A shrill sound wheezed from her nose, her hands starting to shake. She felt how energy collected, tangled in her grip. It darkened her Before she could even move, Makkari rushed up to Ikaris, grabbed him and smashed him into a rock, back colliding with a boulder. She dragged him out of reach, but Persia could still see how Makkari let his body crash into another hill. Waves of sound vibrated in their ears, the hair on their bodies standing as they watched gold flicker in the horizon. Persia whimpered a screeching tone, grasped at her chest as it started tightening. "Persia, he knew." Phastos spoke up, trying to walk up to her. "He knew about the Emergence." His fingers reached out for her, trying to touch her when energy gushed from every pore of her skin. Phastos froze, hand pulling back. The power was pure black, so thick that her vision went blurry at the corners, another whimper causing her lip to quiver. "Persia, listen to me." Thena tapped forward, grabbing her wrist through the thick smoke surrounding her. "This is my fault." the girl heaved, skin heating up to the point that she thought she was burning. She tried reaching Druig again. But she felt nothing. "No, it's not." Thena still held onto her wrist, increasing the pressure to gain her attention.

Chapter XXIII

"I am sitting in the seat of justice, watching you closely. Your destiny is in your hands, your future will be determined by your own.

What happens if you turn against me, will tear you worse than anything ever could." \$\cdot^\circ*: *\sho^\circ*: *\circ* \sho^\chi: *\circ* \sho^\chi: *\circ*

expression.

" He lied to me."

" Hey" Suddenly her hands placed to her cheeks, staring back at the black shot eyes of her. "Collect yourself. Remember come on." Her body cramped, feeling for Thena's hands and enclosing them with hers, head manically shaking from side to side. Her face swam apart, unable to piece it together. An explosion broke the sky, red shooting up before it all bubbled down the earth. It looked like blood, steaming blood consuming the planet as it rumbled. A wall of lighting smoke raged up, then crashed down the earth and tearing down without mercy. The lava sped down the hills, slithering past anything and everything in its way. The world was ending. Because she was too fucking stupid to think. A laugh shook Persia's being, but it sounded as if she was gasping for Which she was, in a way.

That feeling of inhaling smoke, the needed oxygen not even reaching Control pulled back, she fell down to her knees as she desperately tried getting to it. It slipped from her hands like glass, just inches before it shattered. She was trying to make the feeling fade, loosened her clenched hand and dug it into her scalp. "I told you, child. Nothing would stop me." She hit herself with her fist, a nauseating feeling expanding in her head. "Come on, Persia!" Sersi screamed helplessly, looking up to the sky as the lava started raining down on them. Druig, he was gone. He fucking died on her before she could even move a finger. Before she even thought about moving a finger. Her flickering eyes wandered up, heat rushing up her face as the woman next to her held up a sword and protected them from the blast. She turned back to Persia, breathing heavily. "You can do this." Persia didn't understand, and watched as Thena blocked two more meteorites. "You can't handle it, come back to me. I will help you." "No!" a scream scratched up her throat, squeezing her eyes shut. Her energy spread into every inch of her body, anger stirring up in her core. Blackening her heart, the thuds making her chest erupt. Heat surrounded her body, blasts there, a grunt behind her. Too much noise. Too much going on.

She would burst, like she hadn't in over 400 years. It would drag her family down into horrid deaths, attacking and burning them alive. And herself with it. A voice called to them, but she no longer understood range, unable to distinguish her senses to the point she forgot where she was. Pain pulled at her muscles. "Thena." Persia choked, praying she would hear her. Heat collected somewhere, placed around her body. "You need to get away." she cooed through her hoarse throat. The heat vanished, cold freezing through her being and making her groan loudly. It wasn't emptiness that dragged her body. Not that familiar feeling she could guide. Terror, that terror making her vessels pop, yet at the same time it

wasn't that at all. " Come on my child, give in. I will give you all you need, you only need to give me your hand." Visions of her family flashed before her eyes, gaze rushing back and forth until they rolled back. Chasing Sprite through the paths of Babylon, both giggling like children. Ikaris o ering a hand and sparred with her late at night when she needed it. Gilgamesh giving her a stern look before he cracked a joke. Sersi teaching her how to braid her own hair. Phastos rambling about his inventions, Persia sitting at the side and listening in interest. Kingo betting with her on who was getting themselves in trouble next. Thena sitting in the corner, giving her the wisdom of a divine, while the comfort of a friend. Makkari scrunching her nose at her a er making a joke, holding her as she sobbed. Ajak hugging her tight, soothing her calm. Druig, with his hands wrapped around her body, repeating how she was safe with him.

