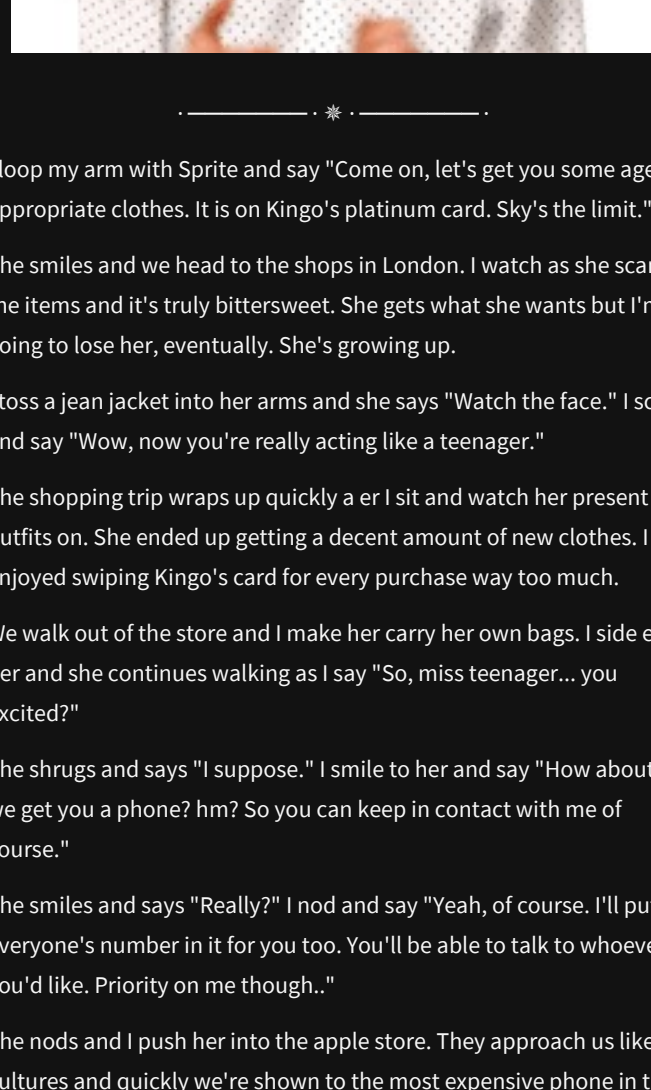


saying goodbyes

"You know it's not the same as it was... As it was."



I loop my arm with Sprite and say "Come on, let's get you some age appropriate clothes. It is on Kingo's platinum card. Sky's the limit." She smiles and we head to the shops in London. I watch as she scans the items and it's truly bittersweet. She gets what she wants but I'm going to lose her, eventually. She's growing up.

I toss a jean jacket into her arms and she says "Watch the face." I scoo and say "Wow, now you're really acting like a teenager."

The shopping trip wraps up quickly a er I sit and watch her present outfits on. She ended up getting a decent amount of new clothes. I enjoyed swiping Kingo's card for every purchase way too much.

We walk out of the store and I make her carry her own bags. I slide eye her and she continues walking as I say "So, miss teenager... you excited?"

She shrugs and says "I suppose." I smile to her and say "How about we get you a phone? hm? So you can keep in contact with me of course."

She smiles and says "Really?" I nod and say "Yeah, of course. I'll put everyone's number in it for you too. You'll be able to talk to whoever you'd like. Priority on me though..."

She nods and I push her into the apple store. They approach us like vultures and quickly we're shown to the most expensive phone in the store.

They try to sell it to us by talking over themselves and I say "We'll take it. Sprite, go pick out your case."

She wanders o and quickly returns with her yellow case. I nod and we pay and leave. Heading back towards Sersi's apartment was bittersweet. We walk in peaceful silence and as we get closer and closer to the apartment Sprite begins to walk slower and slower.

She comes to an abrupt stop a corner before Sersi's apartment building and I turn back towards her. I question "Sprite?"

Looking to me she gives into her sadness and says "I don't want to lose you."

