

LOIRE

Cheers.

The clink of glasses. They drink. Silence descends.

beat.

Spinner slowly puts down his cup.

SPINNER

Listen, Cap... been meaning to ask  
you... When are we going home?

Asherah and Loire exchange a look. Loire puts down his cup.

LOIRE

Excuse me?

SPINNER

I asked when are we going home,  
captain?

ASHERAH

We go home when the job is done.

SPINNER

And when exactly is that? Do any of  
you recall an end date for this little  
excursion? Does anybody remember Kiran  
ever mentioning that tiny little  
crucial detail? Because I sure as shit  
don't.

LOIRE

(sharply) Watch your tone.

SPINNER

That's what I thought. Just a lot of  
song and dance. I'm just sayin', I've  
been thinkin'-

ASHERAH  
About leaving?

SPINNER  
You say that like you're surprised we  
have a choice.

ASHERAH  
Because we don't.

SPINNER  
After everything we've been through,  
don't you think we should?

LOIRE  
We all came down here of our own  
volition-

SPINNER  
No offense, Cap, but I signed up for a  
VERY different mission.

MATTI  
(reluctantly) He has a point...

ASHERAH  
Matti!

SPINNER  
Thank you!

MATTI  
I'm not saying he's *right*, but...

LOIRE  
(realizing) You're scared.

MATTI  
(laughs) Shit yes! And I'd feel a hell  
of a lot better if I knew when the  
cavalry was coming. We are WAY beyond  
the bounds of our mission parameters  
right now. That doesn't scare you?

LOIRE  
Of course it does. But I also have a  
job to do. We have a contract-

SPINNER  
Destan's dead.

beat.

LOIRE

I know.

SPINNER

Destan's dead... This station doesn't have a proper doctor -- and given our track record, I'd say that's just about the only person this station needs. We don't have a communications array, except for the emergency unit up on the bridge! We are... woefully unprepared for this shit, and nothing that's down here wants us to be here, so you'll excuse me when I say I don't give a flying fuck about a piece of paper a million miles away, gathering dust in Kiran's filing cabinet.

LOIRE

I appreciate the candid response. What do you want me to do about it?

SPINNER

Call Kiran! Tell me there's an escape pod on board! Give me an end date, or let me know the next time I get to see the sun! I just-

(sighs heavily, suddenly exhausted. softly) I've had nightmares that were sweeter than this... I-... Look. If I'm here... then I'm here. I can be a big boy about it. And I'll be with you on the front lines, I'm your man through and through, but... I haven't seen the sunlight in a month of Sundays, Captain... and somebody died yesterday... I want to know if I'm going home.

Loire looks at him, then around the table at the rest of his crew. He turns back to Spinner.

LOIRE

If it's the last thing I do. I swear. I'll see you home.

SPINNER

Yeah?

LOIRE

Yeah. I can't promise that nothing will happen to you. But I promise I will be here, fighting through it at your side. That's my job. To get you through this long, long night, so you can see the sun.

I'm not... letting *this* happen. Ever again. Under any circumstances. I will get you home.

But if you don't believe me-

SPINNER

Cap-

LOIRE

And it's fine if you don't. If you don't believe me, if you'd rather cut your losses sooner rather than later... there's a supply shipment scheduled to come in in two days. You want to head home, I'll talk to the crew about hitching you a ride back topside.

ASHERAH

Loire!

LOIRE

But if you stay... you're in this for the long haul. I won't begrudge you either way -- and I mean that. Everyone's got to make their own decision on this.

He stands up.

LOIRE

But I've still got too many questions left unanswered... so for anybody that wants to stay, I'll be here.

SPINNER

(quietly) 'preciate that, Cap.

LOIRE

And Spinner?



SPINNER

Yeah, Cap?

LOIRE

Candid is one thing. Always welcome. You cuss at me like that again, I'm gonna let Asherah drop you out an airlock.

SPINNER

Understood, captain.

LOIRE

Good. Pass me that glass.

MATTI

Where are you going?

LOIRE

We all get a choice in this... Somebody's gotta tell Marella. Be back in a bit.

He leaves. Asherah follows him, and as soon as the door is closed...