Safe with him. Not safe with her. Their faces twisted into scared stares, widened eyes that forced their bodies to take a step back from her. "I didn't mean it." she heard her own voice sob, her tone no more "It's alright, you are my creation. You are all I ever imagined. All you Her family greyed, until they gathered as a ground in front of her, Persia ran a er then, the visions of their happy moments plucking Until she fell to her knees, complete silence surrounding her. I'm giving it all to you, just take my hand." Persia stared blankly, everything drowned out. Something reached Her expression turned odd ways, until her being hovered over the

than embodying pain. need is my guidance." falling into the background. from her memory. " Persia, my girl. My precious soldier. You need time, and you will get it. for her, even if she couldn't see it. She tapped down, uniting with it. "Suck my dick, you son of a bitch." The glass shattered to the ground, flying into every direction and the shards dug under her feet. Her energy darted and cut, eating up and filling with the unfamiliar Pain placed down on her, until it took her oxygen to breathe. A low vibration tossed her body from side to side, until her field of vision broke apart and for a moment she could glimpse at how Arishem cracked apart. Her eyes widened, following how the Celestial struggled. She could feel how it's heart beat. Arishem He had a beating heart.

And it was clutched in her hold. Then it sucked back, her body compressed. She screamed, the impact of it pushing her back into reality. A crash of energy protruded from her and around, pure sizzling power rushing from her body. Persia looked up, her hand up in the air, steaming with the energy twirling around her fingers, up through the air. She clenched it shut, the energy pulling back instantly. Control sat so lightly on her shoulders, barely more than a feather. So easy. Her back straightened, eyes looking around her until she found the others at the le side of the cli .

Ikaris stood right in the center, chest rising. She could feel his comic energy jump and run through his veins. Persia opened her mouth to say something, then caught how a being, unlike the Eternals, pushed from the ground. Slithering needles pushed from its body, piercing something in front of it which Persia couldn't see. The body was li ed into the air, and suddenly she could decipher the

Her hand pushed from her body, whipping her wrist upward causing black threats to knit and rush for the Deviant. The blood in her body froze, pathing up her feet and collecting in her Using her power made her drunk. The Deviant was knocked to the side before the blasts Phastos sent could reach it. He turned, looked at her. A nod moved his clenched face, then he turned back forward. "This one's mine." Thena growled as she picked herself up from the ground and walked into the cave. Persia pulled her energy back, rubbed her knuckles. Tingles made the air around her crowded. "Where's Sersi?" She almost threw up or burst again as she heard him talk, restraining herself from draining him of life. You always underestimated her. Persia's mind clicked, Ikaris balling his fist as he flew up into the air. "Oh no, I don't think so." She extended her arm, gold sizzling from her skin and racing into Phastos' body. First, he panted in confusion until she centered her own energy. Golden metal clicked through the air, enclosing Ikaris' ankles and wrist, then tightened and he landed with a crash to the ground. Persia pu ed a short breath, releasing the tie between her and Phastos. A smile curved her lips, slowly striking up to Ikaris who was lowered to his knees. Dust and smoke seemed to make a circle around her body, leaving her shimmering in her pure power. "You need to let me go!" the man screeched, metal still coursing through the air and pulling him down further.

"Awwhhh," Persia purred, making a tsk sound with her tongue. When Ikaris spotted her, his breathing picked up. He beamed back at her with lighting strikes of energy. Instead of hitting her though, she turned on her heels to the other side and raced her hand across his face. " Pathetid' She got down, didn't acknowledge how Phastos called for her. "Tell me Ikaris. Do you know what it feels to get lied to?" she traveled her hand up his cheek and gave it a pinch, letting her energy burn his skin. "What it feels like to get everything taken from you, believing for millions of years that all your worth is garbage." Her face leaned down, chin raising as her tongue grazed her teeth nonchalantly. Ikaris panted back, screaming a frustrated yell into her face, "I need to stop this!" "You don't get to do shit" Persia snapped, gripping his hair and heavily spat back into his face. His eyes started glowing again, and she forced her own energy to run along his.

She took it, for a brief moment. Ikaris gasped for air, face rushing red. "I did it for everyone, I did it for us-" "You don't get to speak about us anymore." she pressed through gritted teeth. "So Druig was never us? Gilgamesh wasn't?" Her heart twisted, energy pulling it back in place. Persia lowered her face until she basically hovered over his, "Ajak?" Ikaris' mouth bobbed open, in a desperate attempt to defend himself. But she just raced her hand into his face again, this time enforced with her energy. His body flew to the side in restraints, red tickling down his chin. "Come on, kill me!" he bellowed back at her, ripping and tearing at the metal. "Death is too merciful for you!" her voice was cutting his skin worse than her energy ever could. She pushed herself up, took a look around herself. Waves crashed the beach, rocks collapsing. Dusting to nothing. The water frothed, the isle they were on sank into itself and held its form barely in pieces. Druig was gone.

