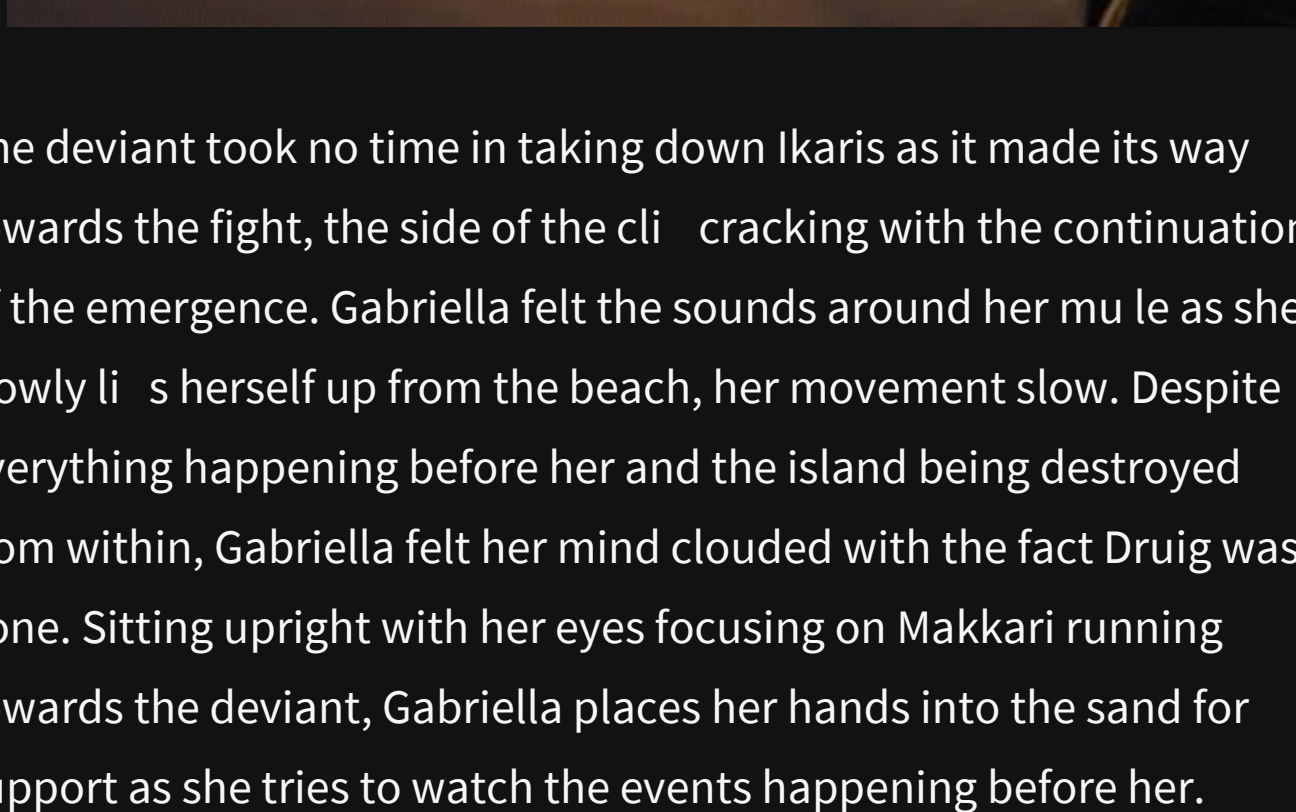


## LIFE



The deviant took no time in taking down Ikaris as it made its way towards the fight, the side of the cliff cracking with the continuation of the emergence. Gabriella felt the sounds around her mumble as she slowly lifts herself up from the beach, her movement slow. Despite everything happening before her and the island being destroyed from within, Gabriella felt her mind clouded with the fact Druig was gone. Sitting upright with her eyes focusing on Makkari running towards the deviant, Gabriella places her hands into the sand for support as she tries to watch the events happening before her.

Trying to follow what Makkari was planning on doing as Thena joins her, Gabriella watches the best she can as a cyclone of dirt surrounds the deviant. Grabbing fists full of sand as she notices the deviant's movement slow, Gabriella leans forward gasping with little noise. Watching the tall creature lift his fist and pummel the ground, Ikaris finds his footing as both Thena and Makkari are thrown back. Turning her gaze from Thena who had managed to get up from the impact, Gabriella crawls forward slightly as she notices Makkari slowly wincing against the ground.

Following the deviant walk towards Makkari as its tentacles pierce her, Gabriella can't help but to push herself forward before stopping suddenly with the creature being blasted away and into a nearby cave. Pulling herself to her feet with her body wavering as she places a hand to her head to attempt to calm it, Gabriella frowns as she watches Thena twirl a gold sword in her hand before disappearing into the cave. Once Gabriella makes her way to Makkari's side as she now stands gripping where she was hurt, Gabriella gently offers her a shoulder for support. Feeling Makkari nudge her sofly as she casts her eye over to Ikaris who was viewing the scene on the beach, Gabriella finds her pain turn to anger.

