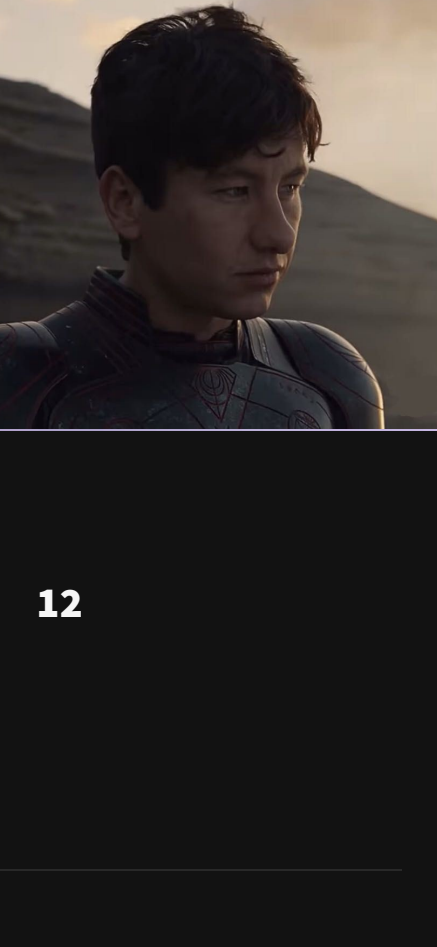




2021

Hell's Kitchen

"Come on cora, I told foggy we were already on our way." Matt knocked on my bedroom door.

For the past 720 days... 17,472 hours... 104 weeks... Cora had lost her job at the library due to not leaving her house for days. Matt was kind enough to let her work at Nelson and Murdoch law firm. Aer druig had le New York to go to the Amazon, cora had no motivation to do anything. She lost her light forever.

She didn't know what she thought, sure it was a rough break up but a er finding out the truth of the party she started to forgive him for saying those awful things to her, but hearing his cold and dark voice through the phone she didn't get the chance to explain what was really going on, but those words druig said out of anger repeated in her head over and over again.

"If you get up we can stop for donuts..." I heard Matt's voice from my hallway. I groaned and turned in bed looking at the clock.

"I'm sick leave me alone." I said loud enough for him to hear.

"Come on cora we were just watching a movie last night, you're not sick. Open the door please?" He knocked one last time. I rolled my eyes and pushed back my blanket that shielded me from the world. I storm to the door and unlock it looking up at Matt.

"Come on get ready, today's going to be a good day." He said as he looked down, his signature glasses laid on his nose as he smiled at me.

"Okay fine I'll get ready. Just wait in the living room I'll be right out." I closed the door as Matt walked away to my living room.

I got ready in a pink sundress and decided to wear matching pink shoes. I put my hair in a bun and grabbed my phone from my nightstand where it charged throughout the night. I walked out the door and see Matt sitting there.

"Okay let's go, I need some sugar in my system and someone owes me donuts." I allow Matt to stand up and hold my arm as we walk out of the door and into the hallway leading to work.

"Yeah yeah we can get them during our lunch break since we are already on our way out the door and onto the street." He said as I would have felt the emotions and chose but ever since that night I stopped. I chose not to feel anyone or anything. The only times I do is for Matt, when he stumbles into my room bleeding. I chose to shut my feelings down.

"Okay fine I'll make a small run during my break." We walk for what felt like miles but only turned out to be a few minutes. Matt held the door open for me while I walked inside.

"There you guys are!" I was about to send out a scorch party. Until I realized we don't know many people that would help and I don't think two qualifies for a party. If it did I had some killer parties in college and I awkwardly laughed and sat with Karen.

"Hey how are you doing hun?" Karen asked.

"Better. I've been through worse." I shrugged it o .

"I know break ups are rough! I'm sure you can find better!" Foggy tried to make me feel better.

"Well foggy it's not like I got many options... you know for guys... my age" I saw Matt smile and hold a laughter. I rolled my eyes.

"Oh come on cora you're young I'm sure even Matt would take you out." I was slipping from the water bottle I grabbed from the desk and nearly choked trying to catch my breath. I look at Matthew and his head whipped to foggy.

