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Shattered Kaleidoscope

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He stood in her kitchen filling the doorway, glaring at her. Confusion and fear hidden behind those angry blue eyes. “Commander Chezgreen, I don’t understand what’s going on. You worked in that lab explain it to me.” Lieutenant-Commander Eric Garrison demanded.

She knew on some level he knew. Clearing her throat, she checked her watch and knew another flux was almost upon them. Visions of the chief in charge sprang to her mind. It was just yesterday when they were in their lab, he was yelling eureka! We did it! Eight hours later he returned to the lab, his face had turn pale and the gravity of what he had just done settled in. They worked for the government and followed orders to the teeth. At some point she knew she should have just quit, walked out, walked away from all of this. Even if she did, it wouldn’t have mattered they would have reached this point eventually, with or without her assistance. It was just a matter of time. Dr. Jason Judge wasn’t evil by no means. He just lost sight of the big picture. It wasn’t until he had come back and standing in front of her with tears in his eyes, “What have we done? It can’t be undone,” he pulled out a handgun and shot himself in front of her eyes. Moments later a flux occurred, and the air sizzled around him as he disappeared from existence. The sound reminded her of a memory from her youth. She had a friend that she went to the fireworks with and the air was damper than usual one night, the fireworks went off with a pop followed by a whistle then it sizzled in the air. The fireworks were dying out before they could go off as it was intended. The air felt heavy, her skin prickled as the sizzle slowly died out. Her best friend Max laughed and chanted sizzle, sizzle we don’t like when they fizzle.

Garrison grabbed her shoulders and shook her, nose to nose. “What the hell is going on?”

“They are Mandela fluxes,” she calmly told him.

“What does that even mean?” he growled.

“Our universe is colliding with other universes,” she pressed her lips together.

“What?” he let her go and began pacing her kitchen. “I don’t understand. I was at work yesterday, when I left my house, my wife was fine, and she was my wife. When I got home last night, we had a three-year-old that I never met and when I couldn’t remember our daughter my wife started yelling at me and packed up our daughter and left, she went to her sister’s house.”

“She’ll be safe there.”

“Will she? Because my wife is an only child.” He growled.

Kelly Chezgreen groaned and closed her eyes, leaning on the counter. “Nick,” she opened her eyes and looked at Lieutenant-Commander Nick Garrison. “Did you ever have a kaleidoscope when you were a kid?”

“What?” he paused and blinked, slamming his hand on the counter. He looked at her bewildered by the question. “What?”

“A kaleidoscope, I had one and it was a yellow plastic one, when you held it up to the light the colored beads inside would dance around and create these pretty patterns when you looked through and turned the end of it. Turning the end of it would change the pattern. All the beads would still be there just rearranged.”

“What does that have to do with this?”

“You are aware of the Mandela effect?”

He nodded. “Crazy people thinking that Mandela died in prison. Yeah, I heard of it.”

“Well, that’s what’s happening here. We were inside the lab when Dr. Judge threw the switch, and we are part of that universe that is consuming other universes. Much like the kaleidoscope, all the same pieces but different patterns, different universes.”

“How do you make it stop?”

“I don’t know.”

“You were Dr. Judge’s assistant; how do you not know?”

“I was his assistant, yes. I was just assigned to him a few weeks ago. He kept things from me.”

“Well let’s go ask him.”

“Did you go to the lab?”

“Yes.”

“Did you ask for him?”

“Yes.”

“And?”

“No one knew who he was.”

“In this universe he doesn’t exist. Or if he did, he doesn’t now.”

“What does that even mean?”

“It means we are on our own.”

“We have to stop this.”

She nodded in agreement. “Alright let’s go back to the lab.”

He motioned for her to lead the way.

It was the last place she wanted to go, especially after yesterday. Her alarm went off on her watch; she absently turned it off. They stood in the doorway as the room shimmered and the

air waved, like a little ripple in a body of water. It passed through the room and headed right for them. Nick's eyes went wide as he watched it come at them and pass through them. The memory from her childhood played in the back of her mind, sizzle, sizzle we don't like when they fizzle.

"What the hell was that?"

"A Mandela flux."

Looking at her and the door that was closed behind them. "Everyone can see that right?"

"I don't think so. No."

"What the hell is wrong with your face?" He jumped back alarmed.

"What do you mean?"

He covered his mouth and as his chest heaved, "You, you," he gasped. "You have three eyes! What the hell?"

She reached for her face and found a third eye, blinking hard. It was weird that things were different around them, her third eye offered her extra depth. "You too." She nodded at him.

"What the fuck?" he reached for his face. "This is not happening."

"Nick!" she yelled at him.

"What?" he snapped. Looking at her, he looked like he was about to burst into tears.

"Why us?"

"Because we were in this chamber yesterday when the first one occurred."

"This is bullshit."

Kelly grabbed his hand and dragged him with her to Dr. Judge's desk. Sitting down she realized it wasn't his desk. Clicking on the log in her username came up. She wasn't really privy to the information for this project. She had been assigned to Dr. Judge just a few weeks before this all happened. It was as a security measure, and if she was evaluating her presence here, she

would say it was a failure. She had done some research on the Mandela Flux, and her investigation was laughed at by her peers, but someone higher up thought it merited attention and that's how she met Dr. Judge. He had asked her a bunch of weird questions about her research, but it wasn't anything that could assist with this! At least not that she could think of.

Logging into the computer she started going through the files. Nick hovered over her shoulder then found a chair and sat down beside her, reading as she was reading.

“What does that mean?”

“What?”

“The alpha-earth and zeta-earth?”

“I think it's a version of base earth and earth-a. That's what Jason referred to them as.”

Her watch beeped.

“What's that?”

“Another flux is going to happen soon.”

“We have to make it stop.”

“I would if I could.”

“I just want my wife and my life back, without the extra eye. It's really starting to freak me out.”

She looked at him and didn't know how to tell him the chances of that happening were next to nil. “Me too.” The room began to shimmer as it got closer to them, Kelly had a bad feeling in the pit of her stomach.

The Mandela flux hit her first, she watched as her outstretched hand sizzled and slowly disappeared, she heard herself screaming but couldn't do anything to stop it from happening. A voice from a distant memory sang out, sizzle, sizzle we don't like when they fizzle. The pain was

excruciating as each atom in her body was rip apart. Then nothing, as the flux swept over her.

She was gone.