CUT TO:

SCENE FOUR

EXT. Corridor, The Tiamat - CONTINUOUS

ASHERAH

That was a bad idea.

LOIRE

Would you rather them discuss it behind our backs, and wake up with a knife in your chest one morning?

ASHERAH

I've had worse.

LOIRE

(snorts) I haven't. And I'd like to keep it that way. Look, it's better they know they can talk to me. If they're afraid and they don't think they can turn to me to deal with it, then what kind of captain am I supposed to be?

ASHERAH

What kind of captain has a station and doesn't have a crew?

Loire stops to look at her.

LOIRE

Are you going?

ASHERAH

No, of course not. I've stuck with you through worse decisions than this.

LOIRE

(relieved, but playing it off) Gee, thanks.

ASHERAH

I'm just saying, you're an idiot.

LOIRE

Thank you, lieutenant.

ASHERAH

So? What happens if they leave? You think Kiran will issue you a new crew.

LOIRE

About... 45% sure.

ASHERAH

Oh brilliant.

LOIRE

It's almost 50%.

ASHERAH

Which is still a failing grade.

LOIRE

He's as anxious as I am to find out what's down here. Besides... if the crew doesn't want to be here, it's going to cause us more problems down the line. I can't trust somebody who's only going to be thinking of themselves or the fastest route to the exit.

ASHERAH

(sighs) I see your point.

LOIRE

I knew you would. Besides... if they're going to mutiny, better to do it when we're all on friendly terms. (grins) Means they're less likely to shoot me.

ASHERAH

(rolling her eyes) Idiot.

LOIRE

Only on my best days.

He kisses her quickly. Asherah pulls away.

ASHERAH

Clarion! Not in the hall.

LOIRE

Nobody's here! ... Look, this will most likely all blow over. And if it doesn't, we're better off. We can't expect to get through this on our own. I don't want Kiran's ideal crew around me, I need mine. In two days time, we'll find out who that is. Or, we'll have a couple weeks where we can do nothing but enjoy the 20,000 Leagues Club. Either way, I'd say it's a win.

ASHERAH

I just hope you know what you're doing.

She walks away.

LOIRE

(under his breath) Yeah... Me too.

He knocks on the door to the Marella's lab.

MARELLA

(muffled) Come in!

Loire pushes open the door, and we find ourselves...

INT. Marella's Laboratory, The Tiamat - CONTINUOUS

The sounds of the lab fill the air. Marella busies herself scratching notes into the margins of *The Creatures Beneath*.

LOIRE

Marella...

MARELLA

(looking up) Captain Loire. Is everything alright?

LOIRE

Everything's fine. We missed you upstairs. Here... brought you this.

He sets down the glass.

MARELLA

Oh... That. Uh... thank you. Yes, I-... I just... I was just in the middle of working on- I just have a lot to do.

LOIRE

I'm sure.

MARELLA

Did you need something?

LOIRE

No, not this time. I-... I wanted to apologize for... last night. This morning. I shouldn't have asked you-

MARELLA

(looking away) It needed to be done.

LOIRE

I'm sorry. ... I really mean that.

MARELLA

... Thank you.

LOIRE

There's... one other thing.

MARELLA

... What is it?

LOIRE

Some of the other crew members have expressed some... concerns about the viability of this mission. There's been some discussion about going home.

MARELLA

What?

LOIRE

There's a supply shipment-

MARELLA

No!

LOIRE

(startled) I-... Sorry?

MARELLA

No. We can't leave.

LOIRE

Marella, you don't have-

MARELLA

We're not finished! We're no closer solving this thing than when we first arrived! You can't just... just pack up and go home! I can't just drop this! I'm not just going to abandon him- I- THIS. I won't just leave it when I am THIS CLOSE to finally having some answers-

LOIRE

Whoah! Marella, slow down! No one is forcing you to go! No one is abandoning anything... I'm staying! Asherah is staying! It's just if wanted the option to leave-

MARELLA

Well I don't!

LOIRE

Okay! Okay... I just wanted to make sure you knew, that's all.

beat.

MARELLA

... I-... I'm sorry, captain.

