

We walked back hand in hand to the small hut and found Lola and Madelyn talking and Nerth nowhere to be seen. I let my hand gently slid out of his and he gave me a confused look. I didn't respond and went over to where Lola and Madelyn were talking avidly.

"-haha! Yeah! You know, there was this one time where me and my friend- Audrey! There you are! how was your walk with Ben?" Lola asks and she wears that smirk. I sit down next to her.

"It was good." I tell her and try not to blush as I recall the kiss.

"Mhm. Ok. Well that's a nice rose. Matches your hair very nicely." She says and chuckles. My cheeks flushed a little and I touched the tiny flower and turned so she couldn't see my pink cheeks.

"Well, Madelyn just finished going over the plan with me, I'll go get some supplies for the trip and you can go over it with her and... oh look Ben and Nerth seem to be getting along." She says and I whip around to see Nerth and Ben talking over by one of the trees. I froze and watched them. Had Nerth been watching us the whole time? That would be really bad. While I was thinking both Nerth and Ben turned to me and I sheepishly waved and turned right back around.

"Want to go over the plan?" Madelyn asks and I see her wearing the same smirk as Lola had had. I turned beetroot red.

"Yeah, sounds good." I say and she explains the plan. I had to admit, it did seem near impossible, but there was too much riding on us winning for us not to try at least. She looked at me.

"Lola told me about the quest your on. Sounds pretty similar to mine." She says.

"Is that a good thing or a bad thing?" I ask her. She thought for a second.

"I don't know. Every quest is different I guess. Some get luckier than others." She says and picks some of the grass nearby. SERIOUSLY WHO WAS THIS PERSON AND WHAT IS HER STORY?!

"I'm assuming yours wasn't one of the lucky ones." I say quietly. She doesn't answer.

"I guess you could say that. But it had to be done." She says finally. We sit in silence.

"How do you meet Nerth?" I ask her. She chuckles.

"Well, I've been looking for someone for a while. I happened to run into him while looking. He offered to help me look for him." She said.

"Oh nice." I say.

"He's told me quite a lot about you. About everyone but mainly you." She says. I sighed and the guilt flooded back.

"o-oh yeah? What all did he say?" I ask her. She thought for a moment.

"He told me of how kind you were, how nice and incredible you are. He would tell me stories of you and camp and the Forggottens. You meant a great deal to him." She says. I nodded. More silence.

"Welp, my ADHD is saying we should do something. Want to get ready then do some sparring?" She asks and stands, offering me her hand. I looked over at where Nerth and Ben had been and realized they weren't there anymore.

"Sure. Why not? But I don't have my sword." I tell her and stand up with her help.

"You mean this weapon?" She asks me and grabs my sword out of thin air. I gape at her.

"H-How?" I ask her and she laughs.

"Your Hades friend grabbed it and brought it here and we have this little power to pull objects we need to us here in Elysium so." She says and hands it to me. I tested it and was happy to find it still familiar in my hand. But I was weaker and it took more energy to swing it than normal. What did that cell do to me?! I think.

"Thanks Madelyn. Where should I meet you?" I ask her. She smiles.

"There's a tiny field a few minutes away. Over there." She explains and points northwest.

"I'll be there. There's a change of clothes and some food in the house. Feel free to change and eat before you come. I know the cells weren't very friendly so rest and regain some strength before coming. Wouldn't want you to hurt yourself now would we?" She says and walks off. The mention of food made my stomach erupt and I didn't realize how hungry I was. I walked in and found some fruit and ingredients to make a sandwich. I quickly changed into the cute blue shirt which fit perfectly and some comfortable dark jean shorts. It was a cute but flexible outfit. I looked at myself and almost didn't recognize myself. My hair was a bit messy and my face looked tired. Dark bags sat under my eyes. But I think the biggest difference was how much older I looked. I was only 13 but I looked 16. I

guess being taken over by an ancient monster and getting thrown in an Underworld cell does that to you. I think darkly. I shake my head and look around for a brush. I find one and take the remaining strands of my braid out and carefully brush my hair. Something hit the ground next to me and I reached down and picked up the delicate rose. I smiled and set it on the sink and put my hair in a simple braid for sparring. I looked at the rose and put it in my back pocket for safekeeping and went to make myself some food. I was practically starving when I finished making the two ham sandwiches and immediately gobbled them down. I was so full that I debated going into a food coma but sparring with Madelyn sounded more productive. I forced myself to get up out of the chair and grabbed some water before heading to the spot Madelyn had pointed to. I looked at my sword as the light glinted off it and reflected off the metal.

"Where are you off to?" Ben says suddenly, appearing next to me. I jumped like 3 feet in the air and shoved him.

"Don't scare me like that!" I yell at him and punch him. He laughs and clutches his shoulder.

"Noted haha. So, where are you going?" He asks.

"Some field where me and Madelyn are gonna spar." I tell him. He nods.

"Just be careful ok?" He says, suddenly sweet again.

"I'll be fine." I tell him. He smiles.

"Good, mind if I tag along?" He asks.

"Sure." I shrug.

"Great!" He says but I stop him.

"But on one condition. What did Nerth have to say?" I ask him, not wanting to overstep but I had to know. What? We Athena kids are very curious. He sighs and looks down.

"Nothing much. Just some bro stuff." He says and I nod. I could tell he wasn't telling the whole truth.

"Ok, now come on, I didn't get much ADHD but it's kicking in right now." I tell him and we both run hand and hand to the field.