xxix - Fuck Druig (Wait, no, I didn't mean-)

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Kingo's private jet, 2023

POLLO HAD NOT WENT TO MEET WITH PHASTOS. He'd wanted to, at first, until he'd finally decided against it. His chest and head still hurt him and he'd gone on too many adventures in the last few days. He wanted to just stay on the plane and relax as much as he could before the emergence. After Phastos, they would go find Makkari and he wanted to have as much energy as he could when he would reunite with her. He'd missed her. And he wanted to apologize for leaving her. He wouldn't be able to do all that if he was falling asleep between each word. He would have talked with Phastos when he would come back. He didn't think it would take much convincing for him. He would never miss an opportunity to understand more about the universe. And what better way to learn about a Celestial than to be there for its birth?

He would not get the relaxation he so wished for. And deserved. It started with Sprite, who wanted to know about the alien black market and how he'd gotten a flerken. He explained to her that he'd been bored, so he'd decided to take a glimpse at it, discovering awesome things such as a super price on Asgardians eyes. She seemed both amazed and disgusted by that fact. He hadn't thought of buying anything at first, but when he'd seen Dragon, he'd known that he had to get him. Most people would use a flerken for bad deeds and such, yet he was just lonely. When seeing him in that little cage, barely able to move, he'd known that Dragon understood the feeling. And he hadn't been able to resist the urge to buy him. Or, well, as some narrow-minded person might say, steal him.

Then, it was Kingo, who refused to let Dragon roam free in his jet, when he was capable of eating all of them in one bite. He'd claimed that it was dangerous for all of them, which didn't stop Karun from defending the flerken. Pollo had to sit through Kingo's explanation of what a flerken was, which was uselessly long and boring. In the end, Karun didn't change his mind. He still wanted Dragon on board. Betrayed in such a way by his valet, Kingo had started pouting, though he did stop complaining about Dragon. That might've just been because he was scared the flerken would understand, as he still made sure to stay away from the beast.

After that, it was Dragon himself who wouldn't stop bothering Pollo as he tried to take a nap. He wanted to play, apparently bored after he'd only gotten to eat one Deviant. He'd started by hitting Pollo in the face with his little paws until he'd finally accepted to play with him, taking some lace that had been laying around and using it to make the flerken play. He would jump and fall, all with the grace of a cat. A very clumsy cat, that is. And whenever Pollo would stop, even for a second, Dragon would meow furiously, which got Kingo to panic, thinking the flerken would eat his friend if he didn't continue to play. Pollo had first tried to explain to him that it wasn't the case and that he couldn't just spoil Dragon, it wasn't good for him, however the movie star had finally managed to convince him.

Even when Dragon finally fell asleep, Pollo didn't get his rest. It felt like hours had passed by then, which wasn't even the case. He didn't have to do it, but he saw Thena alone, a saddened look on her face, so he went to talk to her. He sat with her for an hour, this time he counted, talking about their best memories of Gilgamesh. She didn't cry this time. Then again, she might have just tried to look strong in front of him. She didn't have to. As he sat with her, he did something he should've done a long time ago. He thanked her. For being there for him on that day in the cave, centuries ago, and for always keeping his secret, even if it made her uncomfortable. He swore to her that he'd gotten help since then, which was a lie, but he was starting to feel better. He was sure of it. They didn't hug. She wasn't much of a hugger. Not in front of the others at least. But she took his hand and smiled. It was the first time she smiled since Gilgamesh's death.

Now, you'd think he would've been able to take his nap once and for all, but that wasn't even the last thing to happen to him. Next, he had to eat, which he didn't normally hate, yet at every bite he took, he felt like he was going to fall asleep on his plate. Even then, he would have thought that, being rich and all, Kingo would have better food. No, of course not. He might have been because after eating Gilgamesh's good he knew nothing could taste quite as good. Or, it was just the fact that he was too tired to focus on what he was eating. Anyway, if at least he could have eaten alone, he would've been able to relax a bit. Again, no. Kingo, Sprite and Karun felt the need to have lunch with him, shaking their plans and everything they'd done over the past years. Karun and Kingo told them how they met, a story about Kingo being mistaken for a vampire, which Pollo would've usually found hilarious had it not been for the fake that he was sleep deprived.

He was still wondering how they couldn't see how tired he was. He had dark bags under his eyes, his tone was sharp and he showed little to no signs of energy. He wasn't even trying to hide the fact that he could not keep his eyes open. It was his fault, he realized it now. All those centuries he'd passed faking smiles and laugh had put them under the false impression that he could not get tired, no matter what he would do. He'd spend so much time hiding the tiniest weakness that they now thought he was indestructible. To them, he was the sun. Always there, until he wasn't needed anymore. They saw him as bright and incapable of darkness. They couldn't understand, of course. They weren't him and he wasn't them.

