12

Alright guys this chapter has some dialouge in spanish, but i'll write the translation in italics beside it just so you guys don't get confused. I was also aiming for a double update but this chapter is turning out to be a really long one so I'll keep it this way and then update two or three times tomorrow.

Hope you guys enjoy :)

PRESENT DAY

AMAZON RAINFOREST

AURORA

I have seen friends and people be murdered. I have been witness to thousands of deaths at the hands of Deviants and humans. I have seen empires rise and fall.

I've seen people sabotage each other, overcome by the need for power and money. I've watched as they've become thirsty for power– for control.

I've watched over the years, as if it were a movie, how people evolved and changed, leaving their values behind and becoming selfish beings.

I've seen them be born and then die of old age while I'm still the same.

Humanity is the most painful thing I have ever seen.

I've been betrayed and lied to. Hurt and beaten up so bad I could barely breathe.

And yet the hurt and resentment of watching them fall sobehind on what their full potential could've been will never compare to what I felt when Druig left me.

I had to admit, our relationship hadn't been perfect. We'd fought and broken up a couple of times during the course of our years together– that was 222 years exactly– but we'd always come back.

Always.

It didn't matter what happened. Whether I'd been in the wrong, or he had been, one of us would eventually swallow their pride and go to the other, and then we'd be fine.

That didn't happen that time.

Druig was a prideful person. His beliefs were set in stone, and while we had the same values, there were still things we disagreed on.

I blamed it partly on having hated each other for so long. Part of me felt like sometimes that routine we'd had for so long rose up, and we'd end up bickering over the smallest things.

Still, we always managed to fix it.

Because as much as there was bad, there was also good

So much good.

We seemed to fit almost perfectly, always in sync and together. Druig was the only person I never seemed to get enough of. The one person I never grew tired of. He'd helped me grow and I'd made him see that maybe you didn't need to control people to let them be peaceful.

Sometimes, while I was in Africa after everything happened, I would wonder how he was doing.

How the village was doing.

I didn't like letting something get to me completely. Each and every empire I'd been in, I had been careful not to get too attached. I knew better than to love a place to my fullest extent because I knew that no matter how incredible it was, no matter how much I loved the people and the place and everything in it, I knew it would eventually disappear.

At the end, everything was temporary except me.

But this place.

This place was different. I got carried away. I made it my home. I really had no reason not to. Druig was here, and with his powers, he was able to make this place everlasting.

He'd kept this place alive and going for hundreds of years. He'd helped these people thrive. He'd protected the forest and everything in it.

And so I'd let this place into my heart completely.

How foolish of me.

Druig was an unpredictable person. Always had been, always would be. I had wanted to believe that maybe he wouldn't be that way with me. That maybe he would understand me and push his stubbornness aside.

He hadn't.

And in return, I'd been forced to leave my home. My people.

It had shattered my soul entirely.

Honestly, I have no memory of the few weeks after he left.

I knew he'd be here, of course. It was his home; his life's work.

But I didn't come looking for him. I figured if he'd left so easily then I hadn't meant much to him, and so I called Sersi and she told me it was best not to go looking for him. That he would contact me in the next few weeks when he realized he'd made a mistake.

He never did.

Just like that, I'd lost my home, both literally and figuratively.

I felt shattered.

It was months before I could start to function normally again. I'd have these fits where everything would overwhelm me and the energy inside me would pent up and then I'd explode.

Normally it resulted in me hurting people. I cursed my powers for relying so much on my emotions and my state of mind because I'd find myself spinning out of control more often than not.

The angrier I'd get the more my powers would get out of hand and I'd find myself unable to control when my powers started and when they didn't. I'd be at a bar and then someone would do something and I would absolutely lose it and use my energy blasts on the wrong things.

I got out of control so much that Ajak advised me to visit Gil and Thena back in Australia.

But then my anger had faded to sadness, and instead of feeling angry at him, I felt disappointed in myself.

I'd believed so long ago that love was complex and complicated, which was why I stayed out of it.

I hadn't listened to myself and look where it had led me.

My heart had been broken by the very same man that had fixed it in the first place.

"We're almost there" Ikaris calls out from the front of the car, driving down the small dirt road between the forest.

I exhale a breath, my fists closing so hard I can feel my nails digging half-crested shapes into the palms of my hands.

The thing about love though, is that you can never make it go away.

