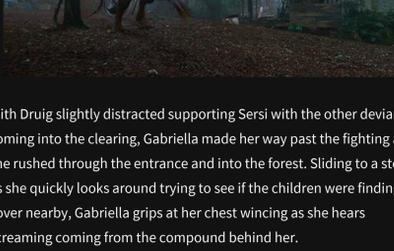


## DEVIANTS



With Druig slightly distracted supporting Sersi with the other deviants coming into the clearing, Gabriella made her way past the fighting as she rushed through the entrance and into the forest. Sliding to a stop as she quickly looks around trying to see if the children were finding cover nearby, Gabriella grips at her chest wincing as she hears screaming coming from the compound behind her.

"Katia!" Gabriella calls out loudly through the fighting as her eyes scan the trees before her, "Gabriel! Evita! Julio! Where are you?"

Trying to listen for any response, Gabriella continues deeper into the forest as she glances at any place big enough to hide in. Feeling her chest aching while she looked around, she stops suddenly as a soft cry for help comes from further ahead, small and faint as it carries with the wind. With a single breath, Gabriella rushes forward to where the sound came from before feeling her footing catch at the sight in front of her, a muffled scream leaving her lips as her hands cover her mouth.

Stepping towards them slowly, Gabriella feels her hands reach up shakily as she notices Gabriel and Evita covered in dirt and blood as they are crouched helplessly beside a fallen tree, their hands pushing at it weakly. As Gabriella's eyes slowly focus on why they were trying to move the tree, her eyes widen in horror as she realises what she was looking at.

It was Katia.

The small frail body of the little girl lay lifelessly underneath the tree, showing she had been caught in the middle of the deviants attacks as they tried to make it back to the clearing. Tripping over her feet, Gabriella panics as she moves towards the children before gently pulling their hands away from the tree, their faces distorted with pain.

"Gabriel, Evita," she whispers out with confidence she couldn't muster as they slowly looked to her, tears wetting the dirt that stuck to their faces, "where's... Julio?"

"He, he went back to compound," Gabriel splutters out softly through tears as Evita leans into Gabriella sobbing, "Katia got stuck, she's, she's not moving, we tried so hard to push the tree over. We aren't strong enough.."

"It's okay Gabriel, you did well, you did well," Gabriella stutters slightly looking away trying to hide her tears as she pulls Gabriel into her chest beside Evita, holding them tightly for a short moment, "we must get you both to safety, okay?"

Gently pushing them away and pulling the children to stand, Gabriella looks around for any sort of help and notices a glimpse of white and blue amongst the trees. Trying to calm herself, her eyes widen in relief as a group of fishermen led by Tomas run towards her.

"Gabriella! We are heading to the river," Tomas calls out stopping suddenly as he looks behind her at the fallen tree, "are you...are you hurt?"

"No Tomas, I'm fine but can you do something for me? I need you to take the children," she comments pushing them towards him as they cry in defiance, "I must stay with Katia."

"But, Gabriella," he goes to question as she shakes her head, his eyes lingering on her with sorrow before moving to pick Gabriel up gently, passing him to a man and then turning to gently pick up Evita, "we will watch out for them, just please be safe."

Nodding softly, Gabriella steps back slowly as she watches the group run towards the river before turning towards the tree again, her eyes welling up blurring the scene before her as she crouches down slowly. Placing her hands against the tree her fingers scratch at the bark roughly as she lowers her head, the pain cutting off her breath as she finally sobs.

"I'm so sorry Katia," she whispers through tears as she tries to pull the tree to no avail, "this is all my fault, you wouldn't have been here, if I didn't let you go."

Placing her hands to her face, Gabriella lets out another scream as she no longer cares for what was happening around her, the pain and anger surging through her body as her mind aches with guilt. Leaning slightly on the tree, Gabriella's eyes narrow as she lifts her head at the sound of twigs snapping and the rustling of leaves before turning slowly towards where the sound was coming from. As her face moves slowly towards the sound she watches as the couple from the hall stop suddenly as they notice her, the woman seemingly displeased as she glances around as if she was waiting for something bad to happen.

"Gabriella, right?" the man questions loudly as Gabriella can only nod as he looks to the tree, "I'm Gilgamesh and this is Thena, you shouldn't stay here, if I were you I'd get to safety."

"I won't leave her," Gabriella chokes out as Gilgamesh hums in disagreement.

