## Chapter XX

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Her hand was tangled inside his hair, gently brushing through the brown strands with her fingers.  Druig had his head placed in her lap, his arms wrapped around her waist, crossed behind her back.  He had his eyes closed, and even if he had reassured her just a
minute ago that he wouldn't fall asleep, Persia picked up on so snores wailing the silence.  A smile pulled at the corners of her lips and didn't allow her to drop it.
She had her eyes glued to the boy.  Persia never really realized how unrelaxed he held his face, all that time.  Until now.
Eyelids so ly resting, no crease to his brows. Lips not pulled up.  It didn't look like him, yet exactly like that Druig she knew.  Her fingers travelled about his features, tracing their outlines.  It almost felt like little electrical shocks whenever the tips faintly touched the skin.  A vibration caused her head to flip, torso jumping back.  She knitted her brows and panic-struck tried to find the source with
her eyes.  Druig made a sound which only caused her to be more nervous.  She put her hand under his head and li ed him o her, so that she could get up.
Then she placed his head back down on a pillow she grabbed.  On tiptoes, Persia rushed through the room and finally found the device which wouldn't stop making those awfully loud tones.  She held the display in front of her eyes, staring back at it in confusion.  Unknown number.
Maybe it was Maya.  Her finger pressed the green button and she held the speaker to her ear.  "Hello?" she tried lowering her voice, quickly walking into the
"Hello? Persia is that you?" a familiar voice asked, but she wouldn't have expected it.  Persia swallowed, the calm vanishing from her chest.  "Ikari?"  "Bersia are you okay?" he asked the worm behind his voice sooming.
"Persia, are you okay?" he asked, the worry behind his voice seemin too real.  "How did you get my number?" she avoided his question, forcing he voice to sound as monotone as she could.
"Sersi gave it to me, she's worried." he paused, "We're all worried."  Persia pushed her tongue between her teeth, taking a breath, "I'm alright."  "Are you with Druig, did he do something?" he urged, accent slithering between his words.
She swallowed, pushed her lips on top of one another. "I told you, I'r alright."  There was no way she would tell him what happened, what was happening in that moment.  For the first time she had something to herself, she would keep it to
herself as long as she could.  She felt like it was going to ruin it.  Ikaris alreadyruined it by calling.  A sigh resounded through the speaker, "Persia, I need to speak with
Her gaze rushed down to her hands which balled next to her body.  "And that can't wait for tomorrow?"  The man at the other end of the line responded quickly but was aware of her rising tone.  "No, it's important. Just you and me."  Persia sco ed, then quieted.
"I honestly don't want to speak to you."  She picked up how he took a breath, fell flat.  "Yes, I understand that. And I'm so sorry you had to find you this way we-"
"No excuses, it just makes it worse."  Persia interrupted, running a hand over her forehead.  Her body turned towards the other room, so silent she could almost hear the boy fast asleep next door.  "And you can't tell me over the phone?"  "No." Heris speks a faint birt of guilt correins a or "Actually. Here
"No.", Ikaris spoke, a faint hint of guilt carrying a er, "Actually, I'm already at the hotel."  Persias eyes shot open, twitching.  "You're kidding."
"I'm not, could you come outside?" he almost laughed uncomfortably, that usual steadiness gone.  A cold breath hurt in her lungs, exhaling it. "Wait there. Don't you dare step foot inside this building or call again."  She hung up the phone before he could say any more.  The phone dropped next to her body, arm limped. Head pushed
The phone dropped next to her body, arm limped. Head pushed against the wood, eyes falling shut, pain rushing her joints.  She took a deep breath.  "God, whŷ" she muttered to herself, unlocking the door and stepping back into the dark.  Persia walked along the ground until she stood roughly above Druig
He had turned to the side, knees pushed up a bit.  The smile returned to her face.  She grabbed a blanket from the bed and spread it over him, crouched down and gave him a kiss to the cheek.  "I will be back."
"I will be back."  Persia rushed out of the room, closing the door behind her before sh could decide to turn.  Whatever Ikaris had to say, it better be important.  Her feet carried her down the five flights of stairs, pulling the jacket
closer around her body when the chilly air collided with her.  She felt dizzy at the sudden temperature drop, the cold tingling against her heated skin.  But she didn't get a clear second until her mind picked up on Ikaris' energy.
Potent, robust, metal which absorbed any kind of impact and shot it back at you.  It honestly made her own feel vulnerable.  She peeked down the street to the le, spotted him leaning against a wall.
"How long have you been waiting?" Ikaris had his hands stowed in the pockets of his dark jacket, cocked his head to the side. "Five minutes." "You know that wasn't my question."
The man pushed himself of the wall and walked up to her with a lowered face.  The grey streak pathing through his hair seemed more prominent in the light.
"I've followed you here because Sersi didn't have a good feeling."  Persia opened her mouth to say something but came to the conclusion not to fire back at him.  It wasn't worth the energy.  She should have expected that.
