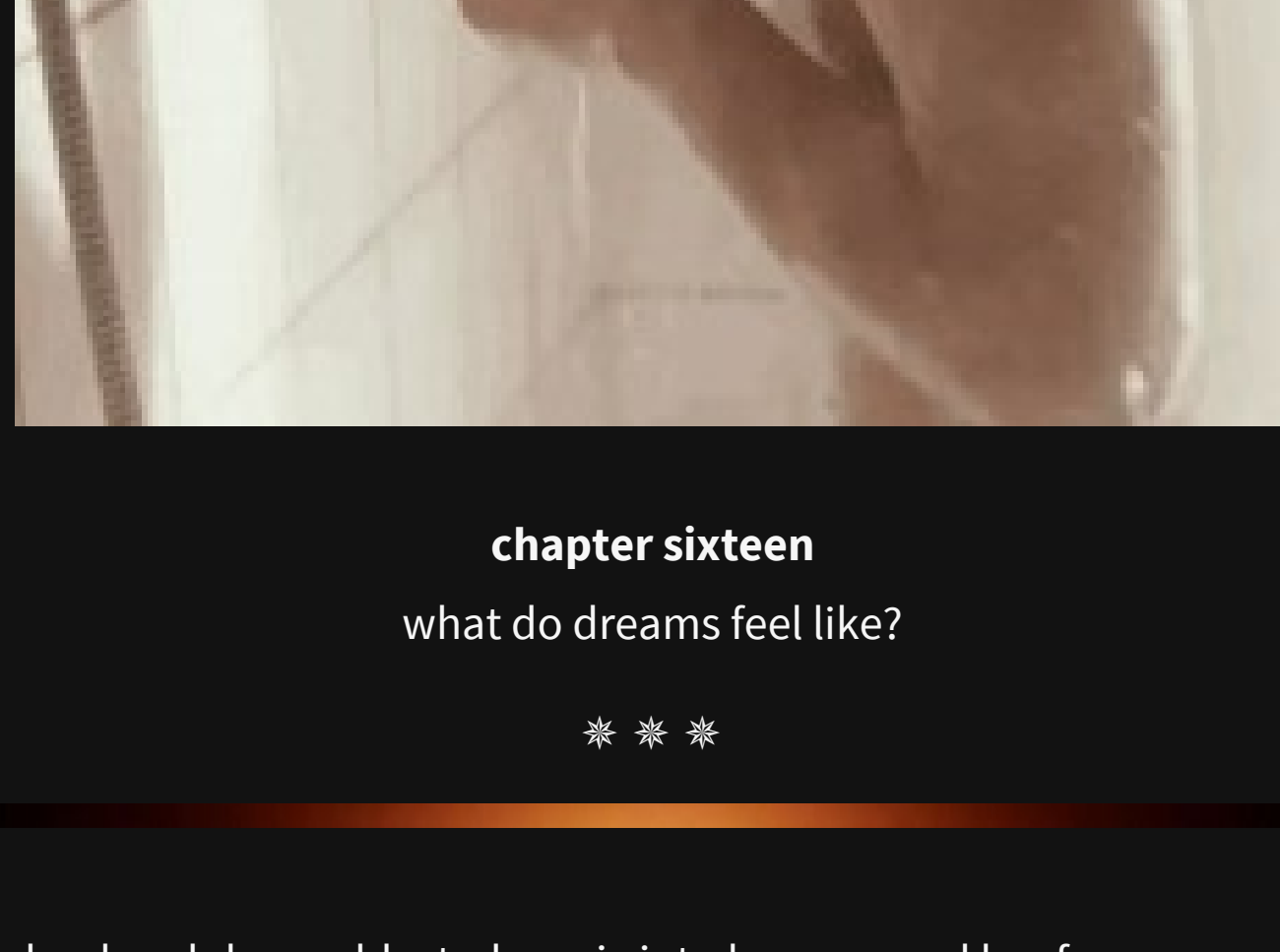


016 what do dreams feel like?



chapter sixteen what do dreams feel like?

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As her headphones blasted music into her ears and her face was rested as she read Alice in Wonderland that laid on her lap, you wouldn't have guessed the amount of pain the girl felt in that moment with the previous events.

Her mind was in a frenzy, her emotions clashing together for she didn't know what to feel with things moving too fast for her liking. She had tried to distract herself with the book in her lap since Jaws had chosen to comfort Thena instead but it was no use.