As much as I want to hate him, I know I'll never be able to.

He was my first love. My only love.

And I'm sure that as long as I'm alive I'll never stop loving him.

"You alright?" Sersi's voice comes out quietly beside me.

I turn to her, my face questioning.

She looks down at my hands, eyebrows rising. I look down with her, watching as a drop of blood trickled from the palm of my hand and into my jeans.

"Oh" I let my hands loose, using my sleeve to wipe off the blood from the cuts.

"You don't have to do this, you know." She begins, reassurance dripping off her words "You can stay in the car while we talk to him"

I shake my head, swallowing the ball of emotion down my throat.

"You know he won't come if I don't go" I heave in a breath. "I'm alright. Just nervous is all"

She looks at me for a second, scanning my face before humming.

"If you say so"

I turn to look forward, watching as the car in front of us nears the village entrance. It halts to a stop on the side of the road, Sprite, Kingo, and Karun getting out of it. Their heads turn to our car, watching as Ikaris slows to a stop and turns it off.

"What will we do if he says no?" I ask them as I unbuckle my seatbelt.

"Don't worry, Aurora. He won't say no" Gil turns to me, giving me one of his warmest smiles before he exits the car.

I nod, not giving it a second thought before I step out of the car as well.

My feet touch the damp dirt beneath me. Instantly, I can feel the surge of energy this forest gives me. So much nature and pureness.

I inhale deeply, smelling the wet dirt and the trees around me. I resist the urge to cry as all the memories and emotions come flooding back at once.

How I'd missed it

I turn to the village entrance, looking up at the trees. Light comes in rays, illuminating the forest floor.

Karun holds up his camera, a look of wonder on his face.

"Come on guys!" Kingo calls out, walking towards the entrance with determination.

I hold out a hand to stop him, my eyes wide.

"Wait, Kingo don't–"

He walks straight into an invisible force, sending him reeling back into the dirt.

I can't hold back a laugh as he groans. I turn to Karun, unable to hold off my smile.

"Did you get that, Karun?"

"I did, Ma'am"

Kingo motions to Karun, a death glare on his face.

"Delete that now, or you're fired"

I pout, looking down at him.

"Why do you have to be such a crybaby, Kingo?" I ask laughter in my tone.

He looks up, a scowl on his face as he holds out a hand covered in dirt and flips me off.

"What is it?" Sersi asks as he walks closer into the village entrance but stops a few steps away.

I catch up to them, unable to keep a smile off my face

"When I was here I set up a protective shield against unnatural beings. I put it on with the thought that only me and Druig could go past, but not other creatures" I explain, walking closer to the wall.

I hold up my hand, reaching out and watching as the force field meets my palm, pulsating with my energy.

Immediately, the force field lightens a light purple, showing the entire dome that covers the village.

"Aurora," Sersi looks up at the field in wonder "That's–that's amazing"

I smile, turning back to look at all of them.

"Yeah, I know. It took me a month to gather the energy to do it. I was exhausted for weeks after"

Without another thought I close my eyes, willing the force field to go away. I feel as it starts to fade away, the entire dome disappearing before our eyes.

"There, you can pass now" I motion.

Kingo stands up, brushing the dirt off his hands and grumbling out about his pants being dirty now.

Ikaris goes first, followed by Sersi and then Gil and THena. The rest follow next, all of them looking around as they head into the village.

I stand still for a moment, taking a second to prepare myself.

Here goes nothing.

I follow the team, taking my time to absorb everything around me like it's the last time I'm seeing it.

It's not long before the small houses are visible. I force down my panic as they head into the town, people milling from place to place.

On my right I can see people building hammers and axes, the steady banging of metal against metal filling my ears.

I force myself to walk forward, emotions and memories everywhere as I look around.

In essence, it was the same village I'd lived in so long ago, but there were some changes. The houses were a lot more modern. Lights lit up on the porches. There were a lot more people than there had been 50 years ago, but that was logical.

On the porch of a house, a group of girls sits, making baskets and small crafts.

I can't keep off a smile, the feeling of home filling up every crevice in my body. We walk through the village, looking around at the people and the animals.

"Aurora?"

I turn to look at the voice calling me. An old woman, her hair white with age, her face filled with wrinkles that showed she'd lived a life filled with emotion.

She sits on a chair on a porch, rocking back and forth. She stares at me with wide eyes, as if she'd just seen a miracle happen before her eyes.

