

Chapter VII

The Fall of Tenochtitlan, 1521 AD

Persia sat at the edge of the stairs, while her tired eyes followed along the golden horizon.

Though it wasn't the sun tinting the city in that warming color, but flames

No comforting gold which made her skin tingle, but one that made her flesh burn which not even an immortal heart of hers could endure.

Flames merciless pathing through the ways, anyone who dared to cross its way felt the wrath of it down to their bones.

It crawled up the buildings, ate at them until they fell to nothing but grey ash.

Ash, everywhere.

When she breathed, she felt it tugging at her lungs.

Her eyes spotted her family fighting, how Makkari bend the laws of physics to grab a child before a pillar collided with the ground where it stood.

Persia wasn't allowed to fight anymore.

At least she didn't allow herself to.

Too many people, a risk too big for her to take.

Hooves clashing with the flattened terrain, men yelling battle cries until their throats cut or hearts were pierced.

With every life that ended, Persia's eye twitched.

Fire bending to the soldiers will, shooting out of long tubes. Guns.

Persia underestimated the cruelty of the population she cherished. Some soldiers dropped their guns.

Druig

Something tugged at her chest, Persia turned and within a second, Makkari stood in front of her.

She had no clue when she learned to see the fastest speedster ever coming.

It's safe for you the girl signed.

Will you race me?

Persia asked, taking the hand which the girl extended.

Always Makkari smiled.

Of course, Persia had no chance.

Her feet carried her over the burnt ground, resounding against the pitiful patches of trees.

Breathing calm, yet her heart thudded.

It was almost over.

When she reached the others, Druig was speaking.

"No you can't, but I can!"

He was directing his words towards Phastos, and even if she had just joined, she knew exactly what he was speaking about.

He always brought it up.

Grew impatient and more furious with it.

"It's too late."

Persia searched her eyes for the source of the voice, everyone turning quiet.

They knew that tone.

"Then?" Sersi hesitated, raising her hand and taking a step closer.

"We are all going to die."

Her eyes turned to glass, mirroring the color of her hair.

A rush of gold tinting them, just as the weapon which formed in her hand.

"Are you okay?"

Persia invisibly gasped for air, Makkari was faster to react and rushed Sersi out of reach before the materialized weapon pierced the air where the woman had just stood.

But they took a hit, the conjuring of blood from their bodies didn't miss Persia's vision.

The woman took an aim for Phastos next, who defenselessly went to the ground as her golden weapon pierced his body.

His pained scream was choked o and turned into a cry.

Makkari headed for her again, pushing her back before Thena could harm Phastos anymore.

But somehow, in that state she was in, a blade managed to stab between Makkari's ribs making her whimper.

It was what made Persia finally move.

She ran over to her friend who had rolled o to the ground, a hand pressed to her bleeding skin.

"Makkari" she whispered, knowing that the girl couldn't even hear her.

Her hand moved to her face, and though it was pained, she at least could follow her eyes.

Persia picked up a thud, blade slicing flesh.

When she turned, Thena was only a couple feet from her, her sharp weapon stuck in Ajak's hand.

But she didn't wince, not even move.

Thena pulled it back, mindlessly going for another hit, when Ajak raised her hands and let the golden strings dance around her fingers.

Her white eyes flickered, head shaking.

The weapon vanished.

"Don't listen to your head Thena."

she dared to take a step closer.

"Listen to my voice.

you are safe,

you are loved,

you are Thena"

The emotionless clear disappeared from her eyes. For a split second, until it came back.

It was worse than before.

A hint of crazy dipped between the milky gold, until it overtook her mind and caused her to go feral.

Persia opened her mouth but couldn't find her voice.

They fought, until her dagger pierced through Ajak's abdomen.

"No!" Persia cried, Makkari holding her down with a shaking hand to keep her from interfering.

She felt the power seep out of her pores, glide in thin strings which locked with the dark night around them.

Gilgamesh wrapped his hand around the goddess, begging her to stop as he dodged her attacks.

He was holding back on her.

When Persia saw how her weapon barely brushed his side, she finally couldn't control herself anymore.

One of her hands protruded from her body, flexing her fingers and allowing the threats of black to knit into a pattern.

It aimed for Thena, her weapons.

With each she made from cosmic energy, the black swallowed it and crushed it to nothing.

It crawled up like vines, shattered it like glass. Dust of gold settled in the air with every new attempt Thena made to call upon another.

"Persia" Ajak whispered beside her, stepping up to Makkari.

She heard her, but her focus was set towards Thena.

Her energy. Movement

"Thena please," Gilgamesh breathed, pleading, "come back to us."

The warrior did not care.

She took another aim.

Persia deciphered how his face changed from hope to braced, his hand slithering with golds.

He heaved it into the air, rushed it down and allowed it to hit Thena so hard that she fell to the ground.

Unmoving

The impact sent waves of shock over the whole area, shaking Persia out of her desperation.

Her hand dropped, the black strings choked o .

