xxx - Not homophobe, just Druigophobe

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Iraq, 2023

POLLO WAS LOVING THE SUNGLASSES LOOK. Now, he was well aware that it was only to protect their eyes from the sand flying around, yet he liked it anyway. It made him feel cool. Druig was standing in front of the others, Pollo not far behind, holding Dragon close to his chest. The flerken, though he could've easily gone through a sand storm without a scratch, had been given tiny sunglasses to protect his eyes.

Druig used his powers on the archeologists that were standing in the spot where the Domo had been buried, forcing them to leave. Sprite had used her own powers to make them invisible to them, so that they could come as close as possible, but now that the humans were gone, she made them visible once more. Phastos then made sure he was standing in front of them, using his powers to make the Domo come out of the dirt, all while Karun was filming. Pollo let a smile make its way onto his face as he took a hold of Druig's hand. It had been so long since he'd last seen it, it was strange to see it now, after all this time. It was strange for all of them to be together again. A good kind of strange.

"The Domo," mumbled Karun, dumbfounded. "Wow."

Pollo smirked at him, sharing a knowing look —even with their eyes hidden behind sunglasses— with Druig. They all entered the Domo, Pollo's breath catching in his throat. They really were back. Just... without Ajak and Gilgamesh. He felt Druig squeeze his hand, probably having noticed the way his face had fallen at the thought.

"You can't take off the sunglasses, now, you know that, right?" He whispered in Pollo's ear.

The other Eternal just shook his head, his lips twitching ever so slightly. He would take them off, of course, just not now. He liked that they hid the melancholy in his eyes. He placed Dragon on the floor, knowing he could trust him to wander around without getting lost. Maybe the flerken would even find his old room and take a nap there. The little creature ran away, directly towards Phatsos' lab.

"A foreboding atmosphere fills the air," said Kingo to the camera, trying to make his voice deep and mysterious. "An eerie stillness chokes our lungs."

Pollo tried to contain a chuckle as he frowned, not quite sure where Kingo was finding all this. However, it seemed that no one had warned Phastos of the documentary, as he gave him a confused look.

"What are you doing? You know you're creeping us out. You know that, right?" As the inventor was speaking, something burst, the sudden noise startling both him and Pollo, who'd grabbed Druig's arm and put him behind him. "Oh! Oh, God! Stay calm, T, please!"

Everybody looked at the ground, seeing the empty bag of chips she'd step on, which was the cause of such a noise. Druig raised his eyebrows, smirking at Pollo who just huffed, stepping away from him. Even then, he didn't let go of his hand. Phastos chuckled nervously, taking the bag in his hands.

"Chips," he stated, showing it to the camera. "It's just chips."

"As you can see, being an Eternal does not preclude you from having emotions such as cowardice," said Kingo to the camera, gesturing at both Phastos and Pollo.

Offended by the comment, Pollo frowned, walking closer to the camera. He wouldn't break it, of course, as he knew how much money it cost, but rather decided to lick the lens, which resulted in a bunch of disgusted noise from the other Eternals.

"Ew!" Complained Kingo. "Do you guys not know how to behave around a camera?!"

He just smiled innocently as he felt Druig wrapping an arm around his waist and kissing his cheek, laughing softly. "I've never been more attracted to you than now."

"We've been dating for less than a day, Dru," he reminded, though he didn't try to fight the grin that appeared on his face.

"Maybe, but I've been attracted to you for 7,000 years," he replied. "But never as much as right now."

Pollo giggled, placing a hand on his face as he did so. Then, before any of them could say anything, they'd arrived at Phastos' lab. Inside, the room was filled with books and artifacts, most of them of which were considered lost or destroyed by most humans. In the middle of it all, Makkari was sitting on a throne, reading a book, and Dragon had laid down on her legs, purring.

"What has she done?" Questioned Phastos, on the verge of panicking. "Is that... a sarcophagus in my lab?"

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

The speedster in question turned her head towards them, smiling as closed her book and nodded slightly, patting Dragon.

"Ready to go home?"

Everybody looked at each other awkwardly as Kingo hummed. She let her head fall on her throne, disappointed, as Dragon jumped off of her, walking towards Pollo. She looked at his hand that was still in Druig's, raising her eyebrows.

He'd forgotten about that. For centuries Makkari had annoyed him by telling him that he had a crush on Druig, which he'd always said was a lie. Now that it turned out she'd been right, as she often was, she was bound to be all smug about it, telling him that he should've listened to her. Which, technically, wasn't a lie, but still annoying. Why couldn't he and Druig have started dating after having seen Makkari? Right. The emergence.

