

Entry Nine - Peter

by

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No Such Thing Productions

PROLOGUE

INT. The Caves, NC1071-Delta - NIGHT

Static.

PETER

Mayday! Mayday! Mayday! Janus to
Aphelion- we have a- shit. Axel?!
Axel, it's Peter. Pick up, GOD DAMN
YOU! Please. Someone. Anyone!

Static.

It just- came out of nowhere. We had
no warning, no-

Static.

-It took her. Axe, it just came out of
nowhere, and dragged her into the
dark. I couldn't- Please... please...
Axe, I don't know what to do. Tell me
wha to do. I need help, Axe. Please.
There took-... Don't leave me alone
out here. Axe? Axe! SOMEBODY PLEASE!
ANSWER M-

Static.

FADE TO:

SCENE ONE

INT. The Caves, NC1071-Delta - NIGHT

Static.

PETER

This was a mistake. It was a mistake.
We never should have come.

Static.

We hear a huge crack of thunder, and the sounds of vicious
wind and rain. Peter sits at the mouth of the tunnels,
watching the storm.

PETER (CONT'D)

We never stood a chance. Not one
fucking chance. And you knew it. But
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PETER (CONT'D)

you wanted your survey. Your trip to the stars, come back with gold, and glory, and stories to tell, like we were kids playing pirates or conquistadors. We're scientists, not fucking heroes. You know where heroes belong? Stories. Not space. Safe in a book, tucked up on some shelf, in a little kid's room. You're old enough to know that by now, old enough to grow up. But no. You sent us out here, to conquer, and pillage, and die... Spin the wheel, play the game, take the risk, that's what it's all about, isn't it Axel? See how much you can take, before you lose? Well. Congratulations, Ax. We lost.

But my god, you should have seen it.

These natives are... something else. Fast. Intelligent. Vicious. Complex. And patient. Quiet. They've been with us, stalking us since the beginning. Playing the long game. And we didn't have a clue.

beat.

They took Chel.

beat.

That's your fault, by the way. My fault. There won't even be a body to bring home. Nothing even left to bury. I-... I couldn't-... But she was dead before that thing ever took her. Dead as soon as she held out her hand... There was nothing I could have done to stop it. There was nothing left to do. You could have stopped it. Couldn't you. Way back when. But you set us up. It's all about the money, right? You and this goddamn mission- If it hadn't been for this fucking storm- She'd still be here Axe! We could have gone home. And instead we got stuck. Like we were no more than birds in bad weather. Trapped on the surface, like

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PETER (CONT'D)

the wind and rain had fingers, twisted into our wings.

You were right, though. We really hit on something this time. I can't wait for you to see this place. Not in person -- you're not stupid enough to come all the way out here, risk your neck. You never were the type. But these things, Ax, these... Gorgons. Breathtaking. (he laughs, bitterly) Literally.

Specimens vary in size, but seem to have the same basic, uniform exterior. They're parasites. They enter the host's systems, and then encase themselves in a sort of cocoon... given what we've already encountered, my guess is that they break down and feed off of the host's internal organs through some sort of liquification. Hollow them out, break them open from the inside, and move on. It would explain the stains.

(almost a sob) Jesus fucking Christ, Chel...

... she's suffering. A process like that would be excruciating. It would take days. The prey might even be able to remain conscious for most of it. Keep them fresh. The process as a whole would also ensure the Gorgon's offspring have the time, security, and enough nutrients to make it to maturity. They must breed extremely rapidly. There's nothing left on this planet besides floral life. Not a bird, or an insect... And then we came, fresh meat to help them breed a whole new, stunning race. And instead of attacking en masse, tearing us to shreds, they played with us. Took their time. Brilliant. It could have been so easy, too. They're stronger than us, faster, deadly, intelligent, their defense mechanisms are better developed. A perfect organism. And those are just the juveniles. You'd

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

PETER (CONT'D)
 love 'em, Ax. You could find a way to
 package a nightmare. The possibilities
 are... endless.

There is a noise in the tunnel behind Peter. Something mid-sized and hollow hitting the ground.

PETER (CONT'D)
 Shit!

Peter scrambles to his feet, and we hear him scrabbling for his gun and powering it up as he whips around.

He freezes.

PETER (CONT'D)
 ... Chel?

CHEL
 Peter... Hi...

Static.

FADE TO

SCENE TWO

INT. Peter's Room, The Adamantine - DAWN

We hear rain against the hull of the starship, but it's significantly lighter, as the storm begins to abate.

Peter turns on his recording device.

PETER
 Storm's letting up. We should be able to get out of here in a couple of hours. Tomorrow, I think. Our original window of departure, if you can believe it. For better or for worse, things are running... essentially on schedule.

It-... She's sleeping now. I gave her something... She won't wake. Not for a while, anyway.

She says she was down there for hours. I don't-... My suit's link to the Adamantine must've gone down when The Gorgon took her. Disconnected. I...

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CONTINUED: (2)

PETER (CONT'D)

don't remember the walk back up from the Den. I have no idea how long we were down there, but I didn't think-
...

She should be dead.

