

I let EO lead out of the cave and I find myself in some sort of mountain chain.

"Where are we?" I ask EO and marvel at the beautiful scenery. I was on a ledge that jutted out from the cave and overlooked the vibrant green forest below.

*Rocky Mountains in Colorado. It was the closest spot to Kansas that the portal could get us to. It's about half a state away from where we need to go.* He says in a state-of-fact way and all the brief joy from the scenery vanished as I looked at the trek I had ahead of me. I looked around and tried to first find a way down from where I was. I stepped and carefully peered over the edge. It was a steep drop and the ground was a terrifying number of feet down. My brain shut down. What? I was TERRIFIED of heights. and your wondering why I why ride Pegasus if I'm so afraid. because Glory would catch me if I fell off and there were dozens of healers and safety features built by the Hepeastus cabin so nobody got seriously injured. Out here, where there was nobody and no safety nets or trust worthy steeds to help you, I was deathly afraid. I paled as I looked around and confirmed I was going to have to climb down.

"You really couldn't have chosen an easier spot to get me out, or at least further down?" I grumble to EO and try to make myself stretch before the long climb. I realized midway through my first stretch that this was going to be impossible. I was already exhausted and everything hurt from the past few days. I tried to push through the stretches but I knew there was no way I was going to able to do this climb.

*I can feel your fear. Just climb already.* EO says. I glared.

"You know what I'm thinking. I can't make this climb. I'm going to need help." I tell him. He grumbled to himself.

*Fine you pathetic mortal. I am sending you something to help you. You have until it gets here to rest. This is the last time I'm so generous.* He says and retreats out of my mind. I sighed in relief and wondered what he had sent me. Please don't be anything horrendous and terrible. I pray silently. I took advantage of the time and leaned against the rock face and tried to sleep. Too many thoughts and feelings stirred in me for me to properly sleep. I sighed and looked at the sky. fluffy white clouds dotted the sky. I remmebered something. The clouds reminded me of my dream with Athena. "A link goes two ways right? If Ο Κακόç can get into your head then can you get into his?". I thought about it for a second. Its always worth a try. I think. I search my mind for any sign of EO listening. Nothing. I breath a sigh of relief. Sooooo how do I do this? I ask myself and look around. Well first of all, I can't concentrate with this rock stabbing my back. I think and walk over to the edge of the cliff and sit right next to the edge. I try to calm myself. The breeze brushed my hair out of my face. It really was lovely outside. I watched a falcon glide over the forest with help from the wind. I wondered what it would be like to be a bird, being able to fly above everything and let the breeze take all your troubles away. I would love to fly away from everything and let the wind take all my troubles away. Soaring high above everything... snap out of it Audrey. I think and go back to the task at hand. I close my eyes and try to think of ways I could connect with EO. I thought of many things but none seemed to work. I could feel him still, like there was a tiny portal or door that he was behind. The problem was figuring out how to open that door. I opened my eyes in frustration and got up and sulked around. I kicked a rock and it tumbled and fell over the ledge. I cringed at the thuds and echoes it made over the valley. That would've been me had I tried to climb down. I think darkly and mentally slap myself. I need therapy. I think and settle myself again. I imagined the falcon again. The way its wings tilted and caught the breeze, how it dived and rose with the wind's currents. I thought of something. I focused on the image and imagined the falcon as me flying to the door. i flew hard towards the portal but it got harder and harder to fly towards it as I got closer. Like there was some sort of invisible force holding me back. I pushed harder and harder until I wasn't moving at all but was inches from the portal. Come on... I'm so close. I think against the force and feel something unlock inside me. My vision got clearer, my exhaustion disappeared, my wings beating stronger. I cried and used my new strength to push through the barrier and dive head first into the portal. Dark tentacles pulled me through faster then I could comprehend. I felt all sorts of evil and hateful emotions as I tumbled into some sort of twisted world. I realized I was looking at something but not entirely like with my own eyes. Like I was watching from a camera. My head pounded with two different thought trains and I

gripped it in pain. I was tempted to yell but I knew that if EO found out I could do this then it would be over. I tried to keep quiet and not move to alert him. I breathed a little when he didn't notice anything.

*Need to hurry... Timeline is tomorrow...Pathetic girl... "Need rest blah blah blah."... Sick of needing a mortal for this job... Thankfully the mansion is not far... Need to make sure Zóke is read- what is that?* He thinks and I realize he was searching his mind. Time to bail. I think and try to escape. But it was like running through the tar pits at camp. I felt his presence combing his mind and he was getting closer and closer. Fear spiked and panic took over. I saw the portal and calculated as I ran. EO was gaining too much for me to be able to make it in time. I need to distract him. I think and wonder how the heck I could while I was in his mind. I continued on but nothing came to mind. He's gonna recognize me. I think in defeat. I could really use another boost right now. I think to myself.

