

**BABYLONE**  
**575 BC**

"Close the city gates now or else we don't stand a chance!"

"Hey that one was mine... Nevermind!"

"Do you want the one I have Kingo?!" I yelled clinging to the tail of a Deviant just as he shot it. "Thanks."

"We've got a big one!" Ikaris called out picking me up and dropped me on the back of the Deviant. "Don't disappoint."

"I never do." I huddled as my eyes glowed and tried to manipulate the blood of the Deviant. "Start shooting at it and someone seal those gates now!"

"Watch your head, little one." Thena smirked slicing the horns of the Deviant and stabbed its neck. Makkari sped up and knocked him over just as Thena and I jumped on.

Gilgamesh punched the Deviants sending it to the gates of the city and I manipulated it's blood trying to force it to stay still giving Ikaris an opportunity to shoot it. The Deviant stood up weakly and Gilgamesh winked at me before slapping it and finally killed it.

"Are you okay, Vena?" Kingo asked helping me stand up and I nodded.

"I've had worse scrapes. They're getting bigger and tougher to kill." I huddled and looked at the village with a frown. "It's going to take them years to rebuild all of this. Maybe we-"

"Absolutely not, Vena. You know the rules." Ikaris scolded me and I groaned.

"Suck my ass, Soldier boy." I spat walking inside the city linking arms with Makkari. "Are you alright?"

"Never better! She smiled and pointed at Druig who was immediately rushing towards us. "I'll leave you two alone."

"Are you alright, starlight?"

"I'm okay. Bumps and bruises, nothing more." I smirked kissing his cheek.

"She was truly exceptional today. Looks like my training did her well." Thena smiled nudging my shoulder before walking away with Gilgamesh and I rolled my eyes.

"I'm just glad you're okay." Druig sighed pulling me into a hug.

"We've been together how long again?" I asked linking arms with him as we walked back to the asomo for briefing.

"About 1,526 years. Give or take the years you left with Thena and Gilgamesh to take care of Deviants on the other side of Earth."

"And yet you still worry as if we've been together for days, darling." I teased pinching his cheeks and Druig groaned swatting my hand away. "Oh please, you love me."

He just hummed in response making me frown slightly.

"Everything okay, my starlight?"

"Yeah... everything's fine. Don't worry about it, my love."

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"Phastos! Did you go to the party last night like I told you to?"

"The party? Yeah, I-"

"He worked all night!" Druig called out from the far corner of the room as I looked at Phastos' invention with curiosity. Thena sat behind me braiding my hair and Makkari laid her head on my shoulder.

"Get a life! And where is Sersi?!" Ajak asked.

"Late as usual." Sprite shrugged.

"I'm sorry, but I have something very important to show you! Wait 'till you see this." Phastos smiled putting his invention together.

"What is it?"

"It's an engine! It moves things from hot pressure to low pressure. It'll help them move their mills at an incredibly fast rate." He explained and I looked at the invention in awe making Druig smile so I lay as he sat next to me.

"Great. I have three children now." Thena chuckled and we nodded smiling up at her.

"It's gonna freak them out." Sprite butted.

"I mean... they only have had the wheel about a thousand years and that was thanks to Vena so..." Druig shrugged and I rolled my eyes standing up once Thena was done with the braid.

"This wouldn't have happened if we only sped their evolution along like I suggested back in Rome." I said in a sing song voice and pat Phastos' back. "I like it!"

"Y'know, you and Adonis could do that thing where you mind control them into."

"I can only control their minds to seduce and to plant illusions in their minds, Phastos. I seriously doubt that their sexual urges will allow them to understand the machine." I teased crossing my arms and Druig chuckled placing an arm around my shoulder. "If it won't help them get on and y'know... there's not much I can do for you there."

"Ajak, are you listening to this?" Druig asked mockingly.

"Phastos, this steam."

"Engine. It's a steam engine."

"It's too soon!" Ajak exclaimed just as Sersi rushed inside. "And there she is!"

"What did I miss?" Sersi asked throwing me a bag. "The stu you wanted, Vena."

"How much I owe you?"

"Not a coin. Glad I could help with that." She smiled and I nodded closing the bag when Druig tried to look inside.

"What do you have there, my starlight?"

"Some stu I needed and Sersi offered to get them for me. Mostly keepsakes." I shrugged pulling out a random necklace and threw it to Makkari. "That's for you."

"Thank you!" She smiled and immediately put it on.

"Ladies and gentlemen! I present to you... the plow. Because that's what it does... it plows dirt." Phastos explained unamused and walked away.

"I met a group of settlers who are building their homes in the northern fields. They'll need to plant their own crops." Sersi said trying to cheer up Phastos who mumbled a thanks and sighed.

"For what it's worth, I liked the engine." I whispered to him and he smiled slightly.

"Listen... humanity is coming a lot slower than some of us want. But there's no telling what wonders they'll discover once they advance." Ajak smiled and noticed my frown. "Vena, something on your mind?"

"Haven't listened to me in three thousand years, doubt it'll make a difference now." I mumbled and Thena and Gilgamesh furrowed their eyebrows at me. "What?"

"We're having a conversation later." Gilgamesh said and I groaned.

"Whatever."

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"Vena, can we come in?"

"You're already inside." I smirked and continued to organize my shelves. "I should stop with the keepsakes for a while."

