

Chapter XXIV

Druig stood in the doorway, leaning against the thick wood.

He had his eyes glued to Persia, who sat with her legs crossed on the couch.

She stared over at Makkari in concentration, who repeated the sign over and over again.

No, you need to open your palm, push your pointer finger out to the brown head sign.

Persia blinked back, helplessly looking over to Druig.

"What did she say?"

He exhaled a weak breath, sight jumping back and forth between her and Makkari, who's head dropped slightly.

"She said you need to push your pointer out more—no, yes—now flatten your palm."

Persia mirrored Makkari again, who sent a beaming smile as she finally had it.

"I did it!" she celebrated, then hunched over into a cough.

Druig wanted to go over to her when Persia put her injured hand out to stop him.

Every time he saw it, it caused anger to stir up in his core. Anger at himself.

Her chest calmed and her breathing fell flat again.

"I'm alright," she murmured, turning back to Makkari. "Can you show me more?"

Persia tried signing her words along in order to help Makkari understand, but she forgot how to.

The girl leaned her chin, her eyes filled with a spark of sadness. Makkari turned over to Druig.

She forgot everything, her expression twisted inwards, tell her that she can just say the words, I will read her lips.

Druig hesitantly nodded, thinning his lips into a smile. "She said that you can keep speaking, she will help you."

"Okay," Persia replied, exhaling a quick breath. She furrowed her brows for a second as if she remembered something.

Druig stiffened his posture but dropped his shoulders as soon as Persia also changed her expression back.

She signed the word. Repeat looking at Makkari for a reaction.

The girl clapped her hands in excitement, both falling into a short laugh.

The boy breathed, keeping his eyes from betraying him and revealing the pain it caused to rush down his spine.

"Druig, she's here." Sersi tapped his shoulder from behind.

He looked over at Persia once more, before turning on his heels and following a server Sersi.

They entered the kitchen, Phastos speaking to a girl, Thena with her arms crossed in the corner.

"I don't understand." the girl said, her fingers sitting against her forehead.

"She lost her memory." Druig spoke up, her eyes darting over to him.

The girl dropped her hand, pushing her hair behind her ear. "Does she remember anything, at all?"

Sersi pulled a chair back and sat herself opposite her, nostrils twitching.

"I'm sorry, Maya. We thought it would get better with time, but she keeps forgetting more."

Maya leaned back, her hand traveling up again and rubbing over her temple.

A heavy exhale made her chest wheeze.

Druig stepped one foot in front of the other, his inner self refusing to speak but he did anyway.

"I think she is still fighting, I can tell that she is still in here."

he crouched down next to Maya, who moved a careful small distance back.

"You need to try it, please"

Maya bit the inside of her cheek, her fist lightly hitting the table.

"Alright, of course."

She got up, stood for a moment before Phastos walked ahead into the living room.

Maya gasped invisibly before she even saw more than a figure, but immediately knew it was her.

Hair shorter, scratches all over her body and face.

She also seemed taller, even if she couldn't have grown in less than a few days.

But what she didn't recognize was her attitude, the way she laughed or turned her face.

It was not Persia, even if she copied her looks.

It wasn't her Persia.

Phastos knocked against the open door to grasp their attention, their heads shooting up.

"We got a visitor for you, Persia."

Persia cocked her head in interest, her gaze catching the outline of a girl who walked in with a lowered face.

Maya took a breath, unable to look into her eyes but forcefully moved her face up anyways. "Hey Pear."

Persia's lip twitched up for a moment, "Hello, I—" she knitted her brows, "You already know my name."

The brown head took another step closer, the others politely walking out of the room.

"Yeah, um, do you remember me?"

"I—" the girl started, making space for Maya to sit opposite her, "I feel like I should, but I'm sorry. I don't. Could you tell me your name again?"

Maya sucked in the discomfort in her stomach and shoved it aside, "I'm Maya."

Persia's eyes unintentionally filled with tears, one of her fingers moving up her cheek in confusion, "I don't know why I'm crying. That's embarrassing, sorry."

