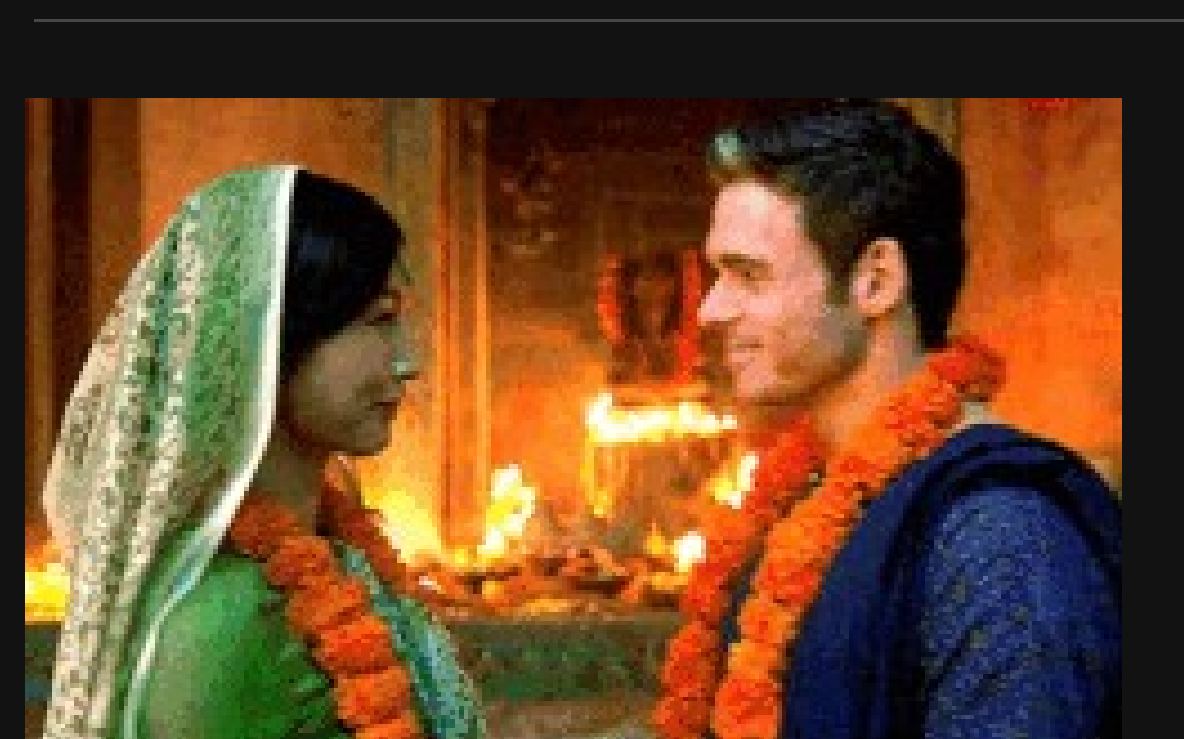
viii - Ikaris gets married (but not to the sun)



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Gupta Empire, Pataliputra, 4th century - 6th century

"WHY AM I HERE, AGAIN?"

Pollo had never attended a wedding before, so maybe he just didn't know much about them. Still, if he'd understood correctly, the male Eternals were supposed to help Ikaris prepare, which is what they were doing, so he didn't quite understand why he was helping Sersi. He didn't mind, however he wished to understand.

"Ajak is walking me to the altar and we each wanted four people to help us before," started to explain Sersi. "We just had to decide who would get you and who would get Druig. Ikaris got the short straw."

He clicked his tongue at that. "Come on, Druig isn't that bad. He was really happy for you, y'know?"

"You know I didn't mean it like that, Pollo," she sighed, smiling softly as him while he rearranged her dress. "We had two straws, the tall one was for you because you're taller and the short one was for Druig. It's not a bad thing. I'm sure Ikaris is very happy to have Druig with him."

"Okay, but why were we your last choices?"

She hesitated, obviously not wanting to hurt his feelings. "Well the girls would obviously be helping meout, but then the numbers were uneven and, no offence, but you and Druig aren't really that close with Ikaris."

She was right, of course. He hummed I'm agreement, even though he didn't look very convinced. He was about to say something else but Makkari slapped his shoulder.

" Leave the poor girl alone," she scolded him. " It's her wedding day!"