"If I can't do it, you can." The world was ending, and Persias was too. Once more, she pulled down to Ikaris and grabbed his face into her grip to force him to look at her. "You will feel all of my anger, all of my wrath. And if that's the last thing I ever do." She turned her gaze to Phastos, who reinforced the bond of Ikaris to the ground. "The plan I told you in the Domo, could it work?" "Taking a Celestial's energy could cost you your life." A smirk raised the corners of her lips, turning towards Ikaris, who sent beams in their direction. They cut and burnt the sand, whirling it up and sending waves of piercing air around them. "Don't worry, I did that before." she winked, Ikaris' mouth twisting downwards with a vein popping from his forehead.

"Arishem will kill you for this!

He won't let you do this!" "I told that thing to suck my dick and look at me!" she gestured down herself, back facing the wall as she walked up it backwards. "Alive, more powerful than you will ever be!" "You-" Before he could finish, she fluttered her fingers, waves of black

energy poured down his throat which took his air to breathe.

"Doesn't feel good to get your voice taken away, does it?" She turned and crossed the distance over the disassembling mountain, lava sending columns of heat back up her spine. It splashed, hit her face and made her groan in pain. The charred ground smoked and dried out her lungs, covering it in a thick layer of Her teeth clenched shut, nothing on her mind. Sersi's energy lingered close, and when she finally spotted the woman, her heart set out a beat. Persia reached her, causing the woman to flinch back slightly, "We need to stop it, now." "I need to get closer to Tiamut, I think I can turn him by using the Unimind." "Okay, scratch that." Persia said, taking Sersi's hand.

"I can help you." She then noticed a wound stabbed right through her stomach, water and blood mixing as they ran down the suit. "It's alright." Sersi remarked, giving a weak smile. But then she hunched over, coughed heavily and moved a shaking step towards her. Without warning, the world started rumbling and quaking so intensely, both were thrown o their feet. Magma rushed from the ground, Persia forming a barrier with her energy to keep their bodies shielded. When her eyes went down, a pu of air bent her nostrils. "Sersi." The ground beneath them split, revealing a golden mosaic pattern, which pushed the world aside to rush into existence. Energy buzzed from it so heavily it almost overpowered her own. Her teeth gritted, a pain shooting up her jaw as she pushed her hand flat against Tiamut, the other enclosing Sersi's shoulder. She held back a scream as the endless energy flushed her corpse. A er a matter of seconds, her skin threatened to dissolve. "Are you ready?" she muttered, barely able to see the woman anymore. "Go."

Her fingers embedded themselves into the Celestials being, allowing the vessel of her body to turn into a medium. Energy flooded in one way, the other out. Sersi inhaled sharply, then placed her palms to the ground too and started turning Tiamut to marble. White marble, racing over the golden skin and causing the Celestial to shriek an inhumane noise. Her eyes closed and she screamed a groan, body feeling as if it was on fire from the energy. Mind lightheaded, sight tinted by white.

Her body felt weightless, until the world came crashing down on her. She collided with the ground, hand pushing down into the hot magma. A horrid pained scream made her back bend, rolling over. A beam of golden energy burnt her hair, just next to her face. Tears glazed in her eyes from the pain that ate up the nerves in her hand. "I told you," Ikaris landed, eyes almost as dark as hers. "I will stop this. And I don't care who I have to kill." Persia raised her hand in front of her blurry eyes, quivering as the charred skin sizzled golden. Sersi yelled, grabbed him by the shoulder and drew him back harshly, pushing past him up to her. She put her hand on her chest, coughing blood as she had no strength to keep her body up. "Persia, no." Persia exhaled, hand dropping to the side. She felt energy tingle, pulled at it slightly. It shot up with the last force she had, racing it into Sersi's chest and creating a tie between them. "End it, Sersi."

