

Sixteen

Agil was out of the door of the cabin with huge taloned tipped reptilian wings bursting from his back. They flared up strong and blazing a bright fiery gold as he swept his eyes over the camp. Behind him, Druig glanced at the wings with curious eyes. They were easily twenty feet across and toughened leather skin over bones and muscle. Huge roughened talons tipped the top, the glistening gold sharp and gleaming and almost clear enough to be realistic. For a second, they looked like actual flesh and blood wings had sprouted from Agil's back and expanded to shield Druig from the threats. These wings did not look like a human animal he recognised.

The threat was deviants. Already three of the buildings were trashed, one a flaming wreckage. The humans were running for safety as a Deviant lunged for Sersi. Kingo was visible in the middle of the clearing, arms out as he shot at the creature. It leapt from the roof ops across the village. The shots leaving scorch marks where it was standing. It was chasing Sersi. The woman was busy herding people into the hall, pushing the human's inside and pressing her hands to the door to turn the wood to metal. Agil moved as the deviant gained on her. Just as the creature went to flick it's long tail in to Sersi, he landed at her side and wrapped them both in his wings. His arms pulling her close as the force of the blow knocked them flying into the shed a few feet away. The impact knocked the breath out of him and snapped the supports. Agil barely had time to look up before the roof was crashing down on their heads.

The impact hurt and Sersi groaned in his hold. The golden reptilian wings surrounding them having shielded from the worst of the impact. Agil pushed himself up as gunshots echoed round the trees. He pulled Sersi to her feet and the golden wings shimmered before disappearing. A long cat tail, claws and ears flickering to life in their place. Then Agil was leaping back towards the battle. Humans stood in a circle around the deviant, guns raised. As he drew closer, he watched the creature send two men flying through the air with it's tail. The two humans dying with the impact.

Then Druig was there. The man had stripped o his tunic and was wearing a sleeveless grey shirt underneath. Agil watched, still slightly too far away, as the man leapt over the deviant's tail and rolled across the ground. One hand snatched up a dropped gun and he de ly reloaded before ducking under the tail and leaping up onto the beast's back. A gunshot to the creature's head emitted a snarl as Druig leapt o and out of the way of the creature's teeth. Then Agil was throwing himself into the fray. Golden claws sinking deep into the thick muscle of it's throat as he tackled it to the ground. The deviant hissed and struggled but Agil snarled back, teeth bared as he sliced his claws deeper.

"Move!" Sersi's voice called. He let go and leapt back just as a metal tree fell and landed on top of the creature. The branches skewering it as it shrieked. Agil stumbled a bit on the landing and would have fallen over if hands had not caught him under the arms. He looked up and gave Druig a small grin as he was li ed back onto his feet.

"Druig", Sersi panted as she ran towards them. "Let them go".

Any joy at being able to fight at Agil's side again faded from the man's eyes. His gaze became steely. "Now is not the time Sersi".

"Please", She grabbed his shoulder. "I know you are better than this".

Druig turned to glance at Agil. The long haired man nodded and he sighed. Druig raised on hand and his eyes glowed gold. The humans who had been firing shots into the trapped Deviant, all lowered their guns and looked around in confusion. "Druig", one called. "What's happening?"

"Go!" Druig ordered, voice echoing over the village. "Get to the river!" They didn't need to be told twice, fleeing between the trees. Agil glanced around then grabbed the two other eternal by the arms and pulled them away just as the deviant wriggled free from the metal structure. He glanced around to see Kingo and Sprite battling a canine like deviant. Then the jaguar one was upon them.

"Agil!" Druig shouted as the smaller man threw him and Sersi towards the hall. They landed heavily and rolled, looking up just in time to see as the Deviant lunged at the man.

Agil caught it by the jaw, hands pulling the mouth apart as the creature snarled at him. He growled right back as golden sparks took form. The deviant grunted as the scorpion tail pierced through it's brain. The breath le it and Agil let it slump to the ground, one hand reaching out to catch the tail that flicked round in one last attack. He ripped it from the body and tossed it onto the earth. Black blood splattering his clothes and silver piercings glinting in the late a ernoon light as he turned to the others.

"Are you alright?" Ikaris was hovering above them. The man hanging in the hair as he glanced over Sersi.

"I am fine. What about the other's?" Agil asked.

"There are more heading this way. Gilgamesh is going a er the one that attacked us in London".

"I can handle them. Help Gil", Agil stated. It wasn't cocky confidence, it was simple truth. He could handle more. If that deviant really had beaten Ikaris in London then Gil was the one who needed backup.

"Go", Sersi nodded as she got to her feet. "We will be fine". Ikaris nodded and turned to soar out through the trees.

Agil didn't watch him go, already running to intercept the Deviant charging Kingo and Sprite. It had knocked the man across the floor and was rearing to pounce. Agil caught a glimpse of Sprite crouched by Kingo's side, the man shielding her as the Deviant attacked. Then Agil was knocking the beast out of the air. Large scaled armour shimmering in gold around his body as he pressed the beast into the ground. It snarled and managed to knock him o with a sudden twist that had him stumbling. He gasped as he fell, scales forming around his arms as the beast fell on him. Claws scratching golden magic and teeth bared in a snarl as it fought to break the shield. Agil bared his teeth right back, mind whirring as adrenaline filled him. He needed to form an o ensive attribute but to do so he would have to let down his shield. If he did that, then the beast would be upon him.

"Agil!" Sersi's voice made him look up. She was running forwards, snatching a tree branch from the floor. It turned metal in her hands and she stabbed it through the Deviant's ribs. Unfortunately, it didn't kill the beast, it only turned it's attention onto her. She backed away but the creature was already leaping at her. Agil pushed himself to his feet just as Sersi fell back into a rectangular pond. She hit the water and the Deviant went a er her.

He was just about to pull the creature away from her when water erupted from the pond, soaking his clothed and spilling over the earth. It flooded the ground as something rose from it. He gaped as a twisted tree expanded up from the pond. It was the deviant. It's form contorted and broken into the shape of a snarling tree. For a second everyone just stared. Sersi dripping where she still stood in the water. Sprite and Kingo dirty smudged but unharmed as they drew closer. Druig wordless as he stared and Agil, panting with exertion and pain, frowning.

"How did you do that?" He asked, voice breaking the silence.

Sersi shuddered. "I don't know".

unedited

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