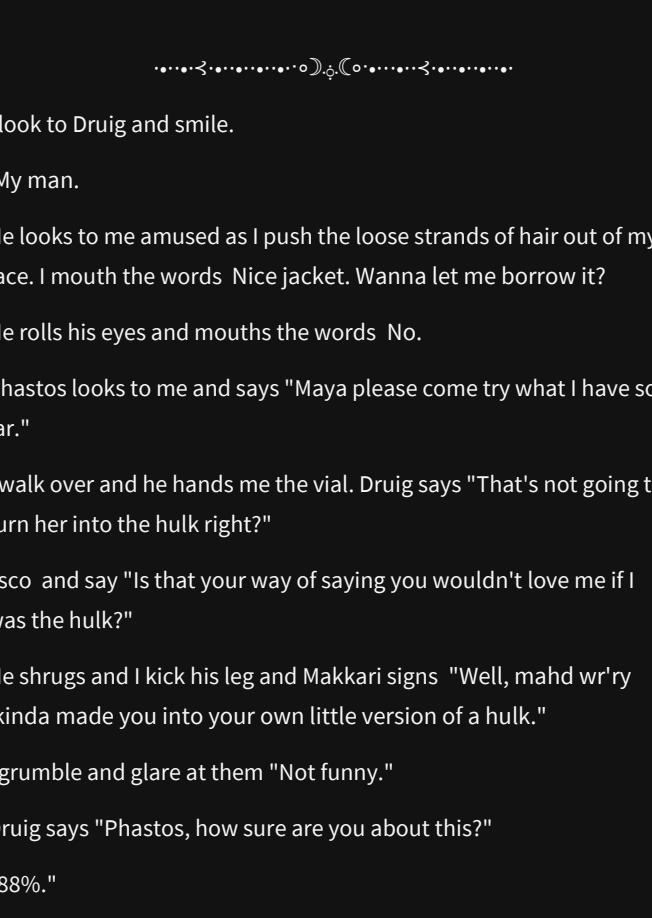


compromise

"Only love can hurt like this.
Your kisses burn into my skin.
Only love can hurt like this."



I look to Druig and smile.

My man.

He looks to me amused as I push the loose strands of hair out of my face. I mouth the words "Nice jacket. Wanna let me borrow it?"

He rolls his eyes and mouths the words "No."

Phastos looks to me and says "Maya please come try what I have so far."

I walk over and he hands me the vial. Druig says "That's not going to turn her into the hulk right?"

I sco and say "Is that your way of saying you wouldn't love me if I was the hulk?"

He shrugs and I kick his leg and Makkari signs "Well, mahd w'r'ry kinda made you into your own little version of a hulk."

I grumble and glare at them "Not funny."

Druig says "Phastos, how sure are you about this?"

"88%."

"No. She isn't consuming something unless you're 100% sure."

I shake my head and say "Druig it's fine. I trust Phastos."

"You don't even know Phastos!" He snaps. I turn towards him raising my hands in defense saying "Druig. Please just calm down."

He sighs and says "I'm sorry. Okay? Just let him go through the chemical make up again. It wouldn't hurt."

I nod and say "Is that okay Phastos?"

He looks between Druig and I and says "If it'll get him to leave me alone I'll do it."

I look to Druig and say "Druig?"

"I'll leave you alone if you do it, Phastos." He says hesitantly

"Thank you."

I look to Phastos nudging him. He slowly turns his head towards me annoyed and says "Yes?"

"Can you tell me more about Jack?"

"No."

Makkari signs "Who's Jack?"

Druig looks to Makkari and signs "Phastos' son."

Makkari's eyes widen and she quickly signs "You have a son? You have a kid before Gaia could steal one to keep?"