LOIRE

Hey, it's okay. (smiles weakly) It's not the first time I've gotten yelled at today. Probably won't be the last

time either...

MARELLA

I just... there's too much left here to-... I need to find the answers.

LOIRE

I know... (beat) Feeling close?

Marella hesitates, then looks away.

MARELLA

... I lost the scale.

LOIRE

What?

MARELLA

I-... I gave it to Destan. He-... He came into the lab yesterday, before he-... He wanted to help. He saw the scale, and he said he recognized the pattern from some book... He told me he'd tell me about it later, and... and...

LOIRE

Jesus...

MARELLA

I'm sorry. I didn't mean for him to find out, he just walked in-

LOIRE

No, Marella it's... it's okay. It's fine. They're all gonna find out eventually, it's... it's not a big deal. You didn't do anything wrong.

MARELLA

I think he took it to his room when he went to search...

LOIRE

Don't worry about it. I'm sure we'll find plenty more where that came from.

MARELLA

Right... maybe...

LOIRE

I'll check with Asherah... See if she took any pictures of it that might help...

Loire starts for the door, then pauses.

LOIRE

He solved it, then?

MARELLA

I think so.

LOIRE

(shakes his head) Well... At least there IS an answer, yeah? That's something to look forward to. (he looks at her) ... You gonna be okay?

MARELLA

I'm fine... thank you, captain. I um... I think I'll... take a look around-... around Destan's quarters.

LOIRE

You sure?

MARELLA

Why wouldn't I be?

Loire hesitates, then thinks better of it.

LOIRE

... Okay. Just... if you need anything-  
... I'm around, okay?

MARELLA

Yes. ... Thank you, sir.

LOIRE

See you at dinner.

He steps into the hall, and closes the door behind him. Marella sits in momentary silence. The clock ticks...

MARELLA (NARRATING)

Have you ever felt like the furniture was staring at you? There's one chair... it sits at my side, silent and waiting. Inviting... And I'm trying to avoid its eye. The walls

yawn blankly, and the eurypterid tank bubbles and murmurs to itself, but all the rest is silence.

I'm trying not to think about... how badly that knock on the door scared me. No. It didn't... scare me. But I hate the way that my heart leapt into my throat. I wasn't really listening for it. Wasn't *really* waiting. Still, it came and it went, and the chair is still... empty.

The night keeps rolling on, days and days of night, and sleep is slipping through my fingertips. There are books, and secrets, things I'm too stupid, too useless to understand, and an empty... cold... shadowed... *empty* chair...

I don't have the stomach to face it.

We hear the scraping of a chair against the floor as Marella abruptly stands, and heads for the door.

MARELLA (NARRATING)

So I'll keep moving.

The door creaks open...

MARELLA (NARRATING)

I have to.

And slams shut.

FADE TO:

SCENE FIVE

INT. Destan's Quarters, The Tiamat - DAY

Marella crouches amongst a massive stack of books, searching. They have been strewn across the desk, the bed, all available shelves -- she flips through them in a near frenzy, before setting them aside.

MARELLA

(murmuring to herself) Where is it? Where IS it? God... damnit. Destan, don't do this to me...



Behind her, the door opens. Matti looks around the room, surprised.

MATTI

Marella?

Marella gasps and whips around. It seems to take her a moment to recognize the engineer, but when she does, she lets out a half sigh of relief.

MARELLA

Matti... I thought you were-... What do you want?

MATTI

I was looking for you... I haven't seen you since-... since yesterday... You weren't in your lab... I got worried.

MARELLA

Worried.

MATTI

Well... Yeah. (pauses, then) You heard... about the supply shipment tomorrow?

MARELLA

I did.

MATTI

You're staying, then?

MARELLA

I am.

MATTI

Oh... (beat) Spinner's leaving. Or at least, he says he's leaving. Or he says he's thinking about it.

MARELLA

Think you'll follow him?

MATTI

I don't know... The things we've seen... sometimes it scares me half to death, but it's kind of beautiful, y'know? I just don't know if I can stand the silence...

MARELLA

I know the feeling.

MATTI

I thought you might... What are you doing in here?

MARELLA

I... Nothing, I just-...