"I'm trying so hard to stay nice, but you need to get o my ass.", she pushed her face from her body, "I'm nota child"  "Yes, but you went looking for Druig and we all know the both of you  "The both of us what" she pu ed a short breath, a sharp tone
"The both of us what" she pu ed a short breath, a sharp tone guiding her tongue, "Stop your crap, we know now that it was always all of you separating us, not ourselves."  Ikaris' face stayed the same, yet his pupils expanded.
"Yes, that's right, but we did it-"  "If you wanted me to come here just to give me your unwanted wisdom I suggest you leave." Persia interrupted him again, finally shutting him up.  He looked at her, then up at the building.  "Is he in there?"
" None of your concern."  She began growing frustrated with him.  If he didn't start talking within the next few seconds she would just leave.  It ruined her day entirely.
Ikaris loosened his eyes and dropped them down, his height towering over her.  "You need to know something about him, and about Arishem's plantersia could visibly no longer hold back her disbelief and snorted a ridiculous laugh.
"Trust is the least I can give you right now."  She turned to escape his eyes, debating to get her feet to move her away from him.  "And Ajak" he added, pronouncing it in a way that thundered in her mind, taking it up whole.
"There's something you should know about her."  Persia turned, eyes darkened.  "What about her?"  Ikaris tiredly let his eyes fall half lidded, pursing his lips.
"I was the last one who ever saw her, because I considered myself closest to her."  The man reminisced in emotions, speaking as if he was unaware of it is a saw her a few days before the Deviant attack. The last time anyone.
ever saw her alive was me."  Persia swallowed heavily and nodded.  "I figured."  "She told me something about Arishem's plan." he declared, but no
matter how rooted he tried to speak, his voice rocked.  Persia tilted her head to the side, heart hardening as it pumped her blood ten times faster.  "Ajak told me that Arishem doesn't want to let Tiamut emerge and that this is a test for our loyalty."  She was speechless for a moment.  Thoughts racing.
Thoughts racing.  "Why are you telling me this, not Sersi?"  "I tried, but it seems that Arishem didn't tell her that." Ikaris exhaled words thick with emotions,  "She refused to believe me."  Persia took a step back, knees weak.  Cold air wrapped around her humid breaths.  "I don't believe you either."
A bashful chuckle escaped her, sounding more like a whimper.  "What, so we just wait out those remaining two days, everyone lives and everything was for nothing?"  She took a step closer, eyes reflecting the light heavier as her vision got blurry at the edges.  "That everyonedied for nothing"  Ajak, Gilgamesh.
Ajak, Gilgamesh.  So much grief all collected and compressed, but the weight always there.  She just held it all in until they made sure that the earth was save.  "The Deviants are out of Arishem's control. It's a misfortune that the fell victim to them a er so long."
Ikaris replied, going more and more quiet.  Whatever he said, her mind didn't even pick it up fully.  A test, a test.  About loyalty.  All of this, just to test them.
"Great.", she threw her arms over her head. "And why are you telling me this, why come to me?"  He took a breath.  "I was Ajak's right hand, we worked alongside each other. But the
bond the two of you had was special."  Persia felt her heart ache, back slumping.  "All I wanted was for you to know and not make a mistake."  The girl furrowed her brows, shook her head rather to herself than to
him.  "And what if you're wrong? If Ajak knew of the Emergence, she would have wanted to stop it, so what if Arishem lied-"  Ikaris stepped towards her and grabbed her hand.  " Persia"
She quieted, nostrils blowing with aggressive pulls for air.  "We spend so much time together, we learnt so much from each other."  She remembered how they trained.  How he found the time to help her, at least a little.
When no one spoke, he o ered his support.  "I wanted to let you know, because I don't want to hide anymore from you. You deserve it, a er all you went through."  The words hit her harder than they should have, considering she
despised the pity in every way.  But her mind just couldn't grasp it.

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They weren't loosing.

"I can't lose them, Persia.

barely hold her ground.

She wanted to believe him.

"Yeah, you're right."

against her chest.

He breathed out a deep breath.

" Together we will be unstoppable."

A/N: short, but VERY important chapter :)

write, but i'm still very happy with this

support is making my heart go brr <33

chapters or rather the shorter ones?

"Thank you."

serious now.

too.

Not when I knew how to save them."

"Hold yourself close to me and we can convince the others to believe

The girl couldn't properly see anymore, balance o as she could

Never losing someone, she had the power to save them.

it was closing up, an itch spreading all over her skin.

Make sure Druig would stay by her side

Her whole legs were numb, she would argue every other body part

A few days weren't enough, she couldn't have him get taken from her.

"Right." she murmured, unsure of where to look. Her air pipe felt like

Not when she finally had the power to make everything up to him.

He wrapped his arms around her and squeezed her tight, pressure

the next one will be much more detailed and long, since we're getting

i wrote like a six page paper for school and had barely any time to

thank u all so much for 700 votes and 16k reads!! all the love and

question: would you guys prefer longer and more detailed

us." his tone was flat. breathy, but desperate.

She had never heard him speak like that, ever.