



## Iraq

Once Ikaris and Sersi convince Phastos to join them, they all make their way to Iraq in search of the Domo. Ada hoped Makkari was there. She was the last person they needed to reunite everyone.

The sand is blown up with a strong gust of wind, feeling like a million little needles on her skin. Ada was glad she wore sunglasses now. Druig's eyes glow as he takes control of the archeologists' minds, making them all pack up and leave their camp.

The group stops in front of the site, where the humans were uncovering the tips of Babylon. Even though it was thousands of years ago, Ada felt like it was just yesterday they were all here.

Phastos pulls out a device and lifts the Domo out of the depths of the Earth. They all enter the ship. Karun films everything, eager to get more footage for the documentary.

"A foreboding atmosphere fills the air. An eerie stillness chokes our lungs," Kingo whispers to the camera.

"What're you doing? You know you're creeping us out. You know that, right?-" A loud pop startles Phastos. Ada laughs as he yells in fear. "Oh! Oh, God! Stay calm, T, please...Chips," he chuckles, embarrassed at his reaction, "It's just chips."

Kingo turns to the camera, "As you can see, being an Eternal does not preclude you from human emotions such as cowardice."

They enter the lab only to see Makkari sitting on a throne, speeding through a book peacefully. She is surrounded by mountains of books and stolen items and artifacts.

"What has she done? Is that...a sarcophagus in my lab!" Phastos complains. Once she notices them, she smiles.

"This is Makkari. Or should I say...Miss Havisham? None of us have seen her for centuries," Kingo tells the camera.

"Finally, time to go home?" she signs.

No one speaks right away, dreading having to tell her everything that occurred recently. Upon seeing Ada, Makkari leaps from her throne and throws her arms around her. Everyone takes this as their cue to spread out and do their own thing. Phastos begins working on something to help them.

"I've missed you!" Makkari signs with a massive grin plastered across her face.

"I've missed you too!" Ada returns an identical smile. It had been five centuries since they last saw each other.

"So, you and Druig together yet?" she asks.

"What?" Ada looks at her, confused.

"You know what I said. You missed him, didn't you?" Makkari teases. A smirk creeps up her lips.

"I mean, yeah. But that doesn't mean we're together. You must've spent a lot of time alone with your thoughts to come up with that narrative."

"Pretty much. I've been bored out of my mind. I spent a lot of time reading. I'm just glad everyone's here."

Kingo butts in, "What're you two ladies talking about?"

"Nothing," Makkari quickly signs.

"Ah, girl stuff. Anyway, mind if I steal her for a minute?" Kingo asks.

"Go ahead!" Kingo whisks Makkari away to catch her up on everything.

Druig saunters over to Ada with a devilish smirk on his face. "So, I heard you missed me, huh?"

"How would you know that? Unless you were eavesdropping," Ada accuses.

"I've done nothing of the sort. I just so happened to watch you and Makkari signing from across the room. I don't think that counts as eavesdropping, do you?"

"Whatever. Based on the way you hugged me yesterday, I know you missed me too!" She rolls her eyes, a smile growing on her face.

Druig brushes off her question and continues, "I bet you've spent a lot of time thinking about me. Did you miss seeing my lovely face? I bet you used to lie awake at night thinking of my gorgeous eyes..." He smirks, swinging an arm around her waist, pulling her closer. She smiles up at him, blushing.

"I'm sorry what are we watching, because this... Are you two...?" Phastos asks.

"Is this new? Because I hate it." Kingo adds.

"Phastos, I need to control the mind of a Celestial," Druig reminds him.

"Okay, get ready for it." An image of a golden band is put on display for the entire room to see.

"Bracelets? You made us bracelets?" Kingo asks, unimpressed.

"So, here's a little Celestial 101. Celestials are the most powerful energy generators in the universe. When Arishem made us, he imbued us with infinite cosmic energy to keep our bodies regenerating. The bracelets, in theory, shut down our regeneration process. Once that happens, our bodies accumulate extra cosmic energy," Phastos explains.

"What for?" Sersi asks him.

"Well if the Deviants can absorb our energy, what if...we could absorb each other's energy as well," Phastos suggests. "If I could find a way to connect us all, one of us could become immensely powerful, pulling the accumulated energy from the rest, forming a Uni-Mind."

No one speaks. "Uni meaning one. Mind meaning mind."

"Oh no we heard you the first time," Kingo tells him.

"Terrible name..." Sprite adds.

"We'll brainstorm- Brainstorm! That's a way better name!" Kingo suggests.

"No I invented it, so I'm calling it whatever I want."

"So suppose Druig can, say...put Tiamut to sleep. Then what?" Makkari signs.

"We find humans a new home on another planet," Sersi answers simply.

"Are we building a big ship too?" Sprite asks, "Take a pair of each animal?"

"Well, you know what's never saved the planet? Your sarcasm." Kingo was over the snarky comments.

Sprite continues, "Space colonization could take decades."

"It could happen quickly with our help," Sersi reasons.

"What if we end up accidentally killing Tiamut?" Kingo mentions. "We could be responsible for billions of lives not being created across the universe. Boss, am I right?" Kingo turns to Ikaris.

Sprite looks to Ikaris as well. "Say something Ikaris. You don't think we should be doing this."

"Ajak chose Sersi to lead us. Sersi should decide," Ikaris tells them. Everyone looks over at Sersi, waiting for her to say something, but Sprite doesn't even give her the chance.

"Forget who Ajak chose. You're the strongest, you should be making this decision. Fine, just keep lying to yourself."

"Sprite-" Ikaris walks out the room behind Sprite. Kingo follows after him like a baby duck.

Ada turns to look at Sersi, expecting her to say something, but she remains silent, not knowing what to tell them. Even though Ikaris is stronger, she knows Sersi is the better choice to lead them and she will stand by that until the day she dies.

Despite this being a serious moment, Ada had yet to wipe the rosy blush from her cheeks because Druig's hand was still placed delicately on her waist. She knows it's not good to be distracted like this, but she just can't help herself. Besides, they can't do anything until Phastos finishes the Uni-Mind.

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