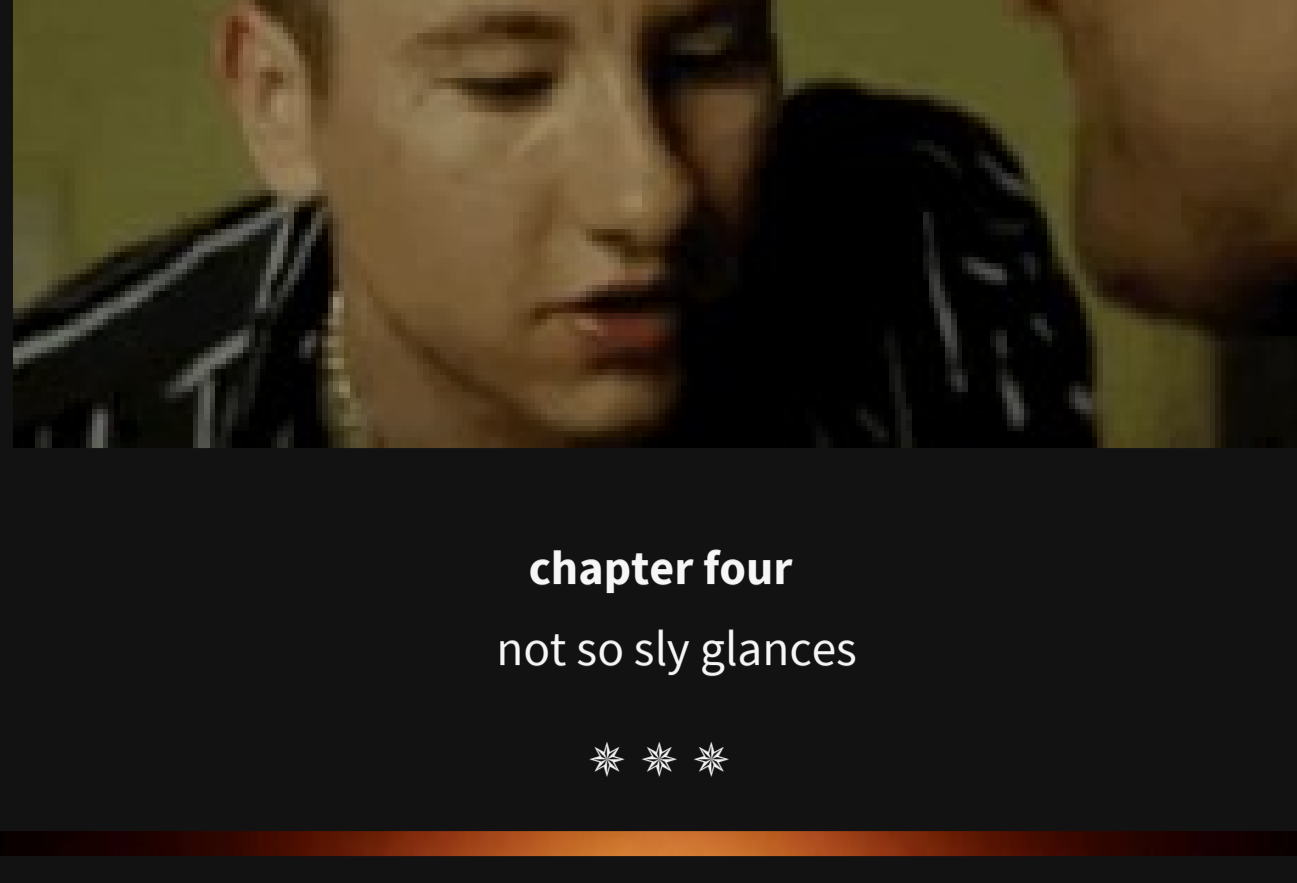


004 not so sly glances



chapter four not so sly glances

* * *

Ardens heart hammered in her chest as she brought her katana into the chest of the closest deviant. Her lips tugged into a small smile as she brought it down, cutting open its chest.

She let out a huff of pride as she looked around.

"Beautiful kill," Thena spoke, making Arden stand up straighter. Her lips tipped upward to match Thena's before nodding to her in thanks.

"Its nothing compared to yours," Arden admitted, a bit awestruck from the compliment.

She had always admired the way Thena fought so being complimented let her head scrambled. Yet, she looked around to help out nonetheless.

"Oh please," Thena scooped before beginning to turn to continue fighting. "You did great."

They both caught sight of another deviant and made their way towards it at once. Thena jumped and Arden ducked, both of them simultaneously cutting its back and stomach. Arden quickly stood up, spinning her katana in her hand to readjust before turning and stabbing it in its neck.

"Now that," Thena spoke. "That was amazing."

"That was so cool," Arden gushed. "I feel so—"

"Hey you two," they heard Kingo say before turning towards him. "That one was mine!"

