

## 011 faint memories



### chapter eleven

#### faint memories

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Arden hated the next door neighbors. She hated the smell of cigarettes, she hated Frosted Flakes, and she hated the fact she kept tripping over her own feet when trying to play just dance. Just dance was overrated anyway.

The snobby dicks who lived next door and practically put cameras in her house due to how much they knew about her. Well, they didn't know much, but the fact that they knew at least one fact about her was more than enough. They were so utterly annoying.

You see, the Andersons were convinced that Arden was some kind of criminal who was hiding from the government. How they knew that, she didn't know. Yet, she was convinced that if they knocked on her door one more time that month she may as well commit murder, and arson, and steal a thing or two while she was at it.

She was also convinced she'd get away with it.

But that was besides the point, the point was that she hated them with her whole well being. However, the more they seemed to anger her, the hatred fueling her heart, the worse it made her feel.

She didn't want to be an angry person.

So to hopefully find some way to put out the flame, she found that going on bike rides and getting tattoos made it fade out just for a little bit. That is until one stupid thing made her flame ignite again.

Yet as she came to a stop in her driveway, she took off her helmet and got off her bike, scanning her house for any potential threat. Her heart began hammering in her chest, a feeling she hadn't felt for years, when her eyes found her front door opened. She immediately drew her katana out and held it in front of her.

The rain continued to fall onto her body and she regretted not bringing her jacket. She went along the side of her house, keeping eye on her surroundings and the ground below her. Her breath hitched in her throat and she fought the urge to change her body and run away.

Running away was for losers.

Walking through the back door, she caught sight of three figures rummaging around her living room.

She ran towards the closest one, pinning them against the wall with her blade against their throat. A trickle of blood ran down as she stared at their face and when she recognized who it was, she smirked.

"You shouldn't just sneak into someone's house now should ya?" Arden whispered as she leaned in closer to his face, her voice raspy from not speaking all that much.

"Nice to see ya too Arden," Ikaris mumbled, a smile on his face.

"Likewise."

"What did you do to your body?" A voice asked from beside the two making Arden's head snap to the sound.

Her eyes found Sprite and Sersi and she faintly smiled before frowning.

"They're tattoos Sprite," Arden sighed before unpining Ikaris from the wall. She gave him a tight lipped smile and a pat on the shoulder before putting space in between them.

"Why'd you get so many?" Sprite asked.

"I don't know," Arden shrugged. "I was bored."

An awkward silence filled the room as the three stared at Arden. The girl rocked back and forth on her feet before letting out a small groan.

"Can you guys stop looking at me like that?" she spoke before turning around and making her way to her kitchen. Before she could make it too far however, her body was trapped in a hug which made her squirm.

"I've missed you," Sersi told her making Ikaris laugh at the distressed girl.

"I missed you too," Arden replied, still struggling in Sersi's hold. "Can you let go of me now?"

"Did they hurt," Ikaris asked, never once looking away from her arms.

"Not really," she shrugged. "You get used to it."

"Well you've changed," Ikaris noted, walking around and peeking into the brick room filled with street art. He stared in awe at the greatness she created before turning around to look at her again. "You used to be uh- happier? More... talkative?"

"It's been like- I don't even know how many," she mumbled. "But it's been years and none of you bothered to answer me back so I'm sorry if I'm not the happiest."

"You reached out to us?" Sersi asked.

"Yeah, all of you," Arden replied. "I thought you guys like- died, and then I was like 'but there's no way we could die' and then I was like 'holy crap what if we candle' and then I started freaking out."

"But anyway, after Gilgamesh kicked me out because I was 'in danger' I didn't have many places to go," she continued. "So I tried because I genuinely forgot where everyone said they were going, but no response. So I went on my own."

"Gilgamesh kicked you out?" Ikaris questioned. "I thought you just left?"

Arden began unbuttoning her shirt, the three looking away immediately. She was left in just a bra before she turned around and showcased her scarred back, shoulders, and sides.

"He kicked me out because of this," Arden mumbled.

She heard Sersi gasp, the other two's were quieter, and looked back to see their reactions.

"What happened?" Sprite asked, her eyes looking at every scar carefully as if it was a piece of literature being analyzed by English students.

"Thena," Arden shrugged, putting on her button up again. "She got me really bad one time, almost died, so Gil had no choice but to make me leave. I don't blame him really, he wanted to protect me."

"You let her hurt you?" Ikaris asked, as if in disbelief she didn't fight back.

"In a way," she shrugged, turning the ring on her pinky around subconsciously. "I figured if I took the hits, Gil wouldn't have to. He was kind of the only one who kept Thena okay-ish, without him it'd be chaos. So I did what I thought was right, kept him safe so he'd keep her and the rest of us safe."

"I'm sorry Arden," Sersi apologized.

"Me and T were helping Gil bake one day," Arden continued, smiling faintly at the happy memory. "We were having the most fun we've had since... a time before when we went rock hunting, but anyway we were baking. We were joking, Gil was singing some horrible tune that made me laugh so hard and it just happened out of nowhere."