Looking at her softly, Gilgamesh turns to signal for Thena to keep going as she nods before he moves towards Gabriella to place his hands around the tree. Sitting back slightly, Gabriella grits her teeth tightly as he pulls the tree effortlessly up and moves it away from where the child was, Gabriella gripping at her chest gently. Slowly dragging herself towards Katia and pulling her into her chest, Gabriella cries out softly glancing up to Gilgamesh as he nods mournfully, a frown twitching against his lips before he turns to follow Thena.

That was the first and last time Gabriella spoke to Gilgamesh.

Gritting her teeth as she pulls herself to stand still holding Katia close to her chest, Gabriella's pain turned to worry as she thought of Druig and if he was safe. Trying to move, she begins to waver as she notices how weak she was, her grip on Katia loosening as she slowly drops to her knees once more. With so much happening, Gabriella had no notice of how the situation was affecting her until she looked slowly down at the child in her arms.

"How can I protect Druig," she whispers out, more tears welling in her eyes making her sight blurry once more as she pulls Katia's body closer to her chest, "if I can't even get you to safety."

Closing her eyes tightly as the tears fall, Gabriella opens them slowly as she notices the sound of someone running before realising it was Tomas finding his way back to her. Watching him kneel before her, Gabriella looks weakly towards him as he speaks his words inaudible as the pain she was feeling overcomes all her senses. Watching his face grimace as he looks down at Katia's lifeless body in her arms, his eyes return to Gabriella as she leans to push her towards him with no words before rising and turning back towards the compound.

With the muffled cries from him telling her to stop silenced by the sound of screams and the fighting, Gabriella runs into the clearing wincing as her eyes sting from the force of the wind before focusing on Druig as he notices her. Watching him easily dodge the deviants still thrashing around the clearing, his eyes are blazing gold as he moves to her quickly placing his hands against her shoulders.

"What are you doing here?" he questions slightly angry as she only looks past him, noticing groups of people all shooting towards a deviant, "I told you to go, it's not safe."

"Katia... she's, she's dead."

"Wait, what?" Druig mutters out turning slightly to make sure the deviants were still distracted before turning back to Gabriella, "I don't think this is the best time, we can talk.."

"Druig!" Gabriella screams pushing him away as his eyebrows furrow, "she's dead and it's all my fault! I said.. I said she could go and she died, it's all my fault.. my fault, but I won't be responsible for you getting hurt, I want to help, I am going to help."

As Druig tries to move towards her again she swats him away, her tears clouding her vision once more as he can only watch frowning. Feeling his body tense slightly as he moves from looking at her to the deviants, Druig knew that she was in no state to help but he also knew she would not go willingly. Placing a hand through his hair as he turns back to Gabriella, he groans sadly before looking directly at her as she suddenly steps where she was standing.

"I'm so sorry, my love," Druig whispers as Gabriella's eyes glaze over gold, her tears stopping and her body turning slowly back towards the forest as Druig commands her to go to the river, "forgive me."

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Gabriella can't remember much after that as she later wakes by the river, surrounded by everyone that safely made it there from the compound. Standing up slowly from the rock she had found herself on, she spins slightly as she looks around for Druig or any sign of the others, her mind throbbing as her thoughts returned to her.

Clenching her fists together as she walks along the river, she grits her teeth as she thinks of what she will say to Druig when she sees him. Gabriella could feel her eyes stinging as her thoughts lingered to him, she felt betrayed, hurt as she realizes he had used his control on her, something he promised he would never do.

Feeling her anger rising, Gabriella suddenly stops as she notices Tomas hovering over someone as they screamed and wailed against the floor. Focusing on who it was, Gabriella's breath catches as she remembers Katia and as she watches silently, she realises it was Katia's mother holding her lifeless body. Gripping at her chest, Gabriella finds herself backing away to rush into the forest and back to the clearing as she wished to make sure Druig was okay and wanting to move away from the pain on at the river's edge. Feeling the mix of worry and anger continuing to build as she passes the entrance, her eyes focus on Druig and the others, except something was wrong.

Counting the group quietly as she finds herself slowing down making her way to them, Gabriella's lips part with sorrow as her footing catches noticing they were missing some.

The couple, Gilgamesh and Thena.

Loosing her hands to fall gently against her side as Druig looks up nervously his eyes focusing on her, the others slowly turn to watch as she continues towards them. Despite having all eyes observing her, Gabriella took little notice as she stepped towards Druig, her mind blank as she was only focused on one thing.

Him.

[ a/n: I'm sorry, I had toooo ]

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