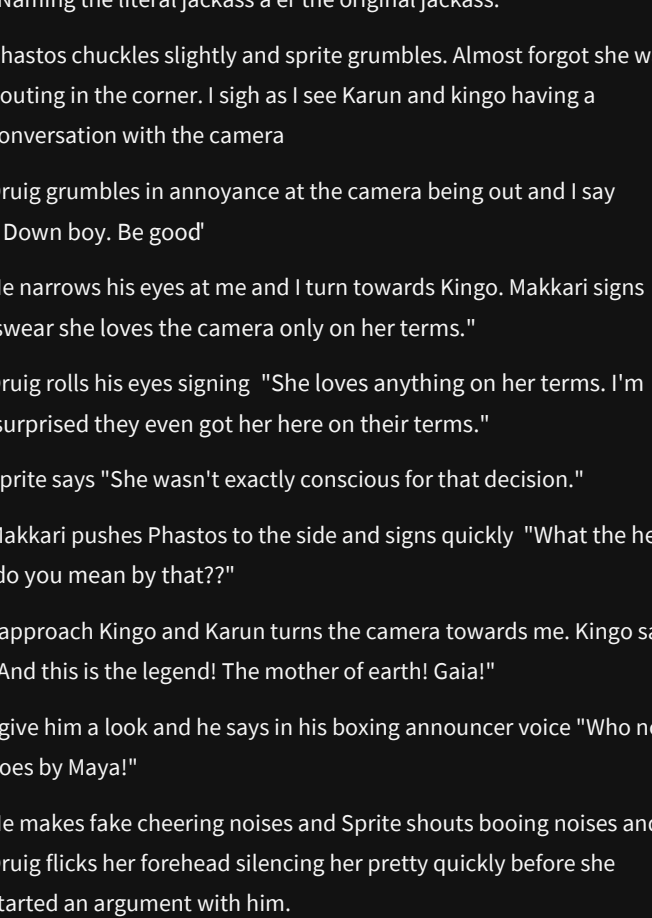
Druig pushes Makkari's shoulder and says sarcastically "Very funny. Knock it o' Makkari."

Phastos chuckles and says "Maya did make a comment about stealing Jack."

I sco and say "I did no such thing!"

Druig looks to me and says "...It sounds like something you would do."

I shake my head and say "It's wonderful that you guys think so highly of my morals."



Makkari signs "Well, considering you stole half of the crap in this room with me and a horse one time, I wouldn't say our morals are exactly the best."

Druig translates for me and I say "I want a horse. Makkari come steal another horse with me."

Makkari nods and Druig says "No. Immediately no."

I smile and say "Maaaakkkarrriiii. Come on, we can steal a pretty horse. Name it Druig."

Druig scoos and says "Excuse me?"

Makkari laughs and signs "No a donkey and name it Ikaris."

Druig chuckles and translates what Makkari is signing. I laugh and say "Definitely. I'm sure he'd just love to see that."

"Naming the literal jackass a er the original jackass."

Phastos chuckles slightly and sprite grumbles. Almost forgot she was putting in the corner. I sigh as I see Karun and Kingo having a conversation with the camera

Druig grumbles in annoyance at the camera being out and I say "Down boy. Be good"

He narrows his eyes at me and I turn towards Kingo. Makkari signs "I swear she loves the camera only on her terms."

Druig rolls his eyes signing "She loves anything on her terms. I'm surprised they even got her here on their terms."

Sprite says "She wasn't exactly conscious for that decision."

Makkari pushes Phastos to the side and signs quickly "What the hell do you mean by that!?"

I approach Kingo and Karun turns the camera towards me. Kingo says "And this is the legend! The mother of earth! Gaia!"

I give him a look and he says in his boxing announcer voice "Who now goes by Maya!"

He makes fake cheering noises and Sprite shouts booring noises and Druig flicks her forehead silencing her pretty quickly before she started an argument with him.

