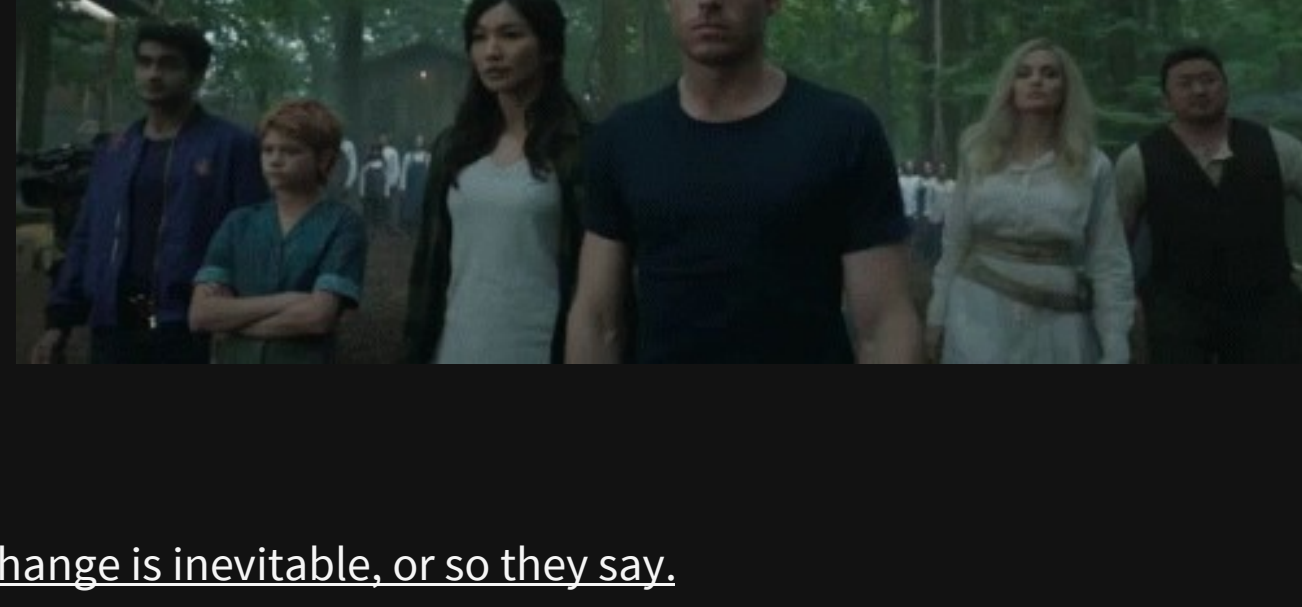


REUNION



Change is inevitable, or so they say.

It didn't take long for the afternoon to arrive as Druig and Gabriella went about their day, keeping busy like they normally do. As the sun rested quietly behind the trees, only allowing a low glow of light to pass through the clearing, Gabriella could see Druig felt restless. Keeping her eyes on him, Gabriella watches as he paces around the room slowly before pressing his back against the podium in the back of the hall. Frowning slightly, she could sense something wrong as he held his head low moving his hands behind him, his arms tensing slightly as he leaned.

"Druig," she questions so ly as she places the book she had in her hands on her lap, noticing him not look up as she spoke, "are you alright? You've been awfully quiet?"

There's a short pause before he speaks, his eyes focused on the floor and his lips slightly parted to show he was overthinking.

"I'm not sure, I feel, strange," he comments distant as she continues to frown, "I can't seem to.."

Druig's words get caught in his throat as he straightens himself, his hands clasping together so ly in front of him.

"Is something wrong?" Gabriella questions placing the book on the bench she was resting on and standing up, still watching him looking to the ground, "Druig?"

Watching Druig look up eventually, Gabriella makes her way to him as his lip twitched in a half smile, her hand reaching for him. Removing the distance between them and placing her hand against his cheek, Gabriella sighs as he puts a hand over hers. It stayed there for what seemed like only a moment before he removed it slowly, Gabriella pouting as he kisses it gently.

"Druig," she questions again as he moves her hand before him so he can fiddle with it, not looking at her, "you can't ignore my questions forever? What's going on? Are you okay?"

"I'm okay," Druig responds quickly looking up at her as she rolls her eyes making him chuckle so ly, "I just feel lost, as if something isn't right, and I'm frustrated at myself for not knowing what it is, or what it could be."

"Has this been happening for a while now..?" She continues her questions as she uses her other hand to stop his hands fiddling with hers, "I feel like you've been going in and out of focus lately? I'm starting to worry about you."

Pulling his hands from hers, Druig lazily pulls Gabriella into his chest as he gently plays with her hair. As his warmth consumes her she slowly places her arms around him tightening her grip, her thoughts still worrying for what he was not telling her.

"Don't worry pretty lady, I promise, I'm okay," Druig replies warmly placing a kiss on her forehead, "I'm just finding everyone's thoughts a little more overwhelming lately and with something bothering me, that I can't figure out.. I'm just irritated."