The woman was sobbing, but got up and immediately put her hands to the ground. Ikaris moved down to Persia, stared into her face and for once did. a smile pulled up his lips. "I made a promise." she whispered so quietly that Ikaris' bent down out of instinct. Her other hand clenched behind her back, collecting energy in her "I-" she pu ed, eyes closing. "What is it?" Ikaris spat back, listening as his energy started buzzing

in her eardrums. She exhaled a childish laugh, "I told you, you will feel my anger." Her hand raced up, blowing herself o her back, the blast of energy racing over Ikaris' body. Her head twisted, Sersi pulling her energy on one hand, her own Black energy collected in her hold, hovering above her charred hand. Ikaris raised into the air, and she sent blasts a er him, one a er the other. He shot right back at her, forcing her to dodge but before she could, energy raced for him and pulled him back to his feet. A grin stretched her face from one end to the other, a weird laugh ripping up her belly. "Sparring with you was always fun!" Black ran up her veins and eyes, feet pushing into the ground as her balance centered. Sersi pulled, but she did more. Tiamut connected to her spine, becoming an extended part of her

body like a sword held up to Ikaris' throat. Gold glazed between black, the sun reflecting her body like a star on Air thinned between them, she stretched her uninjured palm out, right to where he started aiming with his blast. "Showtime baby." Her own energy shielded the blast, redirecting it back at him. Ikaris blew o to the side to dodge it, just aiming for her again from the le. She lowered herself to her knees, pushed a hand to the ground and made columns of energy rush up and shower back down on Ikaris. "God, how long have I wanted to clip your wings, Icarus" she

mocked, brushing the hair out of her face. Ikaris yelled a battle cry and aimed for her again, this time racing his fist towards her face too. She thinned her eyes, pushed her fist down and let her energy li her o the ground.

"You took everything from me!" her voice roared as she rushed through the air and threw another blast a er him. "You are not one of us!" he aimed again, this time catching her and knocking the air out of her lungs. "I did it for all of us, you selfish bitch!" he returned, throwing her into "You are not an Eternal, you are not one of us." He was about to give her the final blow, his energy cutting the smoke of her energy. Sersi screamed, but then choked o suddenly. It got quiet. A little too quiet. The blow vanished, Ikaris collapsed on heavy feet. Persia had her hand up, shaking along with the rest of her restless

Ikaris had his eyes glued open, gagging as if he couldn't breathe. "Oh, does it feel a little di icult to breathe, can the poor Ikaris not handle being flesh and blood?" Her other hand connected to Sersi, transferring all the energy she had le in her. For him. For them Her body voided o all she had, vision flickering as she looked up to find the others floating into the air. For a moment, all her lost memories flashed before her mind, her origin, all of it within the blink of an eye coming back to her. Sersi thudded back down, using all energy and turning Tiamut to marble until all that resounded was the waves crashing. They lowered back down, Persia falling on her back. Her eyes blinked in disbelief, the numbed pain finally patching her body.

Sersi breathed heavily, and ran up to Persia. "We did it." "We did it?" the girl asked, chest filling with oxygen. Noise came from her side, twisting her face. "I couldn't fight you, Sersi." he breathed, then turned to Persia. "But I will kill her for it." He shot his eyes open, trying to blast energy back at her, but nothing

happened. Ikaris tried again, then again, then stared down at his hands. "What did you do?" his tone weak and bristle, laid out like open cards for her to crush. "Do you feel a little heavier?" she chuckled, giving him a devious grin, " Can you feel your heart crumble?" Ikaris yelled and came racing for her with his fists up, which she mirrored but only she still had her power. It wrapped around him and down his throat, li ing him o the ground. He choked, grasped for air.

"Teach the dog how to sit before it can be let o its leash." Persia recited, the veins on her hands consumed by black once more. She felt like her body would give up on her every second now, and tried her hardest not to faint. "I was the puny little creature at the end of the leash, Arishem the owner." she cooed, clicking her tongue. "And you think you're the savior" "Let me go." he whimpered, to which she got up when Sersi tried to stop her. "This is the least you deserve, drowning down at the very bottom of the world thinking about your own stupidity." Before he could return anything, her hand clenched shut and so did Ikaris' collapse to the ground. Sersi gasped as Persia fell back to the charcoal floor.

She realized what she did the longer she stared. "I killed him." "No, you did what you had to." Sersi strained her face and put an arm around her waist to pull her up. "It would have been him or you." "You shouldn't have had to see that." Persia lowered herself, trying to

"What about Ikaris?" Thena asked, Persia's eyes becoming glassy.

Makkari started signing something, but froze and turned around.

Persia stretched her neck to follow her eyes, and noticed a figure

But from the tears which rushed Makkari's eyes and the way she

She pushed herself up, stumbled over her feet and tried deciphering

Her lower lip dropped, mouth pulling down as tears shook in her sore

She watched as Makkari closed him into her arms, then peeled

He li ed his head with furrowed brows, but once he saw her, the

Persia twisted her face into a crooked smile, head pounding as she

Tears spilled down her cheeks and he started running towards her. He enclosed her with his arms, both lowering down to the ground as

It only made her sob even more, pulling him closer to the point that it

"Shh," he hummed, tracing his hand through her hair, "you're here,

He looked back at her, a weak smile twisting his face upwards.