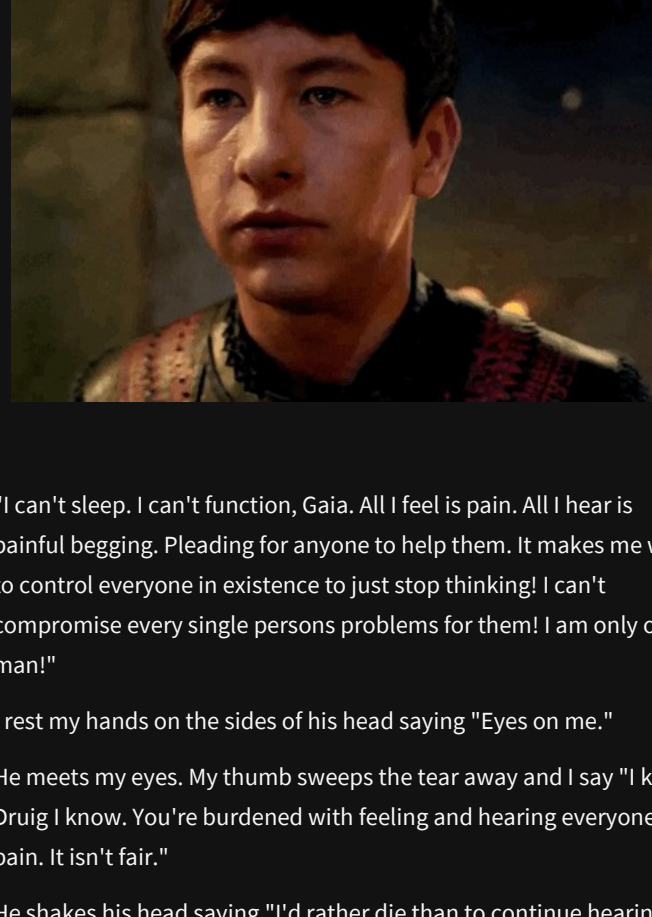
Kingo says "Care to explain what you can do Maya?"

He pats the seat beside him and Druig groans "Don't do it. God don't do it."

I sit down and Druig and makkari groan. Phastos says "She's enjoying having her ego stroked. God she's such an overconfident woman."

Sprite clears her throat and says "I think she had enough ego stroked for all of us with that whole scene Druig and her created behind the books."

Druig rolls his eyes and a small but proud grin presses to his features. "What can I say? I like my women confident." Makkari smacks the back of his head signing "shut up."



Phastos says "Can't anyone give me peace and quiet around here?"

Thena creeps up silently saying "No."

Sprite, Phastos, and Druig all flinch at the new voice adding itself into the conversation. Makkari laughs at Phastos' fear

Druig says "Hello Thena."

She looks Druig up and down unconvinced and says "Druig."

He nods and says "It must be a relief to know you weren't just going crazy. That we can see an end in sight."

Thena crosses her arms and purses her lips "What is she doing?"

I move my hands around as I talk and say "So basically Sprite came up with the legends of Mother Earth and Ajak thought we should run with the idea. Well, that's what Sprite at least said."

Kingo nods and says "And obviously you're married to a mind controller and reader. What's that like?"

I shrug and say "Uh... I am not Gaia. Technically not. I don't exactly have my memory back of our full relationship but when I look at him, I'm home."

Kingo awes and says "Is that from finding dory? All I love that movie. I was on Ellen's show once. I love her. Don't you? Even though she's a little controversial at the moment."

I look to him and say "What? No. That's my line. Not hers."

Kingo pats my shoulder and says "And how do you feel about this emergence thing? You're feeling as one of the empath's of the team. As an empath what are you feeling?"

(Me, as an empath, feeling that I just made a joke)

