

## 020 across the universe



### chapter twenty

across the universe

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Arden slid her leather jacket off slowly as she looked to the wall in deep thought. Her rested face made her seem angry and her tatted arms just added to the slight intimidation. She ran a hand through her hair and rolled her shoulders before taking a deep breath.

Everlong by the Foo Fighters played in her headphones and she crouched down and picked up the purple spray paint and tilted her head.

Once she had come to a decision, she put the purple down and replaced it with a white. As she shook the bottle, that she could surprisingly hear instead of her name being called, she mentally placed where everything was going to be so she wouldn't have empty gaps.

Turning around and grabbing the small stool, she began writing Ajak's name in big bubbly letters on the top left. She held a piece of cloth from her and Makkari's previous fashion show as to not inhale the fumes completely.

Happy with her outline, she moved onto Gilgamesh. Then Thena, then Makkari, then Kingo, Sprite, Sersi, Ikaris, Phastos, Druig, and ending with herself.

Having some extra room, she put Jack and Jaws on there too. She wished there were more room so she could add Karun and Ben.

She used black to make a definite outline before filling the inside with the color of their suits. Jaws had gotten grey and Jack got red because she remembered him mentioning that was his favorite color.

She added small details, mostly gold stars, and stepped back to admire her work.

Thena's hand nudged her shoulder and she jumped. She took out her headphones and looked at her in worry.

"You okay?" she asked.

"Yeah," Thena smiled. "Just wanted to say that looks really good."

Arden's cheeks flushed as she smiled. She immediately went forward and wrapped Thena in a tight hug.

"Thank you," she whispered as Thena slowly hugged her back.

"Of course," Thena whispered, pulling away and giving her a bag.

"There's something for you at the house that we can get later. Gilgamesh wanted me to give you these though. We collected them with Jaws."

Arden took the bag, opening it and finding sticks, rocks, leaves, and much more. It was practically nature in a bag.

Her eyes watered as she looked down at the gift and she began to smile.

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Arden walked the hallways of the Domo in search of a nice wall space. She stared down at her boots as she walked, the Beatles playing in her ears at the highest volume.

Crashing hard into whatever was in front of her, she let out a yelp and took out an ear bud so she could use her senses better.

"Oh, hey Druig," she greeted, finding the perfect spot to sit in.

"Standing in one place so you can find an excuse to talk to me again aren't you?"

"What?" he scoffed sarcastically. "I would never do such a thing."

"Mhmm sure," she shrugged.

"Can I sit?" Druig asked, looking down at Arden who had just sat down and pulled out Alice in Wonderland.

"What?" she asked, taking out an earbud again.

"Can I sit?" he asked again.

"What's stopping you?"

He sat down beside her, his leather jacket touching hers as she put her headphones back in and continued reading.

He offered the bag of chips in his hand and she quickly accepted it with no thought about it. He watched happily as she read her book with such an intensity he'd never seen before and took a chip one by one.

"Hey," he spoke, nudging her shoulder.

"What?" she groaned, turning down the volume on her phone.

"What are you listening to?" he asked after a moment of hesitation.

He didn't expect her to answer, or be so quiet.

"Music," she spoke, putting an ear bud in his ear and telling him to shut up.

The two sat in silence, listening to the song and hearing only the turn of a page outside of the headphones.

"This is a nice song," he told her, watching as her finger tapped to the beat of Across the Universe by the Beatles on the page.

"You should listen to Here, There, and Everywhere by them," she recommended, momentarily forgetting about the shut up she directed toward him. "I know they're kind of popular but I love their songs."

"Hmm," he replied. "You should send me all the songs you like and I'll listen to them."

"You have a phone?" she asked.

"What for?"

"To- to send you the songs?"

"Oh! No I don't," he nervously chuckled. "Don't really have good service in the Amazon."

"Oh," she mumbled.

"Can we play the song again?" he asked, nudging her foot with his own. The action made her chest feel like it was closing in on her.

"On repeat?"

"Sure," he spoke, standing up and taking the ear bud out of his ear.

She looked at him curiously and pressed repeat like he asked. He held out his hand for her to take, which she did, and took the ear bud out of her ear. Unplugging her headphones from her phone, he turned up the volume before putting her phone on a ledge nearby.

"Dance with me?" he asked, offering his hand.

She took his hand and they immediately got into perfect frame. This hands interlocked while his other hand rested on her waist and hers was on his shoulder.

He put his forehead against hers and they both closed their eyes in comfort.

"I'm sorry I let you," he whispered softly.

"Shhh," she interrupted. "Please let's just enjoy the moment."

"I need to-"

She moved her head to his shoulder and wrapped her arms around his torso. He wasted no time in wrapping his arms around her shoulders and soon the pair were holding each other.

When Druig squeezed, she did too.

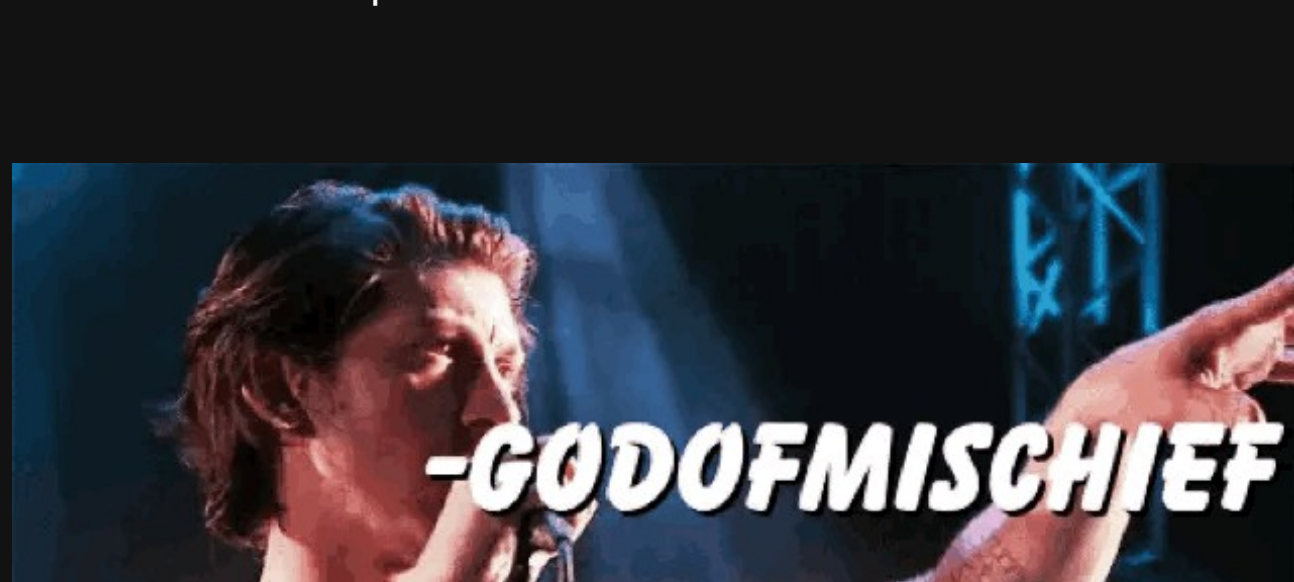
"I missed you," she spoke, her voice muffled.

"I missed you too," he replied with no hesitation.

authors note:\_\_\_\_\_

have this that I wrote in 15 minutes bc I'm rewriting the last chapter ☹️ its also very late and im pretty sure im in a dream right now

also work sucks and school is terrifying I would like to live in my silly little stories instead pls save me



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