

A/N: bring on the tissues for this one...

"Ajak, it's just this one time! I promise!"
"No Vena, absolutely not!"
"But..."
"No buts, Aphrodite. We cannot interfere! How long will it take for you to understand this?"
"they're killing themselves and yet you people do absolutely nothing! Ajak, you can't seriously expect me to just stand here and watch yet another war break out! We've watched entire dynasties fall due to their wars and yet here we stand, in the Domo doing absolutely nothing!" I exclaimed with tears in my eyes as the rest of the Eternals looked down at the ground. "I can't take it anymore!"
"You can and you will! This has gone on long enough, Vena, I've seen you interfere during minor inconveniences and had to defend you from Arishem countless times." Ajak scolded. I grabbed a random object and threw it at Arishem's statue in anger. "Vena! That's enough!"

"It's always Arishem's rule! Can't you see they're practically turning into cannibalistic savages! We have the power to do something, to help them evolve! They worship us and expect us to defend them. Why can't we defend them from themselves?" I cried and wiped my tears in frustration. "Just this once, Ajak. Just let me help this one time and that's it. I can deal with Arishem myself. Just let me help them."

"You've grown attached to this planet, you all have. But we should remember the rules given to us and focus on the mission."

"Why should we? What good did it ever do to us? It's always the same argument over the same thing. A civilization goes to war, Vena wants to stop it, you won't let her resulting in her getting panic attacks, Ikaris being a smartass as usual and all of us are forced to sit here and watch Vena die on the inside." Druig scooped opening his arms for me. I walked towards him and fell into a fit of sobs. "They shouldn't have evolved this way."

"I'm afraid this is out of our hands, Druig."

"I've seen men kill their wives over jealousy when all I have to do is snap my fingers to stop it. I've seen them beat their lovers and children half to death and I stood by doing nothing because of a rule that someone we've never seen has given it to us. How is that just, Ajak? Explain it to me." I choked out through sobs as Druig rubbed my back comfortingly. "I can't take this bullshit anymore!"

"Vena, we must follow the role that has been given to us. We are to protect them from the Deviants, not from themselves." Ikaris sighed. "It's always the same thing with you."

"They see us as gods... how can a god who is just allow such pain and suffering be bestowed upon them?" I asked and turned to face him. "Answer me that question and I'll let it go."

"Because we're not gods." Ajak butted and stood in front of me. "I think it's time we do the thing we've been talking about."

"And what's that?" Sersi asked concerned and I started to hyperventilate clutching my head pulling away from Druig. "Vena?"

"No, no... Let me keep them, please. I want to keep them." I begged falling to my knees crying.

"You've lost your focus."

"I want to keep them. Please let me keep them, Ajak."

"Keep what?" Makkari asked crouching down in front of me.

"Her memories." Ajak said in a soft tone just as I broke into another fit of sobs.

"I don't want to forget. Don't let me forget, please I beg you." I pleaded holding onto Druig's leg. "I want to remember."

"Ajak, don't do this to her." Druig choked out. "Please don't do this."

"I don't see any other way, Druig. But she'll always be our little Vena." Ajak sighed taking a step towards me but I scooted further back almost knocking down Druig in the process.

"She won't be the same, because she won't remember us. And she won't remember Druig." Sprite mumbled. "She needs to keep them. We want her to keep them."

Thena and Gilgamesh walked up to us and crouched down so they were eye level with me.

"Ajak, let her keep them. We want her to remember us." Thena whispered with tears in her eyes and pulled me into a hug.

"She needs to remember the purpose of the mission." Ikaris scooped and Thena turned to glare at him.

"Just how cold blooded and soulless are you?"

"Ikaris... this will break her. And not just her, but the rest of us too. Especially Druig." Sersi added and sent me an apologetic look.

"All except Ikaris, who apparently has been waiting for this day to happen for millenniums." Phastos glared.

