

The monster forces overwhelmed us but I kept my head down. I lead Glory through it, soothing her the entire way. She pawed the ground and refused to move right in the middle of the path. I tried to gently nudge her but she stood put. I looked up at where she was staring and looked into the eyes of the creature that had been talking to EO. He was even more hideous in person, his mix matched patches of skin almost glowing with an eerie color in the setting sun. He stood regarding me, his face devoid of all emotion. All sorts of hideous monsters surrounded me and Glory. Something told me she wasn't going to go any further. I looked her in the eye.

"Thank you for choosing me. You were the best Pegasus I could've asked for. But this is where we must part old friend. I love you." I tell her my voice breaking as I hug her tight. She nuzzles me. I sniffled and patted her.

"It's time. Go back to camp. Lola and Ben will take care of you. And who knows, maybe Vulcan will like you back." I say and chuckle slightly. She doesn't leave.

"Glory, you have to go." I tell her, trying to keep it together. She paws the ground indecisively.

"It's ok girl. I'm ok. Go." I tell her and give her one last hug before she takes off. She took the rest of my heart with her. I walked numbly through the crowds of monsters and walked up the dilapidated steps to the massive oak doorway. EO's presence was everywhere. I could sense him, the real him, so close. It drew me towards it like a magnet and I could barely resist running toward it. I followed the creepy guy through the chambers and ancient hallways. tiny yellow eyes were everywhere, their owners hanging from the walls staring at me. I started shaking.

"You are very brave to have made it this far. Most failed at the gate." He says in his croaky voice. There were more? I ask myself.

"More of me?" I ask him softly. He chuckles.

"Yes lots. In fact, almost every generation has one that is chosen. Most just die because of Our Great One's overwhelming power. Some have tried, but only two others have made it this far. One, the first to make it here, banished my Master into this form." He says and bares his serrated teeth in disgust. I was shocked to hear his voice soften. "The second, a girl only a little older than you. She was a lot like you. Brave and loyal till the bitter end. She couldn't handle the Chamber." He says and gets a lost look in his beady yellow eyes. I wondered why the girl had such an effect on him. He straightens and the look leaves.

"Master is certain you will do better than the ones before you. When we get to the Chamber, don't resist the process. It'll be over quick enough." He says. I just kept walking. The pull was so strong. It hurt my chest and made my head spin and throb. I wasn't paying attention much to what he was rattling off. He stopped in front of pure black doors with swirls of purple around them. I knew what lay behind those doors. The green monster looked at me. I shook uncontrollably.

"I am sorry this had to happen to you. Did anyone come with you?" He asks sympathetically. Daggers to my dead heart.

"Yes. One's almost died because of me, the other probably hates me." I tell him in the softest whisper. He nods.

"Well, it's nice you had friends. Most who were given this honor came alone." He says and I could tell a slight change in his voice again. Something was off about this dude. Even my dull mind could tell that. He winced and shook his head.

"The Great One says it's time." He says and I nod. I was about to open the doors when I hear it. I shouldn't have been able to, yet I did. The howling of a wolf. The guy must've heard it too because he paused. The howl was joined by 3 others and I knew why now. Pain, Panic, Famine, and Oblivion. Ben. I thought and cursed under my breath. The green dude gripped his sword that I hadn't realized was there. I heard some noise and commotion outside. A crawling beast ran down to us and made some grunts and gestures to the green guy. He nodded and his fangs bared.

"Intruders?! Demigods?! Ok, I'll come help as soon as I get The Vessel to Master." He says and the thing runs off. The Vessel. That's me. I think and also look at where the weird monster had gone. I feared for Ben and Lola's life. Neither are in any fighting shape, and the wolves would only help a little. One tiny tear slipped down my cheek as I looked at the green guy. He was looking down the hall as well.

"I'm guessing you know who those demigods are?" He asks me. I nod slightly.

"I told them to stay away, its not safe... I'm doing this for them and I don't want them dying before I can save them." I say, mainly saying my thoughts out loud. He nods. He sighs.

