

A/N: I woke up to 14k reads and I almost started crying! I cannot begin to express how grateful I am and I thank you all so much for reading this story!! I read each and every one of your comments and I want to say that they all make me gush. Ily all and tell me what you think ab this chapter when you finish :)

⚔

TENOCHTITLAN 1521 AD

AURORA

Druig and I disagreed on many things, but our faith in humanity wasn't one of them.

I liked civilizations. I liked humans. As much as I had seen the bad, I'd also seen the good. They had good souls, o en corrupted by power and greed. I had lived enough years now to have seen them grow and evolve; to become better and bigger and stronger.

I guess I would always have a so spot for humanity.

Druig did as well. A er Gupta the both of us had distanced ourselves, keeping it to the minimum. It was mostly on his part, though. We didn't talk, but I knew how much he cared about humans. A er all, he'd been witness to their minds and actions firsthand.

I was someone who believed blindly in things, and if I thought humanity was worth saving, then I would protect it until my last breath.

It pained me to see them destroying each other. I had seen a lot of murders. I had killed and I had been witness to horrible things.

But this. This was something else.

This was genocide. They were killed with no remorse. Women, children. They stabbed and shot every person they could see. I cursed Phastos for having given them the technology to do such horrible things.

We're here to kill the Deviant! reminded myself. Do not interfere

Ajak's voice looped again and again in the back of my head as I looked around me.

Why shouldn't I intervene? They were dying horrible, merciless deaths.

I blast a ball of energy into an incoming Deviant, sending it hurling backward and into a temple. It lets out a pained cry, slumping into the ground. It recovers quickly, regaining its footing and about to charge at me again when Kingo gives it one of his most powerful blasts.

The Deviant doesn't even let out a yell as it finally slumps into the ground, dead.

"How many more le?" I shout out to Kingo over the sound of the war around us.

He looks around, brow furrowed before looking back at me.

"I think that one was the last one!"

I nod in response, looking around me and trying to ignore the pang in my chest as people around us screamed in horror. Houses burned bright red, temples crumbling to the ground at the hands of the Spanish.

I loathed them at that moment. I shake my head, pushing back Ajak's warning. I see a family of people being cornered by a soldier. He points his gun at them and I watch as the mother and father cradle their small children in their arms, shielding them from danger.

Over my dead body. I was going to let someone kill an innocent child. An innocent family

Rage builds up inside me like a tidal wave, blood rushing in my ears. I can feel my eyes flashing purple, and in an instant I'm running, pushing soldiers and sending blasts of energy aimed at them, sending them flying backward.

⚔

I reach the family, grabbing the soldier by the neck and into a chokehold. The soldier fights against me for a few moments but I press my arm tighter until his body goes limp. I throw him to the ground, kicking him in the gut for good measure before turning turn back to the family.

"Come on! We don't have much time" I yell at them in their native language, motioning for them to stand up. The parents nod, but I see the woman let out a yell of pain when she carries her child.

"What's wrong?" I ask her. The woman points to her arm, which is swollen and red.

"My arm" She begins "I don't think I can carry him"

I look at the child for a moment before holding my arms open, motioning for her to give me the little boy.

She hesitates, looking around in panic.

"It's alright. I'll get you and your family out of here safely, don't worry" I assure her.

She nods a er a moment, holding out her boy to me. I take him, resting him on the side of my hips and taking the woman's shoulder to guide her through the maze of houses.

"We need to go fast, so you're going to have to follow my footsteps" I call out to them, turning around and weaving between the small houses.

I knew this city by heart. We had been here now long enough so that I knew the majority of the streets. Based on where we were, I estimated a hundred meters before we got out of the city safely.

I shoot at any soldier that comes near us with energy blasts, making sure to keep a protective barrier over the family as we got to the side of the lake.

I knew exactly how I was going to help them escape. The Aztecs had boats and ra s they used for fishing, and if I was right, we were going to exit the city right where they normally were. That way they could leave by water, touching land on the other side of the lake where the Spanish wouldn't find them.

We finally leave the arrays of houses, stepping out into the open port, where the lake begins. For a moment I don't see anything. I look around in a panic manner, my ponytail swishing behind me.