On the jet, Kingo had been the one chosen to explain to Makkari the truth, as it turned out that Ikaris and Sersi really weren't that good at it. And, as he was an actor, he would probably know how to soften the blow. As he did so, the other Eternals wandered around, looking at what she'd found, except for Phastos, who'd already started working on something. Pollo had found a copy of the journal he'd written under the name of Marco Polo, laughing softly at the annotations that Makkari had written down on the pages. He could feel Druig's hand on his back as he snooped through Makkari's things.

He found a box of Twinkies, which Pollo would've advised him not to touch, as they didn't know for how long it had been there, yet he stayed silent, knowing that he should never come between Druig and his food. Anyway, he didn't even need to talk as the sound of Druig shaking the box was enough to get Ikaris' attention, who was holding what Pollo assumed to be the Emerald Tablet. He gasped in surprised while the two other men looked at each other without a word. In a silent agreement, they quickly exchanged, both of them stepping away from the other, Druig taking Pollo with him, as though spending too much time in each other's presence would make them. The couple walked away, seeing Makkari and going towards her, Druig with the tablet behind his back.

"So, how did you end up scoring this Emerald Tablet?" Questioned Druig, showing her off the table, which she tried to grab but he took it away from her.

Pollo took it from him, laughing, and then handing him back to Makkari as his boyfriend faked that he was hurt by the betrayal.

"Is it true that it leads to the last dragon on Earth?" Wondered Pollo, stars in his eyes.

She shook her head. "No, sorry."

He sighed, pouting. He wasn't surprised, of course. Still, he'd kind of hoped that it was possible. Druig seemed to find it rather funny, however, as he pulled him closer.

"You're adorable," he claimed before placing a quick kiss on lips.

Makkari clapped, a pleased look on her face, while Phastos waved at them. The two boys turned around, facing Phastos, who'd stopped working for a second, and Kingo. They both looked equally disgusted by the scene they'd just witnessed.

"I'm sorry, what are we watching?" Asked Phastos, gesturing at them. "Because this... Are you two..."

"Is this new? Because I hate it," stated Kingo.

Pollo laughed, letting his head fall on Druig's shoulder. "Come on, you two, don't be homophobic!"

"Oh, we're not! You do realize I have a husband right? The problem isn't that you're both guys, it's that you're..." he gestured at them once more, still just as disgusted as before, maybe even more, actually. "Pollo and Druig. Together. It's just... Ew."

"I can understand what Druig sees in you," Kingo continued, "but what do you see in him?"

"Phastos, I need to control the mind of a Celestial," stated Druig, mildly annoyed by the little comments of the other Eternals. Pollo kissed him on his cheek, immediately making him calm down, but also resulting in Makkari wiggling her eyebrows at them.

Everybody started to gather around when they heard the last sentence, knowing that this meant Phastos would soon start explaining his revolutionary idea that would save them all. Or, at least, that's what Pollo wished he was going to do.

"Okay, get ready for it," he said, using his powers to make the schéma of his invention appear.

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

"Well, at least they look good," replied Pollo, trying to stay positive, though he didn't see the use for it either.

Druig leaned closer to him as he watched the bracelets, bumping into him softly. Pollo smiled, looking at him with a look that was meant to be annoyed but just turned out as amused.

"So, here's a little Celestial 10q. Celestials have the most powerful energy generators in the universe. When Arishem made us, he imbued us with infinite cosmic energy to keep our bodies regenerating," started explaining Phastos. "The bracelets, in theory, shut down our regeneration process. And once that happens, our bodies accumulate extra cosmic energy."

Pollo opened his mouth but immediately closed it. In general, he could understand what Phastos was trying to explain, still, it was the way he'd said it that confused him so much. The other Eternals seemed to share his confusion.

"What for?" Enquired Sersi.

"We'll, if the Deviants can absorb our energy, what if we can absorb each other's energy as well? If I can find a way to connect us all, one of us could become immensely powerful, pulling the accumulated energy from the rest, forming..." he clapped his hands together. "...a Uni-Mind"

An awkward silence followed his declaration, which didn't seem to have been the reaction he was expecting.

"'Uni' meaning 'one,' 'mind' meaning 'mind'," he clarified, probably thinking that the revaluation of the name was what had lost them.

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

"Terrible name," Sprite said.

"Well, that's not quite true," tried to defend Pollo. "It actually kind of grows on you when you say it a lot. Look: Uni-Mind, Uni-Mind, Uni-Mind, Uni-Mind, am I the only one who's being annoyed by this? You know what? I'll just stop."

"We'll brainstorm..." continued Kingo before realizing what he'd just said. "Brainstorm! That's a way better name!"

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

Then, Makkari waved at them, trying to get their attention. "So suppose Druig can say... put Tiamut to sleep— Then what?"

Pollo had realized the numerous problems in their plan as well, yet he'd stayed silent, knowing they didn't really have a better option. As long as they didn't lose another member of the team, he would be alright.