"Oh no," Maya assured, resisting the urge to close her best friend into her arms and beg her to remember.

"It's okay, don't apologize."

Just something.

The tiniest bit would have puzzled her world back in place.

"Were you important to me?" the girl signed, the glassy look vanishing from her eyes as best as possible.

God, the guilt that her voice carried made her heart shatter with the second.

Maya was unsure of what to say, looked behind her to find Druig standing in the hall.

He gave her a tilt of the head, nudging towards Persia.

Maya parted her lips to say something, but then decided against it right before she spoke.

"No, not really. I just wanted to check up on you."

Persia calmed a little, then started picking at her hands which rested in her lap, "That's nice. You know everything seems a lot like a blur. I feel there should be something where there's not."

Maya nodded understandingly, using all her willpower to stop herself from submitting to her emotions, "It's going to be okay, Pear. Everything will be alright."

Persia clenched her eyelids shut, the muscles of her face tightening. Then it loosened and she sent a weak smile in Maya's direction.

Her chest made a jump, for a moment she could almost feel the presence of the girl she knew.

"I like what you did with your hair," she pointed at the shorter white strands just barely falling below her collarbone.

Persia chuckled and looked down at herself, "We had to cut it, half of it was burnt off. But I still don't know if I will grow it out again."

Her best friend faded before her eyes.

Persia hated her hair short.

Maya cleared her throat, pushed up from the couch, "I guess I will be leaving now. If you ever want to talk, you know my number."

She broke off her sentence.

"Check your phone, my number should be in there."

The white-haired girl wanted to get up to hug her, but Maya shook her head.

If she was going to hug her now, there was no way she could hold back her tears any longer.

"You can do this, Pear," she whispered, avoiding looking at her, "You can't be gone."

Persia waved a server her, but then suddenly shot her eyes open, Maya freezing in place.

"Maya."

A shower of familiarity dozed her expression, first from that known resting face into her emotional heavy one.

Eyebrows twisted, eyes half-lidded and drowsy with her dark color.

Her mouth bobbed open, breathing picking up.

Then it was all gone in an instant, leaving Persia putting a hand to her chest.

Her face cold as stone, yet still expressive.

"I—it was nice to meet you, Maya."

Maya felt her eyes wet again, turning around and brushing past Druig as he gave her a glimpse of her flushed face.

He walked a server her, picking up on how she started crying uncontrollably.

"Hey, Hey Maya."

"What?" Maya yelled, looking at him with her lips on top of each other.

"I can't do it, I'm sorry."

"I know she's still there," Druig almost said to himself.

"Persia is still there, at least the girl I know," Maya replied, feeling for something to hold herself onto. "But I can't bring her back and—"

The words didn't come easy out of her lips.

"Maybe we shouldn't bring her back."

Druig's pupils widened, "What are you saying?"

"Persia had enough suffering, she always struggled with herself and that stupid power," she explained, putting a palm to her stomach as if she was going to throw up.

"If anyone deserves to start over, it's her."

"No," Druig shook his head, pulling himself from giving it too much thought.

"No she can't. She needs to—"

"I know it hurts. Trust me when I say that I want nothing more than for my best friend to come back to me."

Maya pinched the bridge of her nose with her trembling fingers, "But look at her. If what you said is true, what all the others have told me, she will forget everything.

No power, no grief, no pain."

He felt her voice dig through his skin.

"Druig, I don't care what happened between the two of you in the past.

But Persia deserves the world, especially as she saved everyone else's. She knew what she would have lost." Maya grew more and more quiet.

"Let her live, Druig."

He turned around and walked back into the kitchen, shutting the door behind him.

"What's wrong?" Thena asked, alarmed, moving out of the corner.

Sersi and Phastos exchanged worried faces, Makkari looking up at him.

"Maya can't help her," he murmured, clenching his teeth shut, "Persia can't remember."