My heart breaks into a million pieces. They had no way out. I couldn't protect them much longer, either. Ajak was expecting me back any second and if I took any longer she would know what I was doing.

Just when I'm about to burst into tears, I see it. A ra about 10 meters away, floating mindlessly on the edge of the lake.

"Come on!" I motion towards the family, jogging towards the ra and entering the lake, not really caring about wetting my suit. I grab the ra , pushing it to the edge of the lake and motioning for the family to get on.

Once all of them are in place, I look back at the mother, handing her the small child in my arms. She takes him gratefully, eyes brimming with tears.

"Thank you, thank you" She repeats to me, reaching out and holding my hands with hers. I smile back, swallowing back my own tears.

"It was nothing. Stay in the lake as much as possible. If you get to the other side you get o and you run, you hear me? You run and you don't look back"

The mother nods frantically and I proceed to push them gently into the lake, making sure they have the momentum necessary to get to as further away from this city as fast as possible.

I stay looking at them for a moment, watching as the mother turns to look at the city behind me.

For a moment I feel sorry for them. I knew what it was to see your entire world burn to ashes. I had seen it thousands of times before, and I was certain to see it a thousand times more.

I go to turn around, wiping a stray tear that had fallen down my cheek. I'm about to go back to the forest, where Ajak and the rest of us had agreed to meet when I see him.

⚔

He stands there in the distance, staring right at me.

⚔

I halt mid-step, taking a moment to see him and take his features in. Even in the dead of night, the moon and the fire beside us cast a small glow on his face.

He looks as beautiful as ever.

⚔

I watch as his gaze turns from me to the family on the lake, lips pursed.

We stand there for a few seconds, neither of us saying anything. The sound of fire and people screaming mixed with the lapping of the waves in the lake fill the silence between us.

I know he won't say anything. Druig is many things, but he knew as well as I did that if I hadn't saved them they would have died.

As I said, we disagree on many things, but saving humanity isn't one of them.

I don't really know how much we stay there, but a er a few moments, he turns back to look at the city before us, the light making his jawline and side profile ever so godly.

And then, without a word, he walks forward, past me, and towards the forest. I stay there for a few seconds, too stunned to do anything before I finally turn around and follow him.

⚔

—

"There were more Deviants than you said" Thena calls out, walking into the clearing, Makkari next to her.

⚔

Phastos looks at her, shrugging. "Well, I'm sure it was a lot of fun for you"

Thena smirks. "It was."

⚔

Phastos looks down at his device, making a motion with his hand so that tiny earth is displayed on the palm of his hand.

"That marks the last of the Deviants in the planet" he states.

I nod in understanding, watching as the little globe on his hands spins around.

From behind us, the yelling gets louder, gunshots and screams increasing until they are almost next to us.

My head turns towards the sound, my heart sinking at the sight.

Soldiers push the Aztecs into the forest. I flinch every time I hear a gun firing. Beside me, Thena and Makkari also look, all of us frightened by the sight before us.

I turn to Ajak, my brow creasing. "Ajak, they'll kill all of them. Please" my voice comes out small and withered, like I have no more energy. I wince as the gunshots become more prominent. I can see Druig, staring at me from beside Ajak. He scans me, a frown on his face as he sees my pained expression.

⚔

Then he does something I never thought he would do. He takes a step forward, eyes flashing gold as he looks at the fighting, about to control the soldiers when Ajak touches his shoulder.

"Don't!" She warns. I turn to her, exhaling a desperate breath. I can feel the gaze of the entire team on me.

"Ajak—" I protest, taking a step forward.

"No, Aurora" Her voice is cold and calculated, void of any emotion. "We don't interfere in their wars."

"This isn't war" Druig speaks up suddenly, his accent prominent. I'd noticed over the years that the more upset he got, the thicker his accent seemed to get. "It's genocide"

⚔

"Their weapons have become too deadly" He turns to look at Phastos, jaw tightening. "Maybe it's such a good idea helping them advance, Phastos" He taunts, moving away from Ajak's arm and walking towards him.

I watch the exchange, biting my lip in frustration.

