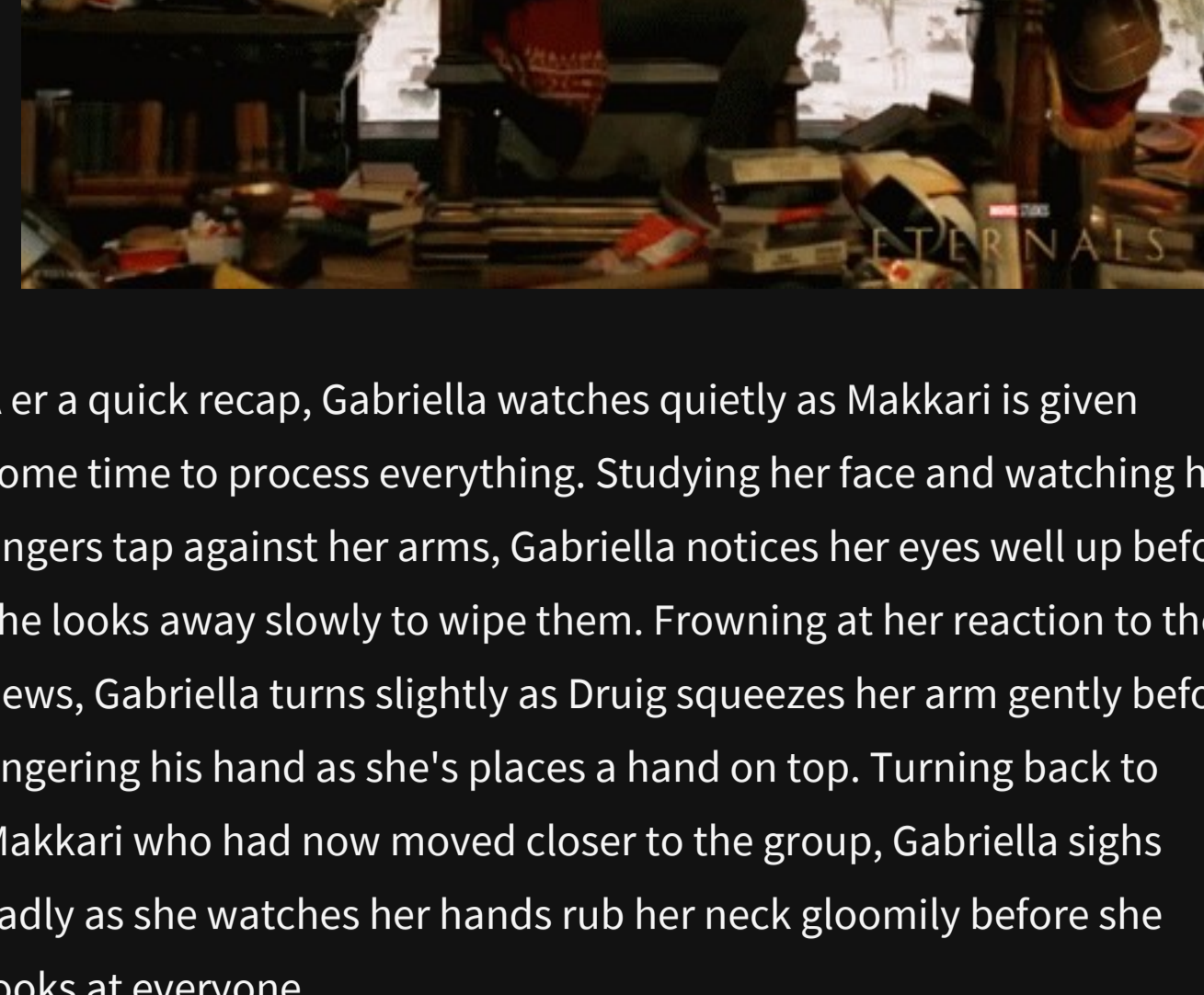


CELESTIAL



After a quick recap, Gabriella watches quietly as Makkari is given some time to process everything. Studying her face and watching her fingers tap against her arms, Gabriella notices her eyes well up before she looks away slowly to wipe them. Frowning at her reaction to the news, Gabriella turns slightly as Druig squeezes her arm gently before lingering his hand as she places a hand on top. Turning back to Makkari who had now moved closer to the group, Gabriella sighs sadly as she watches her hands rub her neck gloomily before she looks at everyone.