Finally, he came out with one of the dumbest plans he ever thought of. Dumb, yes, but foolproof. Or at least that's what he thought at that moment. The good thing about this being a private plane with only a small group of people on it was that there were two bathrooms. And not disguising bathrooms with a sticky floor, no. Two clean bathrooms. All he needed was to take one, lock the door, let others use the one bathroom left, and fall asleep on the floor. It wouldn't be comfortable, yet he was desperate to get at least a five minutes nap. It felt like he hadn't slept in two days —which, granted, was the case — and with a fight against more Deviants coming, he couldn't risk it.

All through the last two, maybe three, hours, every member of the teams who were onboard had managed to bother him. Kingo, Karun, Thena, Sprite, even Dragon! All but one, whom Pollo had completely forgotten about. Or maybe he'd just ignored him. Anyway, the only person who had yet to bother him was Druig. And it seemed that he had decided that this was the best moment to do so.

As he walked towards the bathroom, Druig stood up from his place as well, following him. At first, he tried to dismiss it. Maybe Druig had to go the bathroom as well. He should've known that, with the two of them, it was never a coincidence. As soon as they arrived in front of the bathroom, Druig pushed him inside, locking the door behind them.

"What the fuck, dude?!" Exclaimed Pollo, suddenly much more awake than he had been before.

Druig had an annoyed look on his face, his hands behind his back as though he was here to talk business. He'd changed for more civilian clothes when he'd first arrived in the plane, and so had Pollo, yet he hadn't really taken the time to look it. He'd been avoiding him. At first, it wasn't on purpose, until... Well, until he couldn't stand looking at Druig and thinking of him all the time. He'd hoped that by taking a nap, maybe he would have a nightmare that wouldn't make him think of Druig, but each time another Eternal came to talk with him, he had to look or hear or smell Druig. The smaller man was never far behind. And he hated it. Still, he must've realized that he was being avoided and had finally gotten fed up with it.

"We need to talk," he stated with a cold voice, not taking no for an answer.

Yes. They did. About multiple things. And yet, Pollo was terrified of what talking might lead to. Another fight? He didn't want to hurt Druig. Which might have been why he decided to play dumb. "About what?"

It wasn't the right answer. He realized it as Druig clenched his jaws, his shoulders tensing up. "Everything."

"Well, that's a lot," he chuckled dryly, so tired he was unable to stop the next words to pass his lips. "So what do you want to start with? You, leaving me alone in Tenochtitlan? Or maybe that time you kicked me out of the village after living with you for a century? Oh, no, I know! Let's talk about all those times you locked away my memories, which now gives me flashes at horrible moments, such as when I'm fighting, almost causing me to die. Is that what you want to talk about, my beloved Druig?"

He wasn't sure why he wanted to make him angry. It was like a reflex, something he did to protect himself. Or maybe he just liked seeing Druig's icy blue eyes go cold each time he opened his mouth. He had a shit-eating grin plastered on his face as he noticed how Druig clenched his hands in fists, even when they were behind his back.

"I don't understand you, Polly," he spat. "One day we're dancing and you're laughing but the other you're avoiding me and insulting me whenever you get the chance to. I'm trying, I really am, but it's tiresome, always playing a game of Russian roulette with you. Why do you act like this?"

He was trying to get a calm composure, which only managed to make Pollo laugh as he lifted his hands to his. "Oh, I'm confusing? You think I don't know that? Well what, do you think you're better than me at those kinds of things? You think I understand you when you say you want what's best for me and then start yelling at me for listening to you? I don't want to be confusing. It's annoying and tiresome for me too. Those... feelings. Those horrors. If I could get rid of them, I would, believe me. Do you think I want to laugh with you when I'm supposed to hate you for what you did to me? Do you think I want to feel like this when I'm supposed to hate you for being right? You say I'm playing Russian roulette with you but my love, you're the one who loaded the gun and placed it in my hand."

Pollo had tears in his eyes, though he knew it was unlikely Druig could see them. And even if he did, he wouldn't understand them, as he continued to laugh. He was tired. Not just because he needed a nap but because this had lasted so long, this back and forth between them. And the last words had struck a nerve with Druig. As soon as he finished talking, taking a deep breath, the mind controller pushed him against the wall, his jaw so tight his teeth should've broken like glass by now.