"Yeah, you wouldn't want to give her wrinkles," teased Sprite. "She already had enough to worry about, she doesn't need you to be one of those things as well."

"Wait, what did you mean by that?" Frowned Sersi.

"Hush you three," spoke up Thena. "This should be the happiest day of her life, not the most stressful."

"Well welcome to the Eternals," laughed the only boy in the room, "where every day is the most stressful day of your life."

The blonde woman tutted as she finished placing the veil —shawl?— all while making sure it wouldn't mess up Sersi's hair. Pollo hadn't expected her to take the task so seriously but it seemed that Thena had decided to see this as a mission and so she was just as focused on it as she would've been while hunting Deviants. On the other hand, Sprite was barely doing anything except for walking around and saying a few sarcastic comments.

"It's too bad... It's too bad your families can't be here," he breathed out, darkening the mood.

Since Sersi and Ikaris had announced their marriage, he hadn't been able to stop thinking about it. Their families were still on Olympia, but wouldn't they have wanted to be there for their children's wedding? He often felt like he was the only one to miss his family. They all acted like they never had anybody, but it was a lie. It had to be. Why would they continue fighting if it wasn't to go back to their families?

"I know." Smiled the future bride, trying to make the people around her smile again. "But I'm sure they'll be very happy for us when we come back. We can even have a second wedding on Olympia so that they can be there with us."

While it did seem to lift the spirits of everybody else, Pollo still had a sad expression on his face. He was about to speak up again, but the door behind them suddenly opened, resulting in shouts of annoyance, mostly from Thena.

"It's just me," pleaded Druig, lifting his hands in the air to surrender. "I'm here for Polly."

Titling his head slightly to the left, the taller man frowned. "What is it? Did I do something wrong? I don't remember doing anything wrong."

"You didn't do anything wrong," his friend reassured him. "I'm here because we have kind of an... emergency, on the boys' side. And you're the only one who can help."

Even though Druig had searched for the right word, all it took for Sersi to start panicking was to hear him say 'emergency'. "Something happened? Is it Ikaris? Does he regret the wedding? Please tell me he didn't run away."

Bewildered by how stressed out they all seemed to be in the room, the mind controller was at a loss of words for a few seconds. "Uh... no. No! He didn't run away. It's Kingo who's having an emergency. And, uh, we should really get going now. Wouldn't want him to get impatient."

He didn't really wait for an answer, probably knowing that someone might start asking stress filled questions. He grabbed Pollo's wrist and bolted away while the boy who'd been helping Sersi a few seconds ago waved at his friends. He wasn't quite sure why they were running, but they didn't stop until they were far away from the bride and her helpers.

For a second, they didn't talk, only taking deep breaths. It was a comforting second. Because when they spoke, it rarely ended well. But when they were in silence... When they were in silence, they didn't have to talk. They understood everything that the other wanted to say, sometimes even more. Today, there was nothing to understand. That didn't stop the silence from being calming, though.

"So," finally spoke up Pollo, breaking the silence. "Where is Kingo?"

A small smirk made its way onto Druig's lips. "With Ikaris."

"Ok...? Then what's the emergency?"

"There is no emergency," stated the smaller man without even looking at his friend. "Not yet, at least."

At that moment, Pollo wished he'd been the one who could read minds so he could understand what was going on in Druig's. Why would he bring him here if there wasn't an emergency?

"Because I was bored," replied the other man before he could even utter his thoughts. "And let's be honest, neither of them really needed us anyway."

Oh.He wasn't quite sure what to answer to that, but he knew that he didn't have to. Druig already knew what he was thinking. With a smile, he let himself fall onto the ground, sighing. He didn't move, but he felt his friend kick his leg softly. He saw Druig looking down at him with an amused smile and he let himself close his eyes.

"Are you dead?" The mind controller asked.

"Yes," was Pollo's immediate answer. "In every sense of the term."

"There's only one sense." Druig's voice was closer now, so he had to guess that he'd led down next to him.

"I'm super dead," he tried to explain.

He only heard a hum of agreement, but it was enough. The whole wedding had been unrealistically stressful for people who had done nothing the whole time, like them. Now, they were away from the fuss and it's not like anybody would notice that they were gone anyway. They could just relax after the wedding, about the Deviants, about everything.