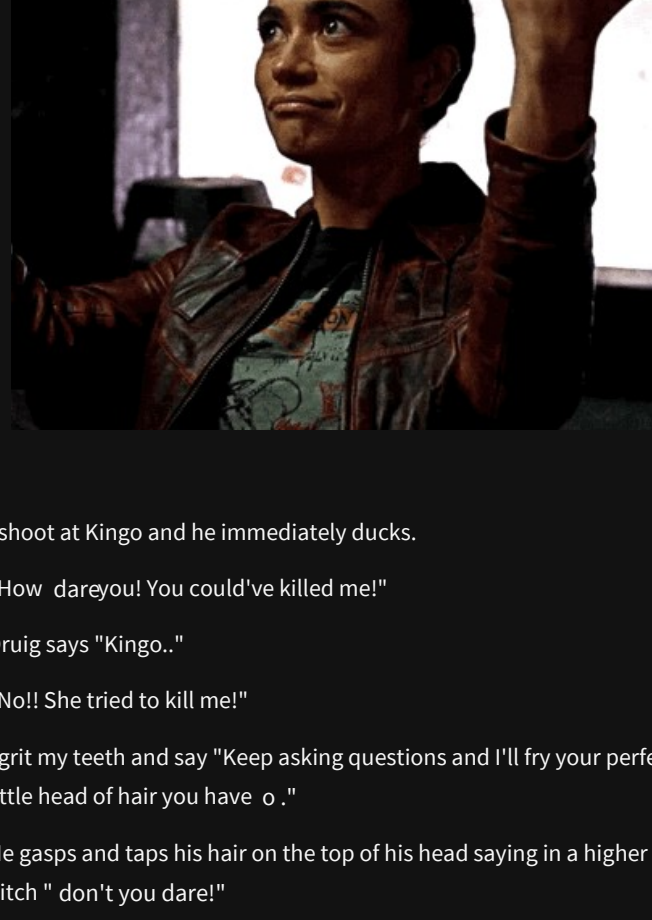
I look to Druig and then kingo says "Humans dying and screaming for our help..."

I gulp and Druig says "She's gonna snap. I need to."

Phastos says "Let her snap... she needs the release."

My mind flashes to moments in my past. Remembering hearing Druig confiding in me.

The voices haunting him for centuries. Eating at his soul. His conscious.



"I can't sleep. I can't function. Gaia. All I feel is pain. All I hear is painful begging. Pleading for anyone to help them. No skipping out on me. I love you too deeply.... It makes my heart ache to see you like this and it makes me want to just hold tightly to you forever."

He nods and says "Maybe for just a little while at least?"

I nod and he slowly rests his head on my chest and the crook of my neck.

I hold his hand tightly, my fingers slowly grazing the knuckles on his hand and small intricate lines with my thumb

He says "Please... just make the voices stop."

I slowly begin to heat up his body as my palms radiate minor levels of cosmic energy. Warming the area we are laying down in. I run my fingers through his hair saying "Just single out the voices that are in dire need. Help them find their way and then put your thoughts to rest."

He hmms as he buries his face in my neck.

I slowly start to say "Just focus on me. My voice. Not my thoughts. My voice only. The beats of my heart. Listen to that"

I grab his hand resting it right above my chest on a place where he can feel my heart beating in my chest.

He nods quickly saying "your thoughts are quiet. They only hold love and concern. Your heart beat is slow but quick..."

I slowly grab his chest and say "It's just me and you."

He nods and says "Just me and you."

Kingo snaps in front of my face and I jolt in my seat. Druig steps forward and Kingo says "Tell us about your mahd w'r'ry dreams. Obviously those aren't false like we believe they used to be."

Karun says "Ah yes. That would be very interesting."