Then he thought we should just keep trying, Makkari signed, directed towards the crowd.

Druig couldn't really comprehend it, all that recalled in his head were Maya's words.

Losing Persia, only for her to start again.

As she sacrificed so much, she got her memory taken.

Arishem knew how much that would hurt, for everyone.

And he lost the only person which he cared for all that time.

"I don't think we should," Druig said, straightening his back, "She's happy, isn't she?"

"What does that have to mean?" Phastos questioned, voice rising.

"After all that time, this is finally the chance she can use to heal. Live a life she wanted, without her overwhelming power or trouble."

"She didn't deserve to get that choice taken from her," Thena replied, feeling as if Persia reflected her own.

"Persia wouldn't want it this way, but I don't think forcing her back into reality will make her the person she used to be."

"Come on, you can't say that." Phastos argued, but the breathy tone revealed that he didn't disagree.

"She will break apart," Thena declared, "Just like I did."

We won't ever get her back, Makkari signed, torso collapsing.

The atmosphere was almost buzzing, the pressure and gravity pulling them down.

"I didn't say I love you back," Druig said under his breath.

"I wanted us to all be safe, and I failed twice," Sersi finally said a server being quiet for so long.

"But I think this is more in her interest than anything else."

Druig didn't want it, body twisting and turning against the rest of the world.

"I will speak to her. Then we will decide on this."

They all agreed, and he moved out of the room, turning to the left when he picked up shallow breathing.

Maya sat on the stairs, knees pulled up to her chest with her chin resting on top.

She was still crying.

"Maya, I promise you I will try my best," he tried in her direction, even if he wasn't sure what exactly he was saying his best at.

"Persia made me hate promises," the girl replied, lips brushing against the fabric of her jeans.

"But I guess this is the least we can offer."

Druig strained his features, walked over to the living room and then stopped right in front of the door.

What was he supposed to do, knock?

He raised his knuckles and gave the door a dull pound, then peeled in through a small gap.

Persia laid with her back-facing the couch, arm raised into the air, the other behind her head.

Golden energy twirled around her fingers very faintly, reflecting the sun.

Her powers were fading too.

Just a day before she could hold a sphere, now barely a few strings.

"You can come in," she said without facing him.

Druig swallowed the clump down his aching throat, pushed into the room and then closed it behind him.

"Maya lied, right?" Persia asked with her lips curled downwards, "We were close and I don't know her anymore."

He seated himself in a chair parallel to her head, which turned as she awaited a reply.

"Yes, she did."

Persia closed her eyes and puffed a laugh, "I lost my memory, you guys are treating me like I'm stupid and can't connect one and two."

Druig shuddered at the sudden appearance of her usual self, but knew it was nothing more than desperate thinking.

"How did it happen?" she kept talking, dropping her hand down.

"I don't think you want to know," he puffed, leaning forward and supporting his elbows on his knees.

"That's the problem," Persia tangled her fingers and pushed herself up until she was facing him.

"I don't know if I want to know or not."

That was almost the answer to the question he was trying to decipher.

He felt the heat of her body.

Loss clawed at his heart as he didn't recognize her as the girl who he held in his arms just a few days before.

But she was still Persia.

The Persia he encountered the first day he came down to this planet. Not at all the person she was a server.

"And if I told you that you'd be better off staying oblivious?" he took in her face the best he could,

"That that your life was before was struggle and pain."

"I would say that that can't be true," she said back, "Because how can all I be suffering if I have all of you by my side?"

A smile manifested in her expression, as generous as she meant it,

"How can everything be torture if I have people who are trying to protect me from it?"

"That can't be enough," Druig shook his head, and she rushed her hand forward to grab his.

He exhaled an exhausted breath when he felt her, just holding onto the touch.

"You can heal, Persia."

"I may not know who I am or what my life was like," her voice grumbled, tracing a fingertip over the back of his hand.

"but I can't heal thinking that there's more to me than just this."

"Am I right?" she added, eyes reflecting a shadow, "The girl you're looking at is not the one you love."