Her eyes stared at the words on the paper but she didn't take in any of it. The only thought in her mind was, what did dreams feel like?

Did they feel like this? So real and unnerving that it made you go into a whole crisis? Or did they all feel like the events in the book she stared at? Maybe she was thinking too much into it, well... she definitely was. Not all dreams felt the same or looked the same or existed the same way, she knew that. Yet she wished they did so it would be way easier to determine if it was a dream or not.

She should've woken up by now if it was. She wished she had woken up by now.

The feeling of fingers touching her shoulder and 'walking' to her other one made her snap out of her thoughts and closed her eyes.

"What are you doing Druig," she sighed angrily, wanting to smack his hand away...but she desperately craved a hug and that was going to be the closest she could get.

"Making my hand person walk," He said as if it was the most obvious thing in the world.

He hoped his words would cause her to remember the time they met. Maybe she would be happier.

"You can't just say that and expect to be buddy buddy again," she muttered, pretending to be upset at him yet he couldn't tell that she was failing miserably.

She could care less about her hatred over the man that lasted for centuries...she had lost someone dear to her and she had no idea how to cope with it. She wanted to rip her heart out and squeeze it so the pain in her chest would stop once and for all. It felt the same as when he left and she didn't like the feeling.

"I'll try again then," he shrugged.

He cleared his throat and rolled his shoulders as if preparing to do something extravagant in some sport that Arden didn't like watching. She watched, trying to refrain from laughing at his poor attempt of making her feel better. He leaned on the back of her chair and looked down at her with droopy flirtatious eyes.

"Ah, my love, long time no see," he managed to say, cringing immediately afterwards.

"I wish I couldn't see so it'd be a longer time without seeing you," she spat, moving away from him with small laughs escaping past her lips.

"Ar, come on you weren't mad before," he sighed.

"I should be," she said, coming to her senses and eyeing the bag of chips in his hand. "I know this is a dream."

"It's not a dream Arden," he told her and she immediately began shaking her head.

"Yes it is," she argued, taking the chips out of his hands and continuing on with her rant. "Because this is exactly what I wanted! I wanted the family to get back together and I wanted my best friend back and-"

"So why'd Gil die? And Ajak?" he spoke so lightly as to not upset her even more. He bent down and grabbed a few chips from the bag and put them in his mouth. "You wanted that?"

"No no no, I didn't want that. I didn't want that at all," she whispered, her eyes beginning to water.

"So why would it be a dream Arden?" he said, sitting down next to her and sharing the bag of chips. They each took turns grabbing one.

"Why did you leave me?" she asked instead, closing her book and putting it beside her.

When he said nothing she just shrugged, pretending to brush it off as if it hadn't bugged her for centuries. Though it very obviously did, he didn't need mind control to figure that out.

"Maybe it's just a bad dream," she concluded. "And I'm going to prove it."

Arden stood up quickly and Druig followed suit. The thought that she might do something reckless and indecisive—like jumping off the plane—crossed his mind making him grow tense.

Instead she walked up toward Ikaris, not before letting out a small oof at the hurt on her back from before, and stared at him.

He looked up at her with a curious look as he waited for her to say or do something. Nothing.

Until her hand made contact with Ikaris' cheek and a loud sound came with it. Those who saw let out 'oohs' and those who didn't quickly looked to see what had happened.

"What was that for?!" Ikaris exclaimed, holding his cheek as Druig chuckled behind her.

"Did that hurt?" Arden asked, her face looked quite angry and not even she knew why.

"Yes...it did!" Ikaris replied.

"Okay smack me now," she said, turning her head to the side so he could get a good angle.

"Okay woah woah," Druig butt in, stepping in between the two and looking down at Arden. "He is not going to smack you."

"Why not?" Arden asked, slouching slightly for her back still hurt.

"Yeah why not?" Ikaris asked, receiving a smack in the arm from Sersi.

"Because I won't let him," Druig scooped as if it was the most obvious thing in the world.

"Well can you smack me then?" she asked.

"I'm not going to smack you, beautiful," he sighed, the nickname flowing out of his mouth ever so effortlessly.

"Well how else am I going to prove it's a bad dream?"

"What's a bad dream?" Kingo asked.

"This whole thing."

"How will Druig smacking you help you prove it's a bad dream?" Sersi asked.

"Because then if it hurts, I know it's real," she nodded as if she was the smartest person in the world. She knew she wasn't but it was nice to pretend.