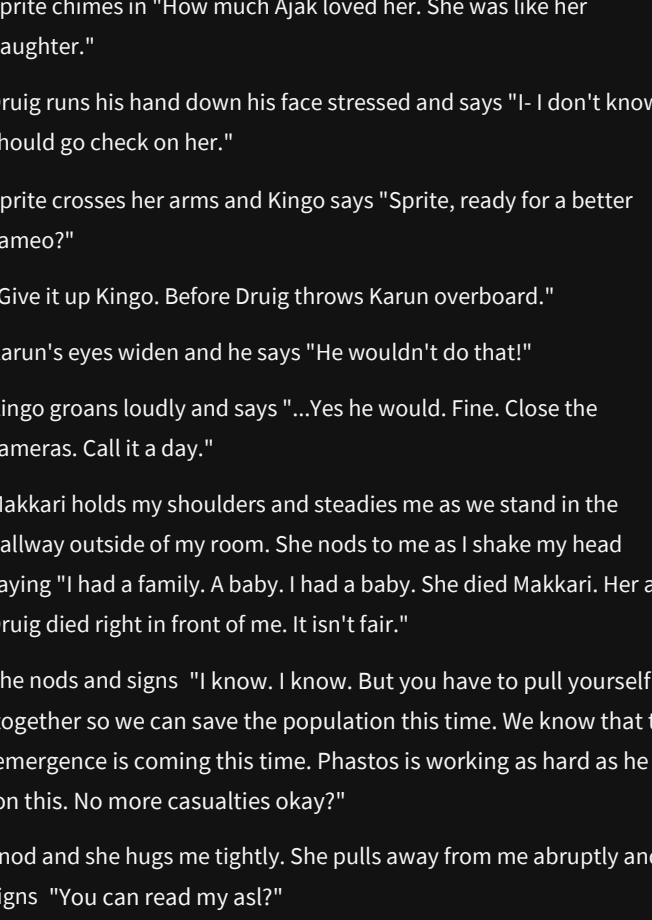
I stare at kingo frustratedly and say "Those are none of your business."

Kingo says "Just one. Your most interesting memory of your past life. Any dirty, dirty secrets?"

I stare at him angrily and he says "Who died first in the past emergence?"

My hand roughly grabs his throat and chokes him. He slaps at my hand and Druig quickly pulls my hand from Kingo.

Makkari's eyes widen and she signs "No! No! Maya!" She attempts to hide her small ounce of pride. (Is that a word?)



I shoot at Kingo and he immediately ducks.

"How dare you! You could've killed me!"

Druig says "Kingo..."

"No! She tried to kill me!"

I grit my teeth and say "Keep asking questions and I'll fry your perfect little head of hair you have o..."

He gasps and taps his hair on the top of his head saying in a higher pitch "don't you dare!"

"I will!"

Karun says "Excuse me miss, but kingo is right- knowing of the past emergencies would provide a clearer image of what the viewers were to expect."

I snap and say "All humans are going to die! Just like every other time before! Billions on top of billions sacrificed for this stupid fucking celestial! You'll die! Phastos' family will die! Everyone will die!"

Druig grabs my wrist saying "Enough. Gaia enough."

"No! Don't go calling me Gaia now! All I remember are the fucking bad things! You dying! Makkari dying! Our kids dying! Arnhem has ruined every single life we have developed and had! I'm not going to reminisce and talk about my disgusting memories of the people I love dying! I'm not!"

Druig wraps his hand around my mouth saying "Not now. Maya. Alright? Calm down."

I push his hand o me and glare at Kingo. I look to Karun and say "You're going to die and kingo will lose the only person he's ever considered family. But he won't be forced to remember how he lost you. He will peacefully be in an ignorant bliss! It isn't fucking fair! Thena and I have to live with the memories of you all dying!"

Phastos nods and Makkari grabs my shoulders tightly. I shake my head as she makes eye contact.

She pushes me towards the exit of the room and Druig looks to Kingo who stands their shocked.

Thena says "Well, that definitely was a release."

Phastos looks to Kingo and says "It was motivation. To not let any of that happen again."

Druig looks to Kingo and then the camera. He says "Delete your footage."

Kingo says "This is over 3 hours of material!"

Druig steps closer and says "Delete the footage before makkari and I let Gaia physically detach your head from your body."

Kingo grumbles and says "Karun. Delete Gaia's footage."

Sprite says "If we all die in the emergence, wouldn't Gaia's mind be reset correctly this time?"

Thena shakes her head and says "Her mind is too powerful and strong. Eventually she'd remember again."

Druig gulps and swallows the pain of knowing Gaia will never feel peace again. She'll always see the deaths of the people she loves when she looks at them

Druig looks to Phastos and says "Maybe she shouldn't remember. Phastos."

Sprite nods and says "Maybe she shouldn't"

Thena says "Did you not hear a word she said? Gaia only remembers the pain. She can't remember the love and joyful memories. She deserves to gain those back. She deserves to remember how much she loved Gilgamesh. How much he loved her."

