

eighteen

"We're back, bitchest! Missed us?"

"It's moments like these that seriously makes me doubt your sanity and the reason I married you in the first place." Druig sighed and I shrugged jumping o his back.

"Who the hell leaves for three more years!?" Kingo yelled running towards us but Druig moved away so I was the one tackled to the floor.

"We do. And I'm back, so calm down and get o me before I su ocate!"

"Let them enjoy their married life at peace, Kingo." Ajak chuckled as I pushed Kingo away from me. "You two stayed in the Amazon?"

"More like Greece. Aphrodite wanted to go back and who was I to say no to her?" Druig smiled helping me stand up. "Where is everyone?"

"Deviants. Kingo stayed because he's injured. You two came back just in time." Ajak explained and I smirked tugging at Druig's hand.

"We just got back and you already want to get yourself killed!?"

"Yes. I simply said and walked to the back of the room to change into my suit. "You're welcome to join as usual."

Druig sighed pinching the bridge of his nose and glanced at Ajak who shrugged.

"Ikaris is in charge of taking care of you. You get hurt, I'm killing him. I'll do my best to get the people away from the fight." He grumbled and changed into his suit. "You're going to be the death of me, my darling Vena."

"I know and I don't care."

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"Miss me?"

"You're back!?"

"I'm back. Watch the head." I shielded Sersi from the hit of the Deviant's tail.

"Where were you?" She asked standing up and brushed the dirt o her shoulder. "And did you get a tan?"

"Another year in the Amazon, Greece for two years, and now saving your asses." I shrugged waving my hand and the Deviant Ikaris was fighting exploded. "You're welcome!"

"Where's Adonis?"

"In the city steering the people away. Thought you could use the help." I smirked and high-fived him.

"Good to have you back, Vena. I actually missed you." Ikaris smirked.

"Feels good to be back home, Ikaris. Shall we?" I asked gesturing to the ambush of Deviants coming our way. "Highest kills win?"

"Ladies first."

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"I think that's the last of them on this end."

"It better be, I'm worn out and not in the good way." I lu ed wiping the sweat and blood o my brow.

"When is VENA!" Ikaris yelled in shock and I bursted out laughing.

"What you do on your own time is of no concern to me! But please keep that to yourself!"

"Did I hear little Vena or do my ears deceive me ?" Gilgamesh asked opening his arms and I ran to him.

"I missed you so much, Gil."

"We missed you too, little one. Where's Ares?"

"Here!" Thena called out carrying an injured Druig and Makkari with the help of Sprite and Phastos.

"Are you both okay?" I asked rushing towards them.

" Couple of hits and bruises. The usual.Makkari smiled and I shook my head smiling so ly.

"We're fine, my starlight. We're just out of practice." Druig chuckled and Ikaris sco ed.

"That's probably you. Little Vena here handled herself practically well."

"A or pushing me out of the way, because, and I quote, "you're taking too damn long to kill this bloody thing!" Honestly Druig, how do you deal with her!?" Sersi exclaimed and I sco ed stopping the blood that was pouring out of Makkari's arm.

"You either step out of the way and make sure she doesn't get herself killed in some way, or you sit back and watch Vena punch a Deviant without using her powers because Sprite dared her to." Druig shrugged and winced when I placed his arm over my shoulder to help him walk back to the Domo. "I sometimes prefer the second one, but I genuinely get concerned over her sanity."

"You punch's Deviant one time."

"Eight times!"

"Fine, eight times and suddenly people fear for your sanity. My sanity is just fine, thank you very much." I sco ed and they all gave me looks. "Okay, okay it may be somewhat debatable at times."

"Sometimes or all the time?"

"Shut up, Makkari."

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"How is he?"

"Wounds were much deeper than we anticipated, but he'll be fine. Vena, Gilgamesh said that he took most of the hits and shielded Thena from being knocked out by a Deviant. Druig just needs to sleep it o." Ajak explained and I frowned sitting next to a passed out Druig on the bed. "Something else on your mind?"