"There must be something I can do?" Gabriella asks so ly pulling herself away from his chest as he smiles playfully, "would a distraction help?"

"Depends on the distraction?"

Scoring slightly as she playfully hits him, Druig pretends to retreat chuckling before pulling her back into his chest and comfortably placing his chin on her head. Despite how much Gabriella wanted to be there for him, to prove that she was ready for anything, he always tried his best to avoid that happening. The reality was, Druig just didn't want to burden her and thought it was best for her not to know, everything.

Taking a deep breath, Gabriella pulls away once more as she feels Druig tense suddenly before letting out a hu while removing his arms from her. Looking up she freezes as she notices his bright blue eyes coat in a gold glaze, his face focused and stern.

"Druig?" Gabriella questions nervously as his face looks towards her, his eyes still burning as if the sun had landed in them, "what's happening?"

"Old friends," he replies so ly as he gently pats the side of her head before moving past her, "how could I be so blind."

Spinning on her heels to see him move towards the hall's entrance, Gabriella begins to follow puzzled as he pushes open the doors and places his hands behind his back. Finding herself awkwardly move to peek from inside the hall, Gabriella's eyes widen as she notices six new figures walking quietly through the clearing. Observing the rest of the people she had come to know over the last year standing still as if in awe, her eyes curiously linger back to the newcomers.

They were beautiful and unique, standing still as if they had been expected and simply waited to be welcomed with open arms and parades of celebrations. Gabriella's eyes flickered to a woman standing slightly in front of the others, her eyes full of doubt and pain. A man was close behind her and Gabriella followed as his eyes gloomy looked around before focusing on Druig bitterly, showing that there was a clear dislike for him. A couple or what seemed like a couple stood firmly behind the first two, their stance bold and calculating as they slightly observed the compound. There was a child standing beside another man, half the size of the others with red hair that was cut short, arms crossed and unamused, the man well presented as if he came from a movie set. Observing the people before her, Gabriella also realized that a short man with a camera was awkwardly following behind the camera flicking around with amazement, was he human?

Moving from the doorway she feels her eyes widen as she finally realizes the people before her, the group from the photograph.

"I've missed all of you," Druig's voice rings out, the silence in the clearing allowing it to sound loud and slightly snarky as the others stayed quiet, Gabriella looking to him as he spoke, "please...make yourselves at home."

Looking from Druig to the group in front of him, Gabriella tenses slightly as the man that looked like a movie star stood forward first, his hand raising to point at her. Noticing that his motion made the rest aware of her, all she could do was slowly pull a hand up to lightly wave.

"Druig my boy," the man pointing at Gabriella questions just as loudly as Druig had been but more teasingly, "I see, this girl isn't under your spell? Did you, actually find someone to deal with your dreary attitude?"

"Kingo, if you must know, girls kind of like the dreary attitude," Druig responds looking back to see Gabriella narrowing her eyes awkwardly before he turned back to the group in front of him, "let's just get this out of the way, okay? This is Gabriella, we're together and no, no questions."

Before anyone else can speak to ignore him and question, Druig raises a hand to silence it. Moving his hand to point towards where they had spent most of the day, he half smiles as Gabriella shyly comes to his side, the others shooting glances at them as they walked past into the hall. The man that Gabriella came to know as Kingo walked in last, his pace slowing as he patted her to show he had more to say.

"If you need help," Kingo whispers not very so ly as Druig pushes him to continue lightly, "just blink three times, okay?"

Gabriella finds herself try to hold in a laugh making Kingo smirk as Druig glances at her quickly, his hand finding hers at her side and squeezing it. Looking towards him, Gabriella half smiles as Druig tilts his head before peeking into the hall as the others silently made their way to sit and wait.

"Will you join us?" He questions as Gabriella looks into the hall before back at him, frowning slightly.

"I don't think this looks like a reunion that welcomes other ears," she answers so ly as Druig smiles, "they seem almost nervous?"

"They are, but I don't care. I want you with me, I need you with me."

Feeling his hand squeeze hers again, Gabriella nods slowly as his smile loosens before pulling her into the hall with him and letting go to close the doors behind them firmly. Finding a spot on a bench to the far back, Gabriella quietly sits as she notices the man that seemed irritated to be there watching her before following Druig as he moved to the front.

Stopping to spin slowly as his hands returned behind his back, Druig simply looked at everyone before returning to look at the woman that appeared somewhat like the leader of the group. The woman shi ing at his gaze.

"So, would someone care to explain this sudden drop in? Sersi?" his voice is calm and intrigued as she readjusts herself on the bench, "I'm sure you're all not here, just to visit little old me?"

Gabriella could feel the tension growing as she looked at everyone watching Druig as he simply waited in front of the woman called Sersi. With the way everyone was acting, Gabriella slowly placed her hands together nervously on her lap as she worried for what was to come. Watching Sersi shi slightly again, she feels herself sigh so ly as Sersi begins to speak.

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