

## BABYLON 575 BC

AURORA

"Phastos, did you go to the party as I told you to?" I hear Ajak's voice before I see her.

She rounds the corner into the room where Phastos, Druig, and I are.

I bite back laughter, looking at Phastos to see what he will respond.

He looks away from his design, pursing his lips and nodding.

"Pshh the party, yeah" He shrugs it o , avoiding eye contact with Ajak.

"Aurora went in his place" Druig calls out from his seat, turning to look from Ajak to me.

I scowl, groaning in annoyance. Did he always have to ruin it?

"Who was talking to you?" Phastos retorts, turning to Druig.

Ajak pauses mid-step, turning to look from Phastos to me.

" Youwent to the party..." She sighs. "Aurora, what did you do?" Her tone is knowing, and I fight back a smirk.

I shrug, leaning back and grabbing my daggers from my belt, using them as a form of distraction.

"I don't know what you mean by that, Ajak" I respond, fighting to urge to laugh.

I hear as Druig stands up from his seat.

"She started a brawl against one of the soldiers" He responds, completely throwing me under the bus.

I look up at him, my eyes starting to flare bright purple. He smiles his foul smile, flashing at me his unnaturally white teeth in defiance.

"You little shit-" I clutch my daggers, standing up abruptly from my chair.

"Woah there" Druig puts his hands up in mock surrender, biting out a laugh. God, this boy really did know how to push my buttons.

"Aurora" Ajak's warning stops me just as I'm stepping towards him.

I halt, turning to her for a moment. Her warning stare stills my anger, and I can feel my eyes dimming down back to brown.

The room is absorbed with silence, Sprite and Phastos watching the exchange.

It was no secret we hated each other. From the moment we'd met the both of us had been intolerable towards the other, and the team knew it.

I had to admit, it was getting pretty tiring, and I knew that the team was getting annoyed at how much we bickered. Sometimes we went days without talking to each other, and then something would happen and the both of us would explode in a series of shouts.

It was hard controlling my anger, but it was even harder controlling the energy of my yells or fights.

I knew Druig didn't have any other power apart from mind control, and as much as it sparked curiosity, it wasn't actually any use to him when we fought, which was why he mostly resorted to making mean comments.

I on the other hand had to admit that I'd thought about killing him way more than once. I knew he was at a disadvantage when we were on the ship, and as much as I hated him I wasn't one for unfair fights.

On land though, that was a different story.

We'd gotten into two physical fights, and they hadn't been pretty. I had started both of them, but it was only because he was being mean and intolerable.

We were out in a sort of bar when he'd whispered something under his breath as he was walking away and that had been the last straw.

Sometimes, when I'm fighting, I blank out, so I don't really know what happened except that when I regained consciousness I was being held back by Gil and Ikaris, and Druig was being held back by Thena and Ajak.

Sprite told me I'd gone all angry and basically attacked him, and since we'd been surrounded by humans, he'd retaliated with just as much force as I had.

Apparently, I had broken one of his ribs, and one of his flimsy humans had stabbed me with a wooden knife in the stomach

It was safe to say we'd both been pretty grounded by Ajak.

After that, the team kind of became tired of all the fighting, and both Druig and I knew that it was better to save the bickering for the appropriate times.

Of course, that didn't stop us from throwing random comments or mean stares.

I tune back into the conversation, noticing that they're talking about the design Phastos is displaying in the center of the room.

"It's a steam engine" Phastos explains, looking up at his design in wonder.

Ajak turns to him, eyebrows high.

"It's too soon" She exclaims, looking up at the design. She looks at the doorway as Sersi finally walks in. "There she is"

I make eye contact with Sersi, sharing a silent look as she walks fully into the room.

"I'm sorry, what did I miss?" She questions as she walks around the design to meet me.

"Oh, nothing, just Phastos wallowing in disappointment" I note, my tone light.

Sersi laughs, looking at Phastos, who only nods silently.

"I am sure you have something simpler" Ajak orders, looking at Phastos as he walks around the room.

Phastos turns to her, brows high.

"Simple?"

He turns to his design, moving his hands around to remove and rearrange pieces until an entirely different machine is displayed in front of us.

"Ladies and gentlemen... the plow"

There's a moment of silence, where everyone is just admiring the new tool.

I shrug, crossing my hands across my chest.

"It looks good enough." I turn to Phastos. "What does it do?"

"Aurora... it's a plow" Druig's voice comes from the other side of the room. " It plows"

I make a face at him, turning to Phastos and watching as he nods in the direction of Druig.

Druig laughs, pushing himself off the wall he was leaning against before making a beeline for the door. Just as he's about to exit the room, his voice trails behind him.

"I told you"

That mother fucker.

—

"Why do you always come here?"