"I don't know." I mumbled playing with Druig's hair. "There's these nightmares I've been having about a millennium now. Druig has been trying to ease my mind, but every time he forgets to ease me to sleep, the nightmare comes back and worse."

"What is the nightmare, Vena?"

"It's always the same thing... Druig dying in the hands of Ikaris and me not being able to do anything about it."

"Vena... I think your and Ikaris' issues has transcended what is considered normal, don't you think? I mean, for you to dream these things."

"Ajak, Ikaris and I made amends days before I got married. My nightmares have nothing to do with any issues I may have with him. Sure we may bicker most days and most of the times it may turn physical, but he's still family." I shrugged and felt Druig stir slightly. I smiled so ly as my eyes glowed and eased him back to sleep.

"How did you learn how to do that?" She asked as my eyes turned back to normal and Druig returned to his deep sleep.

"Dru taught me. Since I can connect to someone's emotions, he taught me how to manipulate them into basically whatever I want. I can also somewhat manipulate their thoughts to coincide with their emotions, but that's a bit more complicated and leaves me with a killer headache a erwards." I explained and Ajak nodded proudly.

"Took a few centuries to get it right, but it helps whenever he can't sleep."

"The way you two constantly watch over each other never ceases to amaze me." She smiled just as the door opened to reveal Thena and Makkari poking their heads inside with the rest of the Eternals standing in the hallway. "Yes?"

"How's Hades?"

"He's doing okay, Makkari. He just needs to sleep for a bit.Signed back and she nodded sitting next to me.

"It's my fault. I was too busy watching the Deviant in front of me, I didn't notice that he was shielding me from the other two coming my way. I should've been more alert." Thena sighed brushing the hair o Druig's forehead with a frown. "He'd be awake and annoying Phastos if it weren't for me."

"It's not your fault, Thena. These things happen. Besides, he's perfectly okay. It's nothing we haven't dealt with before and at this point, we're used to watching over each other." I assured and noticed Druig was waking up. "Good morning, Dru."

"My head hurts more than usual." He groaned rubbing his temples and sat up. "Nice to see you're okay, Thena. What happened?"

"You, Makkari, Sprite and Ikaris collapsed right when we arrived at the Domo. You had a large gash on your back and possible internal bleeding from what I could tell. Ajak healed you and I eased you to sleep up until now." I explained and he nodded looking around.

"Sprite is just worn out from using her powers for so long and Ikaris had some deep wounds way before I arrived to aid him. The others are okay, just the usual scrapes and bruises."

"And you and Makkari?"

"Nothing Ajak couldn't heal. A cut on my forehead and a stab wound on my leg but that's about it. Makkari had her usual bruises because she accidentally ran into a wall, and Thena had a few bruises as well. But we're all okay."

"Ares, I'm."

"If you're going to apologize, I won't hear it. You would've done the same for me, Thena." Druig shrugged and laid his head on my shoulder. "You did all you could and if I hadn't taken that hit, we would all be trying to restrain a crying Vena from going batshit crazy on everything and everyone."

"Next time, just warn me. Don't take the fall for me." Thena ruled his hair and le the room.

"And where are you going?"

"Scouting for Deviants. I'll be back before nightfall." She shrugged and closed the door.

"Vena, about your nightmares. I think it's best you talk to Ikaris about this." Ajak said a er a while of silence and I shook my head.

"Nightmares? What nightmares?"Makkari asked and Druig sighed.

"She's been having these nightmares of me dying by Ikaris' hand. She's had them for almost a millennium now. Each time they get worse and worse.Druig explained and Makkari frowned pulling me into a tight hug making me smile and hug her back.

"I'm not talking to Ikaris, Ajak. And I ask that you don't do it either. Some things are best le unmentioned. I only brought it up because I thought you could help me understand them." I shrugged and Ajak sighed nodding. "Frankly, my nightmares are my own business and I'll keep handling them the same way I've done for a millennium now."

"By me manipulating your mind to help you sleep? That's a huge risk and you know it, Vena. There'll come a time where you won't be able to distinguish what is real and what is made up." Druig protested and I shrugged. "I know you may not care, but I do. I can't keep manipulating your mind the way I've always done."