"Don't let them take my memories. I want to keep them." I grabbed on Thena's shoulder trying to catch my breath as she rocked us back and forth. "Let me keep them please."

"I won't let anything happen to them, I promise." Thena whispered and gestured for Druig to take over which he gladly did. "Ajak, this is wrong and you know it. It will destroy her, it will destroy all of us."

"She won't remember."

"But we will. We'll remember everything. Druig and Vena have been together for almost two thousand years... How do you think this will affect him? Loving someone who doesn't remember the special moments she's had with him? Makkari and her are attached to the hip and share a bond that we'll never understand. Thena and Gilgamesh are practically her parents and the rest of us are her brothers and sisters, Ikaris included. How can you expect us to allow almost four thousand years of her life wiped away while we will remember everything?" Kingo asked. "She won't be the same, Ajak. And how can taking her memories assure you that in a thousand years we won't be having this very same conversation?"

"I want to remember you... I want to remember our story. I want to remember Aphrodite and Adonis." I wept on Druig's chest as he choked back his own sobs.

"This isn't fair, Ajak. Deep down you know Makkari signed and glared at Ikaris. And don't you dare say another word or I'll be the one flinging you to the sun. You've broken her down enough."

"You'll remember. I'll make sure you remember." Druig whispered lovingly placing his forehead on mine and rubbed my temples lightly and I did the same to him with shaking hands. "It's okay... you're okay. Nothing is going to happen to you, my starlight. I won't allow it."

"She needs to focus on the mission! She's intervened far too much and gets distracted easily!"

"How is she distracted easily, Ikaris? You run around making sure Sersi doesn't get hurt while Vena gives two shits what happens to Druig in the moment. Once she sees a Deviant, her full attention is towards the Deviant and nothing else. Druig and the rest of us are damned!" Gilgamesh yelled standing up and shielded me and Druig from the argument.

"There may be another way... but Druig won't do it." Ajak sighed. "He can manipulate her mind to hide her impulses to protect the humans and to intervene in situations like these."

"I won't do it, Ajak. Her caring for the humans in the way that she does is what makes Vena so special. You're asking me to take away one of the many reasons I fell in love with her." Druig protested.

"But that way I'll remember you." I mumbled and Druig shook his head.

"There's always another way, my starlight. I'm not taking away the part that makes you special. I'm not taking away your kind heart. And if I do that to you, it's only fair I do the same to the others."

"You touch Sersi, you die." Ikaris spat and Druig clenched his jaw standing up.

"Why not? You're clearly so keen on manipulating and potentially erasing Vena's memories and you don't see me here beating you up to a pulp. I'm over here trying to calm Vena down and avoiding a full blown panic attack and lose control of her blood manipulation which she's worked for a full millennium to try and control... for your sake, of course." Druig taunted as Ikaris stared him down. "She gets her memories wiped, you're following suit. If I have to see her watching Vena lose a part of herself that's so important to her, it's only fair you see the consequences too."

Makkari separated them and Druig was back by my side.

"Vena... if I don't do this, will you finally understand why Arishem gave us the rule?" Ajak asked and I nodded shakily not looking up at her. "I think it's best if you stay inside the Domo for a while. At least until this all subsides."

I nodded once more and the rest of the Eternals, except for Ikaris, engulfed me in a tight hug.

"Thank you, Ajak."

"You know this isn't healthy, right?"

"I can't help it." I mumbled looking at the city which was majorly engulfed by the flames. "Ajak forbid me to put out the fires... Arishem's orders."

"I'm sorry this is happening, my starlight. I wish there was something else I could do." Druig sighed sitting next to me and I shrugged resting my head on my knees.

"You've done more than enough. You fought for my memories. Thank you for that... and for refusing to manipulate my mind." I sighed looking at the war below us.

"I made a promise to you, I intend to keep it. And I can't bear to see you lose that part of yourself, my darling Vena. Or else you wouldn't be the Vena I fell in love with back in Egypt." Druig shrugged scooting closer to me and a blanket was wrapped around us.