"Where's Sersi?" Ikaris questions as Phastos moves himself between Makkari and Gabriella to protect them the best he could, Ikaris pressing forward slightly as he looks past them.

"You always did underestimate her," Phastos replies coldly as Ikaris's jaw tenses before he looks towards the volcano and launches into the sky.

"Oh, no you don't."

Noticing Phastos take a step forward, Gabriella follows slowly as she watches his hands spinning a large rope-like golden beam towards Ikaris. Wrapping it tightly around his body Phastos pulls the man back towards the ground, a grin appearing on his face as Ikaris slams into the sand.

"I don't know about you, but this is really satisfying. Seeing you fall, it's almost poetic," Phastos calls out mockingly through grunts of frustration from Ikaris as he creates another beam of energy to keep the man close to the ground.

"Let me go Phastos, I can't let her do this!" Ikaris exclaims angrily as Phastos pushes his power further to force Ikaris down even closer.

"I don't think so. I've been wanting to clip your wings for a long time, Ikaris!" Phastos responds as Gabriella helps Makkari move a little closer, her eyes lingering on Ikaris who was struggling against the sand, "it must be so sad, to feel so weak."

Gripping tighter onto Makkari in an attempt to stop her from getting more hurt, Gabriella's eyes suddenly look towards the ground as her body begins to shake with the movement of the island. Looking around her quickly as her feet stumble with the ground shaking fiercely, Gabriella's eyes widen with horror as she notices giant golden fingers begin to rise from the water. Finding her footing as she feels Makkari move forward, Gabriella's eyes snap back to Ikaris blasting his way out of Phastos's hold and disappear into the sky.

Stumbling again as Gabriella finds herself falling to her knees once more, she can barely turn as Makkari crouches down beside her. Feeling her head cloud with old memories, Gabriella can only force a so smile as Phastos makes his way towards them.

"It's up to Sersi now," Phastos comments gently as he kneels down to lift Gabriella's face to observe the cut on her forehead, the blood and sweat mixed into her hair, "I have faith, we must have faith."

"Let me die," Gabriella mumbles out with new tears as Phastos's hand stops suddenly, his fingers nervous against her skin, "I can't live without him, please I can't do it."

"Gabriella don't say-"

But before Phastos can continue what he was going to say, Gabriella falls back sofly as he is lifted slowly into the air. Turning to see Makkari start to levitate, Gabriella finds her eyes looking around to see what was happening and her eyes stop on Thena who had also been lifted as she now returned to the beach. Gripping at the sand as she watches the three Eternals on the beach suspended in the sky surrounded by gold energy, she follows the beams combine into one towards a path further down the middle of the island.

Feeling the ground shake again as she digs her fingers deeper, Gabriella's eyes look back towards the fingers reaching from the water. To her surprise as she furrows her eyebrows looking at the giant Celestial rising, Gabriella gasps slightly at the change of colour. Leaning harder on her palms as she watches the giant freeze over, her body turns to the sound of the three Eternals that were levitating slowly drop back to the sand. Watching Thena make her way towards them, Gabriella looks up as Makkari makes her way to help her to her feet before wrapping her tightly in her arms. Holding onto Makkari as she pulls her into her side for support, Gabriella tries to smile at Thena who stops short of them before pulling them both into a warm embrace.

"It's good to see you both alive," Thena whispers pushing Makkari and Gabriella back as Makkari places a hand to her heart, Gabriella rubbing her eyes gently, "Gabriella, I'm especially glad you are okay."

Placing her hand against Thena's face, Gabriella feels her tears fall quicker as she looks away slowly. Pulling her hand from Thena's face as she looks towards the volcano which had now gone silent, Gabriella half smiles noticing Sersi making her way onto the beach to join them. Letting her eyes linger from Sersi, Gabriella looks to the sky as she watches Ikaris fly towards the sky and disappear. Looking back towards Thena and Makkari, Gabriella frowns slightly as she allows them to move her towards Sersi.

"I knew you could do it," Phastos comments walking with the others towards Sersi as she stops before them with a so sigh of relief, Gabriella leaning into Thena who had offered to support her so Makkari could rush to Sersi to make sure she was okay, "is it over?"

"It's over," Sersi replies calmly as she squeezes Makkari's shoulder with a warm smile.

"What about Ikaris?" Thena questions as Gabriella finds herself uninterested from the conversation, her head drooping, "is he gone?"

"Yes."

Kicking her feet sofly against the sand as the voices of the others mumble with the sound of ringing, Gabriella notices her aching heart once more. Gripping at her chest, Gabriella finds her eyes refocus as she feels a gentle touch against her arm. Looking up from her feet, her eyes focus on Sersi who had stepped forward to reach for her. Glancing at her through tears, Gabriella follows her finger as Sersilifts it up to point past the group and towards further down the beach. Turning slowly to where the group had now turned their eyes, Gabriella squints her eyes slightly as she sees a dark figure casually limping along the sand.

Pushing Thena quickly as she steps towards the figure, Gabriella feels a so cry leave her lips as she realises its Druig. Rubbing her eyes more forcefully now as she begins to run towards him, her feet stumbling slightly on her way. Watching his smile soen as the space between them shortens, Gabriella can't help but to throw herself into his arms. Wrapping her arms tightly around his neck as he gently leans back at the force of her, his hand reaches gently against her head to pull her closer.