It's not that I'm ungrateful- Unhappy. I- She's... here. It's-... amazing. It's too good to be true. But there's no way, she could have-

Her ankle's broken. Blunt force trauma. Lots of scrapes, and bruises -- she claims she managed to fight it off. Escape. The details are vague. She is suffering from a little bit of atmospheric poisoning. She wasn't wearing her helmet! She came crawling up out of the dark, with blood all over her face... She told me the visor cracked. That her atmo was leaking. She ran out of oxygen.

It isn't possible. It's not even probable. There are too many variables, and no matter how I look at it it-...

She should be dead.

She... should be dead.

I brought her back to the Adamantine. Cleaned her up. Got her bandaged. She's not... herself. The Chel I know would be crying. There would be hugging, and non-stop chattering, and a deluge of new facts and observations, and a complete and total disregard of the fact that she should have just died. But there's nothing. She's quiet. She just sits there, with this cold, vacant expression. She answers my questions, but it's like she's not there. I even tried to give her some of that stupid bubblegum ice-cream she snuck onboard, and she just sat there with it in her lap, watching it melt like she didn't know what to

(MORE)

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CONTINUED: (3)

PETER (CONT'D)

do with it. She's not acting like Chel. She's not acting like anything. There's nothing left, she's just... A shell.

Axel... It's not her.

I know it. I can feel it, sure as silver, all the way down to my bones. That... thing. Whatever it is... This isn't my imagination getting the better of me, this-...

Her behavior before was... erratic. Irrational. She was cracking. It was- But she was still Chel. Hearing things, seeing thing... I thought she was losing it down there, fracturing, and it was terrifying, but she was still herself...

I know Chel.

I know every inch of her. I know the sound of her voice, and texture of her hair. The temperature of her hand, whenever she tries to hold mine. The look in her eyes when she's grappling with something she can't quite solve. The way she toys with her hair, and chews on the end of her glasses when she's bored. How she thinks. How she moves. Her wants, and needs, and likes, and fears, and dreams. Every furrow of her brow, every smile, every suggestion of an expression. I KNOW this woman, I-... (but even now, he cuts himself off).

I could pick her out of any crowd. I would know her. Any time, anywhere in this world, or the next.

It's fucking with me. Playing the long game.

Whatever the hell it is that came crawling up out of that cave...

Chel is dead.

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CONTINUED: (4)

PETER (CONT'D)

Something is on this ship. And it
isn't her.

There is a sound from somewhere else on the ship -- something
large and metal crashing to the floor.

PETER (CONT'D)

What the hell was that?

We hear him stand and cross the room. The door whooshes open,
and Peter starts down the hall.

PETER (CONT'D)

(to himself) Somebody's up early. I
could've sworn I locked her in sick
bay. ...I DID lock her in sick bay.

We hear him key in a code, and a door whooshes open.

... Shit. Ax... She's gone. She was
here. I locked her in. She was
strapped to the gurney-... Chel? ...
shit. Where did she-

Something in a room very nearby crashes to the floor. Peter
stops abruptly.

PETER (CONT'D)

... Chel? Is that-... That's coming
from the lab...

We hear the electronic beep as Peter punches in a door entry
code, and then the metallic hiss as the door slides open.

PETER (CONT'D)

Chel, what the hell are you-

CUT TO:

INT. Chel's Lab, Starship Adamantine - CONTINUOUS

But the room is empty. And eerily silent. We can hear the
sound of a viscous liquid dripping slowly onto the floor.
Peter steps inside, and the door snaps shut behind him.

PETER (CONT'D)

... doing... Chel? ... Jesus, what a
mess. Chel! ... Chel come on.

Something clatters to the floor, and we hear a soft

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CONTINUED: (5)

slithering of something across the ground.

PETER (CONT'D)

... Oh. It's you. Isn't it. Out to play. No more pretending, hiding behind her eyes... Come on... (very soft, almost dangerous) I know you're in here.

What? You're hiding from me now? This isn't funny "Chel." I'm not here to play games with you.

He steps further into the room. The lights flicker and buzz. Peter's feet scatter some of the papers and supplies that once sat on Chel's desk but are now scattered across the floor, making small skittering sounds as he steps. We hear him quietly unholster his gun, and we hear it power up.

PETER (CONT'D)

(loathing under false geniality and concern) ... Tell you what, why don't you come out, and we can talk about what happened. You can tell me what you saw, tell me everything that happened... all the new... *friends* you've made. You don't have to hide from me... I know what you are. I know what you've done. So come on out. Come out where I can see you. Really see you, no need to hide behind her face. I know what you are now. COME ON. Come out and face me you fucking monster.

We hear a crunch as Peter steps on something hard. He looks down. Several large pieces of crystal are scattered over the floor. They crunch under his shoe, and he bends down to inspect them. He hasn't noticed, but the sounds of the viscous dripping have stopped.

The pieces of crystal tinkle like glass as Peter pushes them around with his fingers.

PETER (CONT'D)

What-... Is that... (he lifts one, and examines it under the light) ... crystal...

From behind him, we hear a burbling, slightly rasping cry. Peter freezes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

PETER (CONT'D)
...Chel?

The gorgon snarls. Peter turns, and the piece of crystal slips from his fingers.

PETER (CONT'D)
(breathless) Oh... Found you.

The gorgon lets out a terrible scream, and launches itself at him.

Peter screams.

Static.

FADE OUT.

END.