"Technology is a part of their evolutionary process, Druig" Phastos's voice is solemn, his gaze hard on Druig. "It's not exactly something I can stop"

"You can't, but I can" Druig's voice rises, filled with emotion. I nod in agreement taking a step closer to him.

I might have hated him, but I knew he was the only one who could make it stop; who could bring peace and save the people I so dearly loved. I meet my gaze with him, nodding ever so slightly.

Right then, at that moment, it didn't matter whether we hated each other or whether we had fought or if we hadn't talked in a long time. What mattered was saving the people that needed saving.

We were supposed to be heroes.

Why were we letting them die then?

"He's right, Ajak, he can" I look at her, eyes shining. "He can stop all the bloodshed"

"It's too late" Thena's voice cuts through the tension, her voice monotone.

I frown, turning to look at her.

"What are you talking about, Thena?" Worry lacing my words. I take a step towards her, a frown on my face. Her gaze is blank as she stares straight in front of her.

"Everyone is going to die" Her eyes go white. Her sword appears beside her.

⚔

"Are you alright?" I ask, taking another step to her. "Thena?"

It all happens in a flash.

One moment she's standing still, the next she's moving towards me, sword aimed directly at my face.

I dodge it, only slightly, but she's too much of a match for me. I've been fighting and using force shields all day now and I had little energy le .

She turns back around, grabbing her spear and twisting it back towards me.

Time slows down for a moment. I look down, watching her sword as she thrusts it into my abdomen at full force. I feel it rip into my body; through below my ribs and then out by the other side.

⚔

"Aurora!"

I don't process who's yelling, because in an instant she pulls her sword out, tripling the pain I'm feeling.

It's confusing because I don't really know what's happening. I stand still for a moment, too stunned to do anything.

⚔

Then I look down, watching as blood starts to pool out of me and into my Gray suit, staining it a deep red.

My hands go to my abdomen, my breath coming in and out of my lungs rapidly, hands shaking.

I look up, my gaze flickering around what's happening. Gil and Ajak are fighting Thena, struggling against her.

Makkari is on the ground, next to Sersl.

My eyes brim with tears at the pain, and I finally meet eyes with him. He stands a few feet away, eyes wide as he looks down at the blood in my hands.

⚔

His eyes are inked with worry as he rushes towards me, catching me as my knees buckle.

⚔

"Hey hey hey" He bites out quickly in a rushed tone. "You're fine" He soothes, looking around in panic. The only person who could help was Ajak, and she was busy fighting Thena.

⚔

He turns back to me, o ering a warming smile.

Wierd. I have never seen him smile like that.

⚔

"Rory" His accent is so thick I can almost not recognize he has just called me by a nickname. "You're fine,"

⚔

He lays me carefully on the ground so that I'm lying down, then going to kneel down next to me.

I close my eyes, letting out a shaky breath as I try to control the pain. I grind my teeth together, stifling a cry as he touches my stomach.

"Jesus you're bleeding so much" Druig mumbles to himself, his tone laced with concern.

⚔

"Oh, it's nothing" I finally speak, my voice strained. "I'll just tough it out. No biggie" I wince in pain as I speak, watching as his face transforms into an even more concerned one.

⚔

I frown up at him, my vision blurring on the edges.

"Why do you care anyway?" My voice is slurring and becoming weaker, and I can feel myself losing grasp.

He laughs, tilting his head to the side, eyebrows rising.

"All these years and you've never noticed?" He asks, looking at me for a moment. He's about to speak when he looks up, his gaze flooding with relief.

⚔

Noticed what? The way he stopped talking to me? The way he always had a mean comment on the tip of his tongue? I can't think straight, my mind reeling with pain and confusion.

I open my mouth, about to question what he just said when he stands up, making space for Ajak to kneel beside me. She puts a hand over my wound, closing her eyes and focusing on healing me.

I turn my head to Druig, whos' standing behind Ajak, my eyebrows scrunched together. I open my mouth, managing to strain out the last of my energy into words.

"Druig, noticed what?"

⚔

I don't really know what he answered because then my ears are ringing and I can't hear what anyone is saying, and then everything finally turns black.

⚔

a/n yeah that happened :)

⚔