MATTI

(confused) Really? Cause it looks like you're going through Destan's things...

MARELLA

It's not- I'm looking for-... something. I gave Destan something to look at. A piece of research he was helping me with. He said he had a book, that he'd solved it, he was going to get it, and...

She looks around the room, and helplessly starts to laugh.

MARELLA

A book! ... I came in here, and I almost fainted. He said he'd brought "a few books" down here with him. A few books! This... This is a library! There must be... two hundred books on the shelves alone. Then there's the desk! The nightstand! His trunk! I'm afraid to look in the closet! He must have had them shipped down here when they were building the place. I don't know if the man owned more than a single pair of shoes! Damned if I know where he slept! There's no room for anything but books, and books, and books! I've been down here since practically the fucking funeral, and I can't-... I can't do it! I haven't even scratched the surface! I don't know where I'm supposed to start. I NEED to find it, but I don't... I-I... I can't-

MATTI

Hey! Hey... It's okay. Take it easy...

MARELLA

I'm sorry... I'm sorry... (beat,  
realizing) I haven't slept in days.

MATTI

It's okay... Do you know what kind of  
a book it was?

MARELLA

No. Not a clue. He kept... going on  
about "Nature loves a pattern..." He  
said he wanted it to be a surprise...

MATTI

Oh... (hesitates) He... he had a book  
with him. In the communications room.  
I heard him talking to Loire about it  
over the comms, when he came back from  
his break... it must've been right  
after he saw you. He said he'd just  
been in his room.

MARELLA

He had it with him?

MATTI

Yes...

MARELLA

(sagging) It's gone then...

MATTI

Marella, I'm so-

MARELLA

No. No it's... it's fine. I'm- (she  
takes a deep, steadying breath) Well.  
That's that, then. There's no way to  
get it... (thinking) unless...

MATTI

Are you going to be okay?

MARELLA

(distracted) Yes... Fine... (looks  
around) Well. Thank you, Matti, for  
letting me know. I should... start  
cleaning this up.

MATTI

Do you want some help-

MARELLA

No, no... I made the mess myself, I should be able to put it all back together again.

MATTI

Well... okay... If you change your mind... or you get sick of the silence...

MARELLA

Thank you.

MATTI

Sure...

Matti leaves, shutting the door behind her.

MARELLA

(quietly, to herself) That's that then...

FADE TO:

SCENE SIX

EXT. Coral Reef, Open Ocean - NIGHT

We hear the cycling of an airlock, followed by a soft splash, and Marella's rhythmic, filtered breathing as she swims.

MARELLA (NARRATING)

For the first time in days, I finally feel alone. Not the hollow, pressing ache behind my chest, but the soft and airy nothingness that feels as if I've slipped out of myself for a moment, and left the insistent, desperate drumming of my heart behind. I hadn't realized how much my heartbeat hurt... the throbbing of it in my temples, thrumming through the rivers of my veins... The open ocean is a balm, frigid and dark -- welcoming, and cool, and quiet, where no one looks at me.

The communications room looks like something out of a bad dream. The bodies of dead snakes sway listlessly in the vague eddies of the current,

and glass glitters in the half light of my flashlight like so many scattered jewels. I thought there would have been more blood, but the sea has swept away all stains. Is it wrong that I should feel so... disappointed? Floating here now, in this place where I should be standing, where I should feel something other than this-... disappointment.

I'm listening for something again. The knock. And no, DAMNIT, there's the ache again. What am I doing? Why did I think coming here, I would find anything but-

The book.

It skids along the floor, entwined by two dead snakes. Green cover. I have it in my hands. Something blue flashing between the pages-

The water logged bookmark tears, and drifts away into the darkness. Ruined pages stare up at me. Blurs of almost black, and muddied white.

It isn't here.

Of course it isn't.

So why do I still trace the binding with my thumb? The book is cold. Lifeless. Gold lettering on its broken spine spins out *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*... I try not to scream, just as hard as I try not to let my mind race. Try not to seek a pattern. A chess board? No, no I would have seen that... WHAT then?