He was tired. So very tired. Still, it wasn't enough for him to stop talking. He'd spent so much time keeping secrets, bottling his anger, it was time he let it all out. "Do you know what I came to tell you that night when you kicked me out? Do you even care? Was it not enough for you to break my mind, did you also have to break my heart? Druig, please, tell me. Did you ever feel them? Those horrors in your stomach, telling you that you're more than what you thought. Yelling at you that now matter what you say, you do know how to have emotions? Did you ever feel them? You have to tell me. Humans say they're butterflies. I think they're monsters. They want to eat me alive, Druig. Help me, please."

Druig did the exact opposite of that. He should've let go of him, telling him he'd never felt the monsters crawling under his skin, giving him the chance to move. Instead, he crashed his lips against his own.

Pollo had never been good with feelings so, as to better understand, he tried to associate them with things he knew. His anger was like a cold winter, biting his skin. His fear was a sword, sharp and cutting through his skin like it was paper. This... this was new. He felt something warm growing inside of him, tickling his stomach and making everything brighter. A sunflower. A sunflower, which always turned towards the sun, the brightest thing in the sky, and could be as tall as a human. That's what he felt inside of him, inside of his mind. A million sunflowers had replaced his brain, making it impossible for him to focus on one thought. Good. He didn't want to. Not now.

This wasn't the first time he'd kissed Druig. He'd done it, once before, when they were both very drunk. It had been different back then. Slobbish and tasting of alcohol. All of his senses had been on overdrive, making it impossible for him to really understand what was happening. Today was different. Druig tasted like mint. And he could feel everything He could feel their lips, dancing together better than they ever had, and Druig's fingers on his neck, tracing little circles. He could feel their bodies, a bit too close. No. Just close enough. He could feel it and understand it and he feared that sunflowers were sprouting out of his mouth.

He closed his eyes. Not because he wanted to avoid his gaze nor because he wanted to escape reality, but rather because it was easier like that to really focus on the smallest detail. The smallest emotion. In his nightmares, he was always terrified by the thought of kissing Druig. But now all fears and sadness had left him. The sunflower was growing his heart, making him smile against Druig's lips.

They parted for a second, their foreheads still touching as they breathed heavily. Druig had placed a hand on Pollo's cheek, who'd sling his arms around his neck, pulling him closer. He opened his eyes, looking at Druig and trying to memorize everything about his face. The sparkles on his eyes, the dimples that appeared as he smiled and the way his lips parted ever so slightly.

"I can't help you, Polly," he breathed out. "I feel them too, the monsters. But I don't want them to go. Do you?"

It was two questions in one. He was asking him if he wanted the monsters to go and if he wanted Druig to go. Incapable of talking, he chuckled softly, shaking his head as he did so. He didn't want Druig to go. Not again. Not ever. They should've done this a long time ago. Still, even if they had waiter for centuries, he was glad it had happened now. It's not a cold anger that he needed against the Deviants, but rather resilience of the sunflower in his stomach. Druig smiled at him, bringing their face closer once more. As they lips were about to touch again, a knock on the door interrupted them.

"Hey!" Sprite exclaimed. "Can you hurry? I really gotta go!"

They paused a second, surprised, before starting to laugh. "Use the other bathroom," chuckled Pollo.

"I can't! Kingo's in there and he says he's doing his hair," she replied. "It's going to take an hour!"

"Fine! Just wait a minute, okay?"

They continued to laugh softly as they parted, a hand still on Pollo's face. They were reluctant to walk away, nonetheless they knew that they couldn't stay here forever. Even if they really wanted to.

"Does that mean we're dating now?" Asked Druig, smirking. "Or do you kiss all your friends like that?"

"Oh, no, Thena is a much better kisser." Seeing the way Druig face fell, he was quick to correct what he'd just said. "I'm kidding. Yes, I would like for us to date. But keep in mind that I still haven't fully forgiven you for locking away my memories. It could take time, but I know I will forgive you. Are you okay with that?"

He caressed Pollo's face once more before letting his arm fall to his side. "Yes, of course. After all, I'm pretty sure I deserve it."

And so, with smiles plastered on their faces they unlocked the door, Pollo being the first to leave.

"Finally!" Complained Sprite, though she froze when she saw Druig leaving the bathroom as well, raising her eyebrows at them.

Pollo just winked at them.

Later, when Phastos would arrive at the jet, he wouldn't be greeted by Pollo. All the contrary, actually. It's Druig who would shush at him, gesturing at Pollo who'd fallen asleep on him. Phastos didn't say anything about it, though he was glad to see Pollo getting some sleep, for once.

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