The roles were reversed—she was the smart one and he was helpless.

But he dropped his head down, turning up his nose, "We hated each other for a long time, I was reason for your pain. Maybe you're better off forgetting."

He recalled the times he blamed her.

When his hate shifted from pure frustration to anger and back to caring.

But it always showed as hate.

She suffered centuries because of him.

"And what's the if?" she questioned, tapping his head to make him look up at her again.

He took a few deep breaths, but suddenly even his emotions overpowered him.

"I always loved you, and I will never stop."

Cries caused the wet tears to gush out of his eyes, all he wanted was for the girl he knew to be back in his arms.

"And I love you," Persia's finger pointed right above her heart, "I can feel it."

Druig felt the knot twist, but release at the same time.

"Do you think that's enough of a reason to get you back?"

She raised her pointer up at something in his face.

"Every time I close my eyes, it's empty.

But in that emptiness something is telling me to remember that scar. She won't let you go, unless you force her to."

"This is your choice," he muttered, their faces close because he needed her to understand.

But she did.

Of course she understood.

"I want to get it back, no suffering in the world would make me want to decide otherwise."

Druig stared back, her words slowly hitting him as he processed them.

"I know a way, but it brought me and you apart before."

It might not even work, it could be stupid.

Persia raised her chin, "I don't care."

"Do you trust me enough to get into your mind?" he questioned, the words feeling odd in his throat.

"I trust you," her voice vibrating against his eardrums and making his stomach bubble.

Druig inhaled a sharp breath, tested their distance by moving a little closer and placing his hands on the sides of her face.

Persia closed her eyes, a grin tugging at the corners of her lips. A tear dropped down to the ground from her side.

"I trust you"

He let his mind empty from anything, even if it was practically filled to the brim.

He connected to his power, let it rush through the tips of his fingers.

His eyes started glowing in that intense gold, forehead wrinkled in concentration.

He was breathing lightly, but could barely feel his weight anymore.

Memories of them occurred, he sent them all back to his intention.

The hungry power ate and got stronger rapidly, until it pressured down on his lungs.

He saw her smile flash before himself.

The wide grin he would see so often from a distance.

Her touch, her hold, her voice.

It expanded until he felt like there was nothing that could be taken up anymore.

"Remember" he said loudly, his voice echoing once, then twice.

He felt how her face leapt from his hands, eyes ripping open as if he woke up from a deep sleep.

Persia was called back into the couch, shaking her head back and forth so harshly that she groaned in pain from hitting her injured hand against something.

"Are you okay?" he stood up and get down next to her, dizziness making his blood stop for a second.

"Fuck"

She hissed a noise, calming as she held her hand in the other.

Her head juggled in confusion, almost energy rushing from her body as she didn't recognize her surroundings.

"It's okay," he assured, not knowing the appropriate thing to say.

Did it work?

Persia caught his eyes, paralyzing from head to toe as her pupils expanded.

Her face so ened, lower lips starting to tremble as her eyes shot with tears.

"Druig" her hand reached for him, touching his face and whimpering as she felt his skin.

"You're real."

He rushed up to her and closed her into his arms, one of his hands tangling in her hair and starting to cry into her shoulder.

"I remember," Persia slurred her words so heavily and lost them in her cries that he could barely understand.

"You're back!" Druig clawed at her clothes, holding her as he feared she would leave again. "I love you, I love you so much. Don't leave me again."

"I won't," she replied, pulling back to look at his face, "I love you."

He pressed a kiss against her lips, tingles caressing their skin.

They were so scared of hurting each other that it was so so, but they didn't want to create a distance.

Persia loosened herself and put her forehead against his, "I love you with my whole being, Druig. I always did."

—

A/N: I love this chapter with my whole heart and I'm very proud of it :) Told you all I wouldn't leave you hanging, I couldn't do that to anyone babe.

We have one more chapter to go before this sorry if officially finished, thank you all so much !!

[Continue reading next part](#)