God DAMNIT Destan, what were you trying to tell me?! Or were you trying to tell me anything at all? Is that it? Was this all some silly game of yours? Just another bad joke? Or am I really THIS stupid? Are you staring me in the face, hand

outstretched, with that shy little smile, urging me on, coaxing me forward all over again, when you know damn well that I can't do it! That I'm not smart enough! I'm not good enough! That I'm looking in all the wrong places, AGAIN, and you know it! Why am I still looking? How in the hell could you EVER be standing in front of me, waiting on me to find you, when you're gone!

You're not here.

You're not coming.

I keep... waiting for a knock on the door... For you to come in and sit down... And you won't.

You're gone.

So why did I think I would find you here?

Knock. Knock. Knock.

Marella instinctively gasps and whips around.

A moment's silence.

MARELLA (NARRATING)

The shark is long, and black. It's eyes, like liquid obsidian, study me through the darkness as its tail beats against the empty window frame.

Knock knock... Knock knock...

MARELLA

(breathless) Come in...

The shark moves into the communications room, and begins to circle Marella, who watches it, her breath coming in small, shaky gasps.

MARELLA (NARRATING)

I know he's not here for me... You smelled the snakes, rotting in the current. Blood on the breeze... But he seems to show no interest in them

now... He just... stares... and moves closer...

He circles, and I twist to watch him. For a moment, we are dancing. Spinning, around and around in the dark.

When I touch his flank, the shark does not shy away. I run my hand along his dark, rubbery skin, and I feel his muscles flex... feel his pure, surging vitality, the life that exists just below his surface... boundless, and primal, and ancient... an almost familiar glitter in the bright black jewel of his eye...

MARELLA

... Destan?

MARELLA (NARRATING)

The shark flicks his tail, and says nothing, but I feel it press the side of its face into my hand... Its mouth curls open, a shy and secret almost smile.

Just for a moment.

Then it cuts through the water... and I am alone.

MARELLA

Wait! WAIT! No- Don't-... Please don't-

We hear the buzz of the comms system, and a voice filters through.

ASHERAH

Marella? Marella is that you?! Marella, where are you?! Are you alright? Marella can you hear me!

MARELLA (NARRATING)

He's gone. And I know... it's only a shark... But for a moment, it could have been you.

FADE TO:

## SCENE SEVEN

INT. Air Lock, The Tiamat - DAY

We hear the cycling of the airlock. A pair of strong hands reaches down to pull Marella out of the water, and she finds herself face to face with Lieutenant Asherah.

ASHERAH

Have you lost your goddamn mind?

MARELLA

(shivering, still shaken) I-... I-I'm-

There is a crackle of static as the intercom bursts into life.

LOIRE

(via intercom) Talise, tell me you have some good news?

Asherah presses the button for the intercom, her eyes still fixed on Marella.

ASHERAH

I've got her, Loire. It's alright. She's inside.

LOIRE

(via intercom) Is she hurt?

MARELLA

(very quietly) N-no... I-... I'm-

ASHERAH

She's alright. Just-... give us a minute.

She clicks off the comms as Marella pulls off her helmet and throws it in a corner.

beat.

MARELLA

I'm not hurt.

ASHERAH

Good. ... We've been looking for you for an hour. You turned your comms off.



MARELLA

So how did you-

Asherah shifts some equipment and sits down.

ASHERAH

Matti finally decided to check the gear locker, and saw your diving suit was missing. Lucky for all of us, there's an emergency line we can open remotely from the bridge. I heard you... You... sounded like you were in some distress. (beat) You want to tell me what happened?

Marella stares at the floor. She moves to shut the door to the airlock, then reluctantly sits beside Asherah.

beat.

MARELLA

He wasn't there.

ASHERAH

Who?

MARELLA

Destan. I-... I went out to the comms room, and-... I don't know... what I was expecting to find. I know he's-... But I've been... I don't know. I guess I just didn't realize I'd been looking for him. That I was waiting-... Listening for him. He was supposed to tell me something. He was going to come back. He had this book. He was going to explain-.... He was supposed to have... all these answers. And I told him later. And now it's... very late. It's past late. It's... later. And I'm... listening, and he wasn't there. What am I supposed to do with all the questions I never asked? I thought if I had the book-... but it's... empty. Like his chair. Like everything.