Sprite chimes in "How much Ajak loved her. She was like her daughter."

Druig runs his hand down his face stressed and says "I- I don't know. I should go check on her."

Sprite crosses her arms and Kingo says "Sprite, ready for a better cameo?"

"Give it up Kingo. Before Druig throws Karun overboard."

Karun's eyes widen and he says "He wouldn't do that!"

Kingo groans loudly and says "...Yes he would. Fine. Close the cameras. Call it a day."

Makkari holds my shoulders and steadies me as we stand in the hallway outside of my room. She nods to me as I shake my head saying "I had a family. A baby. I had a baby. She died Makkari. Her and Druig died right in front of me. It isn't fair."

She nods and signs "I know. I know. But you have to pull yourself together so we can save the population this time. We know that the emergence is coming this time. Phastos is working as hard as he can on this. No more casualties okay?"

I nod and she hugs me tightly. She pulls away from me abruptly and signs "You can read my shaft?"

My eyes widen and I nod. She squeezes me tightly and squeals as she jumps in my arms. The smile widens on both of our faces and we laugh.

I look to her and sign "I can understand you!"

We squeal and jump up and down happily. I laugh and she signs "we have to tell him!"

She yanks my arm forward as I swipe the tears away. Well, that was a short lived tantrum.

Druig steps out of Phastos' lab and says "Maya..."



I leap into his arms and he looks to me confused. I squeal as I kiss his cheek and grab the sides of his face as he holds under my thighs

My legs loop around him.

His hands rest on my behind and I grab the sides of his face. I smile widely and Makkari signs "She understood what I was signing."

His attention snaps back to me and I nod. He kisses my cheek and says "That's great!"

I tug on the sides of his jacket saying "And this is the jacket I got you. We were on that trip to London. Back in the 1950's. I can't believe you still have this."

He smiles and says "You're not only remembering the bad things then hm?"

I press my cheek to his and say "Nope. Remembering the good things too."

"Good... my love Good. Besides, it's my leather jacket."

I press my forehead to him and say "that I love to steal."

He nods and gives brushes his lips to my cheek. Making the blush spread to my cheeks.

Makkari makes a face and nudges Druig. He turns towards her and she signs "just when I thought I escaped you making out. I still have my plan to throw you two o a mountain if you shove your tongues down each other's throats around me."

Druig gives Makkari a look and I laugh loudly as I say "Don't worry makkari. Druig has also thought of many ways to get rid of you too."

She gasps and signs angrily "That's so mean!"

Druig shrugs and says "I've got ways to lose Gaia too."

I smack the side of his head and he presses my palm to his lips and all my anger dissolves.

Makkari rolls her eyes and Sprite says "So you made up."

I turn towards her and she walks away annoyed. I sigh and Druig says "We'll deal with her later. Makkari, we'll be back soon. I have a feeling she wants to take this leather jacket o of me."

I smile to Makkari and she signs "I think you're the definition of bipolar."

I see Sers approaching and I quickly approach her. I squeal and fall her arms around as I fill her in.

She smiles to me and says "Congratulations. I knew you could do it. You need to fill me in on the specifics later. First I want to talk about Ikaris."

I nod and say "Alright. I'm all ears."

Druig nods and says "But it's why we love her."

haley speaks!

Hi guys! Hi new people! Wonderful to have you here! Thank you so much for 300k + reads! I can't thank you guys enough! Thank you for the love and support! I know some of you are still shocked about the loops I've thrown you through in this book but you definitely can't say it hasn't been eventful! Next chapter will be Ikaris' betrayal. I thought this chapter needed a pick me up a er her little outburst so now she remembers how to sign! Woo hoo! Apparently Phastos was right about Gaia needing to be able to release some emotions! Anyway, how are you guys? Doing good? Any comments or thoughts on the book? and, this question below again because I love to see the time difference.

Q&A: what time is it for you right now?

Continue reading next part >