Excerpt from "The Illusion of Agency": Their First Night

by MarcyAugust

Summary

An excerpt from a larger story I am writing, about the events that immediately follow the ending of Life is Strange. The excerpt is from a scene the following night, as Max and Chloe attempt to sleep after the traumatic events of the previous day.

Max broke from her slumber, having been woken by Chloe’s distressed aura. She could see Chloe laying on her side, facing away from her, but she could feel the slight tremble echoing out across the bed they now shared. Chloe’s emotions were intense, as if the darkness that currently encapsulated the garage emanated out of her body, and Max couldn’t stop herself from experiencing the residual grief that was carried along with Chloe’s subtle yet frail breath. She felt her chest growing heavy, and yielded herself to the dejection that overcame her.

Chloe was silently sobbing. She made no sound as her body steadily shivered, her tears silently pouring down her cheek, and her hands gripping the crusted sheets. She didn’t want to feel emotions like this. She’d spent so many years fighting back against the grief of losing her father, the memory of her learning he wouldn’t be coming home with her mother and “bags of delicious grub” like a knife that still hadn’t been removed from the wound it had made. She never wanted to pull it out and face its reality, she just wanted to pretend it never existed. She hated her father for abandoning her, hated Max for leaving town, hated her mother for moving on, hated Rachel for dying, hated everyone who didn’t want to wallow in her misery. As long as the knife was kept in, she would never know how deeply it had cut, and it seemed as if the twister had knocked it loose. Stepping out of her truck to greet the reality of the shell of her childhood home seemed to dislodge it further, and now, lying aside Max, wondering if her mom was still okay… it felt as if it finally fell out, and along with it, all the emotions she had so meticulously bottled up. She had felt that her life had been dipped in shit ever since that day, but… maybe it wasn’t that, maybe that’s just what she needed to feel in order to cope with the vacuum suddenly created that day, choking out any
room to process the events that had occurred.

So here she was, open wound displayed for all to see, feeling more vulnerable than she had ever felt before, secluded away in her hovel, her closest friend at her side.

She felt a sudden warmth touch her arm, and jumped at its sting, turning to see Max staring at her, the faint light drifting into the room reflecting off of the tears that had started welling up. They peered into each other’s eyes, the deafening silence of their shared realization about their reality scaring away any other sound, this trepidatious feeling that, if they were to break this gaze, maybe something else would happen that would break the security of this moment. Max’s hand slowly reached back to Chloe’s arm, and she pulled herself in close, embracing Chloe. The cacophony was pierced by a whimper, neither of them sure of who had uttered it, though this didn’t matter, as their composure slowly devolved into a sea of misery, each of them drowning in their own sorrow, clinging to each other for safety.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!