It was stupid to expect-... I told him later! He reached for me... I don't have a right to hear his

voice.

ASHERAH

Marella-

MARELLA

No, I don't. I don't have a right to-  
He wasn't my friend.

(beat) We weren't even proper friends. I don't have the right to call him my friend. I didn't know... anything about him. Except that he never stopped talking... and he really liked dinosaurs. And if I stayed in my room long enough... there'd be a knock on my door, and he'd be standing there, smiling and... spewing facts, reading something... asking how I was. But that-... It's not enough. It wasn't- He'd still be here if we were friends! If I'd been better-... He would have listened to me if we were really friends! I would have known what to do, what to say. If I'd been good enough- He should have listened to me! He'd still be here!

And it just... At the funeral- It just... threw me. Because he was so kind, and smart, and sweet, and... tried too hard. And I was so sure everybody loved him, because how could they not? And knowing that the only person he had to talk to around here was me, when I wasn't even-... He deserved better. He deserved... someone who knew him. A real friend. And I didn't do him justice... and I can never take that back. I didn't take the time to know him, or even notice he was there. I can't-... go back... and tell him. And if I didn't tell him, then it doesn't count! It doesn't matter! I didn't tell him, which means that I lied! To everyone. To him... And... he's gone... and... it's...  
He wasn't my friend. But I thought I was his. But I wasn't. I'm not. Or he

might still-... And that's... it's not fair. It's not right that I never noticed how lonely he must have been.

ASHERAH

... it's okay to be angry with him, you know. To feel abandoned.

MARELLA

No it isn't. It's not fair.

ASHERAH

I know.

MARELLA

It's not fair. I don't get to miss him. I don't have the right to miss him... (breaking) So why do I miss him?

ASHERAH

(sadly) Because he was supposed to stay. Because he mattered to you, and he's gone. Because he was your friend.

MARELLA

I'm-... I wasn't-... I'm not-

Marella starts to cry. Asherah hesitates, then moves to wrap her arm around Marella's shoulders.

ASHERAH

(gently) I know... It's not fair...

MARELLA

(sobbing) I'm not okay... I'm not okay...

Marella leans into Asherah's grip, and for a moment, allows herself to be held.

FADE TO:

SCENE EIGHT

INT. Observation Deck, The Tiamat - DAY

The crew sits huddled together, drinking and watching the waves.

MATTI

He was really reading Alice in Wonderland?

MARELLA

Seems so. He had about a thousand books like this... little adventures through the weird and wild...

LOIRE

No wonder he and Kiran got along.

SPINNER

You pick up any of those snakes?

MARELLA

A few... I thought they might make decent specimens to add to the collection.

SPINNER

Mind if I take a look?

MARELLA

Of course, be my guest.

ASHERAH

What do you want to do with a bunch of dead snakes.

SPINNER

They have FEET, LT, when was the last time you saw-... never mind.

MATTI

Well count me out. I'm sick of things playing dead, and jumping up and grabbing you soon as your back's turned.

SPINNER

(grins) See, you say that, and yet here you are. Laying on the floor, and still not packed yet. Shipment's going to be coming in any minute now...

MATTI

Well I would've gotten it done yesterday! But there was too much going on, what with the search and everything... Besides... there's... a

couple things that need sorting out.

MARELLA

You mean you haven't made up your mind.

SPINNER

I'm tellin' you kiddo, I WILL leave without you.

MATTI

Oh shut up! I just don't understand all the rush! I've still got time.

A chiming tone echoes through the room. The crew falls silent.

ASHERAH

... proximity alert.

SPINNER

Guess it's time then.

MATTI

Guess so...

ASHERAH

Captain, we'd better go supervise the docking.

LOIRE

(sighs) And I should probably start figuring out what to say to the pilot...

SPINNER

... right. (he pushes himself up)  
Well... I suppose... this has gotta be goodbye then.

LOIRE

Sure we can't convince you to stick around?

SPINNER

You know I think you probably could... Like I said, Cap, it's nothing to do with you. You're a good man to work with. I just... got this feelin' I can't shake. Like if I don't get out now...