Persia fixated her gaze on Makkari next to her, who could barely hold herself on weak elbows.

Her friend could have died beside her.

Ajak slid her hand over the injury, Makkari forming a hissing breath as it closed up.

Persia looked around her, pupils thinned.

There was nothing that her mind allowed her to set her focus to.

"How?"

Phastos asked, hand sitting on his chest where he took the hit.

Her gaze slid over to his face, unable to read it.

"How did you do that?" he urged, breathing heavily.

She shrugged.

"Come on." Ajak spoke, forcing her words to stand upon heavy ground.

Persia brushed o her clothes, thoughtlessly walked over to Makkari to support her getting back to the temple.

I wouldn't have thought you would ever have to help me walk Makkari messily signed, gritting her teeth between her attempts to smile.

Persia returned a tired laugh.

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Her family stood gathered around the flat stone plate in the middle of the room, holding the unconscious body of Thena.

Persia scratched the back of her head, sitting on the ground next to where Makkari was standing.

Her hand was enclosing hers.

"I thought Mahd W'y'ry was a myth."

Sersi muttered, looking down at Thena with a sorrowful expression, brows twisted.

Her eyes searched for something in her face.

"There's no cure." Phastos explained, as Ajak ran her hand barely an inch above his skin over the wound. "That's why nobody really talks about it."

The flaming torches flickered with the sudden movement of Thena, who woke from her shock.

"What happened?"

God how much Persia hated that question.

"Thena, you attacked everyone. Wounded Sersi and Phastos, and nearly killed Makkari." Ajak said, choosing her words carefully and giving Thena enough time to adjust.

That didn't spare her from the truth though.

"I don't remember," she whispered, unable to speak through a clear breath.

Air shaking in her throat.

Ajak moved towards her, putting a gentle hand on the warriors shoulder, "You have Mahd W'y'ry, your mind is fracturing under the weight of your memories."

She took a breath.

"All I can do is erase them, so you can start over."

Persia couldn't convince herself to peak even the slightest look at Thena's face, knowing she wouldn't be able to keep her words to herself if she did.

Makkari squeezed her hand.

"I will have to inform Arishem and take you back to the ship where we have the technology to help you."

She usually was never upset with her family, not with Ajak. But her words were harsh, too soon even if they had been weighing on everyone for centuries.

Persia listened-

Thena taking one heavy breath a er another.

"What if it happens again? She could have killed you, she could have killed all of us."

Kingo spoke, like Thena was not even there.

"Please, I want to remember." Thena begged, for the first time ever choked o by her urge not to lose herself to tears.

"I want to remember my life."

Ajak pulled a face that was filled with pity.

"Thena I love you, but you need to listen to me. It's not important if you remember, your spirit will remain. You will always be Thena deep inside."

Deep inside would never be enough.

"What makes you think you have the right to say that?"

Persia breathed, sliding up the wall.

Her knees were weak.

Makkari put a slight pressure on her hand again, but it slipped from her hold.

"You told me the same." She raised her chin.

"A thousand years ago, you said that because I lost my memory, I get to live again."

Persia extended her arms to either side, nose twitching as she clenched her jaw.

"Look where that got me."

Ajak stared at her.

"Persia, you are not helpless. You have the power in your hands to still live."

Persia gave up with the first words she spoke, mind unable to focus on it.

She nodded and dropped to the floor.

Pathetic

The woman turned back to Thena.

"Trust me."

Trust

"Why should she trust you, you're asking her to let you erase who she is."

Druig's voice hailed through the entire room, his face turning from the bloody fight below their feet over to the woman that they called their leader.

His jaw pushed from her face, eyes daring for a response.

"Druig, I know you're upset"

"upset?!" he suddenly yelled, causing Persia to jerk back slightly. It rang through her head even seconds a er it was swallowed by the walls.

"We trusted you for 7000 years and look where you have gotten us." His feet swept across the floor almost weightlessly.

"I have watched humans destroy each other, when I could stop it all in a heartbeat."

Druig met Persia's eyes for just a split second.

Persia hadn't heard pain in the boy's voice for as long as she could remember. And it was always for no other than the humans.

"Do you know what that does to someone a er centuries?"

It faded into an inaudible whisper, he didn't intend for his words to be this weak.

"Could our mission have been a mistake?"

He looked about the eternals with a stance back to his voice.

Persia wondered how long he had been holding it with him.

She wished that she didn't agree with him.

They usually never agreed.

But it was only her ego that hurt.

"Are we really helping these people build a better world?"

He turned again, face covered with that agony it always did when he observed the humans battle one another.

"We are just like the soldiers down there, pawns to their leaders, blinded by loyalty."

"Right, Persia?"

Her head spun until it was glued to the back of his head.

It caught her o guard.

"It ends now."

She could feel a huge wave of cosmic energy being dragged about her, voiding the entire city of their conscious mind.

A tug at her skin, itching spreading over her.

Her power crept into her veins.

"Why did you say that?"