I look at her shocked as she starts to express her sadness with a few tears. I quickly step forward and hug her tightly "You won't lose me. I'll be around. Guaranteed."

She says "Okay."

"Now, I don't want to start crying. Let's get you and Kingo out of here. Okay?"

She nods and I continue walking with her. As we approach the building Kingo and Karun lean on the town car waiting. Kingo says "Hello. Hello."

I smile to him and Sprite says "I'm gonna grab my things." She starts to walk away and she shouts "She stole your credit card Kingo!" I gasp and say "You brat!"

Kingo says "What? When did you do that?"

I toss him his wallet and smile "sorry?" He grumbles and says "What's next for you Miss Gala?"

I shrug and say "Well, I've got to sort my life out. Adjust back into it I suppose."

He nods and says "Yeah the whole seperation of you and your life for 70 years couldn't have been easy."

I glare at him and say "Thanks for reminding me. Truly."

"Sorry..."

Karun says "Is there a possibility for children?"

I make a face and say "Dude, don't stress me out. I think that's out of the cards for Druig and I. We don't even know if my mahd ur'ry will return or if I'm mentally stable. He doesn't need two mentally unstable people to care for."

Kingo says "He already has you and Thena. Make it three."

I sigh and say "Maybe one day. We haven't talked about it."

Karun says "Ever? Haven't you been together for centuries?"

"We've got a rocky past but we'll talk about it eventually. Just... stop hounding me, I don't even know if eternal can have kids."

Sersi clears her throat as her and Sprite approach with a ton of items. They set them down and Karun begins to load the car.

Sprite sits and Sersi says to me "You'll be alright?" I nod and say "I've got Druig, Makkari, and Thena. We'll be alright."

She smiles and says "Keep in contact okay?"

I nod and say "Of course."

Sersi smiles to Sprite as she has her face in her phone "Told you that thing was addictive."



Sprite looks up and I give her a look to be nice. Sersi's only ever tried to be nice to her, she needs to make an e ort

I pat Sersi's shoulder as Kingo steps out of the apartment building. Sersi says "Please visit."

Sprite nods and says "I'll try... When I get time o from school." Her voice changes to anger, I'lliquid venom.

I smile and she glares at Kingo. He shakes his head and says "Oh wow. Listen, it's gonna be good for you to be in a human environment. It wasn't even my suggestion! If you're gonna be mad at someone be mad at Gala."

"Hey! Don't bring me into this!"

Kingo smiles widely saying "You'll pick up some social skills!... Oh you didn't think you needed those? That explains so much!"

I roll my eyes and say "It'll be good to adapt to society a little bit sprite. Please work with him."

She sighs and he motions for her to get o the suitcase she's sitting on. She stands up and carries it to the car.

I walk with Kingo as he carries it to the car. Sprite and Sersi hug while doing so.

Kingo looks to me and back to the car for a brief minute before he says "I'm gonna miss you buddy."

I frown as I look to him and say "Oh god. Kingo I'm going to miss you so much. Please call and visit."

He nods saying "That goes for you too. Not all of us can just up and go to space. Come down to earth every once and awhile alright?"

I smile to him saying "Don't go making a Gala movie alright?"

"Oh come on! I was thinking of hiring you as her actresses anyway! The industry would love your face on billboards! Come on..."

I hug him tightly abruptly and he looks to me surprised before he loops his arms around me too.

I sni le and say "God Kingo. I'm gonna miss you so much."

He nods and suddenly he's blubbering. I look to him as he lets go of me and waves air towards his eyes and I chuckle through my tears.

He shakes his head and says "Damn it Gala. I almost held it together."

I smile to him and say "Be good Kingo. Enjoy parenting."

He smiles and nods. Karun says "It was a great honor to meet you miss and see your wedding. Thank you. It was lovely to meet you."