LOIRE  
I understand.

SPINNER  
No hard feelings?

LOIRE  
None. Fact I just might give you a call once we're topside again. Asherah and I can always find a use for a man with a good head on his shoulders.

ASHERAH  
Not to mention a good gun arm.

SPINNER  
Aww, you sayin' you're gonna miss me, LT?

ASHERAH  
(amused) Not in the slightest.

SPINNER  
(grins) Yeah, you will.

ASHERAH  
I don't know what you're talking about. You make too much trouble. ...Take care of yourself, Spinner.

SPINNER  
Don't I always?

Loire and Asherah leave the room. Marella stands and holds out her hand to Spinner.

MARELLA  
Bye, Spinner.

SPINNER  
Bye, Rey.

MARELLA  
Spinner? I-... I'm sorry. About... how we met. Everything. I-

SPINNER  
Nah, we both know I deserved it. Anyways, I should be thanking you. Don't think I'd've made it this far if you hadn't stepped in. So... thanks.

You stay sharp, alright? Keep a good eye on Matti for me.

MATTI

Spinner, I-

SPINNER

(smiles) I know you're not coming. ...You know I wish you would. But somebody's got to take pictures to send to your folks... And hey... I could always use somebody good lookin' to write to. If... you're ever interested in writing.

MATTI

I am- I mean... I will. ... Do you need help carrying your stuff?

SPINNER

Not really. I haven't got much. But... walk me to the airlock? I could use the company.

MATTI

Of course.

SPINNER

Rey? You comin'?

MARELLA

Me? Oh- I thought-

SPINNER

I know we had a rocky start, but I'd like to have all my friends around me at the end.

MARELLA

(smiles) I guess I'd better come along then.

FADE TO:

SCENE NINE

INT. Air Lock, The Tiamat - DAY

We hear the cycling of the airlock. The crew waits anxiously.

ASHERAH

Docking clamps secure. We are engaged.  
Airlock cycling.

LOIRE

Okay. Everybody take up your unloading  
positions.

MATTI

Think Kiran will have found us a new  
doctor?

LOIRE

He said something about procuring us a  
replacement, but there's no way he'll  
have managed to pull somebody that  
quickly.

MARELLA

Not without a short-list of  
candidates.

MATTI

Think they'll be nice?

ASHERAH

We'll find out soon enough.

There is a beep of confirmation and the airlock stops  
cycling.

ASHERAH

We have external pressure.

MATTI

(glancing at Spinner) Last chance to  
change your mind...

SPINNER

Funny, I was about to say the same to  
you.

ASHERAH

Clear the entryway. Doors opening in  
five... four... three... two...

The door slides open, and there is a hiss of compressed air.  
Everyone takes an involuntary step back.

MATTI

Ah!



SPINNER  
Jesus that's FREEZING!

MARELLA  
(staring) Oh my god...

ASHERAH  
What the hell is that?

The cold air clears, and we hear the low buzzing of a fan.

MARELLA  
It's an Icer...

LOIRE  
A what?

MARELLA  
An Icer. A compact storage unit...  
sort of like a mobile freezer with a  
motor attached. Usually, we use them  
to ship big specimens remotely, or  
fragile chemicals and solutions...

MATTI  
But... it's so small. You could hardly  
sit up straight in that thing!

SPINNER  
Where the hell is the crew?

MARELLA  
Spinner-

There is a whirring and clacking sound from inside the  
Freezer. Automatically, Loire and Asherah both reach for  
their weapons.

LOIRE  
Everyone BACK! Now! Talise-

ASHERAH  
I've got it...

The whirring and clattering continues as a large metal box  
trundles its way out of the Freezer. There is another hiss of  
compressed air, and the box clatters to a halt. Several small  
compartments hiss open, and metal appendages slide out and  
click into place -- the box has transformed into a squat,  
square robot.

DOC

Hello.

Everyone stares at the robot.

MATTI

Uh...

ASHERAH

It's... a robot...

DOC

Hello.

SPINNER

Where's the crew?

ASHERAH

Is this a joke?

MATTI

Funny sense of humor...

LOIRE

Why the hell would he send us a robot?