"How unfortunate," Arden teased making Kingo roll his eyes.

A growl was heard behind the man making Thena and Arden smile at him.

"You have that one loser," Arden grinned.

"How funny," Kingo spoke before turning around.

* * *

Arden draped an arm over Makkari's shoulder making the other girl grin at her.

"You are amazing," Arden signed, momentarily taking her arm off Makkari's shoulder before putting it back on.

"Really?" Makkari asked making Arden smile.

"I definitely think you are," Arden signed. "And no one's opinion matters besides mine."

Makkari shook her head, her smile never leaving before telling Arden she was great too and she had to do something real quick. The two bid their goodbyes, telling each other that they were to see each other again, before parting ways.

Arden's fingertips found the wall for the millionth time that century. It was like a random instinct to constantly touch the ship's walls as she wandered around it. She didn't know why she did it, but it was extremely weird if she didn't.

Her feet took her down different turns until she ended up in Phastos' lab yet again. That place began to be one of her main hangout spots, but she didn't mind. Talking to Phastos was one of her favorite pastimes.

Her eyes caught sight of Druig at the same time his caught sight of her. He smiled at her before sitting up straighter and patting the spot next to him.

She took long and quick strides to get to him. Her legs laid across of Druig's thighs before laying down and smiling at Phastos. The man smiled back before tossing a cube to Arden.

"What's this?" Arden asked, examining it once she caught it.

"Nice catch," Druig complimented making her cheeks flush.

"Thank you," she said, tossing it back to Phastos.

The two began to toss it back and forth, sure that if they didn't catch it there'd be a big bruise on their forehead.

"It's just a cube," Phastos answered making Arden look to him in curiosity. "Made it for you."

"Why do you keep making things for me?" Arden asked before quickly looking at Druig.

She saw him play with the laces of her boots before looking to Phastos and throwing the cube back.

"I figured you liked things so now I'm going to give you things," Phastos shrugged.

"I suppose I do like things," Arden mumbled making Druig let out a small laugh.

"What's so funny?" she asked him making him look over at her.

His eyes widened before quickly looking away.

"Nothing," he shrugged, playing with her laces again. She narrowed her eyes at him before they traveled down to his chest.

There, sat a type of crystal or rock with a flower in the middle. It hung from his neck and as she looked at it a little longer, she realized it was the flower. The one she gave him. Her heart warmed at the sight before looking away as if not to get caught.

"How'd you like it?" Phastos asked, beginning to continue working on his recent project.

"Like what?" Arden asked, sitting up and leaning her back against the wall. Her feet still rested on Druig's thighs.

"Your gift."

"Ah," she spoke. "Very nice, it's really easy to use."

"Good," Phastos grinned. "Glad you like it."

"Mhmm," she hummed, feeling as if something was burning on the side of her head. She turned, finding Druig looking at her again making the boy look away quickly. Arden chuckled before turning to Phastos again. "So what's that cube for?"

"I don't know," he told her, not once looking away from his project. "Just a cube."

"Huh," she muttered. "Okay then."

"So how was using your new gift," Druig asked making Arden look towards him.

"It was so cool," Arden gushed. "I killed this one deviant with Thena and she said it was amazing and I—"

"I bet you almost had a freak out," Druig teased.

"I didn't actually," she smiled with pride. "I kept my cool."

"Sure you did," Phastos chuckled making Arden look to him with a face of betrayal.

"I did!" Arden defended which just made the two laugh.

"Awe come on," Druig mocked, with his voice getting lower and reaching over to put his finger underneath her chin. "It's all jokes."

"Uh huh, sure" Arden spoke, narrowing her eyes and moving her head from his touch.

Druig narrowed his eyes back in a teasing manner making Arden narrow her eyes more. Unbeknownst to them, they moved closer the more their eyes narrowed, as if to see the other better. When Arden's eyes closed, she felt Druig touch her arm making her eyes open right back up.

Arden stared as his hand resting on her forearm and wondered why it was there in the first place. She looked up to find him doing the same before he looked up to meet her eyes.

"Hello," he whispered, not once pulling his hand back.

"Hello," Arden replied, smiling towards him.

"You guys are weird," Phastos said making the two look over in sync.

They found Phastos looking at them with weird looks on his face. Arden stuck her tongue out making Phastos do the same before continuing to work.

"Do you both like, talk to each other in your guy's head?" Phastos asked.

"You don't always have to talk to someone to enjoy them," Arden shrugged.

"Yeah, you can make out with them instead," Phastos muttered, nothing but disgust on his features.

"Ew," Arden mumbled, taking her legs off of Druig's lap and moving away slowly.

He looked at her confused but brushed it off nonetheless. She began messing with the collar of her suit to occupy herself. And Druig watched. He smiled when he watched her nose scratch and when her lips turned to a frown when she couldn't see very well.

Yet he looked away for the millionth time once she looked up and met his eyes.