"Well does anything hurt currently?" Sprite asked.

"Just my back and my chest," she shrugged.

"And that's not enough to convince you it's not a dream?" Kingo spoke in disbelief. "You're just ignoring the obvious hurt you're feeling."

"Why does your back hurt?" Karun asked.

"Hit the ground too hard I guess," she shrugged, beginning to take off her jacket.

The sight of blood on her back made Druig and Sprite gasp loudly.

"What?! What is it?" Kingo and Sersi asked in unison.

Ikaris guided Arden to turn around gently and she looked behind her to try and see what it was.

"Oh it's just a scratch," she shrugged.

"A scratch?!" Druig asked. "You're bleeding!"

"I mean you do freak out whenever she does get a small scratch," Kingo teased. But once he saw her back he just about panicked. "Oh my god!"

"Arden we need to get you cleaned up," Sersi spoke, quickly standing up.

"I'll see if the first aid is still here," Kingo followed suit.

Ikaris quickly grabbed her hand and they all followed Kingo.

"I'll clean her up," Druig spoke, his voice gave away that he was in a daze.

"Yeah right," Ikaris scooped.

"Is there a problem?" Sersi asked.

Arden looked from Ikaris to Druig and let out a small laugh when she saw him staring at the tattoos on her arm.

"Like what you see?" she smirked, playfully flexing like the men in the magazines so her arms were on full display as she walked.

Ikaris let out a laugh when his arm followed hers, it seemed as though she had forgotten he had grabbed her hand.

"I do," Druig admitted, a few playful gags heard from those following behind them. "I need you to sit down though."

"You don't have to do this," Arden said, taking a seat. "I can just bleed out."

"You are not going to bleed out," Kingo scooped.

"I want to though, I've always done it before," Druig so lightly smiled.

She took off her tank top and Druig immediately looked away to give her privacy. When she turned around to give him full access to her back, she tensed waiting for a cold or stinging sensation but she felt, and heard, nothing.

"What are you doing?" Arden asked, turning to look at him.

"Oh! Yeah um right," he mumbled to himself.

"What happened to your back," Karun whispered making her tense up.

"It looks like..." Kingo spoke before Druig cut him off.

"Arden why do you have so much scars?" he whispered in her ear, his chest touching her bare shoulder made her shiver.

"Can you just hurry please," She sighed, ignoring the question.

He frowned before picking up the wet rag to wipe off an excess of things. She tensed at his touch, forgetting how gentle and so it was, as the three who knew shared a look. It was Sprite who decided to tell them.

"The scars are from-" Sprite began and Arden sucked in a breath sending a scared look towards Thena.

The woman paid no mind and kept her focus on petting Jaws. Arden wanted to go lay in her lap in that moment and had a random urge to just stand up and walk away.

Arden was grateful for Sersi distracting sprite, even if it was just to get her attention for something unrelated. She heard the name Dane and couldn't help but think it was the great dane dog breed.

"Can you uh- unclip this?" Druig asked hesitantly, wincing at the lack of confidence in his words. "You don't have to take it off or- or- or unclip it for that matter! Its totally up to you to-"

Arden rolled her eyes and reached back to unclip it. She held the front so she didn't accidentally flash someone and waited for him to finish.

"We're here!" Kingo announced quickly and Arden immediately let go of the breath she was holding, she didn't know she had held it for that long.

Druig looked at her curiously and refrained from going into her mind. Oh how he wanted to know...but the feeling of guilt he would feel if he had gone into her mind and invaded her privacy overruled the wanting.

"I think me and Sersi should just go," Ikaris spoke and Arden immediately shook her head.

"I'm going too," she said.

"Arden let me finish-" Druig tried to say but she had already pulled away and began putting on her jacket.

She immediately made her way to Sprite who was on her face. Sprite backed up as Arden got closer and soon she was up against the wall since Arden had pinned her there.

"You say anything and I'll bite your head off," Arden threatened, whispering so no one could hear.

"Why don't you want them to know all of a sudden? You had no problem telling us," Sprite asked wearily.

"Thena can't know she caused it."

"Okay woah... Arden what's going on?" Kingo asked wearily, him not being the only one confused as to why she was so close to Sprite.

"Nothing," Arden smiled before kissing Sprite's nose. "Just wanted to give Sprite a little peck on the nose."

authors note:_____

hello filler chapter I suppose cuz the chapter was way too long and it felt weird having 2,000 word chapters and one 5,000 one 🤔👍



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