"Did she suffer?" She signs slowly as the group shuffles mournfully before Sersi steps forward to speak for everyone, a gentle smile trying to form on her face.

"No Makkari, I don't think so," Sersi comments sadly as she signs to her, Makkari trying to smile before watching Sprite whine with frustration and step forward.

"How would you know?" Sprite mutters out with sadness and anger attaching to each word as Sersi frowns, "you weren't there, no one was... we should have, been with her."

"Sprite, it's not the time," Kingo adds softly reaching a hand towards her shoulder, before she pushes past him to place herself up onto a free space on the table, her eyes dropping to her feet swinging lightly, "Sprite."

Watching Sprite wave a hand to silence Kingo as he frowns, Gabriella looks over to Thena who had dropped her eyes to outline a blade with her fingers. Focusing on her as the atmosphere becomes thick with pain and silence, Gabriella shuffles slightly closer to Druig as he brushes his shoulder against hers.

Resting her arm against his, Druig smiles before looking from her to Makkari to show he wanted to speak to her. Pushing at him so lightly, Gabriella half-smiles as Druig squeezes her hand before turning for Makkari. Following him as he moves through the group before touching Makkari's shoulder gently, Gabriella eyes watch closely as Makkari's lips curl into a soft smile filled with appreciation.

Druig's hands were delicate when he signed to her, speaking softly as she smiles and signs back. Looking as the pair speaking quietly, Druig's words are hid by the sound of other conversations beginning to fill the silence as Gabriella frowns slightly.

Over the last couple of days Gabriella had found herself meeting most of Druig's family, those that he tried so hard to forget. But it was the first time she had seen him so happy with someone other than herself, her eyebrows creasing lightly as she turns away.

Was she, jealous?

Shaking her head quickly before looking back towards the group, Gabriella notices Druig smirking slightly as his eyes find hers from the opposite side of the room. Glancing away with frustration, Gabriella finds herself pretending to look unbothered as she hears someone step towards her. As Gabriella looks up she sees Makkari standing in front of her, her smile warm and enticing despite the sorrow lingering throughout the room.

"Gabriella, right?" Makkari signs slowly, her eyes narrowing once she notices Gabriella looks confused, her eyes glancing sideways as if for help which makes Makkari turn slightly, "does she not know sign language?"

"Humans are slow remember?" Kingo comments as he signs to Makkari who frowns and looks back at Gabriella who was looking slightly embarrassed, "no offence, Gabriella."

"Kingo, be nice!" Sersi chimes in loudly before he scoffs at her, mouthing how he is always nice as Sersi shakes her head.

"Yes sir, please show some thought towards us humans," Karun comments for the first time, his back tightly against the corner of the room to stay out of the discussion.

Before Gabriella can respond, Druig moves his way back to her making sure to push Kingo slightly as he moves past him. Looking at Druig as he takes his spot once again beside her, she sighs softly as he nudges her.

"That's why I'm here," Druig voices as he signs to Makkari who followed him as he moved to Gabriella's side, her smile returning with a nod, "I'll be her personal translator."

Trying to hide a smile, Gabriella pinches Druig gently at his waist making him cringe as he chuckles before looking past Makkari. Noticing that Phastos had taken off his glasses to rub his eyes lightly, Druig quickly grabs Makkari's attention.

"Phastos is getting impatient, we can talk more later," Druig whispers as he signs, Gabriella smiling as Makkari glances over her shoulder before looking back.

"He looks like he's gotten older? Must be the stress from having a family?" Makkari signs while mocking his eye rub as Druig chuckles before feeling Gabriella nudge him slowly as Phastos steps forward.