"Figured you both might be getting cold." Thena smiled so ly conjuring a spear and looked at the burning city. "Ajak's talking to Arishem again, so some of us are going down to try and stop this savagery as best as we can and scout for Deviants. Sersi's distracting Ikaris and Sprite is in charge of illusions just in case... I'd invite you, but I think for now it's best you stay here, Vena. We're willing to take the fall."

"Don't kill them... please." I choked out and she nodded kissing my head and ru led Druig's hair before walking out.

"Is there anything I can do to make you feel better, my starlight?" Druig asked er a while of silence and I shook my head hugging my knees tighter. "Is there anything you need? Are you hungry, tired?"

"Emotionally exhausted." I chuckled dryly opening of my hands forming a small daisy and handed it to Druig with a sad smile. "You were right."

"About?"

"What you told me back in Mesopotamia... their narcissism and selfishness will be their downfall. I always had faith in them, but this? This is savagery."

"Don't say that, my love. Because I'll lose faith in them too. I told you a long time ago that if a soul as pure as yours has this much faith in them, they are truly worth fighting for. I still believe that to be true and so do the others, except Ikaris but he's a separate case. You've helped humanity in ways that are nothin' short of admirable, my starlight. And it breaks my heart seeing you this way when all I wish is to take your pain away." Druig said picking me up and sat me on his lap wrapping the blanket tight around me. "You're the fiercest warrior I've ever laid my eyes on and the most caring of this batshit family. Never let them take that away from you."

"I just want to help them, Druig. What's the point of us being here if we can't help them? Deviants don't appear every single day for the love of the Celestials!" I exclaimed laying my head on his chest. I closed my eyes focusing on his heartbeat and took a deep breath trying to calm down. "This wouldn't have happened if I just did what I suggested and tried to help them evolve."

"They will evolve, my beautiful Vena. We just need to give them time." He sighed tightening his grip and pressed a kiss to my temple. "Are you sure you don't need anything?"

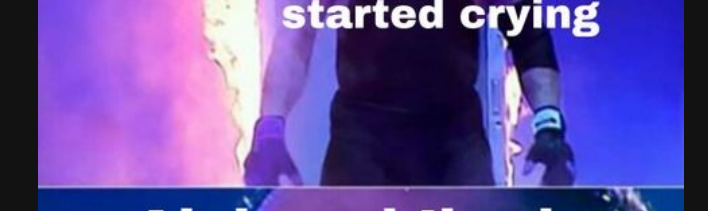
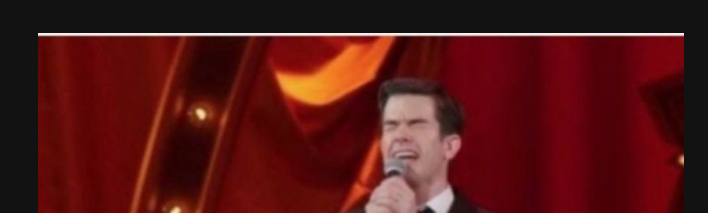
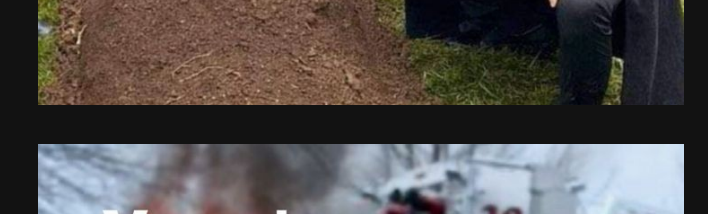
"Just hold me... please. I don't want to be alone." I whispered nestling closer to him and felt a wave of exhaustion wash over me.

"I'll be here for as long as you want me to, Vena."

"Can you stay forever?"

"Forever it is."

MEMES TO CURE THE SADNESS CAUSED BY THIS CHAPTER:



A/N: you guys have no idea how hard making these memes were. This chapter legit broke me