"You're so cruel," Gabriella cries out into the crook of his neck, her tears dripping down his suit as he holds her close, his hand moving slightly to try and soothe her, "I thought you were dead."

"Do you think so little of my abilities," Druig whispers into her hair as she sobs a little soer, his smile warm at his own reply, "it'll take more than that, to kill me."

"Then why didn't you come back," Gabriella responds quickly pulling away to look at him, Druig lifting his thumbs to her face to wipe her tears away, "you made me think I lost you."

"I'm sorry, my love. I didn't mean to scare you."

Frowning slightly as she hits him sofly against the chest, Gabriella wraps her arms back tightly around his neck again before pulling him towards her. Kissing him deeply as her hands tangle in his hair to pull him closer, Gabriella smiles against his lips with the feeling of his arms wrapping tightly around her body. Keeping him close as she slowly pulled away from the kiss, Gabriella smiles as he gently leans his forehead against hers with a so chuckle.

"I love you Druig," Gabriella whispers as he pulls back from her, her smile turning to a frown at his movement, "but I don't want to ever go through this again, not being as helpless as I am."

"More training then?"

"Druig, I am serious," she replies as he gently squeezes her shoulders before turning slightly noticing Sprite slowly walking past them towards the others.

Watching Sprite sadly make her way to Sersi who appeared to be waiting for her, Gabriella feels Druig take her hand before kissing it sofly. Letting him pull her to the rest of the group, Gabriella quietly looks on as Sprite sighs heavily before looking towards the volcano.

"Is he really gone?" Sprite comments sofly, her voice filled with sadness and regret as she turns to look at Sersi who nods.

"Sprite, despite everything, I still have the energy from being joined to the Celestial, I can make you human. Everything you said you wanted, it can be yours," Sersi states as Sprite's eyes widen with a short step forwards, Gabriella's eyebrows creasing as a thought pops into her head, "but your time will be fleeting, you'll die one day. Are you ready for that?"

"Yes!" Sprite declares nervously, a hand reaching slightly towards Sersi.

"Wait!" Gabriella suddenly exclaims stepping from Druig's reach as she steps towards Sersi and Sprite as they both turn, confusion spreading across their faces, "I have a request."

"A request?" Druig comments for everyone as Sersi tilts her head, her interest peaked as Gabriella lifts a hand to her chest while pushing closer.

"You say, you have the power to change Sprite into a human right?" Gabriella questions as Sersi nods gently, everyone still listening quietly to see what Gabriella was wanting to ask, "well then change us, change us together."

"What?"

"I mean, if it's possible for her to become human, then it must be possible for me to become an Eternal?" Gabriella states stopping short of Sersi as her eyebrow raises in amusement, Sprite looking from Sersi to Gabriella, "swap us, allow her to take my humanity and in return, I shall take her powers, her immortality."

Placing her hand against her chest as she looks at Sersi, Gabriella feels her heartbeat quicken as she watches Sersi from slightly before looking around at the others. Feeling Druig take a step towards her, Gabriella pushes him to stop as she continues to wait for Sersi's answer.

"I don't know if it will work," Sersi finally replies as Gabriella takes a deep breath before it standing beside Sprite, "what if it, kills you?"

"Gabriella, I won't allow it," Druig states moving closer before stopping as Gabriella raises a hand.

"Druig, you can't stay right?" Gabriella says sofly as she looks from Sersi to Druig, his jaw tensing as she watches him closely, "you will have to leave right? To find others? So what of me? Must I stay and hope, one day you will be back?"

"Gabriella-"

"I don't want that, I want to be with you," Gabriella explains a little louder as Druig frowns, his hands clasping together behind his back as he keeps his eyes locked onto hers, "this is the only chance I have, I won't give that up. Please understand."

"I love you, Gabriella."

"Don't say it like that," Gabriella whispers with a so laugh as he rolls his eyes, "don't say it, like you are going to lose me."

Turning from him back to Sersi, Gabriella looks to her almost pleading as Sersi frowns with a short sigh before nodding slowly. Reaching her hands out with her palms facing the sky, Sersi waits quietly for Sprite and Gabriella to place their own against them. Closing her eyes as she feels the energy surge between the three of them, Gabriella feels an overwhelming sense of warmth run through her body. Feeling the light overcome the darkness behind her eyes, Gabriella gently feels her body grow numb and then nothing.

Everything happened so quickly and then it was over, everything turned black.

[ a/n: SO WOW, I think we have one more and love? THAT is crazy, I can't believe it... I really love the support and love you guys have shown for this and it means so much that you've followed along! It's been hard at times, but I AM so proud of finishing it and how it turned out. Now this ending, very much a fanfic ending if I DO say so myself haha... BUT I do think it works (maybe just me but that's okay), if it's possible for Sprite to become human, why couldn't a human become an Eternal or something of the sort! The next chapter is going to be sweet, so look forward to it! Again thank you so much for everything! ]

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