Something else clicked and miraculously another surge of power shot through me. Thank you. I think about to tear up. I power through and sprint for the door. It was a close one. I dove through the portal right as he stopped on my presence. I sat straight up on the cliff and tried to control my breathing. I looked around and jumped and fell on my back. I was glowing again. The silver and gold light radiated from inside me. I watched in shock as it slowly started to fade. And it took my energy with it. Wait, was the little bit of power I got, from my glow?! I try to connect the dots but I could feel myself slowly slipping. I try to hold on to anything to keep me awake. I grip onto a tiny shred of energy and hold on for dear life. Please don't let me slip into the darkness again. I pray silently. I almost cried with joy when I was able to stable myself. My glow was almost fully gone except for some wispy traces up my arms. I looked at them and tried to figure out how I had gotten it to work. Grey had explained that it sometimes turns on when you desperately need it. I guess I was kind of desperate but know I wanted to know how I could fully turn it on when I needed it. EO came barreling into my mind, sending shockwaves through my consciousness. I cringed.

*Your help is almost here.* Was all he said and I anxiously look around. I saw something move in the distant and strain to make out what it was. It looked like a cloud but it gleamed pearly white in the evening light. I made a noise that I knew instantly. I broke out in a smile. Glory! I jumped up and pumped my fists as she flew over to me. I was so happy to see her. She looked fine but I would need to look over her when she landed. But wait, how did EO make her come here? and all the way from Camp in less than a day?! My smile turned into a frown.

*You may not allow monsters in your camp but you forget that Pegasus are technically monsters. I have control over them. So yes, even your precious beast isn't safe.* EO says cunningly. I freeze as I watch her glide towards me. As she got closer, I noticed she was breathing hard and her wing beats were weak and wobbly.

"What did you do to her?!" I accuse him. He laughs.

*Nothing. You said you needed a way to get down. I gave you that. And it'll make things go faster which is a plus.* He says.

"But you've pushed her too hard! She could've died! She won't be able to go much farther without rest!" I say, my voice hitching. He groaned.

*What is it with you mortals and your pets needed to take a break every five seconds! I'm sick of it. You and your little pet get one, ONE, more break. Take more than one and I will personally take over and make you go until we reach the manison where you will not stop until you have freed me. Choose wisely.* He says, his voice rising and echoing so bad that I'm pretty sure my brain vibrated from it. I was breathing hard.

"Yes. Thank you." I say and tremble at the words that come out of my mouth. He calms himself and I wait as Glory comes ever closer. She was a few dozen yards away when a noise echoed from the cave opening. Both me and EO were startled by it and we turned around. Nothing moved. The noise sounded again and I could swear it sounded human. EO's rage returned, thundering in my head.

*HOW COULD THIS BE? My servant must've failed me. Useless!* He yells and I try to ponder things out but it was hard with the wreck EO was making in my head.

*Hurry up you stupid flying beast!* EO shouted and I gripped my head in pain as I heard a faint whinny in EO's link that made my heart break. Glory was trying but was just so tired.

"Hey! Be nice to her!" I yell back at him. He growled at me in my mind and I backed off. Glory was a mere 10 yards away when I put together what was in the cave. Two heads popped up out of the cave's mouth. My breath hitched. Ben and Lola were running toward me, each covered in tiny scratches and looked exhausted but alive. Ben hobbled and leaned on Lola for support which was hard for her since she was like half his size. Their alive!! Thank the gods! I say to myself. The banging in my head intensified. I whimpered in pain and gripped my head.

"Audrey! Audrey we're here!" Ben yelled out. I wanted to run towards them but the pounding in my head stopped me from doing anything. I looked at both of them. I have to leave. I think and curse myself. I stand up straight and push all fear down deep and run to the edge of the cliff. I pushed through the tiredness and soreness and jumped. Time slowed as I yelled Glory's name and plummeted. The feeling of my stomach in my throat and being weightless made me yell until something collided with me and took the breath out of my lungs. I tried to breath and hang on to Glory's sleek coat but neither was going very well. Come on come on come on! I think and grab a few strands of her mane and pull myself up. I was barely able to as she flew up to try and clear the treetops. We made it barely and I glanced back at the cliff. It was becoming a distant place now, but I could still see Ben and Lola. Both looked tired and defeated but Ben looked me dead in the eye. I saw all of my own emotions reflected in those eyes but one. He looked so determined, even though he looked incredibly pale and sickly. I knew what it was and it made my heart break into tiny pieces. Love.

"I'm sorry." I whisper into the wind as I focus back onto the horizon in front of me.