"Oh god foggy no, pls last I heard... and oh I heard... someone has a little visitor at his house at night." I smiled and laughed. I look at Matthew and he turned to face the direction of my voice taunting him.

"Oh yeah Matt who is she?" Foggy patted his back.

"No one, cora you must have heard wrong." He tried to play it o .

"Well I think it's nice to finally see you with someone!" Karen said and I smiled looking back to her.

"Yeah it's cute Matthew! It's like my little brother finally has a girlfriend!" teased and Matt laughed coldly not enjoying the spot light on his dating life.

"Little brother? Cora he's older than you by like a year or two right?" Foggy asked and my eyes grew wide.

"Oh yeah I was just saying you know like yeah you know like oh yeah little brother ha ha." I stumbled with my words enough for Matt to rescue me from the awkward moment.

"Enough about my dating life. I believe we got work to do right guys?" He painfully laughed and went to his o ice. I rolled my eyes and started to fill out paper work with Karen.

"He so has a girlfriend! But I thought for sure you guys would have had something, you guys could have been cute." Karen smirked and put the paperwork I just finished into its assigned folder. I rolled my eyes and looked at her.

"Yes Karen he has a girlfriend for sure and me and Matthew have a relationship yes but it's totally platonic. He's helped me through heart break for the past few years and he's helped me getting a job and helped me when not of people have. I also help him you know a lot more than you would think. Yes he means a lot to me but as a brother you know! Like I don't know what I would do without him." I told her and finished filling another paper. Hearing it his he showed here a smile. I couldn't tell her I took his pain away almost every night because he was out fighting Russians or that I patched up his stab wounds with my medical supplies because I was a nurse for 5 years.

"Well I think it's great what you guys have, but now I see the whole over protective brother side. It sucks I would have loved to see a power couple." She laughed and reached for the paper I was holding out for her. Power couple for sure.

"Anyways I was promised donuts so if you don't mind me I'll take your guys orders." I smiled and got o the chair I rested on and grabbed my purse.

"I'll take a chocolate please, be safe!" Karen told me and I nodded my head smiling. I walked across to foggy's o ice knocking on the door and slowly opening it.

"Hey foggy I'm heading out for donuts what would you like?" I peeked my head and smiled at him.

"Oh great! I'll take a chocolate one thanks cora." He smiled and went back to work. I nodded and walked to Matthew's o ice repeating the knocking and cracking of the door. I peaked my head in to make sure I wasn't interrupting and I smiled to see him.

"Hey I'm heading out for donuts want the usual glazed donut?" I asked and he looked up and smiled at me.

"Yeah sure be safe." He said and I le o the o ice to walk down a few blocks for donuts. I walked into the shop and waited for my turn in line. I got my phone out and checked my messages.

One text from Peter, I click on my messages and see his recent text.

Peter: Hey cora I wanted to ask what I should get Mj as a gi I We are on this cool field trip and I want to get her something but I need help! SOS

Hey spiderfing, get her something small but sweet, maybe a flower, jewelry, or maybe take her out on a picnic, need cash?

Peter: thank you cora! And no no I want to do this, I got this bye!

I looked up from my phone and see I'm still 3 people away. I skipped out of my messages and decided to open Instagram for the first time in nearly 8 months.

"new notification

I click on the message request and their profile pops up. My heart felt cold as I read the name on the profile. Sersi.

I click the top to open the message sent. It wasn't a text message, it was a video. I look up from my phone seeing one more person in front of me and I look back at my phone and click it.

"Hey cora! We miss you!" Sersi smiled into the camera that was shaking as she spoke. Sprite popped around on the le side and smiled.

"We love you cora! Hope you're doing well!" She smiled and stayed on the frame as kings came out from the right side.

"We really do love you cora, we are sorry if it seemed like we didn't but we do. We love you and how much you care for everyone around you even if it kills you." He laughed, my heart felt like I was nervous. As if I was waiting for a job interview or like my teacher asked to talk to me a er class, or that we need to talk kind of feeling.