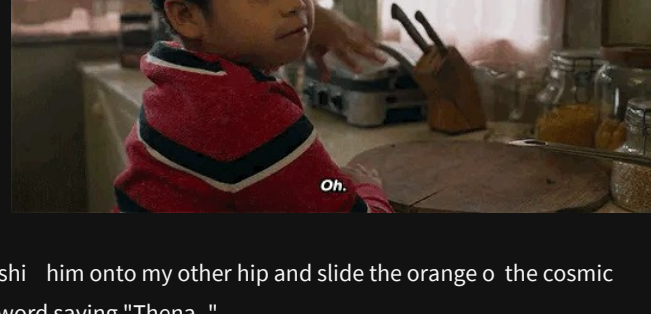
I smile to Karun. And Jeez he's adorable. I shake his hand and say "Thank you Karun. Truly. Thank you for keeping Kingo company a er all these years."

Sprite clears her throat and I turn towards her. She shrugs her shoulders and I make eye contact with Sersi as she nearly pouts.

She's gonna miss sprite I guess?

I open my arms to Sprite and she says "You only get a 5 second hug. That's all."

I roll my eyes and open my arms. She hugs me and I tighten my grip around her. She groans and says "5 seconds are up."



I ignore her and Kingo and Sersi laugh as Sprite can't do anything against my eternal strength.

I kiss the side of sprites head and say "Be good. Text me and call. I mean it. Visit too. Don't be a stranger."

She nods and I begin to loosen my grip around her. Her arms tighten around me and she mutters into my shirt as she squeezes me tightly "We'll say hello again some day."

I pat her hair down and release her. She nods to me and I nod to her. She enters the opened door of the car saying "Thanks. Karun."

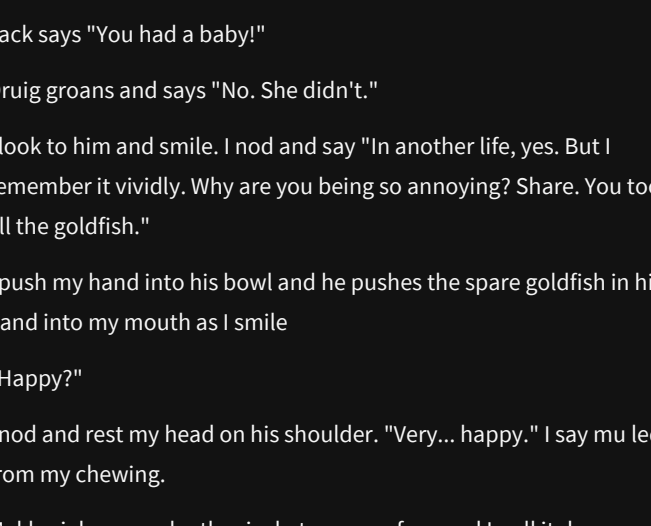
The door shuts and I sigh as Sersi says "Sometimes I wonder if we did the right thing. Killing Tiamut."

Kingo says "It's too late for that. But you both followed your heart. We all did... Ikaris."

I look down and squeeze Sersi's hand tightly for reassurance. She looks to me briefly nodding a thank you as Kingo says "Looks like someone's waiting for you. He's even cuter now."

We all look over in the direction he's motioning to and Sersi and I watch Kingo and Sprite drive away.

Finally she looks to me with a frown on her face. She says "A er all these years, I don't think we've ever been this close. And now we are and we're going separate ways. You're my best friend Gala."



I smile to her and say "You sure you can't come with us? There's room on the ship..."

She nods saying "I've got my life down here."

"If you ever need me, I'm only a few seconds away. Especially for you."

I hug her tightly and she says "Visit? Please?"

I nod and say "Of course. I'm sure I'll grow tired of them quickly and seek you out."

She laughs and says "I'll be waiting for that day. Enjoy time with your husband."

I laugh as I release her saying "Which one?" She laughs and says "Funny."

Dane approaches and I say "You better take care of her. I mean it."

He nods saying "Of course."

I smile and say "God why are goodbyes so di icult? I'll see you soon Sersi."

"Goodbye Gala."

Then, that was it.

We parted ways and I flew back to Ajak's old ranch house. The familiarity hitting me and angering me more than anything.

I wonder if the others know this is where Ajak ruined my life momentarily.