Druig's voice jolts me out of my thoughts. I turn my head to the side, really not in the mood as I push my knees closer and hug them to my chest.

The both of us stared at the city below us, watching the sunset over the Babylon walls.

It was peaceful, to watch the sunset. I often found myself sneaking into the temple roofs, even if they were steep. I loved watching the city in silence.

Everything seemed too strange. How we'd gone from seeing civilization live in mere huts and hunt with wooden sticks to building machines and intricate temples.

Humanity was strange.

I'd been alive long enough to witness life and death and everything in between, and yet I was still marveled by the way they lived. The way they felt and laughed and built.

It amazed me how so much could come out of just them.

I had grown fond of people, I really had. They had been placed in a special corner of my heart. No matter the violence or the peace, they had built so many things throughout the time I'd been alive, it was impossible not to be impressed.

I also envied them.

I envied their ability to live and grow and evolve. To hunt and develop and go through their entire life and then finally be able to die.

They seemed too little, so insignificantly small compared to the vast universe around us.

In the distance, I could see a couple of small children, running around the streets. They yelled in laughter before their mother came out of their house, chastising them and making them go inside.

I couldn't help but smile at the sight.

Sometimes, when the mission got too much to handle, or I got into a particularly bad fight with Druig I would come here to ease my mind and control my thoughts.

"Now's really now the time Druig, I'm not in the mood to fight" I mumble, not looking back at him. I rest my chin between my knees, watching as a swarm of birds goes by in the distance.

There's a moment of silence, and I expect Druig to say something snarky or reply with a rude comment, but instead, he sighs, walking forward and taking a seat on the edge of the roof next to me.

"What are you doing?" I ask, turning to him with a scowl.

He shrugs, not looking at me, but rather at the view below us.

"I'm watching. Can't I watch?" He asks, his tone defiant.

I finally turn to him, my eyes meeting his ice blue ones. I purse my lips, giving myself a few seconds to take his features in.

I hated to admit it, but the longer I continued to know him, the more handsome he became.

He stares back, his gaze unwavering, eyes boring into mine. It was always difficult to know what he was thinking. He was such a master in entering people's minds that he could block everyone out of his.

I thought about what it had been that had made me hate him, and for a moment I could not think of a single thing.

He breaks the stare first, his jaw tightening as he looks from me to the sunset.

Neither of us said anything, an unspoken agreement of a truce hung in the air. It seemed like up here, I didn't hate him, and he didn't hate me.

I tried to take in the moment, to absorb the peace of his presence beside mine. If I scooted over I was almost sure our legs would be touching.

"What does it feel like?" I ask finally, my voice breaking the silence moment.

"What does what feel like?" His accent laces his words, his tone low and serious as always.

"Controlling their minds" I motion below us, to the hundreds of people living along, completely clueless.

He shrugs, pursing his lips.

"What does channeling your energy feel like?" He asks.

"Warm" I reply. It had always been the best way to describe it.

He nods, his face void of emotion. It had been the first time in a hundred years that we had talked more than a sentence without one of us getting angry.

I had to admit, it wasn't completely horrifying. I actually enjoyed his company.

Just a little.

"It's cold. Really cold" He finally says, his eyes boring at the humans below us. "It's like my mind is in a thousand different places and yet nowhere at all."

"Can you hear their thoughts?" The question comes out before I can stop it, and I feel my eyes widen slightly.

He lets out a bitter laugh.

"Every single one of them"

I bite my lip, deciding to leave it there, even though I have so many unanswered questions I want to ask him.

The both of us watch as the sun sets slowly, the air around us becoming colder with the night.

A strange feeling settles in my heart as I watch the humans below slowly start to light their torches and hand them up outside their houses.

"You know, it's a pity" I finally speak as the final rays of the sun disappear behind the mountains and we're enveloped by darkness. I can almost not see Druig's silhouette beside me.

"What is?" His voice breaks the silence of the night, and it's the most beautiful thing I've ever heard.

"They'll end up destroying each other" I finally admit, swallowing down my emotion.

"What makes you say that?"

"Humans are selfish, greedy beings, Druig" I turn to him, even though I can't really see his face. "They'll end up destroying each other."

I'm grateful he doesn't ask me to explain, because I'm not even sure I know why I think that way.

I've seen civilizations fall as their greed becomes more, and it's only a matter of time before this one does too.

It's not long before Druig finally stands up and leaves.

And I'm left alone again.

I'm not sure how long I stay up there, but by the time I go back down, I can recognize the strange feeling I had had in the back of my throat this entire time.

Peace.

It didn't matter what I felt, because when I met the rest of the team, Druig was back to his old self, and I was back to mine.

Five months later, Babylon fell.

a/n comment what you thought?!