



Twenty four

Before Ikaris could turn his attention to the approaching Domo, a weight hit him from the side. Pain made the man cry out as Agil sunk his claws through the blue armour and the skin beneath. Huge reptilian wings, sharp with talons wrapped round the two struggling figures and sent them plunging through the sky. Agil snarled as he ripped his claw tipped fingers from Ikaris' stomach and caught the other man's jaw with one hand to push his head back as golden lasers burst from his eyes, singeing Agil's hair and disappearing into the clouds. For a second they fell together, wind howling around them as the volcano continued to splutter and rumble. Ikaris' arms pinned to his side by Agil's wings and the smaller man's hands keeping his head out of the way as golden beams stuttered. Below, Sersi and the others watched as the Domo landed safely. Ikaris' pained and frustrated shouts echoing in the clouds and Agil screamed with rage.

With tremendous effort, the golden magic shattered and the wings disappeared as Ikaris broke his arms free. Agil felt hands grab him by the shoulders and throw him through the air. He twisted, tumbling through the clouds as Ikaris swooped after him. Golden lasers seeking to pierce the falling man but Agil had seen this happen to Druig and the light glanced off the golden feathers that burst around him. Golden wings turning the free fall into a sharp glide that twisted him around just in time to reach out and swipe with a long spine covered tail at Ikaris as he bore down above him. Agil bared his teeth and caught the other man's head in his hands, thumbs pressing into his eyelids to stop the lasers from bursting through. Ikaris let out a gasp of pain, his own hands clawing at Agil's wrists. Superstrength was one thing but Agil was burning with revenge and anger and betrayal. This man had once been his brother and comrade in arms. Now Ikaris had taken his love from him.

Still, no matter how angry he was, his strength was not as enhanced as Ikaris'. The bigger man tore his hands away and their two forms climbed through the sky as he fought to escape Agil's hold. Lasers burnt into the winged man's shoulder and he let out a sharp cry of pain, swiping out with one hand to carve claw marks down the other's face. Blood dripped cheekbones and Ikaris screamed as he was blinded, talons ripping through one eye. He struck back, fist making Agil's head crack and filling his teeth with blood. The blow knocking out the smaller man's tongue piercing. Agil spat it out and it dropped below, his golden wings beating and keeping them aloft as Ikaris hung from his tail. Spines cutting into his legs and stomach. For the briefest second they both stared at each other, faces covered in blood. Rage boiling in Ikaris' one remaining eye as Agil grinned with bloody teeth.

"Druig is gone", Ikaris snarled. The words triumphant and smug. "It's over".

"Maybe", Agil spat out a wad of blood. "But I can still kill you". Then he was slashing down with his hands, wings folding at the same time to send them into a plummeting dive. Ikaris blocked the strikes with his arms, armour taking most of the damage but the blows still leaving sharp cuts on the skin beneath. He struggled back. Their dive derailed as he sought to fly up and then they were climbing again. Another punch to Agil's face left a ugly scratch down his cheek and sent him reeling for a second. It was all Ikaris needed to rip apart the golden magic forming the tail keeping him trapped. Agil let out a cry of pain as the bigger man caught him by the throat and used his free hand to rip the golden wings from his back, their forms vanishing as they tore from his back.

"Nice try", Ikaris spat before dropping the limp figure and flying away. Agil's head felt dizzy as he plummeted. Pain filling his face and blackness seeking to corrupt his vision. He barely had the awareness to reform his wings, huge comfortingly familiar albatross wings wrapping around him in a protective cocoon as he hit the sea. The water hitting as sharply as concrete before he was going under. The weight bearing down on him and the sky a blurry shape above him as he sunk. Vision going dark as the light above him faded.

As soon as they saw Agil hit the water, the rest of the Eternals made their decision. Makkari, Thena, Gilgamesh and Phastos going for Ikaris while Sersi headed for the emergence. The appearance of the last deviant, the one who had almost killed Gilgamesh complicated things. They were split up, Phastos and Makkari continuing to keep Ikaris busy while Thena and Gil went for the Deviant. By the time Agil dragged himself up onto the shore, chest heaving as he fought to expel the water from his lungs. The cut on his cheek still bleeding but his mouth was already healing. He spat out the last of the saltwater and looked up to watch as golden fingers burst from the ocean. Huge towering structures as big as mountains rising high into the sky, surrounding the island where they were standing like a cage as the very beginnings of a head came after it. Tiamut's four eyes of a celestial like pools of lava as it rose from the depths.

He sat back on the sand, body bruised and aching as waves lapped around his legs, watching as the end of the world began. A feeling of calm acceptance had washed over him. There was nothing he could do. It was over. The world that had been their home was coming to the end. Agil sat silently as he remembered his life here. Meeting Druig in the Domo with the galaxy around them. Fighting the deviants with those who he thought of as his siblings, Thena, Makkari, Gilgamesh, Kingo and even Ikaris. Ajak healing his wounds, her smile motherly. Ru'ling Sprite's hair. Flying high over the villages and looking down to see his family below. Druig smiling at him over meals. Druig stealing food from Sersi's and Ikaris' wedding. The love he had felt when he had found Druig again after Alexi. He even thought of the early years with Alexi when he had enjoyed being around humans in a way he had never felt before. But what occupied his mind the most was Druig.

He pictured the other's face in his mind as he felt the power of the emergence swell. Golden light encased his form and he let himself be lifted up into the air as his engird connected to the others. He felt them distantly, through an exhausted mind as their powers joined. Sersi's power redoubling and the gold skin of Tiamut turning to marble as all their energies flowed into her. Agil could feel it and the hope in his chest sunk into relief. As the golden magic faded and he was set gently back on the earth he opened his eyes to see white cliffs on the horizon. Tiamut dead and froze, nothing more than stone mountains.

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