"We just wanted to say hi! Hopefully we can see each other soon. When we do to meet one day it will be perfect okay!" Sersi smiled. I see sprite li her hands. Suddenly Ajak, phastos, Thena, makkari and gill popped up.

"We love you cora!" They all said and makkari signed. I smiled and my eyes started to water. They disappeared and sprite and sersi had big smiles. Sprites hand waved for the last time as my heart dropped. The cora feeling came up and I felt my throat tighten. The fact I haven't seen in hundreds of years, that smile that made me fall in love, those blue eyes who always looked out for me. Him.

"Hey cora! I don't know what drug would actually say but we all miss you!" Srites voice beamed and all of them where on screen.

"Next in line?" My phone o eyes look up at the woman behind the counter, I shut my phone o and roughly hide it in my pocket.

"Hi sorry can I get one glazed, two chocolate and one strawberry please? Actually wait make that two." I smiled. She looked behind.

"Sorry all out of strawberry, anything else?" She pushed the buttons on the register, not looking at me so I look around.

"Uh can I get a strawberry lemonsade please?" I asked and she looked back at the drinks checking.

"All out of that too. Anything else?" She lazily looked at me. I took a deep breath and forced a smile on my face.

"Is there anything you have back there with something of strawberries... Even if they are unwashed raw strawberries I don't care." I looked at her and spoke with a hard tone. She looked at me and looked back.

"No, that will be \$4.25 please." I sighed in defeat pulled out my wallet. I swiped my star card and took the donuts. I walked out the shop passing people by and let out a groan. Just as I was starting to get out of the house and starting to be okay again he pops up. I know it's not their fault but he-

My thoughts were cut o as a car swerved nearly hitting me. I quickly jumped back and looked at the taxi.

"Are you serious?" I yelled. The taxi sped o and my entire body was pulled back into the alley I stood in front of.

"Don't move give me your purse. Now!" The man wearing a black hoodie said, I looked back at the alley and see two guys keep look out.

"Oh you have GOT to be kidding me. You know what no!" I pushed him back and dusted myself o . I look at the floor and see their donuts smashed and covered in muddy water. I raise my hands to my mouth.

"Look what you start!" I dropped my hands at my sides as the two turned around to look at me and see I'm fine. They share a confused look as the one in front of me started to speak.

"Just give us your purse and you can go!" He yelled. I look at him.

"You know what I've had a rough day so excuse me for not wanting to... I got cut o by the guy who tried to reach for my purse. I ed my le hand and stared at him. His body froze as his eyes grew wide. He started to panic and wiggle.

"Oh you don't get to cut me o... you're a pathetic piece of shit. Just because you weren't loved as a kid doesn't mean you can be an asshole to whoever you want. I'm glad you chose me to rob because your luck just ran out..." I smiled at him. That feeling of power rushed over me and I forgot about the two guys behind me.

"What the fuck are you! Freak!" The guy behind me spoke as he turned around the guy grabbed a pole that was laid on the floor and swung at me.

That sharp cold pain grew as I fell to my knees. My right had flew up grabbing them both and crushing their bones slowly. A er a few seconds I slowly got up and pushed my hair back into place. I dusted my dress o and looked at them.

"All three of you are pathetic. Let's take a walk where no one can see us." I smiled and slowly walked around the alley deeper behind buildings I smile as they float behind me, their fear weakening and covering the smell of sewer water on the floor, fear dripping from their bodies.

"Now boys didn't your parents ever teach you manners?" I told my head and smiled. I slowly close my palms to make a fist and spray had on their body crushed their bones, slowly putting pressure on their hearts and lungs. I felt it. I felt their pain. I felt their heart rate speed up and felt their lungs collapse. Looking at them all gasp for air.

"I should fuck all your fathers and give them a child they actually love... wouldn't that be funny?" I laughed.

"Go ahead, Look at me, I dare you..." I smiled but they all shut their eyes as I tear fell.

"If any of you try that shit with anyone else I swear to god I'll break more than just your legs." I stop talking look at their legs. I let out a small giggle.