Pollo's heart skipped a beat as he felt something brush his hand. He didn't dare to open his eyes, but there were no doubts in his mind that Druig's hand was just next to his own. Well, to be honest, there wasn't much on his mind but the thought of their hands intertwined. But it wasn't the case. They were just close to each other. Closer than they had been in a very long time. However, this time they were sober and fully aware of what was going on. In a sudden rush of courage, Pollo moved his pinky, making it touch the other man's hand. It wasn't much, but he hoped it would be enough for Druig to get the message. He felt the mind controller's hand shift slightly and his heart started running faster than Makkari ever could, hoping Druig wasn't trying to take his hand away from him.

But neither of them would ever know how this might've ended as the sound of footsteps interrupted the moment. Both their eyes opened in a second and they jumped on their feet, making sure to be away from one another. The hand that had touched Druig's flew over Pollo's mouth, as though he'd said the most horrifying things ever. But then again, he might've just thought it. His eyes were wide as he looked at the ground, refusing to meet his friend's gaze. He wasn't quite sure what had just happened, however he did know that he didn't want to think about it for another second.

And he didn't have to, because Ajak quickly appeared in front of them. "There you two are! The wedding is about to start! Come on, we need to go!"

They both agreed and apologized before following the Prime Eternal and, as always whenever they felt happy around each other, they refused to look at each other or talk about it.

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Pollo's colours were normally gold and black, but he'd guessed that Sersi and Ikaris wouldn't appreciate him arriving at their wedding all sparkling gold. He could've gone in black as well, however it was pretty clear that this was the colour Druig would choose and he didn't want to match with him. Still, he wanted to be true to himself, which is why he'd decided to come wearing a mix of both colours. The gold wasn't sparkling, but it was still predominant. The black shirt was almost fully hidden by the gold drape he'd put around himself, yet there were still a few black motifs on it.

Now, this might've been his first wedding, but he'd expected the union of two Eternals to be a lot more interesting to watch. They didn't even have chairs for them to sit down on. It probably was just symbolic and all, but he still wished he didn't have to stand up through all of this. He was next to Phastos, leaning on him a bit so as not to let it show to the two future married that he was tired. In front of him, he could hear Ajak sobbing. He knew that it must've been very emotional to her, as she was basically their mother while they were on Earth, but he still didn't understand the fuss over the whole wedding thing.

It's not like anybody was saying anything very poetic or beautiful and the relationship between Ikaris and Sersi wouldn't change. They'd still be together and still be disgustingly sweet. They'd be able to call each other husband and wife, but what was so extraordinary about that? He knew that it was supposed to be a gesture to prove that they would always be together, however he didn't understand how that was surprising. In a relationship or not, they were Eternals. Their whole thing was that they would stay together for all of eternity. He had tried, but he couldn't think of one thing that marriage would bring them that they didn't already have.

But they were happy. So he was happy for them. If marriage was what they wanted, then they could have it. He wouldn't be the killjoy at this wedding. That was normally Druig's job. Still, this time it seemed like Sprite was the one who'd decided to be a killjoy, which was unlike her, but Pollo didn't question it. It was none of his business and, honestly, he didn't cared that much.

He was interrupted in his thoughts when he finally managed to focus on the human priest. Because, of course, Sersi and Ikaris had decided to have a human wedding. " May the gods hereby bond you in matrimony. Congratulations."

The newly wed couple looked at each other, smiling, and let their foreheads touch softly, closing their eyes. They stayed like that for a few seconds, nobody saying a word which made Pollo frown.

"Is it over, now?" He breathed out.

Almost immediately, Makkari and Ajak both hit him on each arm, making him jolt away and take a step back. He looked at them, offended and surprised, at a loss of words. When he finally got back from the shock caused by the sudden attack, he spoke up, pouting.

"What did I do?" He was still whispering, but it had been enough to get Sersi and Ikaris' attention. They started laughing at the interaction, which quickly resulted in everybody laughing, except for Pollo himself, who was still confused about what was going on. "What did I do?!"

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After some explanation about how rude he'd been by asking that, Pollo had been left alone and the Eternals had stopped laughing, instead letting Sersi and Ikaris dance. He'd finally found somewhere to sit down, which is where both he and Druig now were. Ajak had come to find them, but she was still standing up. She'd stopped crying, now using a tissue to dry her eyes. From time to time, they would hear her sniffles, but neither of them minded.

