

~Druig's POV~

"Druig, what the hell? You could've gotten killed!"

"I had it perfectly handled, thanks."

"No, you did not! I had to drag your ass! And not to mention that you almost got bit!"

"Vena, I'm fine." I rolled my eyes as Ajak healed me and Vena paced the lab. "You don't have to worry about me."

"No? You took the damn hit when I could've perfectly handle it! Hell, even Makkari was running to aid me. You didn't have to do that!" She exclaimed pulling at her beautiful hair and Sprite snickered. "I swear to Arishem, Sprite. Not the time!"

"Vena, you were being dragged around by the Deviant. If I hadn't stepped in-"

"I was trying to find a way to send fire straight to its heart. Druig! I'm always being dragged by the Deviants before I kill them!" Vena yelled as her eyes glowed for a few seconds.

"But I managed to control it, so it wouldn't kill you." I pointed out and she glared at me.

"Resulting in you getting bit!" Vena spat back and shook her head. "You know what...you do you, I guess. I'll see you all later. I need to blow some steam."

We all watched as Vena grabbed her bag and stormed out of the lab with Makkari and Sersi following her.

I sighed sitting up and brushed Ajak's hand away.

"Well...she's mad." Sersi mumbled walking back inside. "I've never seen her scream at us that way, only at Ikaris."

"She screamed?" Phastos asked in shock. "That's a first."

"I believe her exact words were 'if you all want to get killed by the Deviants, do it at your own time. But don't do it trying to protect me.' Then she broke a few boulders and stormed, telling us not to follow her." Sersi shrugged sitting next to Ikaris.

"She's never acted this way, Druig. What really happened?" Makkari asked and I sighed rubbing my temples.

"She was inches away from getting killed and she didn't notice. She was acting careless again. The humans were miles away from the fight, so I managed to tap into the mind of the Deviant to let her go. But all she saw was me getting bit. A er that, she had to pretty much drag me to Ajak while trying to shoot at the remaining Deviants." I explained.

"Maybe it's best if she's away from the action for a little bit. Just until she gets her head straight again." Ajak sighed and Thena protested. "It'll be worse if you do that, Ajak. Vena just needs to blow some steam. She's been having a few bad days and it piled up making her explode." Thena said.

"Last night, we couldn't find her for hours until she joined us at the feast. I think that's the first night she refused to dance and I'm right before Kingo's story." Gilgamesh added and we all felt the ground shake. "And she's still mad."

"Upset actually. She's been having a lot of bad days lately." Makkari shrugged and I tilted my head.

"How so, Makkari?" Sprite asked and she sighed.

"Having to fight the Deviants every day, being constantly on edge, Ikaris bothering her constantly, her not sleeping, etcetera."

"I'm bothering her with reason!" Ikaris defended and I sco ed. "I... need her help with something and she's been giving me the cold shoulder."

"That's because you've been treating her like shit for the last two thousand years." Phastos pointed out. "Have you tried... oh I don't know... BEING NICE?"

"I'm being nice now!" Ikaris yelled standing up.

"You want a round of applause for that?" Kingo smirked. "We should all just give Vena some space."

"The last thing she wants right now is space. Especially if she's been having so many bad days." I said standing up and gestured for Makkari to follow me. "Why didn't she tell me any of this?"

"She doesn't want to worry anybody. Thena found out because she heard her the other night ranting to Phastos about how nothing is working out for her. Makkari shrugged. "I found out because I sensed her crying last night and that's when she told me."

"She cried?"

"She did. I think it's the first time I've ever seen her cry." She signed just as Ikaris walked past us. "Where are you going?"

"Ajak told me to find Vena and bring her back. I'll be back soon." He shrugged walking away but I stopped him.

"Do you even know where to look?" I sco ed.

"Which one of us can fly?"

"Which one of us actually knows Vena's hiding places?" I smirked and pushed him back. "If you go, she'll probably kill you because you always go for an aggressive approach. You have to wait until she calms down before you try and talk to her."

"Let Druig go to her. A er all, he's the only one that's able to calm her down."

"Ajak sent me, Makkari." Ikaris sco ed and signed.

"That's because you're mother's favorite. Let Druig handle it." Kingo joined in and I groaned walking away from them. "Make sure she gets back here eventually! Preferably calm and if she's still mad... let her punch Ikaris in the face! That always makes her smile."

"Sure thing, Kingo."

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"I think this is the first time I don't see you hanging upside down on a tree."

"Can't write if I'm upside down." Vena mumbled not looking at me. "I'm not apologizing for my outburst, but I will apologize for the earthquakes."

"And I won't apologize for protecting you from the Deviants." I shrugged climbing up the tree. "Thena said you were having some bad days, is that true?"

"Bad days are an understatement." She h u ed finally looking at me and my heart ached.

Her hair was disheveled, eyes were red and swollen and face was paler than usual.

"Want to talk about it?"

"I don't think you'd care, Druig." She chuckled dryly and I frowned scooting closer to her.

"It's you. Of course I care." I shrugged holding her hand seeing a faint smile on her. "And there's the beautiful smile I missed so much."

"So you noticed?"

"I did. Just didn't say anything because I didn't want to pressure you... and Thena snitched." I whispered and wiped her tears. "So, want to talk about it?"