I heave a deep breath and step into the house still holding my breath. I find everyone lounging on the couches. Ben and Phastos in the room with Makkari. Makkari looks up and waves. I nod to her and uneasily look around for Druig.

Just a small amount of fear sinking in. He rounds the corner and from the promptness of his walk as he sees me he sends me notice I'm not doing so great.

Phastos and the others watch as Druig grabs my sides and focuses my attention back up to him. I sigh heavily and he nods saying "It's just a house... nothing dangerous can happen here."

I nod and shrug as the tv loudly speaks in the background " U.S and Australian naval ships are maintaining defensive positions. But at this point..."

Ben says "You guys did that?"

He motions to Phastos and Makkari on the couch. Druig releases my sides and sits down beside Makkari.

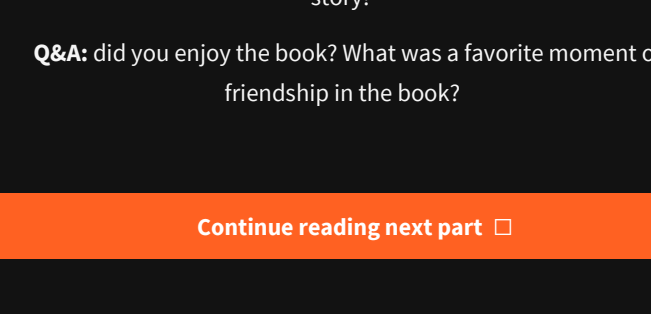
So much for being a supportive husband??

Phastos says with a mouth full of pizza to Ben "I love you so much."

I shake my head and give Druig an annoyed look as I enter the kitchen. Makkari chuckles and Phastos says "ooooo you've got an angry wife now..."

Druig grumbles and says "She isn't mad at me, she's mad at the situation."

I look to the adorable Jack and my bottom lip pops out as I coo over how adorable he is. But I'm quickly interrupted by Thena sticking her hand into the toaster.



Jack, oh so adorable and tiny Jack says "Are you okay?" I approach and li Jack up smiling to Thena saying "Yeah, are you okay?"

She looks to Jack saying "I get confused sometimes."

Jack rests his head against me and says "Yeah, Me too."

I look to him and say "Only thing I'm confused about is how it's humanly possible to be so stinkin adorable. Thena do you see how cute his tiny little face is? Oh god, look at his curls."

Thena smiles widely to me saying "Don't steal this one. Phastos wouldn't be happy." I glare at her and Jack says "Dad says you're Mother earth. Goddess of the earth."

I look to him and say "He said that? Hm? Did he also tell you that he was the one who convinced me to steal my first baby."

"I did not! Gaia quit spreading lies!" Phastos shouts. Whispers "And he has really good hearing." Jack and Thena laugh and he says "So, Dad said you're the Goddess Athena."

I internally wince at the added A and she says "Thena... drop the A." He nods and says "what's your superpower?"

She spears the orange he's so desperately attempting to reach and waves it in front of his face. I immediately step back away from the sword, giving Thena a look as Phastos jumps to his feet pushing his plate onto Makkari's lap.

I shi him onto my other hip and slide the orange o the cosmic sword saying "Okay..."

Phastos says "Okay... Alright... See, that thing is... She almost have you a shave and a haircut, didn't she? Give me my kid back before you steal him."

I roll my eyes and li him into Phastos' arms saying "I had it handled."

"Remember earmu's Jack? Remember how we practiced them? Thank you."

He turns back towards Thena saying "You know that your babysitting privileges are completely revoked, right? Like it's done. Hey, yeah... Violence. Violence is never the answer. You gotta always use your brain. Right? Gaia? T?"

I laugh and say "Tell that to Ikaris..."

Phastos glares at me as Thena says "Like you did fighting on the beach?" I smile to Thena and Phastos defends quickly "Your dad spoke calmly and firmly to the bad guy and he had to listen to me, so no violence."

I turn as Makkari calmly enters and I smile to her as I approach. She signs "The kid is ten. Not stupid!"

My mouth drops and I sign "He's ten?"