"Where's Druig?" Thena asked grabbing a few small statues and placed them on an empty shelf. "Organize them by eras and by level of importance. It's easier that way."

"Out for a walk with Makkari."

"So she's knocking sense into him. Thank Arishem because that means I don't have to." Gilgamesh sighed in relief and I tilted my head confused. "We could see your frown from a mile away. Is everything okay with you both?"

"Why do you ask?"

"The past few years you've been acting rather weird. So has he and we're getting worried." Thena butted and forced me to sit down.

"A thousand years I've been waiting for him to say those three words. Has he said it? Not even a hint of it. Meanwhile I've said it more than once and I just get a stupid hum out of him." I admitted and rested my head on Gilgamesh's shoulder.

"Have you talked to him about it?"

"He gets all weird whenever I bring it up, so I just don't anymore. I love him to death and beyond, but he really pisses me off sometimes."

"Well he has expressed his feelings for you in more than just words, little one. I mean, your room is covered head to toe in gifts from him." Gilgamesh chuckled and I shrugged. "Druig absolutely adores you and worships the very ground you step on."

"Sometimes it wouldn't hurt to hear it once in a while." I mumbled laying down on the bed and they joined me. "Sometimes actions need words just as much as words need actions."

"Well he is rather slow with these things. He did wait two thousand years to admit his feelings. I always knew that would happen since we arrived." Thena shrugged playing with my hair. "Maybe he's not ready to say it yet. But don't force him or else it'll end badly. Just let things flow for a while to see. Your relationship has always been one of complete and utter devotion to one another."

"Maybe you're right." I sighed as Gilgamesh put the covers over me. "I'd like to nap now if that's okay. The Deviants wore me out and my head hurts."

"Sleep tight, little one. I'll tell Adonis once he gets back."

"Thank you, Gilgamesh."

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"You missed Sprite's story. You never miss her stories because they're your favorites."

"Too tired. Deviants wore me out." I mumbled waking up and rubbed the sleep out of my eyes. "Feast's over?"

"No, but I wanted to see how you were. You've been sleeping all a noon, my starlight. Thena said not to disturb you." Druig pointed out as he laid next to me and looked at the organized shelves.

"Someone's been busy."

"Thena helped and apparently finished it when I fell asleep." I sighed wrapping my arms around him tightly. "How much did I miss?"

"Well, I managed to stop a brawl from breaking out. Makkari and her sticky fingers again. And she scolded me for interfering!"

"We're not supposed to, Adonis. No matter how much we want to." I shrugged and hummed when he started to play with my hair. "Keep doing that and I'll fall asleep again."

"You interfere all the time. Stopping couples from fighting and introducing inventions to them behind Ajak's back." Druig pointed out and I chuckled.

"Because unlike you, I know how to not get caught."

"Well my sincerest apologies for not having powers that can manipulate the earth and allow me to sense when someone is coming." He scooped teasingly and pulled me up so I was eye level with him.

"That's why you can't scare me anymore, love. And that's why I hate walking in sand." I whispered and pressed a kiss to his cheek.

"You missed." He mumbled pressing his lips to mine. "That's better."

I rolled my eyes smiling and kissed him again.

"I adore you, my beautiful Vena. And I don't ever want to be parted from you." Druig whispered placing his forehead on mine.

"Adoration is selfish, my charming Druig." I teased.

"Then maybe I'm a little selfish."

"And fueling the narcissism in me." I smirked. "Do you remember the other name they gave you before we left Greece?"

"They gave me many names, my Aphrodite. Hades and Ares being amongst the many. I also remember they gave you the name of Persephone as well."

"Of all things they called you a war god when you're as peaceful as they come." I laughed as Druig rolled his eyes.

"They see me fighting Deviants once, and suddenly I'm a war god." He scooped. "The only good thing is that I'm still a lover to my beautiful Aphrodite."

"How did I become Persephone again? That never seemed to come up in conversation."

"Thank Makkari for that. Once you discovered those new powers, she just fueled the fire. Can't say I mind because as Aphrodite or Persephone... we're still together." He smiled brushing his nose against mine and I giggled. "But I still prefer the story of Aphrodite and Adonis."

"And why's that?" I asked sitting up slightly and he whined pulling me back down to lay on his chest.

"There's just something about a mortal falling in love with a goddess that's just so heartbreakingly beautiful. It's a love that he knows he doesn't deserve and that at points he may have taken for granted." Druig explained and I frowned looking up at him.

"Are you talking about Adonis or yourself?"

"Would it be valid to say both?"

"Maybe." I shrugged sitting up and brushed his hair out of his face.

"What brought this on?"

Druig just shrugged and closed his eyes wrapping his arms around my waist.

"I'm not good with words."

"Now what made you think that?" I teased as Druig rolled his eyes and pinched my sides lightly. "Hey!"

"But I truly do love you, my darling Vena." He smiled and I stopped playing with his hair from the shock. "Why'd you stop?"

"Y-you do?" I asked stifling a smile as my eyes welled up with tears.

"I do. And I never wish to be parted from you." Druig smiled wiping my tears and kissed me gently. "I believe I'm about a thousand years late to say that, but I really do mean it, Vena. It's you and me forever."

"That seems like and awful long time." I smirked and kissed him. "But I love you too. It's just you and me forever."

"Forever it is, then."

**MEMES:**

