



Betrayal

Ada and Druig stand by Phastos watching him work on the Unimind, not helping whatsoever. Not that she'd be able to help anyway. Technology is his specialty, not hers. Thankfully, he never asked for help.

Sersi runs into the room with a worried look on her face. She doesn't explain what's going on, but instead she tells Makkari to find the point of Emergence. Before she speeds o , Phastos hands her a tracker, hoping it'll aid in her search.

Druig detaches his hand from Ada's waist and heads over to Thena to check on her. She stands alone, staring at a picture on the wall.

"You always knew the end would come. It must be a relief," he comments.

"That Deviant is still tracking us," Thena mentions.

"Revenge won't bring peace for you, Thena."

"But killing it might."

Ikaris walks into the room wearing his suit. No one really acknowledges his presence, seeing as everyone is either focused on Phastos' work or enticed in conversation. Ada briefly glances over to see who entered the room. She's confused when she sees him wearing his suit. They aren't planning on fighting anything yet. The Uni-Mind isn't even finished.

"I'm close to figuring it out," Phastos updates him.

Without warning, Ikaris' eyes light up and fire a cosmic beam at Phastos' work, destroying it. Then, fires one directly at Phastos. Ada stands up and takes a threatening step forward, ready to send him flying into the wall, but Ikaris blasts her back as well. Ada's body slams into the wall behind her. She gasps in pain, trying to catch her breath.

"Ada!" Druig runs across the room and helps her to her feet. He then stands in front of her, shielding her from further harm.

"Boss, what're you doing?" Kingo asks, ba led that his leaderwould do such a thing.

"I've let this go on long enough."

"Don't hurt him!" Sersi yells at Ikaris, running to Phastos' side to help him up. "He lied to us. He already knew about the Emergence," Sersi informs them.

"No he didn't," Kingo doesn't want to accept it. He's too blinded by loyalty and trust to see through Ikaris' lies.

"Ajak told me everything when we le Babylon," Ikaris admits.

"What?" Kingo takes a step back and stares at Ikaris with a look of betrayal in his eyes.

"You were never gonna let us stop the Emergence," Phastos concludes. He doesn't need to ask because he already knows the answer.

"No. I only wanted to protect you from the Deviants," Ikaris adds.

"If Ajak wanted you to take her place, why did she choose me?" Sersi asks. Ikaris hesitates, not wanting to tell them. "What have you done?"

Ada reaches into Ikaris' mind and si s through his thoughts. A memory comes forward that she wishes she could forget. Ikaris shoves Ajak o the cli , down to the frozen lake below. The Deviants run at her, thirsty for blood. One knocks her onto her back, pinning her to the ice. She notices a shotgun beside her. She quickly grabs it and slams the butt of the weapon into the creature's temple, distracting it long enough for her to get up and fire a shot. From behind, a bigger Deviant emerges from a cave. It's long, snake-like tentacles stab into her back, piercing her flesh. A er absorbing her energy, the Deviants retreat into the cave, leaving Ajak's grey, lifeless body on the ice. That's when Ikaris floats down and scoops up her body.Ada recoils from Ikaris' mind as if it burned her, like the time she tried to snag a slice of Gilgamesh's pie without realizing it was fresh out of the oven. Her body sti ens. Tears well in her eyes and her heart drops into her stomach. The room spins around her. Ada couldn't form any words. Her mouth just hung open like a gapping fish out of water. Each time she gets close to regaining her composure, Ajak's empty, emotionless face fills her mind.

She wants to say something, but can't.

"He killed her," Druig states.

"I had to," Ikaris tells them.

"No...you didn't!" Ada speaks up.

"She loved you..." Sersi shudders.

"Did she?"

"She loved you!"

"Do you think it was easy to live with the truth? To know that one day all this would end? To keep on lying to you? If we gave humanity the choice, how many of them would be willing to die so that billions more could be born?"

"We're not giving them a choice," Phastos mentions. "Is that why you're willing to kill? You are so pathetic!"

"I'm an Eternal, Phastos. I exist for Arishem. As do you. It's who you are."

"I wouldn't change a single thing about who I am. Born or made. But I do not exist for Arishem, I exist for my family!" Phastos tells him.

"Then you are making the same mistake Ajak did."

Makkari speeds in, telling them she found the Emergence point. Ikaris' eyes glow orange once again, this time aimed at Makkari.

"Makkari!" Ada warns. Kingo jumps in front of her and takes the hit. "Get out of here!" Makkari wastes no time thinking and speeds o .

"Kingo..." Ikaris advances toward him. Kingo gets to his feet, charging up some energy in his fingertips.

"You do not turn against your family! Gilgamesh died because of you!" Kingo shouts.

"You won't succeed against me. And I will kill every one of you if I have to," Ikaris turns to leave.

"Wait!" Sprite calls out, "I'm going with you!"