Phastos says and signs "When are you guys leaving? When is that happening? That's happening soon, right?"

I side hug Makkari, still wary of the surroundings as all memories of this place are so horrible. Druig enters, tossing a berry at Phastos' forehead and I turn towards him with my eyes narrowed.

Phastos says "Ah, yes, there's Druig."

Jack smiles and high fives Druig as he walks by and I shake my head. Phastos says "Don't go anywhere near him. Kapiche?"

"Hey! That's still my husband."

Phastos says "On second thought, stay away from her too."

"Hey! I was a mother once!"

Jack says "You had a baby?"

Druig groans and says "No. She didn't."

I look to him and smile. I nod and say "In another life, yes. But I remember it vividly. Why are you being so annoying? Share. You took all the goldfish."

I push my hand into his bowl and he pushes the spare goldfish in his hand into my mouth as I smile

"Happy?"

I nod and rest my head on his shoulder. "Very... happy." I say muld from my chewing.

Makkari drops my leather jacket over my face and I pull it down annoyed as Druig pulls me forward. I say "Already?"

He nods and I nod to him. He grazes my cheek with the back of his hand and pushes the stray strands from my braid out of my face. We step out onto the porch and Thena walks ahead as Druig holds tightly to my hand as Makkari walks beside me

I hold onto the zipper of Makkari's jacket as we approach the domo. Jack whispers something to his dad and Phastos says "No. You don't need to see that."

Druig says "She wouldn't mind, Phastos."

I look to him saying "What? What is it?"

Phastos nods to Jack and Jack says "Can I see your powers?"

I smile and say "I'm still a bit rusty, but..."

I shoot towards Druig and he angrily dodges the hit, looking to me pissed. "Really?"

"Be more comforting then."

Jack laughs and says "Cool!"

Druig says "She can fly too."

Phastos groans and says "You didn't have to tell him that."

"Can I see!"

I float o the ground and say "I'd o er a ride but your dad would freak out. Maybe when you're older. Okay?"

He nods excitedly and Phastos says annoyed "Your babysitting privileges may be reinstated."

I smile to him and he says "So, next step for the two of you is?" Druig shrugs and I say "Finding the other eternal's and sorting that out."

Druig speaks with Makkari as he asks her a question and Phastos says "And kids?"

"ahh, hm, I'm not sure that's exactly in the cards for us any longer. We still don't even know if my mahd ur'ry could return and I like it just being the two of us. We at least need to get some more years as a married couple under our belt. If we have a child you can know as soon as possible alright?"

He smiles and says "Be careful up there. Alright?" I nod and he hugs me tightly. "I will miss you Gala."

"I'll miss you too, Phastos."

I pull away from the hug and Druig says "Hey Phastos. Take care. This world is lucky to have you."

Phastos smiles and extends his hand to Druig saying "Thank you. I know you're not a hugger, so..." Druig grabs Phastos' hand and pulls him into a hug. My smile widens and Phastos says "Oh... Okay?"

They pull away and Phastos says "That was new."

Druig says "Gala's made me a pile of mush." I smile and smush his cheeks together, making his lips pucker. "Yes. But he's my pile of mush. Sweet husband of mine. Right?"

Phastos laughs and Druig kisses my palm saying "I'm charming."

I nod and he sweeps me o my feet causing me to laugh as I say "Put me down!" Druig shakes his head saying "Never."

"You're infuriating."

"Infuriatingly yours."

I roll my eyes and then we're o , into space we go.

haley speaks!

This is NOT the last chapter. Let's not talk about how long it took for me to get this chapter out. This is probably the last chapter BEFORE the epilogue. I might add a little chapter in with a flashback, I'm going back and forth. It'd probably just have a little Loki blurb and Eros. Anyway, is anyone else sad but glad to see the ending? Please go check out my other stories or head on over to my tumblr and request a one shot for a marvel character. I quite literally write for anyone but thanos lmao. Go check it out! my handle is @haleybook !!! For old times sake humor me and answer the last q&a over on this story!

Q&A: did you enjoy the book? What was a favorite moment or friendship in the book?

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