

Ugh, I hated passing out against my will. And waking up from it was a pain. But I didn't have a choice. I groaned as I opened my eyes and sunlight blinded them. Being in darkness for that long did that too my eyes. Wait... sunlight? But- all of the memories came rushing back.

"Oh your up. Erebus thought you would be out later than this but. It's fine." A friendly voice says. I let my adjust and I realized there was someone next to me and I almost jumped.

"Oh sorry! I didn't meant to startle you! Dang it Madelyn!" The girl says and her face comes into focus. My eyes were more sensitive and I was blinking like crazy. She had a pretty face with green eyes and pretty blonde hair. She smiled at me.

"Where am I?!" I ask her and sit up and realize I was in a tiny white marbled room.

"Your in Elysuim. Home of the fallen heroes." She says. I could feel my eyes getting wide.

"What?! How'd I get here?" I ask her. She opens her mouth but someone else answers instead.

"Well, we brought you here like Erebus told us too." Nerth's voice says and I look in disbelief as he walks in the room with a big goofy grin. I jumped out of whatever I was on and ran into his arms. I didn't pass through him and he held me tight like if he let go I would be gone.

"Hey Audrey, sorry about the whole knocking-you-out-and-dragging-you-here thing." He says and I just hugged him tighter. I looked at him.

"gods how I've missed you." I tell him.

"Me too. But we're here together now." He says. I nod.

"Umm, I'm gonna go get the others." Madelyn says and starts to leave.

"Wait. Audrey, this is Madelyn. She's an Apollo kid from years ago. Went on a quest at our age too." He says. She smiled and nodded.

"Nice to meet you Audrey, I've heard a ton about you from Nerth. It's nice to get to meet you in person." She says and walks out. I give him a 'Who is she?' glance. He just shrugs.

"Why am I here Nerth? I told Erebus that I wanted to stay away from the people I love so nobody got hurt." I tell him softly.

"Because you don't deserve to be there. There's nothing wrong with you Audrey. And besides, you still have a quest to finish. Lola explained everything to me." He says.

"Lola?! How were you able to talk to her?" I ask him as we walk out of the building.

"Because I'm here too dummy." She says and I turn to see her and Ben being lead over by Madelyn.

Time slowed. Both her and Ben had massive grins. I could feel myself tearing up as I ran to them.

Lola reached me first. She almost tackled me when we collided in a hug and both of us we're crying.

"You idiot, do you think we would just let you rot down there?" She tells me. I don't respond and just hug her tighter. Ben gets to us and wraps up in a group hug. I had never felt better than in that moment, safe in my friends' arms. I finally pull away and look at them.

"Seriously, how did y'all get here?" I ask them. Lola rolled her eyes.

"Erebus. He shadow traveled us and then collapsed. He's been emitting dark stuff the whole time so we haven't messed with him." She says. I looked around and saw the only dark patch to my right. I assumed it was him. I turned and got a good look at Ben. He looked tired, but good. But he did have a scar over his eye. What had happened there? I noticed there were more on his arms and legs too. He gave me a small smile and I could see some red creeping into his cheeks. He surprised me by grabbing me into a hug. I hugged him back.

"I'm glad your ok." He says and pulls away. I hid my blushing cheeks.

"I'm glad I'm ok too." I tell him and smile. Someone chuckled behind me. Both Ben and I stepped away from each other, my cheeks burning red. I looked up and my face fell when I saw Nerth's face. His was one mixed with shock and hurt. I realized why. Nerth had loved me, like like liked me. He had told me so a year ago, before he returned here. But, I couldn't help my growing feelings for Ben. I can't have Nerth, but I had a slim chance with Ben. I'm sorry Nerth. I think. I hated the guilt. I looked over again to see Madelyn patting his shoulder. Seriously, who was she? I was genuinely intreseted in her story. Lola gave me a smug smirk.

Anyway, Nerth, why don't we explain our plan to Audrey?" Lola says. Nerth clears his throat but doesn't meet my eyes. Guilt was like a roaring sea in me.

"um, well, Lola said we needed to find Bellaphron and ask his advice on how to defeat the Evil One

correct? Well, none of that is easy. He's in the best part of Elysium, or what we call it, The Hill of Legends." Nerth explains.

"The Hill of Legends? Doesn't seem that hard to get to." Lola says. Madelyn laughs.

"Not hard huh? Well, if you can get past the few hundred guards and the φτερωτός, or the Winged One, you'll have to sneak past all the greatest Greek heros and heroine in the history of the world. Finding him is like looking for a needle in a haystack. He's gonna look like all the rest. If you find him, you'll then have to get him to tell you how to defeat the Evil One. But knowledge comes at a cost." She says with a small grimace. Something happened to her there. I make a mental note to myself.

"Anyway, then you have to do whatever they want for the info. After that you got to get out of here, otherwise Hades will trap you here permanantly." She finishes. I'll admit, it sounded near impossible. "But on the bright side, you can stay here! Its not so bad after a while." Nerth says. I should've made me feel better but it made me feel worse. Everyone looked down.

"So, Audrey whats the plan?" Ben asks me. I look up, surprised. Everyone looked at me. I thought I wasn't the leader anymore. I think. I guess not. I took a deep breath and collected myself the best I could. I felt someone put their hand on my back and looked to see Ben giving me a small smile and a nod. I didn't feel the butterflies this time, just calm and quiet determination.

"We have to try. Its the only way to save our world." I tell them.