"So what? I'll just continue having these nightmares and pray to the celestials that it doesn't come true? I'll just keep waking up at ungodly hours and then stay awake because I'll be too terrified to go back to sleep?" I sco ed and they all sighed.

"I'd talk to Ikaris about this, Vena. Maybe there's some unresolved issues le. I mean, you two have been at each other's throats for as long as we've been here! Makkari shrugged and I yelled protests at her. "It may be the only way to ease your mind. Druig can't and won't control your thoughts for eternity, Vena."

"FINE! IKARIS, GET IN HERE!" I exclaimed and seconds later, Ikaris poked his head through the door terrified. "You and me are going for a walk and if someone bothers us, I'm driving a fire of up their ass."

"Am I gonna die? I feel like I'm gonna die..."

"You won't die if you don't push my nerves to the breaking point."

"Noted..."

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"Ikaris, stop looking so tense. I'm not going to kill you. I just want to talk."

"About?"

"Well... I've been having these nightmares for a millennium and..."

"A millennium! And Druig hasn't tried to ease for mind!?" Ikaris exclaimed and I sco ed.

"He's been doing that for a millennium, Ikaris. But he won't do it anymore. According to him, it's too dangerous." I shrugged sitting on a bench and gestured for him to join. "Besides, you're the protagonist of my nightmares."

"I'm honored? I guess?"

"You killed Druig."

"I take that back. I'm not honored at all!" He exclaimed and I rolled my eyes pushing him lightly. "May I ask how?"

"Trust me, you don't want to know." I mumbled. "Ajak and Makkari say that it's because we have unresolved issues between us."

"And do you think that?" Ikaris asked and I shrugged leaning on his shoulder. "I think this is the most a ction you've given me in the four thousand years I've known you."

"This is the longest conversation we've had without insulting each other." I chuckled and he wrapped his arms around me in a tight hug. "It feels nice. Like we're actually family."

"I've seen how you act when Druig is around versus when he's not. Why would you think I'd take pretty much the only person who can bring you a sense of peace? All of us know that you like to act on impulse and sometimes don't think things through, but we also know that he'll always be there to make you fall into reason... Why would you think that I'd take that away from you?"

"I think it's the fear of losing someone who means everything to you... Do you ever fear of losing Sersi?" I asked and I hugged him back.

"Every single day, if I'm being honest. Sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night just to make sure she's still there. Like one wrong move and she'll be galaxies away."

"Then you understand my point?"

"How o en do these happen?"

"Most nights. It gets worse whenever we come back from fighting Deviants and whenever an argument breaks out." I shrugged and started to tear up. "I don't want to lose him, Ikaris. I'm so scared that one day he won't bounce back from those hits and he'll truly be gone."

"You're scared of losing him just as much as he's scared of losing you. Druig may be the pacifist of the family, but he knows how to fight. Vena. He'll always bounce back because he knows that you'll go batshit crazy without him bing your voice of reason." Ikaris whispered and I chuckled slightly trying to stifle my cries and held him tighter. "And I think you know damn well that I'll never dare take that away from you."

"You promise me?"

"I promise, little Vena."

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"You've got to be kidding me."

"This... is just unnatural."

"This is weird... I don't like this. Ajak do something."

"Are you all done? You got that o your chest?" Ikaris sco ed as I hopped o his back.

"So what? You two don't hate each other anymore? Because this feels weird." Sprite said and grimaced when we both nodded. "I don't like that."

"I'd say it's about time." Gilgamesh shrugged and Druig nodded.

"Though, it'll take some time getting used to."

