

## SUFFER



As Gabriella steps forward to remove the space between Druig and herself, her face tenses as she blocks out the whispers from the others. Feeling all the built up pain and anger pushing for release as she li s her hand, her thoughts flash to past memories.

"You promised," Gabriella growls more harshly then she meant as her hand cracks loudly against his cheek, her lips slightly parted and quivering as Druig's face is turned with the impact, "Druig, you promised.."

With the surprise of her slap completely silencing everyone close enough to hear it, the sound of crackling debris on fire and the groans of the wounded becomes the only sounds heard. As Gabriella's hand moves to her chest in agony, she watches Druig places his own so ly against where she hit him. Moving his gaze from the ground to look at her, he feels his face contort with regret as he watches her take a step back fumbling slightly.

"I'm sorry," Druig whispers as he slowly straightens himself, not taking his eyes o her or caring about the others as he notices Gabriella's eyes filling with tears, "I'm, so sorry."

"You..." she chokes out quietly as her body moves on its own, Druig allowing her the freedom of hitting him again if she needed it, "asshole."

But despite her words spewing with anger, Druig catches Gabriella as she flings herself towards him throwing her arms tightly around his neck and hooking her fingers into his hair. With tears clouding her vision as she felt herself overcome with a mixture of disappointment and sadness, Druig places his arms tightly around her. Burying her face deeper into his neck, the eyes of onlookers seemed unimportant as she only thought about holding him.

"I wouldn't have done it," Druig whispers into her hair, placing a hand against her head as she continues to cry so ly, "I wouldn't have, but you were inconsolable, and everything happened so fast, I had no other choice."

"We always have a choice," Gabriella whispers back into his skin, making him only pull her into his chest tighter, "it's only up to you, whether it's worth the consequences."

"If the consequences are that you hate me but you're alive," he continues pushing her forward gently so he could look at her as she tries to look away, "then I would do it again."

Rubbing her eyes gently, Gabriella drops her head slightly before turning at the sound of hands slowly and awkwardly clapping. Feeling Druig move himself to her side as he slightly pulls her behind him, Gabriella watches Kingo rubs his hands together before stepping forward.

"This, whatever it is," Kingo comments pointing slightly at both of them as Sersi tries to shush him, "is incredibly weird to watch, sweet of course, but Druig being this sensitive is very strange, I'm actually shocked."

"It's totally weird," Sprite adds in bitterly, her hands crossed against her chest as she kicks at the dirt.

Gabriella shi s nervously listening to the other Eternals, before feeling Druig reach down to squeeze her hand for moral support.

"Kingo, Sprite, now is not the time," Sersi comments firmly making Kingo shrug as he places his hands behind his head, while Sprite rolls her eyes moving away from the group slightly, "Druig, we must take care of things, with Gilgamesh, with the emergence. Please, you realise that now right? That you have to help us?"

Feeling Druig tense slightly beside her, Gabriella takes a deep breath before stepping from behind him so she was once again in clear view of the group. Glancing back slowly as Druig reaches for her hand, she smiles so ly before turning to Sersi and bowing shyly.

"I'm sorry, but first I have to apologise for my outburst," Gabriella utters out as she straightens slightly as Sersi shakes her head slowly to try and stop her, "I lost a lot of good people today, a lot of my family and I reacted without thinking, it was really inconsiderate of me."

"Gabriella, please there's no..," Sersi comments as Gabriella shakes her head gently before reaching for her hand.

"I know, I don't have to apologise Sersi, but I want to," Gabriella replies sadly as she looks from Sersi to the others, "I wish we could have met on better terms, but that's not how life works. But I think we should prepare the ceremonies for our... our dead first and then we can figure out the next step to stopping the emergence."

"I agree with her," Ikaris adds in sternly a er listening quietly the whole time, before pushing himself o a tree and glancing at Gabriella for only a second, "standing around here miserably is doing nothing for our mission."

"So stern, boss!" Kingo comments as he signals the man with the camera to roll, "Karun, you better be getting this."

Letting go of Sersi's hand shyly, Gabriella feels Druig tug on her shirt lightly as she puts on a brave face despite her feeling her nervous. Watching Sersi nod slowly in response as she tells the others to head into the forest, she looks back to Druig as Gabriella feels herself sigh so ly.

"Shall we?"

Following Sersi's eyes, Gabriella notices Druig had returned his focus to her completely as she smiles sadly before flattening out his shirt which had wrinkled from the fight. Stepping back from him, Druig shakes his head grimly as Gabriella rolls her eyes pushing him towards Sersi who was quietly waiting for him.

