

Entry Six - Peter

by

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No Such Thing Productions

PROLOGUE

DATA PAD TWO - BLACKBOX RECORDING

Static. We hear the sound of crystal smashing against the ground, barely distinguishable from the static.

And then, much louder, and perfectly clear, we hear Chel scream.

PETER

Chel? Chel?!

There is a computer error noise.

DATA PAD COMPUTER

Error. Processing... Error. Incorrect
Timecode. File Corrupted. File
Corrupted. Processing...

Static hisses again.

FADE TO:

SCENE ONE

INT. The Gorgon's Den, NC1701-Delta - EVENING

Static. We fade in, catching Peter mid-recording.

PETER

Her body was laying on its side when I found her. She was... twisted. Broken beyond recognition. There was blood coagulating over the lacerations in her flesh, and I could see the bones of her ribs poking through. It looked like someone had put her through a blender, and then dumped her out carelessly in the dirt. I could see that... something had been at her. Pieces were... missing. Gnawed, and scratched, and torn away. I was... about four months away from turning thirteen. And that stupid dog... I don't... know why Axel felt the need to show it to me. It's not as though I was particularly interested. But for the longest time, I couldn't think of a worse way to die... smashed under the fender of a car, and then thrown

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PETER (CONT'D)

down a hillside to rot by the edge of some muddy creek... ripped apart like that and then just... abandoned. I grew up, of course. I've seen worse. Heard worse. She still sticks with me though. That stupid... poor, dumb dog. But there are worse ways to die. And I'm sure this must be one of them.

The sounds of the world around Peter begin to fade in. We hear the distant sound of water dripping, echoing around the large cave, and the nearer, soft sounds of Peter as he moves through one of the small alcoves.

I've never liked the idea of being sick. I say never liked. It's... It... terrifies me. Something so small as to be invisible, filling the air and crawling under your skin. A poison you didn't know you had seeping into your flesh, curdling and mutating your blood, infesting your lungs... And there's nothing you can do. If you're sick... if you're THAT sick... My grandfather got sick. When I was a kid, I wouldn't go near him. I remember my mother begging me to go up and kiss him, to sit with him and hold his hand, but I could hear his... breathing. His skin was ugly and pallid, too dry and too cold, and... I could feel him dying. It was in the air... eating him... sucking pieces away from the inside. Under his flesh. I knew it would get under mine too...

I can't imagine... Being here, when it happened. Trapped down here in the dark, while all around you the plague is raging. To have sacrificed so much, to leave your home, and the light, and your dead behind, and condemn yourself to a life in these caves... only to discover the sickness has been with you all along. That you've just found a colder place to die.

That's the working theory anyway. The indigenous population abandoned the city when the plague hit, and came

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PETER (CONT'D)

down here. The story seems somewhat supported by the etchings in the tunnels, but without the city ruins, there's no way to be sure. Who knows. This could have been an aberrant splinter group...

They were refugees, at any rate. A desperate, dying breed. And intelligent enough to know it, if their pictography is anything to go by. There isn't much left down here in the caves. Some indication of basic tools, a few more etchings. Any cloth or paper material seems to have long since rotted away. I haven't found anything that could be identified as weaponry. Which either means they've decayed into nothing, or these creatures didn't see any need to take things like that with them. Maybe they didn't have any... There were images back in the tunnels that looked, for all intents and purposes, like war. But maybe these people evolved past that. Wouldn't that be something? Intelligent, resourceful... and completely at peace. A world like that has to exist somewhere in the universe... It could have been here. Until they got sick.

What I have found is chaos. Ruin. There was a locked sort of box, and something that might have been a toy... But almost everything that was here is in pieces. Broken bits of petrified wood, and stone that could have been furniture, vases, bowls, and fragments of who knows what. And the crystals scattered all around. Which I could hypothesize away with the constant volcanic distress, or the bombardment by passing meteors. But even then, it's hard to reconcile such... widespread destruction *underneath* the earth. Doesn't add up.

He walks on to the next alcove.

It must have been beautiful once.

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Knowing Chel, I'm sure she'd say that it's beautiful now. I don't... know whether I could agree with that. The Den is... magnificent. I can see that. Awe inspiring. She's seeing ghosts. Memories. Stories. But I can't stop thinking... what it must have been like to be here. Sick. Alone in the dark, huddled deep under the ground, listening to your whole race die around you. I feel like I'm walking on someone's grave.

Peter crouches, and scratches at something at the base of the wall, clearing away the dirt.

And I think I've just found an epitaph. There's... a discoloration here. A stain. It's hard to see it against the walls because it's so dark.