Once all eyes were on Phastos again and as Gabriella made her way quietly to the other side of Druig so Makkari could stay with them, she watched as Phastos rubbed his hands together slowly. Although everyone was here to work together, Gabriella could see that Phastos was concerned as he stood before the rest. It didn't take a rocket scientist to see he was feeling the pressure, and all she wanted to do was cheer him on.

"Right, so now we have all been caught up," Phastos comments through the silence as he signs for Makkari, her smile widening shamelessly as he looks at her, "and have stopped talking about me, like I can't hear it. We need to figure out our next step."

"Well the next step, is figuring out how I could possibly put a Celestial to sleep," Druig questions with a cynical tone as Gabriella's face scrunches with a thought as her eyes scanned the room, "I don't think I have that kind of power."

Before anyone can say anything, Gabriella awkwardly hums while slowly raising her hand as everyone's eyes fall on her. Noticing she has the groups full attention, Gabriella awkwardly drops the hand which was raised as Druig chuckles.

"Humans are so cute," Kingo comments raising his hands to make pinching movements at Gabriella, before being shushed again by Sersi his eyes rolling dramatically, "what? I didn't say anything rude? I just mean, who raises their hand to speak?"

"Quiet!" Thena adds finally speaking up, making everyone turn slightly at the surprise of her voice, Gabriella especially as she lingers on Thena who was looking at her, "we will never get anywhere, if everyone keeps butting in."

Looking from Thena to the others, Gabriella watches as Kingo is finally at a loss for words as he mimics the zipping of his lip. Watching them patiently waiting and seeing Kingo turn to stand with Karun, Gabriella nods shyly at Thena before stepping forward.

"Thanks... Thena," Gabriella starts softly, showing she was not confident in front of the others as Thena nodded slowly, "what I wanted to say was that since knowing Druig, he's mentioned that cosmic energy is what gives him his mind control. If he has cosmic energy, then wouldn't you all?"

"Yes, your point?" Sprite adds as Phastos waits to see what Gabriella had thought of, his eyes glistening with interest as he crosses his arms.

"Well, couldn't it be possible to connect your powers together?" Gabriella continues as she glances from Sprite to the others, not exactly looking at them directly, "Maybe if you were all connected, you could put the... Celestial to sleep."

The room is silent for a moment before Druig chuckles signing to Makkari as Kingo points his finger, moving it slightly before stepping into the circle once again. As the others turn to each other slowly while Phastos smiles a little wider, Gabriella's fingers lace together with nervousness.

"You aren't just a pretty face?" Kingo remarks turning to Phastos as Gabriella half-smiles before stepping back to be close to Druig again, "look at you, helping out! Phastos, could it work?"

There's a short pause before Phastos nods and begins to speak.

"Gabriella is right, if I could find a way to connect us all," Phastos comments as everyone's eyes focus on him as he steps into the middle of the circle. As his hands move before his chest, they open to show light expanding between them, "one of us could become immensely powerful, pulling the accumulated energy from the rest, forming a... Unimind!"

As no one makes a sound, Gabriella smiles before slowly lifting a thumbs up as Phastos winks at her. Before he can say anything, Kingo shakes his head as he steps towards Phastos while his hands wave slightly in front of him.

"Phastos, you totally kill the vibe of being the inventor of the group," Kingo mumbles as Phastos rolls his eyes, looking past him to see Sprite groan.

"What a terrible name," Sprite exclaims rolling her eyes as she crosses her arms.

"How would we connect our energy? If it's even possible?" Sersi adds in before Sprite can say anything more, Phastos moving his hands as she speaks.

Looking from Sersi to Phastos, Gabriella watches the yellow light between his hands expand as it separates and connects into ten spinning rings. As the rings spin faster, they grow smaller becoming more detailed and Gabriella can only gawk in amazement.

"Is that?" Kingo begins looking at the imagery in front of the group, before Makkari signs her confusion to them, "bracelets... did you make us bracelets?"

"Quit butting in," Phastos states as Kingo surrenders before grumpily stepping back as Sersi sighs, "using these bracelets, the cosmic energy that is infused in us, to keep our bodies regenerating would in theory, shut down."

"I think, they are quite pretty sir," Karun shyly comments as Kingo hushes him.