One of her arms pushed forward, pulling her body with it until she was standing beside him.

He furrowed his brows, batted her not even an eye.

She felt another tug, pushed it down with a sharp breath.

"Persia."

The girl raised a hand to stop Sersi from speaking.

"I'm talking to you, Druig," she spoke, until he stopped his attempts at mind controlling the soldiers.

"Do you know how many men are dying down there while you are throwing a tantrum?" he spat, taking a step closer to her face.

A slight smile unwillingly spread on her face, cocking her head to the side.

She dropped it and grasped at his collar.

"Answer me."

He raised his chin, staring down at her, his eyes jumping back and forth between hers.

"Are you stupid or do you want me to repeat it?"

Druig strained his limbs, broke from her grip and pushed her towards the wall.

"What, so you're not aware how you're acting like a puppet? How everyone is throwing you around and how don't even care?"

Persia looked at him, unwilling to make sense of his words.

"No one cares, Persia. You are no longer the person you used to be. You are not family, to anyone. But you don't care either, as long as someone is willing to stand by you."

"Do you think I wanted myself to be like this?" she hissed, feet growing numb.

"Do you think I am that oblivious that I didn't know?"

"Enough." Ikaris demanded, forcing a distance between the two, back turned towards Persia.

"You're going to have to make me." Druig mocked him, finally releasing his eyes from Persia.

"If you want me to stop," he looked at Ajak who had watched silently from afar.

"you will have to kill me."

He guided himself past Ikaris down the stairs, raising his hands.

"Let go, Persia. You can't stop me."

Persia felt tears drain her eyes of sight, but she dropped her balled fist, knuckles rushing back with color.

Druig released a breath, taking control of the forces as he joined them.

"It's your fault!"

she yelled a er him, filled with every ounce of agony she held for him.

All that obeyed to be kept within a scream and not an outburst.

Energy pinched at her, grabbed, tossed her from side to side.

Tears forced themselves down her cheeks.

Something touched her shoulder.

"Ajak I swear to you, don't touch me right now."

She could distinguish between the touch of her family by the breadth of a hair.

"I will watch over Thena." Gilgamesh spoke so ly, as if Persia had taken up all volume. "Allow her to keep her memories."

"One day when she attacks you, you might have to kill her."

Persia's chest was shaking with so much energy, emotions she couldn't pick apart.

"We will take that chance."

A silence fell over them.

"You may all go."

Persia's heart dropped, eyes shooting open in disbelief.

Her face was burning with heat, the flames tightening where the tears dried.

The pulse of her blood made her ears lack feeling.

"The Deviants are gone, there is no reason for you to stay with me."

"Shouldn't you ask Arishem first? We're a team, we should stay together."

Ikaris said, but all she heard were the words 'stay together'.

She wanted to fall to her knees and beg Ajak to agree.

"I didn't ask you for your advice, Ikaris."

Ajak replied, stern, with a newfound confidence which was unlike her. She bore Persia a glance which the frightened girl didn't notice.

"Do not forget your place."

"This is where we say goodbye. You are free to go. I want you to go out there and live a life for yourself."

Persia couldn't believe her ears.

It was worse than every nightmare.

She wished she had held on to that touch which she had refused out of anger.

"Not as soldiers, not with a purpose you are given." Ajak guided her eyes about her people, seemingly letting go of each.

"Find your own purpose, and one day, when we will see each other again, I want you to tell me what you found."

"So this is it?" Persia stammered, nothing but pure lack of anything to her tone.

"This is the end, because of him?"

"No, my dear." Ajak said, the comfort she was trying to convey flying over the top of her head.

"It was always coming our way."

Persia swallowed, head dipping forward and falling again, "I don't want to—"

"You deserve."

"Let me go with you, Ajak." she pleaded, like a knot has loosened, the tears started pouring again. "Please, I can't do this on my own."

Ajak thinned her lips, blinked away the tears, "No, you need to live the most, Perseus"

She used her given name.

It really was the end.

Was this what it felt like for a child to lose it's mother?

Foolish she was. But that didn't keep her chest from doing the bare minimum of keeping her breathing.

Her eyes from only seeing blurry outlines

Her heart was pumping so faintly she feared it would stop.

"I—" Persia didn't know what to say.

"We separate here, but always will be family."

Persia had those words on repeat for decade a er decade. Haunted her sleep.

God, it followed her everywhere.

Whether it made things better or not, she had no clue.

It certainly was the last memory which she didn't burn with the rest of the 7000 years.

And him

She would never forget that if he hadn't spoken that day, she wouldn't have lost everything.

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A/N: surprisingly short, I'll overwork it because i don't really like it -/ anyways, I gained like nearly 400 reads in a day? like hello THANK YOU SO MUCH!

we will be getting into the present now, i'm really excited for you guys to meet persia a er all this.

thoughts on this chapter?

(very sorry, but i will overwork the formatting and layout of the chapters to make them more neat, so there will be a lot of unnecessary notifications. they will be worth it though :))