He clicks on his suit's headlamp, and we hear it humming away quietly. He inhales sharply as he sees the stain clearly.

It's... It looks like-... blood...(no, let's not jump to conclusions) Uh, there is... some sort of fluid, long since dried, but the pattern... it's splattered over the wall in a... a fanning spray.

There's... something underneath it. Another hieroglyph... It isn't decorated, like the ones lining the walls outside. Not as deep either. The lines are shaky. Like they were scratched out in a hurry... There are... three of them. So far as I can tell. I'm... going to take some pictures of this.

We hear the click and flash of his suit's built in camera as he snaps several quick shots of the hieroglyphs.

Where the hell did Chel go? I know she's more paleo than anthropologist, but she'd get a real kick out of-

Peter's suit suddenly lets out a small warning siren.

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COMPUTER

Warning. Atmospheric pressure change.
Warning. Atmospheric pressure change.
Warning. Atmospheric-

PETER

Crap.

He switches off the alert, and turns on his comms.

Chel? Hey, Chel, are you picking that
up? (no response) Chel, we've got a
storm warning, do you copy? ... Chel?

He stands, and looks around. Chel is nowhere to be found.

... oookay... Where-

We hear the sound of smashing crystal, followed by Chel's
scream.

PETER (CONT'D)

Chel? Chel?!

CHEL

Shit! Shit! Holy-

PETER

Chel, can you hear me? Are you
alright? What happened? Where are you?
Chel?!

CHEL

I was... trying to wave to you...

Static.

PETER

Chel had-...

(deeply shaken) Shit.

I was just... so sure. I would climb
up that stupid pyramid. And she'd be
laying there, with a hole in her exo-
suit, just... gasping. Or... or
just... not.

Axel I swear to god, if she dies out
here it is your fucking fault.

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PETER (CONT'D)

...There's nothing I can do to protect her. I don't know how to keep her safe. This isn't a lab. there aren't... walls, or boundaries, or rules. I'm... not... protective. I'm not strong. I'm not fast. I'm not-... I'm not cut out for this.

He sighs and puts his head in his hands. After a beat, we hear the crunch of Chel's approaching footsteps.

CHEL

Peter? ... Hey... you okay?

PETER

... We're leaving. Now.

Static.

FADE TO:

SCENE TWO

INT. Caves, NCC1701-Delta - MOMENTS LATER

The static fades. We hear the wind whipping violently somewhere in the distance. Water dripping. Peter is walking quickly, his and Chel's footsteps echo slightly around the tunnel.

PETER

Oh I don't like this. I should have kept better track of the time...

The storm's picking up fast. I've gotten three more alerts since we were down in the Den. We're back tracking as quickly as we can, but I can already hear the wind up ahead. We shouldn't have stayed this long.

It's alright. It's alright. We're still between the two day-cycles. Remus is setting, but we'll have a three or four hours of twilight before Sirius rises. After that, it'll be true-dark, but we'll be at the Adamantine long before then.

If there even is an Adamantine. We're

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PETER (CONT'D)

still almost a mile under the earth,
and I can FEEL the thunder vibrating
through the walls... very faintly. But
still there. A storm like this... One
bad shake, or a little lightning, the
faintest shift in those winds and we
could be-

We hear a huge burst of thunder, and the recording fades to
static.

CHEL

(low, urgent) Peter... Stop.

They both stop. We hear the sounds of the caves and tunnels
echoing around them. Was that a crunching footstep?

PETER

... Chel? What's wrong?

CHEL

Are you-... Are you sure this is the
right way?

PETER

What? Yes. Positive.

CHEL

Have you seen that before?

PETER

What?

CHEL

That. That... statue. There. In the
tunnel, up ahead. In the middle of the
passageway. Was that there before?

Static.

PETER

I'm turning off the comms.
Temporarily. Just... switching from an
open channel to a one way connection.
If Chel needs me, I'll hear her. I
just... I'm not sure I want her to
hear me.

I have some... concerns. Chel's
injuries from the fall might be

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PETER (CONT'D)

more... extensive than I previously thought. She appears fine, what I can see of her through her suit... There's no sign that anything is fractured, no way to know if she's bleeding until I can give her a thorough check up back on the ship, but... her behavior is...

She's been hearing noises. She describes them as slitherings, sometimes a footstep. Things more in the corner of her vision, and she imagines faces in the dark. She's jumpy. Erratic. Muttering into her recorder and flinching at every shadow. I'm worried she might have hit her head when she was up exploring the pyramid, maybe cracked her visor... I don't know, but... She's scaring me.

Static.

FADE OUT.

END.