She felt how his chest shook, her skin wet with his tears.

"I killed." she choked, guilt making her stomach growl.

She couldn't feel his energy at all, the more she tried reaching.

Their foreheads touched and she took a shaking breath for air, voice buzzing in her ears. "I lost control over myself, you were right."

"No." Druig shook his head so ly, nose touching hers, "You are strong and all I've said was not true. I needed you to hate me, for your

Her throat closed up, trying to open her mouth to speak.

Persia felt how her body tugged back, mind suddenly pulled away

She could see everything in a tunnel vision, tried all she could to get it

Suddenly she remembered the voice which spoke to her, the talks she

She tried so desperately to hold on, clutch at least the faintest hint in

But then, she pulled back and felt the oxygen tingle against her skin,

She put her hand out to block the light, pushed herself from the sand. A frown dragged down her brows and an unsure laugh made her lips

"Oh my god, I thought you were going to die." the same voice exhaled, a boy pulling her into his arms and squeezing her tightly.

He peeled o her, waving towards a group of people, his hands

"I-" she started, putting her lips on top of each other. The touch

He looked back and forth between her face and his hands, then hesitantly put them into the air with an arch to his brow.

Hair messy, colored dark but the brown shone against the setting

His eyes pushed o his pale skin, darting in a lost blue that stared

There was a scar above his brow, how tiny it might have been.

Continue reading next part \Box

"Are you alright?" someone asked, standing over her.

Persia patted his back, looking around the area.

confused her, so she pulled back slightly.

She took a couple breaths, looked at his face.

"Are you- are you okay, Persia?"

He was injured, very lightly.

She had no idea why it stood out to her.

back at her.

Druig pulled her o him, grabbed her face.

himself o her with tears lighting against the sun.

" Druig" she muttered, taking painful steps forward.

looked back at Persia, something loosened in her chest.

Dark clothing, a faint hint of distress to his way of walking.

She tried feeling for energy, but was too weak to.

"Killed him." she responded, the others all looking at her for a

keep her feet moving. Sersi breathed a short inhale, "he deserved it." They got down the hill, Makkari immediately rushing for the injured girl to support her weight. Persia panted a short breath, taking in a glimpse of her presence, "I can't feel you anymore." When Phastos spotted them, he came towards them quickly and put Persia to the ground, Thena also walking up to them. The woman crouched down, tucked in her bottom lips as her hand touched the skin on her face. "How did you do it?" Phastos asked, checking Persia's hand and hissing a pitiful sound. "I tried doing it though the Uni-mind, but something was blocking me." Sersi explained, hiding her shaking hands, "Persia somehow lead the energy from Tiamut to me and-"

Phastos nodded understandingly, looking down at Persia. He didn't want to force her for an answer, but she still picked up on it-"I'm not an Eternal, but I was at fault for the destruction of Celestials." Persia whispered, sucking in a pained breath, "I'm a vessel of endless energy but I can't control it." You gave it up for us? Makkari signed, worry replacing her usual bright face.

Persia swallowed, "I saw my past and I understand that my struggles never went away. If I hadn't, for you, this endless torture would have gone on for forever." The hint of a lie to her voice underwent the others' notice. She lost more than she would have gained. A mother, a lover, a friend. All gone.

moment.

the face.

body.

approaching from a distance.

Persia couldn't believe it.

expression dropped.

tried going faster.

she fell victim to her injuries.

hurt only to feel more of him. "I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry."

"You did what you had to."

How much she missed that touch.

She thought she would never feel it again.

"I thought I lost you."

you saved us."

But-

protection.

"I love you."

"Enough."

back.

had with Arishem.

light hitting her.

against her forearms. "What happened?"

But she had no chance.

You are perfect, my love."

from her and both separated.

her hands but it all got sucked from her.

"Persia." he breathed, pulling her closer.

A/N: Umm... would it make it any better if i said that i'm sorry? no but honestly, this chapter was a ride and despite having more

planned, I figured I would keep it as short as I could. this is NOT the end, I'm not that cruel♥ thank u for 20k, it's honestly amazing to hit such a great number when publishing one of the last chapters. you will get the emotion speech from me once this book is finished. i love you all so much <33

And as she looked down at herself, she noticed that she looked even "Um-" she started again, clearing her throat.

There was something missing and she couldn't quite grasp what. "Could you tell me who you are again?"