"Not now. Frankly, I just want a hug." She shrugged and I pursed my lips for a few seconds before pulling her into my arms. "Okay, this is new."

"Well, if you don't like it then I'll just leave." I teased pulling away but she held me tighter.

"No, no. I never said that." She mumbled and I felt her body shake with sobs. "They're turning into savages."

"The humans?" I asked and Vena nodded. "I wish I could make it go away, beautiful Vena. But if Ajak finds out, we're both done for."

"I shouldn't care about this. I should just focus on my mission. But they have so much potential, Druig. And they're wasting it away. Why do they do this to themselves?" She sobbed and I frowned rubbing her back lightly.

"Do you remember what we talked about? When we first came here? About how I deemed them selfish and narcissistic?" I felt her nod as I pulled her closer. "And do you remember going on a rant for hours about how they're not selfish, that they just need to learn to get along?"

"I remember."

"Well, that gave me hope on the humans. If a soul as pure as yours can have faith in them, then they truly can be redeemed. Maybe one day, they'll learn that those are their brothers and sisters, lovers and children. I think that'll be the day that they stop fighting and it'll be the peak of human evolution. And do you know who will be responsible for that?" I smirked pulling away and wiped her tears. "It'll be you, beautiful Vena."

Vena finally smiled and hung upside down. I rolled my eyes sticking out my tongue at her and she laughed.

"Let me guess, I'm upside down?"

"You're upside down." She giggled and I joined her. "Now you're right side up."

"Or maybe we're the ones upside down." I teased and Vena sco ed pushing me lightly. "But I like your version better. Everything is upside down."

"I knew you'd come around." She smiled and I smiled back.

"You're allowed to have bad days, Vena. But next time, try talking to someone."

"If I talk to you, will you listen?"

"I'll always be there to listen, beautiful Vena."

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"Well it's about time you two got back! We were worried sick!"

"Kingo, she's asleep. Shut up." I hissed gesturing to Vena who was sleeping in my arms. "Where's Ajak?"

"Vena's room with Makkari." He said and I nodded walking away from him. "You care for her, way more than you would care about any of us."

"So?"

"Nothing. It's just cute... Adonis." He smirked and I rolled my eyes walking towards Vena's room.

"Is she okay? Makkari asked speeding up to us immediately.

"She's fine, she crashed on our way back. How long has it been since she last slept?" I asked setting Vena on the bed and tucked her in.

"About six days. Mostly just power naps in Phastos' lab, but that's about it." Thena said leaning on the doorway with Sersi and Karis. "How is she?"

"Better now. I put an illusion in her mind to help her catch up on her sleep. So don't be surprised if she doesn't wake up for breakfast tomorrow." I chuckled when Vena grabbed my hand and I sat on the floor next to her. "Ajak, may I speak to you alone for a moment?"

"You all should get some sleep. Vena's okay." Ajak said dismissing the rest who were all by the doorway. "She'll be back on her feet in no time."

One by one they all le and Ajak closed the door before sitting on the floor in front of me so I wouldn't let go of Vena's hand.

"Yes, Druig?"

"Is it normal that I worry about her this much? I mean... she had it perfectly handled and I still felt the need to step in to make sure she didn't get killed."

"Sweet Adonis... Ajak smirked and I groaned rolling my eyes. "You care for her in a way probably none of us do. I've seen the two of you together. Our sweet Vena brings out the best in you, just like you bring out the best in her. You feed her curiosity to keep exploring this world because you always ask her about where she was and what she found."

"I don't see how that has to do with the other." I shrugged and Ajak rolled her eyes.

"Of course you don't. Neither of you don't. But we all see it. Sneaky glances between the two of you before disappearing. And where do we always find you both? Together asleep in a corner with countless human artifacts around you both. That I can bet those artifacts were hers and she was showing you. Who do you think wrapped you both in blankets every night that happened? If it wasn't Thena or Sersi, it was me."

"I don't think I should be feeling this way, Ajak. We came here for a mission and that was it. So we could go back to Olympia." I sighed glancing up at Vena who was snoring lightly and I brushed the stray hairs from her face. "She's definitely not waking up anytime soon."

"Who says that you can't fall in love in the meantime, Druig? You know what I think? I think you two were connected a long time ago, way before Olympia and it is now that you're both finding each other."

"Like a soulmate?" Ajak shook her head and I furrowed my eyebrows. "Then what?"

"Like lovers in a past life that reconnected in this one." She shrugged and frowned. "There is something else about Vena... something she's never told anyone, I'm telling you because I know you have her best interests at heart, Druig."

"Ajak, you're slightly scaring me right now." I chuckled nervously.

"She has a very special power. Much more powerful than her power of seduction. You know that she can control the elements, correct?"

"I've only seen her fight like a thousand times."

"Okay. Then you know that blood contains water, right?" I nodded and she sighed. "Well...she has the ability to control the water in the blood, whether it be for good or evil. She doesn't use it because she hasn't found a way to properly control it. I'm begging you, Druig. Don't let her tap into that power if she can't control it. She trains with me and has an understanding of it, but still doesn't have full control over it."

"Then why should it be any different with me?"

"Because you won't let her hurt herself or anyone else. Because you know better than anyone that it will destroy her."

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