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

It was far stretched and a rather bad idea, even more if there was a chance that this other planet also had a Celestial in its center, but if they didn't kill Tiamut, they couldn't really do anything.

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

"Well, you know what's never saves the planet? Your sarcasm," stated Phastos.

"Space colonization could take decades," continued Sprite, this time much more serious.

"It can happen quickly with our help," their new Prime Eternal argued.

"Really, Sersi?" Enquired Pollo, shu ling onto place awkwardly when all eyes turned towards him. "Okay, let's say we find a way to take a whole population in outer space, how many of them would accept? A lot of them are racists when it comes to their own species. What do you think will happen when they meet aliens?"

She didn't have time to find an argument against what he'd said that Kingo was already talking as well. "What if we end up accidentally killing Tiamut? We could be responsible for billions of lives not being created across the universe. Boss, am I right?"

He turned towards Ikaris, who, for once, didn't seem comfortable by the fact the spotlight was on him.

"Say something, Ikaris," nagged Sprite. "You don't think we should be doing this."

They all looked at him, waiting for an answer. Pollo was almost expecting him to try and take Sersi's role as the leader, like he'd always wished. He would probably find some kind of way to take Sersi's ideas and make them his own, his minions, Sprite and Kingo, following behind him like lovesick puppies.

"Ajak chose Sersi to lead us," he declared. "Sersi should decide."

While Pollo had been pleasantly surprised by his answer, Sprite, on the other hand, was greatly annoyed by it. From what he'd understood, she and Sersi had been living together for some time now, making him wonder why she was so keen on disagreeing with her. Yes, she could've had her opinion and think this was a bad idea — because it was— but that didn't mean she should've suddenly started worshiping Ikaris like he was some kind of saint. He was her hero, the person she always looked up to and, as he was rather egoistical, Pollo was incapable of seeing what she saw in him.

"Forget who Ajak chose. You're the strongest. You should be making this decision." She waited for him to say something, however he didn't. "Fine. Just keep lying to yourself."

And with that, she walked away. He'd never really understood why everybody thought Ikaris was the strongest. Shouldn't Gilgamesh have been considered the strongest? Well, now that he was... gone, this title should've been given to Thena, right? Maybe Sprite didn't consider it because her fractured mind made it harder for her fight. Even then, had she not seen how Sersi had turned a Deviant into a tree? A Deviant that Ikaris had previously been losing to!

"Sprite," Ikaris called out, though it wasn't enough to make her stop.

It was followed by a silence that Pollo used to take Dragon in his arms. Makkari patted the flerken's head as he did so, making the creature purr. Druig pulled Pollo closer, letting his chin fall on his shoulder and taking the sunglasses away from his face. Pollo didn't try to fight it, first because he had Dragon in his arms, but also because he didn't really want to. He hadn't meant to disagree with Sersi, he knew that questioning her leadership so soon wasn't helping her, still he had to bring up the problem. If he had to do it again, he'd rather she could see his eyes and understand that he wasn't doing this simply to disagree with her.

Now, Pollo was a great fighter. And he had a lot of experience when it came to arguing with Druig, it was with others that he was a bit more uncomfortable. With Druig, he knew when he'd touched a nerve or when he'd went too far, which wasn't the case with most people. They weren't as bold or as honest as Druig. So he always feared that with one word he could make somebody cry. And he really didn't want that, because he never knew how to act when people started crying. Along with that, another of his fears was that he'd lose somebody's friendship by simply arguing with them. He realized that it was unlikely, still the thought had prevented him from speaking his mind on numerous occasions.

"Okay, this is not..." Phastos started, though he was interrupted by Kingo who walked away as well, following the both of them.

"Ikaris," he called out, leaving behind his valet.

The remaining Eternals looked at each other, as though they were waiting to see if somebody else was going to run away. They didn't. Still, an awkward stillness had taken over the room, making Pollo shuffle onto place. He could feel Druig's fingers on his shoulder, tapping the rhythm of one of the songs he'd been humming earlier. The rhythm was enough to relax him a little, making him realize just how tense up he'd been before. As a thank you, he smiled at his boyfriend.

His boyfriend. His thoughts about Druig had been so confusing for years, going from rival to friend. Now, he had a clear term for what he was to him. His boyfriend. They weren't in love. At least, he wasn't. Not yet. He'd spent too much time being confused, too much time being bitter to be in love. Still, as he looked at Druig, he knew that, one day, he would be able to feel it and even to say it. He'd once thought that he was unable to love anything, as he was a soldier and only knew how to fight. Now, he knew that wasn't the case. He could love. And one day, he would.

"Don't run after him! Kingo, I..." Phastos sighed, gesturing at them. "You guys!"

He looked at the other Eternals, waiting for some support on their part. All he got was a few awkward smiles and maybe one or two shrugs. He shook his head at them, silently going back to his work.

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