"I noticed something was wrong when she had stopped laughing suddenly, but before I could turn she had her weapon in my back inches away from my lungs and heart," she sighed. "Any deeper I would've been gone."

"How'd you live?" Sprite asked, tapping her knee slowly.

"Don't know," she shrugged. "Luck I guess. Gil made me a little house to hide away in so I could heal, he helped wrap my torso and stuff. I wouldn't let him take me to Ajak."

She looked at the three, sensing they could care less about the story, before sighing. They probably did care, at least a little, but their minds were occupied with something else.

"Why did you come here," she asked, her tone a bit harsher than she wanted making her wince slightly.

"We have bad news," Sersi mumbled.

"Ajak is dead, the deviants are back," Ikaris finished quickly.

The sound of tapping on the hardwood floor before being cushioned by carpet filled their ears. Arden smiled at the dog trotting her way as the others watched hesitantly. She walked over to the couch, the dog hopping up and laying in her lap.

The three watched her face to find any emotion, they found none. The only possible one was sadness as they watched her eyes fill with tears before she closed them. When she opened them again, they were nowhere to be found. She cleared her throat before looking at them.

"So," her voice cracked making her clear it again.

"It's okay to cry," Sersi said as Arden blinked her tears away yet again.

The girl shook her head, looking at the big black dog on her lap.

"This is Jaws," she introduced quickly, going back to conversation.

"Did you... did you guys bury her? Have a funeral?"

Ikaris opened his mouth to speak, only for Arden to hold out her hand. She didn't want to know.

"So are you like... getting the band back together?" she asked instead hesitantly, looking between the three before her eyes flickered down to Jaws who laid by her side.

"Yep, to stop the deviants," Sprite spoke confidently. "Are you in or not?"

"Why'd you guys have to pick me up first?" she frowned, not yet answering the question. "You couldn't get everyone else and then me?"

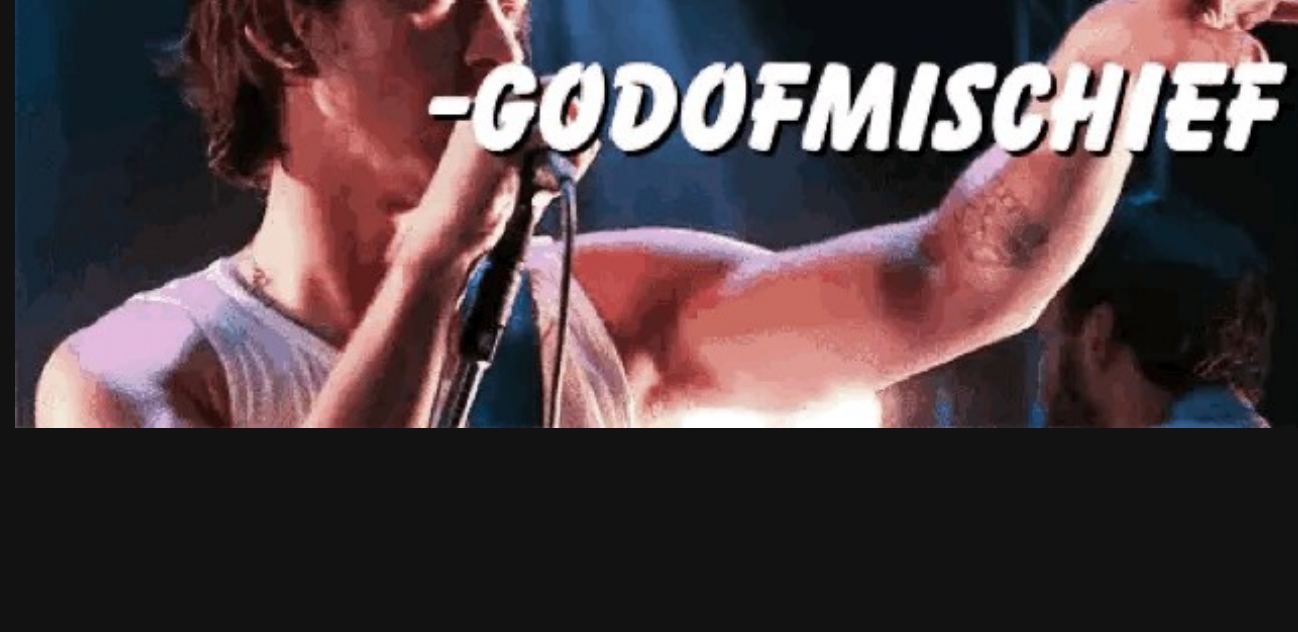
"Oh sorry lets just come back when we have everyone," Sprite spoke making Sersi laugh.

"That'd be great thanks," Arden spoke, replicating Sprite's sarcasm with a mocking smile.

authors note!

YALL I CAN PROBABLY FINISH THIS BOOK BEFORE NEW YEARS NOW THAT I FINALLY HAVE A BREAK ☺ ☺ ☺

also sorry this is rushed i was excited



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