

Prologue - Chel

by

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No Such Thing Productions

INT. CEO's Office, Aphelion Industries - DAY

AXEL sits with his feet up on his desk, staring across at CHEL, who fidgets slightly on the edge of her seat.

AXEL
You're serious about this?

CHEL
Absolutely.

AXEL
A field mission.

CHEL
Yes.

AXEL
Doctor-

CHEL
Chel, please.

AXEL
Chel. I appreciate your enthusiasm-

CHEL
Thank you, sir!

AXEL
-but what you're asking is...
impossible.

CHEL
That's not a word I'm familiar
with, sir.

AXEL
No, I'll bet it isn't. Still, I'm
sorry to say, we just don't have
anything for you.

CHEL
Actually, sir, that's not strictly
true.

AXEL
Oh?

Chel pulls up a small electronic tablet, and shows it to Axel.

(CONTINUED)

CHEL

I did a little digging through the Aphelion database, and it turns out, there's a perfectly suitable site that's been completely overlooked. A small planetoid in Sector D, orbiting twin stars. It's got a thin atmosphere, and initial scans showed decent amounts of natural resources and some evidence of prior inhabitants. One of our scientists logged it a few cycles back, through some of our long range scanners, but no one's ever bothered with a follow up.

AXEL

(scrolling through the data) So this scientist's located a new planet.

CHEL

He didn't just find a planet, he found a site! See? There. Those are roads, buildings, walls towers, steeples... The images are clear as day. That's a city. A real, veritably undocumented class 6 civilization, and. it's just been sitting in the archives.

AXEL

... Is this your data pad?

CHEL

No, sir. It's my partner's. We share data pads all the time.

AXEL

Do you share passwords too? Because this file was encrypted. See, I can tell, because there's a tiny little picture of a lock up on the corner of the screen.

CHEL

I-

AXEL

And because I'm the one who gave Peter permission to lock the file. (beat) But he didn't tell you that, did he. ... You're a geologist, isn't that right?

(CONTINUED)

CHEL
Xenopaleontologist, sir.

AXEL
Right. Have you ever been on a
field expedition?

CHEL
No sir.

AXEL
Ever been to another planet?

CHEL
I was born on Saturn. And I spent a
couple semesters interning at a dig
on Deimos.

AXEL
Not enough rocks for you down here?

CHEL
Dead aliens, if you want to be
crass about it. And... No.

AXEL
Right. (he studies her, then
smiles) How does your lab partner
feel about all this?

CHEL
(caught off guard) Peter? I-...
Ah...

AXEL
... You didn't tell him you were
coming to see me?

CHEL
He gets... nervous.

AXEL
I would too, if my partner was
going behind my back and
volunteering me to be sent hurtling
into space. Not for the first time,
either, so I hear. ... Can I ask
you a personal question?

CHEL
Of course.

AXEL

What the hell are you doing here?
(beat) I took a look at your file.
You've been denied by your
supervisor for every expedition
you've applied to since you got
here.

CHEL

In my defense? Peter *is* my
supervisor. He just... doesn't want
to see me get hurt.

AXEL

And you because you disagree with
him, you thought it would be a good
idea to go over his head? (beat)
You know I could fire you for this.

CHEL

...Mr. Director-

AXEL

Axel. No... Call me Ax.

CHEL

Ax... I'm not here because I
disagree with Peter. My work is out
there. There's a whole universe of
discoveries waiting to be made, and
it's not going to happen to me,
sitting in my laboratory.

AXEL

Ah. So you want to be famous.

CHEL

I want to do my job. I want to be
good at it.

beat.

Axel pauses, considering her, then slides his feet off the
desk.

AXEL

Okay. Let's say, hypothetically,
that I did have something for you.
This planet... I'd need to know it
was worth my while. I'd need to
know YOU are worth my while.

(CONTINUED)

CHEL

I am.

AXEL

Prove it.

CHEL

What do you need me to do?

AXEL

Convince me.

We hear the sharp hiss of static, and the office scene disappears.

FADE TO:

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SCENE TWO

2

DATA PAD ONE - BLACK BOX RECORDING

The hiss of static continues. It clears just enough that we begin to hear Chel's voice coming through, but the message is faint, and dips in and out of the static. She is panicked, and in pain.

CHEL

... There's no way out, there's no way back up-...

...-trapped. I don't know, how long I've been here, (she lets out a noise somewhere between a sob and a scream) Oh god... Oh... go-...

...-It knows where I am. I can feel it. It's here. Hunting me. It's so close. I can feel it-...

...-I want to go home-...

The static swallows the sound of her voice.

FADE OUT.

END.