"Oh wait I haven't yet have I. Oops." I twisted my hands and all three of them screamed as they felt their legs being crushed.

"Now if you don't mind me, I'm going to grab my donuts and head back to work. Have a great day guys!" I let them drop from the air as the gravity took control hurting their broken legs even more. I smiled and reached down for my donuts. I wiped my cheek where blood dropped. I wiped it on a napkin from the bag and started walking back to the o ice.

"Hey guys I'm back!" I smiled and entered the o ice. Everyone was over at Karen's desk and eyes landed on me.

"Cora what happened? Your covered in dirt oh my god your cheek!" Karen rushed over to me.

"Oh my fine." I smiled and foggy rushed over.

"I'm fine cora what the hell?" He looked at me and Matt jumped up following them, he pushed Karen and foggy out of the way and reached for my face feeling the bruise starting to form.

"Who did this to you?" He asked. I set down the dirty soaked bag of donuts and li ed my hands to his holding them.

"I'm okay, that me I look care of it. You know I can take care of myself mate." His thumb traced my cheek and the small cut, his thumb fell to my bottom lip feeling the smile on my face. I stepped back and they looked at me.

"So got the donuts but you might have to pick out the dirt or just bite around it." I laughed and handed the donuts out.

"You're insane you know that cora?" Karen took her chocolate donut and laughed. I smiled at them all and sat down.

The day passed and we all headed out, I held on to Matthew as we walked back home.

"You hurt them didn't you?" He asked and the silence took over. I wasn't proud but I let out all that built up anger and frustration on the moon. Do I regret it, no. Would I do it again if it happened, yes.

"It doesn't matter I'm fine." I said and forced a laugh.

"How bad?" He asked with a dull tone again.

"What do you mean?" I looked at him.

"Cora how badly did you hurt them?" He asked and we turned the corner of the street, the lights of the street guided our way.

"Nothing too bad I don't know why it matters." I said.

"You're lying." He said.

"Okay I know their legs why does it matter?" I yelled and we stopped walking. I let go of his arm and looked up at him. He had this face as I couldn't recognize.

"It matters because that's not you cora. You don't hurt people! He started to raise his voice. I so ed and looked at the floor.

"Maybe I should! All my life people have taken advantage of me, used me for my abilities, led to me and called me evil and more and now I should add try to rob me to the list!" I yelled in frustration again.

"The cora I know wouldn't have hurt them that badly. You could have killed them if you broke the wrong donut." He yelled yet again. I looked to both sides of the street making sure it was empty.

"And I'd do it again." I said coldly to his face. He just stood back and laughed.

"For fucks sake cora this isn't you! You don't hurt humans. You may feel like that know but the second you are alone, by yourself. You will feel it, that bottomless feeling of guilt. Knowing you could have taken someone's life and their blood will be on your hands. I'm sorry, just because some guy told you that you were stupid that doesn't mean you have to start acting like it." And with that last sentence I walked o.

"Running away from your problems cora?" He yelled a er me. I walked back home alone and slammed the door as hard as I could. I dropped to my knees crying as my couch flew to the air and I could I let out a scream and the bookshelf and lamps flew up and everything crashed down on the floor braking most of me.

I look up at the mess I made in the place I called home. The only place I felt safe and now I don't even feel safe in my own body.

I wipe my tears and head to the bathroom. I turn on the water in the bathtub and strip o my dirty pink sundres. I throw my shoes across the bathroom and pull the clip out of my hair. Putting one foot in the boiling hot water I slowly sit down resting my head on the edge.

"What have I become..." I let a few tears stream down my cheek and the warmth of my eyes burns as I couldn't stop the crying.

As the tub filled up I turn o the water and lay back down.

The steam from the hot water filled the air as I closed my eyes. My legs slowly li ed up from sitting down and my back slid into the plastic tub, the hot water that was turning my skin red, rose up as I sunk down. My hair that was floating, started to sink as my head emerged in the water. The small cut and growing bruise burned at the warm contact sending chills down my spine. I winced at the pain but felt at peace under the water.

That silence.