As he hummed along the music, Pollo let his gaze wander towards Druig. The shadow of a smile appeared on his face as an idea came to him. He stood up and extended his hand toward him.

"Would you do me the honour to give me this dance?"

They'd been in a similar situation a few centuries ago, but that didn't stop Druig from being stunned by the proposition. He remembered very well how much he'd regretted not accepting to dance with Pollo, but it had been in a different contest. He'd been angry at him, for a reason he couldn't even quite remember. But now, he knew that if he took Pollo's hand, he would never let go. And that was a terrifying thought. He'd felt Pollo's finger against his hand earlier and that had been the most electrifying contact they'd ever made. Hell, they'd slept together and it had been nothing compared to how fast his heart beat when he realized that the taller boy wanted to take his hand. He knew that, at that moment, if Ajak hadn't arrived, he would've held his hand and they would never have been able to come back from something so simple it hurt.

And that's because he knew just how much he wanted to dance with Pollo that he had to refuse. "I'm sorry, dance really isn't my thing."

Pollo's expression fell and so did his hand. His disappointment couldn't have been more obvious if he'd written it in ink on his forehead. "Oh. Okay. Well, if you change your mind, I'll still be there. Until then... Ajak? May I?"

"Why not? It feels like I haven't danced in centuries." She smiled, taking Pollo's hand as they walked towards the dance floor with one last glance towards Druig.

He tried not to let it show that he was hurt by this second rejection but, of course, Ajak could not be fooled so easily. She was the Prime Eternal, after all, and she knew her Eternals better than they knew themselves.

"Do you know why he never accepts to dance with you?" She asked, even though she had that look on her face that said she already knew the answer to her own question.

He shrugged it off, trying not to let show his discomfort. "Druig doesn't like dancing. Not with me."

"Maybe, but he does want to dance with you," she laughed. "That's why he keeps refusing."

"That's messed up," he couldn't help but blurt out. "No offence, Ajak, but that sounds kind of stupid and I don't see why he would do something like that."

She seemed tempted to say anything, however she didn't and just smiled knowingly. "Then tell me, what were you two doing earlier when I walked in on you?"

"Oh, we were just taking a break. Druig tricked me into going with him," he explained, smiling fondly at the memory.

"He tricked you?"

"Yeah. He told me Kingo was having an emergency." He wasn't quite sure why he was explaining it to her. Maybe he just wanted to talk about it.

He knew by the way her smile grew wider that he'd said something he definitely shouldn't have said. "That's not a very good excuse, is it? Did you really believe it?"

"What?" He frowned, not expecting the question. "Of course I did! Why wouldn't I?"

He made her spin and heard her laugh. Quickly, he glanced at Druig, as though saying his face would explain everything. Their eyes met and he suddenly felt a warm feeling take over him. He was about to lower down his temperature, realizing he'd probably lost control, but Ajak showed no sign of feeling the change. And if there was anybody who would've told him, it would've been her.

"I don't know," she teased. "Maybe because it's stupid. But I guess you tried to convince yourself it wasn't just so you wouldn't feel guilty about going with him."

"Okay, first of all, no," he stated, huffing in annoyance," and second of all, even if whatever you're saying was true, I don't see your point."

"My point is that he could've chosen anybody to 'take a break with'. In all respect, Pollo, he's good friends with Makkari, while you two have kind of an on-and-off relationship. Why wouldn't he choose her instead of you? Unless of course, he feels safer around you, unless he..."

Pollo let go of her hands and took a step back like she'd just slapped him. His hands were shaking and he had a sick look in his face. "Look, Ajak, I know this is a very nostalgic day for you. You basically set up Ikaris and Sersi and now they're getting married. Good for you. Good for them. And I love you, I really do, but I don't want you meddling with my love life or whatever it is you think you. Druig and I are friends. Barely. And my life is messed up enough as it is, so I don't need some romance bullshit to make it worse. I'm sorry, but leave it alone. Please."

She seemed just as shaken by his words as he had been by her meddling. "No. I'm the one who should be sorry. You have nothing to apologize for."

She was right. He had nothing to apologize for, still he hoped he'd talked about this with her at least once. When she could still help him understand. When she was still alive.

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