MARELLA

I suppose we'll have to ask it. ...  
Hello.

DOC

Hello! I am unit 41711.

MARELLA

Nice to meet you 41711... I'm...  
Marella. Welcome to the Tiamat.

ASHERAH

What the hell do you want?

DOC

I am your replacement Physical Health  
Droid -- or P.H.D. for short. You can  
call me "Doc!"

LOIRE

(realizing) Oh... my god...

DOC

I am here to assist with all physical  
and mental ailments that may beset

your crew!

LOIRE  
Kiran sent you?

DOC  
I was manufactured at InTerraGer Bio-Industries! I am here to assist with all physical and mental ailments that may beset your crew!

LOIRE  
(furious) I don't BELIEVE this shit!

MATTI  
He sent us a robo-doctor?

ASHERAH  
It... would appear so.

SPINNER  
The fuck kind of a sick prank is this supposed to be?! Sending a tin can to take a man's place?!

DOC  
Keyword Alert! Are you -- sick?

SPINNER  
Where the hell is the pilot? I want to talk to somebody on this goddamn crew-

MARELLA  
(alarmed) Spinner, wait! Don't-

As Spinner starts forward, he grabs the edge of the Icer. There is a hiss, like flesh burning, and Spinner screams and yanks back his hand.

SPINNER  
AH!

MATTI  
Spinner!

MARELLA  
Don't touch it! Don't touch the Icer, just stay back.

DOC  
Warning! Elevated heart-rate detected!

DOC trundles over to Spinner. A compartment slides open and a small appendage shoots out. We hear the hiss of something being sprayed over Spinner's hand.

SPINNER

My hand! Get off of me- What are you doing! You stupid piece of scrap-

DOC

Warning! Second degree frostbite detected! Applying solution 36901. Please hold still. Please hold still. Please hold still.

SPINNER

GET OFF!

He kicks at the droid.

DOC

Impact detected! Please, do not strike me! I am here to assist! Please, do not strike me! I am here to assist!

SPINNER

I'll "assist" you, you little- Let go of my hand!

DOC

Solution 36901 applied. Please wash off with cool water in 7 to 10 minutes.

SPINNER

Son of a bitch!

DOC

Would you like a lollipop?

SPINNER

GET AWAY!

MATTI

Spinner, are you okay?!

SPINNER

No!! What the hell did it do to me?!

ASHERAH

It sounds like DOC just saved your fingers...

MATTI  
(sniffs curiously) Smells like  
marshmallows...

SPINNER  
Yeah, well it looks like blue flubber,  
(glaring at DOC) and I didn't ask for  
your help!

DOC  
Keyword Alert! Do you need - help?

SPINNER  
I hate you.

LOIRE  
What the hell just happened?

MARELLA  
(grimly) The Icer. Those units are  
highly pressurized, and kept at about  
-70 degrees. That's near instant  
frostbite if your flesh comes into  
contact with it.

SPINNER  
Now you tell me.

MATTI  
But I don't understand, how could the  
crew-

MARELLA  
You couldn't.

SPINNER  
What?

MARELLA  
(hesitantly) Icers... Icers are...  
unmanned drones. Because of the nature  
of the containment units... a human  
being couldn't survive in one for more  
than a few minutes...

SPINNER  
... What?

MARELLA  
(apologetically) There isn't a crew,  
Spinner... just the supplies...

SPINNER

But... no...

MARELLA

I'm so sorry.

MATTI

Maybe... M-maybe the next shipment-

LOIRE

(darkly) There is no "next shipment."

ASHERAH

Clarion-

LOIRE

(quiet fury) He set us up.

SPINNER

What do you mean there's no next shipment?!

LOIRE

(sharply) I mean this is how it's going to be from here on out. This? This is Kiran's way of sending us a message. No more crews. No ships back. No contact topside, and no living replacements if we screw up. As of this moment, we don't have to worry about having a choice anymore. It's the end of the fucking line.

SPINNER

(realizing, softly) ... son of a bitch...

MARELLA

You're saying... we're stuck down here?

LOIRE

Until the job is done.

Cavalry's not coming, kids. We're officially on our own.

FADE OUT.

END.