"Come on. It's time." He says and I go numb again. But just before we fully enter the room, I feel just a small flow of emotions. Some sad, some angry, but there was this tiny feeling I didn't expect. Especially now. Hope. Just the tiniest hope that they would survive, or come to their senses, or even find help. But that I could even possibly survive this next and likely last phase of my life. I realize how short it was, but it was a pretty awesome life. It had its troubles and minor problems but they only made me stronger. I sighed and pushed it all away. The darkness swallowed me and the green guy as the heavy doors clanged shut.

Meanwhile in New York City...

I always went to the Ring when I needed to blow off steam, or hit something. The Ring was a small gym where adults could workout, train and fight. It was started by a Son of Ares actually. He owned and ran the place. Any demigods who lived nearby were welcome for free. I was a regular. This time I came to work off all my worry over Audrey. I hadn't heard anything from her since she and her friends came to the apartment and we had all gone to the Underworld. My mind wouldn't leave her. I worried endlessly. Was she ok? Is she hurt? Did something happen to her? Those questions battered me constantly. I hit the punching bag again. I was still recovering from the fight even though it had been a few days since the underworld ordeal. I had passed out for the day and everyone had explained what had happened after I woke up. Audrey had jumped down and killed the thing and then healed me enough so I would survive. She then was 'possessed' by the monsters she's supposed to defeat and carted off the Hade's dungeon. Her friends had come back and explained everything and it took all I had (and Dev holding me back) not to march down and kill Hades myself. We sent Erebus instead. He came back that afternoon saying they had rescued her and she was safe with Nerth and would soon return. That was days ago. No word. We sent him back and he found nothing. I punched and punched and punched and punched. Nothing could stop it. The stress kept me up for hours and I had only caught snippets of sleep. Dev as well though he needed it more for work. I punched it one last time and it sent it hurtling into the wall. a spike caught it and it stuck there. I stopped and groaned in frustration.

"woah woah woah. Something's got you wound up. Everyhting ok?" John asks me. He was the owner and in his mid 50s. He was extremely strong and always wore a stern look on his face. I shoved off my punching gloves.

"My daughter is on a quest and we haven't heard anything in days." I say and grab a sword and start practicing on a dummy. He walks over and stops my aggressive hacking.

"I'm sorry Lura. I never had a kid go off on a quest but I remember the stories. I'm sure she's fine. If she's anything like you she'll be back by the end of the week." He says and gives me a small smile. I shrug. He didn't know the full story and I wasn't wanting to share it.

"I guess. But I can't stop worrying about her. Can't sleep, can hardly eat, can't relax." I say and set the sword down.

"Well, the Ring is always open to you. I'll even let you come by after hours if you can't sleep." He says and I smile at him.

"Thanks John, you really don't have to do that." I tell him.

"My pleasure. We demigods got to stick together." He says and walks off. I sigh and grab my bag. I drive back and look at the clouds. There was a a massive dark cloud covering all of New York. Thunder rumbled but no lightning yet. I wonder whats up. I think and had this awful feeling somthing was horribly wrong. I tapped my foot on the floorboard and parked. I went inside and walked into my apartment. It was bare and the grey filtered light made it almost eerie and empty. Greyson was at Camp waiting for any word if she showed up there. Dev would be back in a bit. I sighed and set my bag down. Something felt off and I fingered my dagger in my bag. I turned around and whipped out my dagger only to find a small floating paper. It had an inscription on the outside. I set down my

dagger and tentitavly grabbed it.

*To Lura Baxter, Devin Baxter, and Greyson Baxter.* I looked at it, confused. Maybe its from Camp? I think and open it. Light flooded the grey room and a projection of Audrey appeared. I gasped.