"They need you, Druig," Gabriella comments so ly as Druig looks at her with a frown, "and I need to go back to Katia. When we have put the... them to rest, let's talk, about everything, okay?"

"Okay..." Druig replies with a short hu before turning to follow Sersi into the forest, glancing back quickly as Gabriella keeps the forced smile on her face until they disappeared into the darkness of the trees.

Once she was alone again Gabriella's lips drop quickly as they begin to quiver again, her tears falling silently as she slowly makes her way back to the river. Crossing her arms tightly against her chest her eyes look tearfully into the distant, as all that replays in her mind was Katia and the fact her death was her fault. Wiping her eyes roughly as she makes it back to the rivers edge, Gabriella feels herself shiver at the sight of bodies laid motionless near the water. Stumbling towards the groups of people setting up pyres for the deceased, Gabriella looks up to see Tomas rushing to reach her as his smile warms her slightly.

"Gabriella! I've been looking for you everywhere," Tomas mutters out painfully as he pulls her into a gentle hug, "when you didn't follow, I was certain..."

"Tomas I'm okay," Gabriella replies so ly as he removes himself from her before rubbing the back of his head awkwardly, "the children? Did they make it okay?"

"Yes, yes, they are with their parents. Thankfully they were unharmed as well."

"I'm glad," she comments sadly as she looks past him as she notices Katia's mother kneeling near the water, "I should... I should go to her."

"Gabriella," Tomas mutters so ly as he places a hand on her shoulder, "you are not to blame, okay?"

Feeling him let go of her shoulder gently, Gabriella tries to smile as she nods before moving slowly towards Katia's mother. Feeling her heart pounding against her chest, Gabriella takes a deep breath before shortening the distance and reaching a hand out to tap the woman so ly. Finding herself fall to her knees before the woman as she turned to face her, Gabriella feels her eyes prickle with tears once more.

"It's all my fault," She whispers looking at the woman before dropping herself to the ground wishing for forgiveness, her eyes closes tightly as Katia's face flashes quickly through her thoughts.

Laying quietly for what felt like eternity, Gabriella's eyes flutter open slowly as she feels hands grab gently at her shoulders before beckoning for her to sit up. Li ing herself painfully, her eyes notice it was Katia's mother as her hands move from her shoulders to reach for Gabriella's. Feeling herself trembling, she can't seem to stop the tears as she looks into Katia's mother's eyes, her hands tightening slightly against hers as the woman smiles lightly.

"You're not to blame, my child," the woman whispers, her own tears filling her eyes as Gabriella cries, "the gods have plans for us all, Katia will watch over us well, over you. Don't let her death be your end, it wasn't your fault."

"But I let her go," Gabriella chokes out, her head aching as her lips part and her face twitches with pain, "I had the choice to say no, if I said no, she would still be here."

"If you said no?" The woman questions so ly her voice trembling as Gabriella looks at her, "if you said no, she would have been in the clearing for the attack. Who could say, she would have not died then?"

Looking from the woman to their hands, Gabriella throat feels dry as she can't stop her tears before slowly looking back to the woman. She felt horrible as Katia's mother tried helplessly to express to her that she wasn't at fault, but she couldn't shake the feeling and her heart broke again as she realised the child was really gone.

"I'm so sorry, I can't believe myself," Gabriella whispers out through tears as the woman finally pulls her into an embrace, "I just can't believe she's gone, I'm so sorry."

"Katia would want you to stay strong," the woman hums so ly as she pushes away from Gabriella who was trying hard to look brave again, "she would want us both to be strong."

Nodding slowly, Gabriella wipes her eyes as the woman pulls them both to their feet before leaning into her. Helping the woman walk further down the river, Gabriella finds that the pyre for Katia had been made and she had been placed comfortably on top. Feeling the tears filling her eyes again, Gabriella grips the woman's arm tighter as they both huddle together for support, the torch being placed to set it ablaze.

As the fire grows slowly and smoke rises into the sky, Katia's mother finally weeps as she turns into Gabriella's chest, her words mu led as Gabriella lowers her head with a final sob.

[a/n: HI GUYS, so this chapter and probably the next are just filler chapters! I want to explain a bit more that is le out due to Gabriella not being in certain parts (of the movie) as well as explain why Gabriella is emotionally torn between possibly losing Druig and knowing he has to go.. (as this ties into the death of Katia) p.s. my self-confidence is messing me up, so I hope the chapter is okay...

ANYWAYS I hope you enjoy it although its slow, it'll make sense eventually, I promise.]