"Sprite!" Sersi warns.

Thena walks into the room, ready to attack. Ikaris' eyes glow, but before he has the chance to fire at her, Sprite makes the two of them vanish with her illusions.

Makkari returns with a puzzled look on her face, asking why Sprite went with Ikaris. Druig goes to sit down on a table, resting his elbows on his knees. Ada doesn't move from her spot beside Phastos. She desperately tries to process everything. I should've known. I have the ability to read people's thoughts and emotions. How did I not know? She stares o into space. She knows that feeling of the knowledge wouldn't have saved Ajak's life, but the feeling of blame seeps in.

"Because she loves him," Kingo answers, surprising the group. This pulls Ada out of her trance. "Oh, you guys didn't pick up on that?" It may have been obvious to him, but not to everyone else. Great! Another thing I didn't catch.

"Karun, let's go."

"Wait, where the hell are you going?"

"I can't help you guys. I still think Ikaris is right."

"So, that's it, huh? Just gonna follow him?"

"I love the people of this planet. But if you stop this emergence, you are preventing so many other worlds like this one from being created. I still have faith in Arishem. But I refuse to hurt any of you for my beliefs."

"We need you," Makkari signs.

Ada almost sco s. Sure he is entitled to his own opinions, but he wasn't even going to help them? She hated to admit it, but they really did need Kingo if they are going to stand a chance against Ikaris. Ada has long since forgiven him for what he did in Tenochtitlan, but now? He was practically handing her another reason to be angry at him.

"Even with my help, we're no match. It's Ikaris. I hope to see you on the next planet. Let's go, Karun," Kingo wanted nothing to do with fighting Ikaris, let alone a Celestial.

Karun lets them for their work before following Kingo. Things were beginning to look bleak for the remaining Eternals. At the start of their mission, they had eleven. Now, they only had six. And only two of them were the fighters of the group.

"Look, if I'm going to get myself killed going up against Ikaris, we'll need to have a backup plan," Druig comments. Each one of them were going to try their best to fight Ikaris, but with him knowing most of their plan, he knows to go a er Druig.

"All of our powers, even if they're amplified, are not enough to kill a Celestial, so..." Phastos sighs in defeat.

"Well Sersi did turn a Deviant into a tree," Druig mentions. Ada's eyes widen, forgetting Sersi did that.

"I'm sorry, what? You didn't wanna tell me that?" Phastos stares at the three of them in shock.

"I don't know how it happened, okay? And I'm pretty sure I couldn't do it again."

"Well, now is the time to try, don't you think?" He's still a little upset no one told him this update sooner.

"Phastos, that Deviant is dead. Our plan is to put Tiamut to sleep, not kill it. I can't kill a Celestial." Sersi begins to panic, doubting herself.

"Sersi!" Phastos' frustration grows. He didn't understand what her problem was. If she had the power to kill a Deviant like that, then she has a chance at killing a Celestial.

"I can't... I just can't." Her self doubt only increases.

"What about your abilities? If you can su ocate a energy, you might be able to temporarily slow Tiamut down," Druig projects into Ada's mind.

"No, That's not exactly how my abilities work. They won't work on a Celestial," she projects back to him, instantly shutting down the idea.

"Well if you had enough power-"

"No!" She cuts him o .

"What're you two talking about? You're not hiding something from me too, are you?" Phastos turns to look at Ada.

"No," she lies.

"Unbelievable," Phastos sees right through her lie and rolls his eyes.

"It's okay, I can do it," Druig assures them. "Don't worry, Phastos, I'll take care of it"

Sersi leaves the room in a rush. Phastos stares o into space for a moment. Suddenly, his eyes widened.

"Ajak's orb!" Phastos jogs out the room in search of Sersi.

Ada walks over and sits on the bench near Druig's table. He turns to face her, letting his legs dangle o the side and o ers her the food he's snacking on. She doesn't even want to know where he got it from or when he started eating it.

"Are you sure you can do this?" She asks him.

"I'll be okay, I promise." He considers teasing her for worrying, but decides against it. His words do little to convince her, though. The worry in her eyes doesn't vanish like he had hoped it would. He gets up from the table and sits beside her on the bench.

"I already thought I lost you once. I don't want it to happen again," she tells him, looking down at her hands. A couple tears dripped down her cheeks.

"Hey, look at me," his voice so ens. She looks up at him. His thumbs gently wipe the tears. His hands linger on her face a few seconds longer than he intended before he drops them. "I'm not going anywhere. Sounds like Phastos just figured something out, so I'll have the Uni-Mind to help me. And don't forget, I won't be alone out there...it'll be okay."

Druig pulls Ada into his arms, holding her for a moment. The two hold each other, afraid to let go. They had only reunited a day ago and neither were ready to lose each other again. They only break contact when Phastos, Sersi, and Thena return.