

"Those bruises aren't healing."

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"It's only been a couple of days and-"

"VENA! DRUIG! I KNOW YOU'RE HERE!" We both tensed at Ikaris' voice.

"How fast can you climb a tree?" I asked Druig.

"Not fast enough and we can't leave the people down here to face Ikaris' wrath by themselves. They'll die!"

"Shit... Well, we've had a semi-good life, huh?" I sighed walking outside the hut holding an axe defensively. "One swing and your head is cut clean o , Ikaris. And where is Sersi!?"

"Helping Thena and Gilgamesh settle. I'm here for you two." He spat looking around. "Let these people go!"

"You don't understand, Ikaris. If you just let us-"

"It's your fault! Both of yours!"

"Yeah? Who was the one who laid hands on my wife and tried to kill her? Almost succeeding, might I add." Druig stood behind me holding a machete and stared him down. "See those bruises on her neck? I certainly didn't put those there, and I doubt the others would dare lay a harmful hand on her."

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"I should've finished the job apparently. Whenever something goes south, your sweet Vena is always caught in the middle of it." Ikaris sco ed and I threw the axe at his feet.

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"Next time, it'll be your dick. Now have you come here to tell me I'm a disgrace again or do you actually have a purpose?"

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"Thena and Gilgamesh won't come back if you two aren't there, neither will Makkari. Kingo said that he'll do whatever you do and we can't find Phastos anywhere." He said sending me a death glare. "And it's all thanks to you. This family is broken because of you two."

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I let out a so gasp as my eyes burned with unshed tears. Druig noticed and pushed me behind him defensively.

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"Ikaris, that's enough. You've hurt her enough, mentally and physically. It's done. This family was broken from the start and you had a big part in that."

"And how did I do just that, **Adonis?**"

"Let's count the ways, huh? First, you target every single person in the Domo just for your amusement. Second, you push my best friend to her breaking point. I swear, I've never seen Makkari cry up until the night you just had to train her way past her limits. Third, but not less important, you almost killed my wife!" Druig yelled pushing him back. "And now you have the absolute audacity to come here running your mouth about how all of this is **our** fault!? Why... We're only laying in the bed **you** made 7000 years ago."

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"Boys, that's enough." I sighed trying to push them apart. "Ikaris, the damage is done. We all le , some quicker than others."

"Yeah, because I'm sure that Druig le first just to get away from you."

Ikaris smirked and my breath hitched. "Your wife almost died a few days ago, and what did you do? You walked away from your family... From **her**."

"It's not like that and you know it, Ikaris!" Druig spat as his eyes glowed and so did Ikaris'. "The only thing that's keeping me from driving this machete through your skull are my morals and the woman I love."

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"Fine." Ikaris sco ed and grabbed me by the throat and I have zero doubts that there will be new bruises tomorrow.

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"Ikaris... Don't make me do it." I choked out just as Druig raised the machete. "Don't you dare!"

"Ikaris, let her go!" Druig pleaded not daring to take a step forward.

"You're gonna have to make me. You're not the boss of me." Ikaris mimicked.

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"Ikaris, please... I'm begging you. Don't hurt her. Punch me, kill me, I don't care... But don't hurt Vena." He sobbed falling to his knees as his eyes glowed even brighter and I knew he was trying to enter Ikaris' mind.

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My eyes started to glow as I looked at Ikaris in the eyes and a er a while, he started to sweat and his face turned red. Ikaris' nose started to bleed and he slowly let go of his hold on my throat.

Once I fell the ground I sent him back with a gush of air and constricted the air in his lungs.

"The only reason I'm not killing you is because of the sole fact that you're still family no matter what. But you dare lay a hand on me one more time, and I'll give you something a lot stronger than just a nose bleed. Consider it your first **and final** warning, Ikaris." I said through gritted teeth and released my hold on him.

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"Vena, I-"

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"I hate you... I can finally say with every bone and fiber of my being that I fucking hate you and I never want to see you again." I crouched down in front of Ikaris and he scooted away in fear. "Next time you come and stir shit, I hope you have a fucking death sentence because I swear to the Celestials above that I won't hold back."

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"Vena, I'm sorry." Ikaris sobbed but I remained unfazed.

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"Get out. I won't ask twice." I said and helped Druig stand up. "Is he gone?"

"Yeah, he is." Druig sighed and pulled me close glancing at my neck. "Those are definitely gonna bruise tomorrow."

"They hurt real bad." I shrugged rubbing my neck.

"Don't scare me like that, my starlight. I don't know what I'd do without you."

"I don't have doubts, but I have to ask. Did you-"

"Leave because of you? Never in a million years. On the contrary, it was you who kept me around for so long. I le because... Because I couldn't take it anymore, Vena. All these years watching humans kill themselves and for what? For the illusion of power? It was too much." Druig said as his eyes welled up with tears again. "I'm losing faith, my starlight. Please give me hope that someday they'll change. Please... even if it's a lie."

"I... I don't know, Druig. I honestly don't know what to think anymore." I choked out and Druig broke down crying.

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"I don't want to lose faith, Vena. I care for them so much." He sobbed and hid his face on the crook of my neck. "I didn't want to leave our family. I'm sorry I broke our family... I'm sorry I broke us."

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"Druig, look at me." I sighed and held his face in my hands wiping his tears away. "You didn't break our family, it was fucked up since the start."

"But we weren't. We were so pure and-"

"Who said we still aren't? My sweet Adonis... Nobody is pure anymore, especially you and me. And besides, what makes us so special and 'perfect' is that we're not perfect. We both have our flaws and we deal with them together."

"You don't... You're so pure and-"

"Someone who thinks too much with her heart instead of her brain and it gets her into compromising situations at times. Someone who acts on impulse and then regrets most of it later." I pointed out and kissed the tip of his nose. "I'm not perfect, Dru. But you've always treated me like a woman who can do no wrong and I'm far from that. I mean, I just told Ikaris that I hated him and almost boiled his blood a few moments ago."

"He deserved it." Druig grumbled and I shook my head.

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"Nobody deserves to be hated. Especially someone we call our family."

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"A/N: no memes for this chapter because it legit broke me into a million pieces and then some.

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But happy new year everyone🍷

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