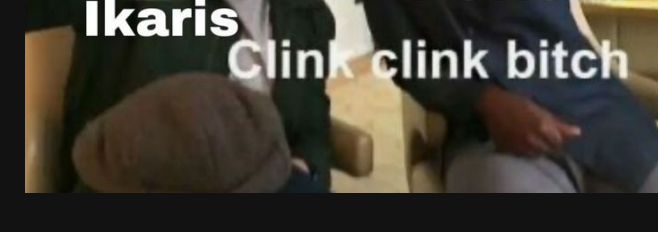
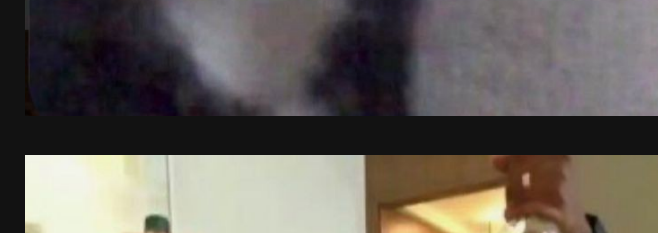
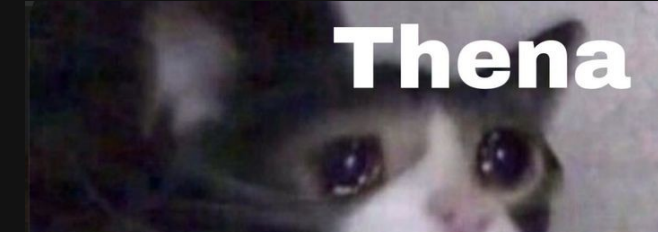
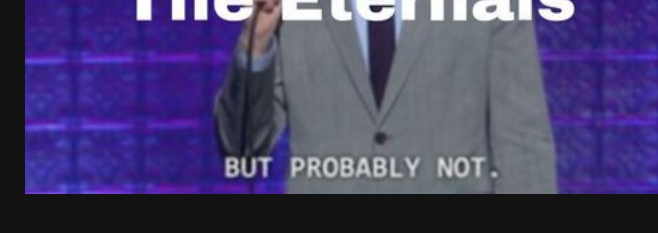
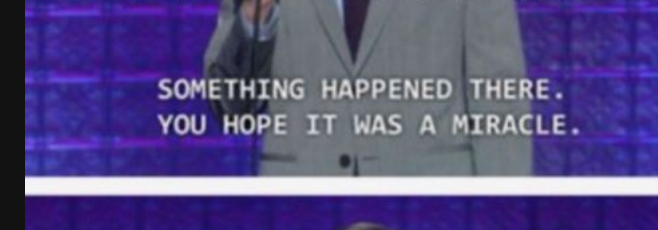
"I'd say we'd make a pretty good team. Don't you think, Vena?" Ikaris asked putting an arm around my shoulders and I nodded.

"Damn right we would." I beamed and everyone took steps back from the shock.

"Nope, this is odd. I hate this!"

"Shut up, Phastos."

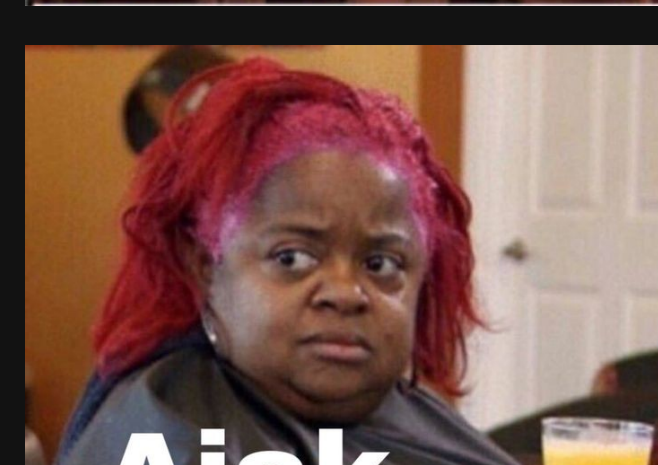
MEMES:



SPOTIFY PLAYLISTS:



Sam Smith Say It First • Lady Gaga Million Reasons • Harry Styles Sign of the Times • Lady Gaga Shallow • Lady Gaga Always Remember Us This Way • Katy Perry Unconditionally • and more



Bon Jovi Always • Bon Jovi This Ain't A Love Song • Bon Jovi Never Say Goodbye • Aerosmith Angel • Guns N' Roses November Rain • and more

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