"Eres tú?" *Is it really you?* Her voice comes out hoarse and withered.

I frown, confused as to why this woman knows my name. She stands up slowly, not taking her eyes off me as she steps down the small sets of stairs.

"Perdón" *Sorry* I tilt my head to the side "Quién eres?" *Who are you?* My Spanish comes out with a thick accent, a consequence of not having spoken it for so long.

She laughs as she walks towards me, shaking her head in astonishment.

"Todos estos años y no haz cambiado nada" *All there years and you haven't aged one bit* Her blue eyes blazed with confidence and power.

It takes me a moment to place her, but with those eyes, I could recognize her everywhere.

I break out into a smile, laughing.

"Ana?" I ask, my eyes widening. She nods, laughing back at me. I go in to hug her, making sure I'm not being too rough.

It had been 50 years since I'd seen her. She'd been about 15 years old when I'd left, meaning she was about 65 right now.

She hugs me back, the warmth of her body waming my own in the embrace.

"Tantos años" *So many years* I pull back, unable to hold back my eyes from watering.

She stares up at me, nodding.

"Una aquí ya vieja y tú? Igual que Druig. Jovenes como siempre" *I'm so old now, but you? Just the same as Druig. Young as always* Her smile waves at the mention of Druig.

"Como está?" *How is he?* I ask her, my lips pursing.

"Te extraña." *He misses you* She notes, nodding. "Lleva mucho tiempo extrañandote" *He's been missing you for a long time*

I nod, sighing. I'm about to respond when Thena's hand touches my shoulder.

"We need to keep moving" She motions to the rest of the team, which keeps walking forward. I nod, turning back to Ana.

"Me tengo que ir, pero alrato regreso para hablar contigo, Si?" *I need to go, but I'll be back to talk to you, alright?* I assure her.

She nods, ushering me away with a big smile on her face. She knows I'm here to see Druig.

"Ve, yo te espero" *Go. I'll wait for you.*

Without another word I turn around, continuing to walk forward and catching up with the team.

In front of me, Kingo and Karun walk. Karun holds a big smile, twisting around in circles to record everything. He turns to Kingo.

"It's very nice here, sir"

Kingo looks around, grimacing at the sight of everything.

"Don't be fooled, Karun. Ignorance is bliss"

I roll my eyes at his comment but remain silent, not really up to fight with him.

I watch as Sprite walks to one of the men, tapping him in the back.

"Hola, estamos buscando a Druig, donde está?"

The man frowns, looking around at us and then back at Sprite.

"De que conoces a Druig?" *How do you know Druig?* He asks, turning back around to his working station.

"Somos amigos. De la Universidad" *We're friends from college* Sprite answers.

The man goes still, standing straight and then turning back with a smile.

"Hello, Sprite" Druig's voice comes out of the man. Around us, I feel as all the people are still, all of them turning to face the main building.

I roll my eyes at his dramatics. I'm at enough of a distance that I can stay unnoticed, but near enough to watch as the yellow doors open.

He walks through the door.

My heart stills for a moment as I take him in. He has a coat, wrapped around him. His hair is the same as how I'd told him to cut it all those years ago. His expression is smug, filled with confidence and pride as he takes a couple of steps and walks down into the dirt ground.

The entire team except me walks forward as Druig scans all of them.

"I've missed all of you" His voice oozes with a conceited tone.

A strange emotion flashes over his features for a moment, his eyes passing through every one of them.

He thinks I'm not here.

He smirks, hands in front of him.

"I appreciate the visit after all these years, but if we're being honest, I don't really want you here" He begins, taking a step back.

I can tell Ikaris is about to protest, his demeanor changing as he puts his guard up.

Before I know it I'm taking a step forward.

"Druig"

My voice cuts through the silence. It's like even the birds and the crickets have stopped chirping.

He stills completely, his coy smile disappearing in an instant.

He turns to look at me.

I'm not sure how long we stand there, staring at each other. My heart is beating so hard I'm almost sure everyone can hear it.

"It's important" My voice comes out filled with emotion, even though I don't want it to.

He blinks, seeming to be in a trance. Then his gaze jolts away from me, and he turns back to the team, sighing before forcing out a smile.

"Make yourselves at home"

Just like that, we were one step closer to convincing Druig.

And I'm one step closer to figuring out why he left.

Continue reading next part