"Audrey?! Audrey honey its me!" I say but she seemed to not hear me. She looked awful, dark bags hung under her eyes and she had small bleeding cuts all over her. Her eyes seemed more sad too. I knew that look. I had seen it in my own eyes on my quest. The look of deep grief and sadness but eternal determination against everything. Her hair was blowing in the wind and I saw some feathers so I assumed she was on Glory. Grey had told me that Glory had flown off in a fit suddenly yesterday and they hadn't found her. She was going to Audrey. I realize and I was happy they weren't alone. She sighed.

"*how do you work this thing?*" She says and then looks at the thing. I was crying tears at this, my daughter was alive!!! She sighed and looked at the paper. I could almost reach out and touch her.

"*oh I guess its already on. Well hi mom and dad. And Grey too if hes there. Um, its been a crazy couple of days um... Yea if your reading this or whatever I just want to say I'm sorry. Yall were the best family I could ask for and at times I took it for granted but now looking back I see how incredible my life was.*" She says and my hearts sinks a little. Why was she saying these things? I had this horrible feeling something was incredibly wrong.

"*I know yall are probably wondering when I'll be home but... I won't be able to come back. I'm sorry Grey I broke my promise and made this into a whole mess. And only I can fix it. So thats what I'm going to do. EO has promised he'll spare yall and all of our friends and family if I go through with this. He has this plan and having seen it... I'm scared. Not scared, terrified. I had hoped to find a way to win, but there is no winning situation here. I just hope yall can forgive me. If the enevitable does happen, there something I have that nobody has seen yet but I think it's time. Under my bed, toward the back behind the boxes, is a small box with all my keepsakes. In there, theres a drawing I had hanging up but took it down. It should have all of us on it. Look on the back. It's the only part of me nobody knew about. It needs to updated but it'll be something to remember me by.*" She explain s and tears roll down her cheeks. I was panicking. What is she saying? What promise?! What was she going to do?! I grab my phone and dial Dev. It goes striaght to voicemail. I cursed loudly, which I don't do often, and called Greyson. He picked up after the third ring.

"Hello? Anything?" He asks me.

"Get over here now. Something's wrong." I tell him and hang up. He'll be here soon. I tell myself and look at the message. It seemed to be repeating itself. *It needs to updated but it'll be something to remember me by.*" She says and sighs. She wipes a tear from her cheek and looks in the distance. "*I love yall. More then you'll ever know. Tell Lola and Ben I'm sorry.*" She says and the projection pauses. I break down in sobs and I don't move until Grey helps me up. He carries me to the table where I sob and can't explain anything to him. He eventaully gets ahold of Dev and he rushes over. I manage to tell them how to work the letter and they listen to it. My girl is dying. I think over and over. And there was nothing I could do about it. Dev was in total shock and Grey yelled in grief and ran off and locked himself in his room where I could hear him sobbing punching things. I just sat there. Maybe if I had just tried a little harder, been a bit nicer, maybe she wouldn't have gone. I realized why she had taken it. I had heard of her little club, only snippets. The second born forgottens. I looked back on all the times she had done great things but Grey always got the glory. How awful that must've made her feel. And I caused some of it. I think in shame. I did praise Grey a ton more then her even though looking back now, she did so much more then him. I picked myself up and walked absent mindedly to her room and crashed on the floor sobbing. I could see her everywhere, in the bed, on the floor, in the swing, at her desk. I then remembered the tiny detail. I looked under her bed and pushed aside the box and grabbed out the tiny box she had described. I carefully pull it out and open it. I gasp and start crying again. All the tiny things that seemed like ordinary things rested carefully in her. But each had a piece of her. I looked through and then pull out the photo she had talked about. She did get my talent for drawing, the picture was beautifully. I picked out the people in the picture. Nerth, Lola, Astraea, Cole, me, Dev, and Grey and so many others. Her family. I think and see her in the center smiling. I sucked in a breath and turned to the back. I gasped at the intricate

detail and design. Everything had a purpose, everything had a tiny detail that made it unique. How did she do this? How did she know? I ask myself as I inspect it. It was incredible. But it only made me cry more. Why Audrey? Why did it have to be her?!