Holding my breath, my mind flashes to the life I lived when things were okay. When times were di erent.

Thena helping me spare, sersi going on walks with me through town, glimmerish asking me to test taste new recipes, makkari showing me the collected, sprites showing me stores, kingo letting me take the big deviants, ikaris catching me every time I fell from the sky, Ajak helping me control my abilities and brushing my hair to help me calm down, and phastos talking to me for hours about his future plans for the humans. Then came him, the eternal who was my light, the one who protected me from myself, who made sure I was okay when no one else asked.

When no one else asked.

They probably had families, I could have taken someone away from their family the way my family was taken from me. They probably are in pain, the blood I caused...

The blood on my hands...

I shot up from the tub and coughed up the water, the hot water spilled over and crashed on the floor making the only noise in the empty apartment.

My empty apartment. I look around and it was quiet, empty, and lonely. My heart slows down and I push my wet hair to the back and hold my chest as it burned for air.

"What have I done." I said to my self and stood up, my hair dripped on the hard and cold floor as I grabbed my towel wrapping it around my body.

I look in the mirror and see my red eyes from all the crying. Swollen to the touch.

All I can think about is how badly I hurt someone. I could have taken their life and I wouldn't have had any regrets...

Do I regret it now, yes. If I could go back and do it again would I no.

I grabbed my oversized shirt I stole from Matthew when I stayed a few weeks with him and put some shorts on, ignoring the water beads dripping from my hair still I walk out of the house and into the hallway in front of the familiar door.

Looking down at the bottom of the door I took a deep breath. I knocked twice and at that very second the door swung open.

"Cora are you okay I heard your heart rate rise?" He asked and looked down to me. I looked up as a few tears escaped again and I hugged him. I hugged him so hard my hands dug into his back, catching him o guard he hugged me back and closed his door leaving us in the hallway.

He picked me up as I cried still and brought me inside of my home, he lead me to my room and laid down with me.

"I'm sorry you're right! I didn't mean it I swear! I was just so mad I could have killed them." I cried into his shoulder. He rubbed my head trying to calm me down.

"Shh it's okay cora. You didn't kill anyone, bones can be fixed." He held me as I calmed down.

"I'm sorry Matthew you're right it's not me but when I was hurting them I didn't feel guilty, what's what scares me the most." I barely spoke loud enough to be called a whisper.

"Do you think I'm a monster because I break peoples bones and leave them barely breathing?" He asked and looked down to me.

"No." I said without hesitation.

"Then why should you hate yourself for losing control?" You're right cora you have lived a life I couldn't imagine but the past doesn't matter right now, what matters is your humanity. That feeling." He pointed to my chest as I looked up to him.

"That's what makes you cora. The same way you could have killed them, they could have killed you. Do you think they would have their humanity? Do you think they would go home and feel guilty? No because they are bad people." He went back to his room as I stopped crying.

"You're right." I said and continued to lay on his chest.

"I was wrong, you will never change cora and that's tter thing I love about you, in a way I look up to you. You could have died and you are still thinking of them and if they are okay! You're cora and no one can take that away from you." He laughed and I gilled.

"It was wrong of me to call you stupid and I'm sorry. I know the whole drug thing is a sensitive topic but if you think about it... the way you lost control of your anger, it happens to all of us. No one has total control of their feelings, and for someone that can literally suck the life and soul out of a human I thought you would have known by now." He laughed and I joined with him.

"Thanks Matthew." I said and looked at my clock that rested on my right stand.

2:36 am

"Get some rest, I'll stay here with you. You will be okay cora. Trust me." He ru led my hair and I closed my eyes.

"Thank you for being the brother I have always wanted." I smiled

"Thanks for being the little sister I have always wanted. Who knew siblings where so cool." He laughed and I hit his chest. He groaned as I laughed.

"I'm older. You're the little brother I have to take care of and make sure doesn't die." I said and he let out a chuckle.

"Okay okay get some rest cora, I'll be here if you need me." And with those last words being said, I dri ed o into a long needed sleep.

Now to the place where I was told to never return too...

Continue reading next part