As Phastos glares at Karun and Kingo before continuing his speech, Gabriella finds herself looking around to see the others reactions. Stopping slowly at Ikaris, Gabriella's eyebrows furrow as she watches his eyes are focused on the ground. Frowning as she watches him Druig pokes her gently as she smiles, her attention turning back to Phastos before nudging him back.

"With our regeneration shut down, our bodies would accumulate extra cosmic energy," Phastos continues smiling as he looks slightly to the others as he speaks, his eyes finding Gabriella's for her support, "and that's how the Unimind would form."

"I still hate that name, I vote we brainstorm- wait brainstorm!" Kingo states clapping his hands as Phastos shakes his head, "brainstorm is so much better."

"No, I invented it, so I get to name it," Phastos comments stepping towards Kingo as he frowns, "I am calling it, whatever it want."

Glancing to Druig, Gabriella half-smiles as he shrugs while leaning into her. It seemed like familiarity was flowing back to the group as she watched Phastos and Kingo bicker. Frowning as Makkari stepped forward this time, she notices her face is scrunched with confusion.

"And if Druig can put the Celestial to sleep, what then?" Makkari signs as Phastos goes silent at last, moving back from Kingo as Sersi takes the place in the middle. Druig whispering what she signed to Gabriella as she smiles warmly.

"We find humans a new home on another planet," Sersi states as she signs to her, her words sounding unsure as the Sprite rolls her eyes pushing herself off the table.

"Are we building a big ship too?" Sprite replies mockingly holding her hands up as if she was praying, "taking two of each animal?"

Watching Sprite walk past Sersi towards Ikaris, who had his smile playing on his lips, Gabriella turns to see Phastos roll his eyes.

Noticing the tension rise again slightly, Gabriella feels slightly awkward as they talk about what they need to do.

"You know what's never saved the planet?" Phastos mutters out, pointing towards Sprite as she turns from Ikaris and grumbles, "your sarcasm."

"Space colonisation would take decades!" Sprite argues back at Phastos as her expression grows more frustrated.

"It could happen quickly with our help," Sersi responds softly as Kingo steps forward again shaking his head.

"What if we accidentally kill the Celestial?" Kingo questions as his hands raise in surprise before falling at his side, "we could be responsible for millions of lives not being created across the universe. Right boss?"

Looking at Kingo turn his attention to Ikaris, Gabriella notices him finally look up before his arms cross tightly against his chest. Watching as he steps towards the group, Gabriella notices the gleam of hope in Sprite's eyes as she looks at him.

"Say something, Ikaris?" Sprite urges her body leaning towards his as she tries to read his reaction to everything, "you don't think we should be doing this right?"

"Ajak chose Sersi to lead us," Ikaris's voice looms over everyone as Sprite pouts, her arms falling to her side as he looks from her to Sersi, "she should decide."

"Forget who Ajak chose? You're the strongest, you should be making the decisions!" Sprite states angrily as she throws her hands up, Ikaris moving a step towards her, "fine, just keep lying to yourself. I'm out of here."

Watching Sprite shake her head defeatedly and storm out of the room, Gabriella looks back to see Ikaris sign before turning to follow. As the man walks out a roller Sprite with a call of her name, Gabriella's eyes turn to Druig as he rolls his eyes at the dramatics.

"Ikaris, wait!" Kingo calls out shortly after Ikaris had walked out, moving to follow as the others frown and break from the circle. It appeared that the meeting was over, for now.

Noticing everyone slightly exhausted with everything that had been said, Gabriella frowns slightly before noticing Thena move towards a table filled with artefacts. Feeling pulled to her somehow, Gabriella sighs as Druig wraps an arm around her waist.

"That was a lot," he murmurs as she nods slowly without a word, making him chuckle as he rests his head on her shoulder, "let's rest, everyone needs a moment anyway."

"Good idea, I could use a break."

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[a/n: HI GUYS, sorry it took me so long to post the next chapter... my brain is dying and I got a terrible stomach bug so I couldn't focus...! I hope you are still enjoying my fic and understand/are okay with the longer pauses between chapters... sorry]

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