"Phastos," the group heard before turning to find Ajak walking in. "Did you go to the party like I said to?"

"Hi Ajak!" Arden exclaimed, frantically waving at the woman making Ajak let out a laugh.

"Hello Arden," Ajak said, waving back.

"Party?" Phastos asked before nodding his head. "Yeah party yeah."

"He worked all night," Druig spoke, rattling him out.

Though Arden looked around confused. She couldn't recall a party at all.

"Party?" she whispered to Druig. "What party?"

"You went adventuring with Makkari remember?" he told her.

"I don't remember."

"Who was talking to you?" Phastos asked, bringing Arden back to the previous conversation.

"Get a life," Ajak told him making Arden let out quiet 'ooohs' before letting out small giggles. "Where's Sersi?"

"Late as usual," Sprite said, walking into the room.

Arden waved making Sprite do the same. The two continued waving to each other, Arden drowning out everything going on before Druig tapped her on the leg.

She looked over at him with confusion on her face making him smile.

"Can I show you something later?" he asked.

"Of course you can," she smiled.

"It's gonna freak them out," Arden heard Sprite say.

She turned to the girl with her eyebrows furrowed.

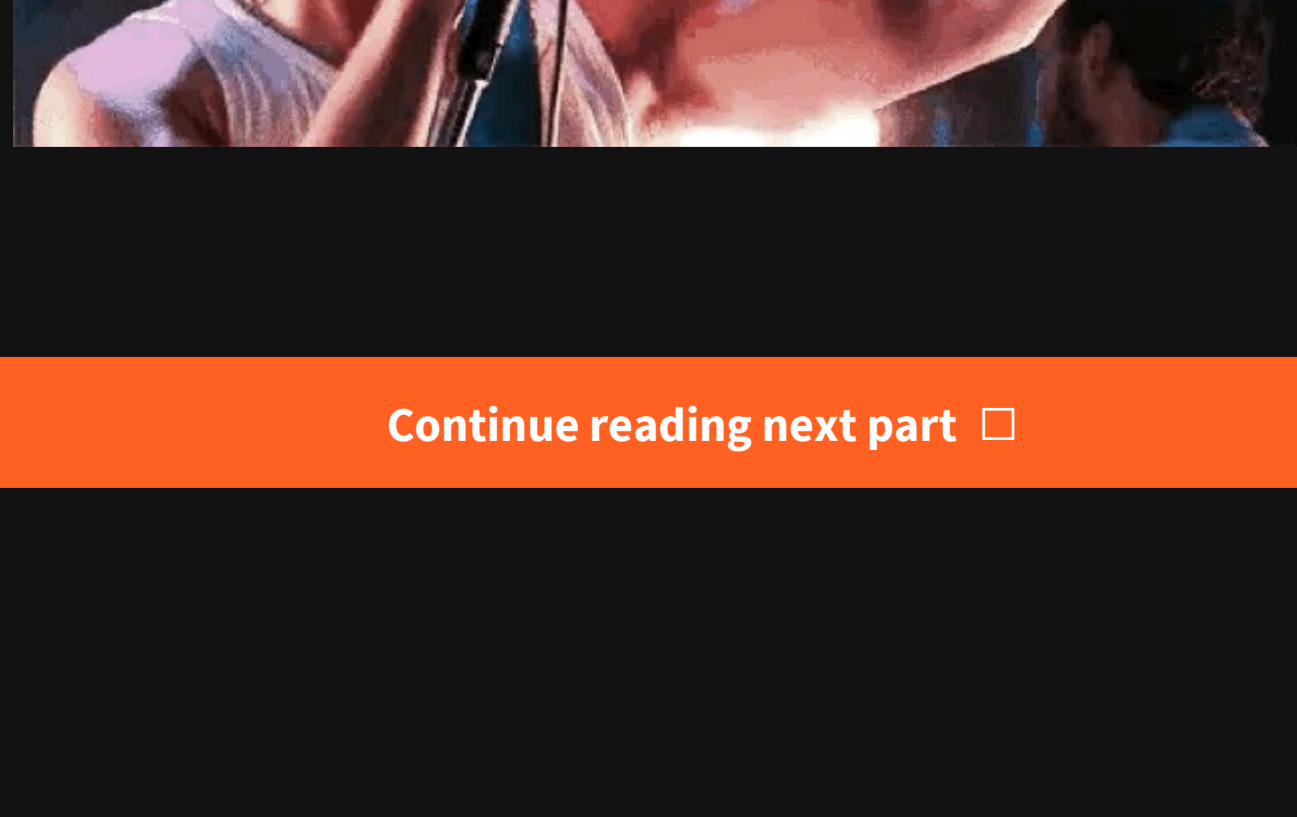
"Freak who out?" she asked.

"The humans," Ajak replied.

"Oh I always love freaking them out," she grinned.

authors note:_____

I hope school dies a slow and painful death and never comes back alive ever again



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