

PARAGONS3

GODS AND SUPERHEROES



GIDEON MILLS

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For all the superhero MMO fans out there.

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MADISON SQUARE GARDEN

I stood on sacred ground; for the first time in my life, I was at Madison Square Garden. One of the most hallowed sports arenas in the world, but I wasn't here for the game. Sure, the basketball team was playing, but I was here for a different reason. Up in the most expensive seats in the place, with his closest friends and enemies—not including me—was Fenrir Walker.

I was with the regular folks watching him. As one of the richest men in the world, Fenrir could do whatever he wanted. There was no one standing in his way.

"He really does know how to play a group," Athena said. She was standing next to me and was the only one in the venue with me. Fleur wanted to be here more than ever, but she was almost as famous as her dad, and so was Lola. Felicity being a squirrelkin made her stand out too.

Not that I didn't stand out, being a Greek God and all. As did my dearest half-sister, but we were the best options, and recon on the man that was trying to kill or depower every Paragon was required.

Many people at the venue gave me a wide berth, since I was a large man. Not many would want to get on my bad side. Even if they didn't know that I was God. Or a Paragon for that matter, which was what many people thought of me.

"I want to just jump up there and throw him into the sky," I said.

Athena snorted. That was the old me talking, and she knew it, but it would solve a lot of our problems. Though it would create a whole

new group of them, and I didn't want to deal with that in the slightest.

"Be my guest," my half-sister said. She had her hair pulled back in a bun, one that made her look very angry. Unlike me; I had my hair short, in a high and tight style these days. It was the norm of the Marines here, and if it was good enough for the men that fought for a country's freedom, it was good enough for me.

"Under no circumstances is he allowed to do that," Fleur said. As if a voice in my head, and in many ways, she was. The technology that Lola had created really was one of a kind. We were all connected and able to hear each other and talk to each other. In some ways it was very disrupting, being connected to someone miles away.

"It would be fun," I countered.

"It sure would," a smooth voice said. Felicity was a fiery squirrelkin, with the cutest tail and ears.

I was one of the luckiest Gods alive, three stunningly beautiful women wanted me, and I wanted them. Loved them. Each was different, yet the same in many ways.

"Oy vey," Lola said. "Felicity, don't encourage him."

Next to me, Athena rolled her eyes. She had become part of our team after Hera threw her from Mount Olympus.

Yet another unofficial member of the team arrived next to me with his wife. McGarrett and Janet were two of the friendliest people I met here on Earth. Both were among the first to help me track down my batshit crazy sister Eris. Who was working for Hera and trying to do what she does best, cause chaos and strife.

Eris nearly succeeded in her agenda, but with the help of those amazing people around me, we stopped her.

It was no small feat, but it was only the first step in stopping my dear mother. She was out to kill all the humans, while Fenrir here was out to kill all the Paragons. That was what my mother wanted too; it made her goal so much easier.

McGarrett stopped next to me. I took in him and his wife; Janet was pregnant, but not yet showing. "How's the baby?" I asked.

"Going well," she said. "Going in for an ultrasound tomorrow."

That was a big deal, and I could see on McGarrett's face that he was nervous about it.

“That’s great,” I said. How far along Janet was, I couldn’t remember, and when one could find out the sex, was yet another thing I had no clue about. This was all new technology that had appeared since the last time I was on Earth.

I won’t deny that I’ve had my fair share of babies over the years. It wasn’t like back in the sixteen hundreds there was birth control, the only method then was to pull out. That meant a lot of people had kids when they didn’t intend to, and the same went for Gods.

Athena cleared her throat. “You learn anything?”

All four of us were part of the recon here, to learn about Fenrir or rather, more about his security. That was something that Fleur wasn’t sure about, and we had to see it in action. A place like this was a great location to study it as he was extremely vulnerable when out.

“He has some of the best-trained men I have ever seen,” McGarrett said.

“That’s an understatement,” Janet said. “My father and brother both served in special forces, and these guys make them look bad.”

I nodded. Fenrir having the best of the best on his team was to be expected. Though they were still just regular humans and not Paragons. That much we all could agree on since the man hated them with a passion.

“They carrying?” Athena asked.

Since they were in the building, no one should have been allowed to enter with any type of weapon. Knives, guns, batons, etc. were all taken away and got the person into a lot of trouble. Even before Reign and my sister, cities like New York had increased their gun laws. It had been a very long time since anyone was allowed to enter a venue like this armed.

“They are carrying,” McGarrett said. “Anti-Paragon weapons, and some of the best I’ve seen.”

“Figures that they would be allowed,” I said.

It was time to leave before I drew too much attention and had those souped-up, special force security guards on me. I’d be able to take them, and with Athena it wouldn’t be hard, but they might hurt innocent people in the fight. That was something I wanted to avoid.

We were about to leave when a young child walked up to me. “You’re Ares, aren’t you?” she asked.

I took a deep breath and knelt down next to her. With her long, curly blond hair, she was an adorable young girl. “Don’t tell anyone,” I said. “But yes I am.”

The girl’s face lit up. “You’re my favorite Paragon.”

Back in the day, I had been told I was many people’s favorite God. But also told I was the worst—comes with the territory. Hearing this sweet child say that was nice to hear. It had been a very long time since I heard anything like it.

“Thank you,” I said. I patted her gently on the shoulder, as a couple watched. “You have a sweet young lady,” I told them.

The father gave me a smile. “Addy is a good girl, Ares.”

I stood and shook his hand. “A pleasure to meet you.”

Then they were gone, and I was left wondering how many more of those encounters I would have. If my dear mother got her way, the world could be dead. Gone. I hated that thought. It was moments like these that I wanted to save. To see little boys and girls grow up and be the next generation of heroes.

AN UNEXPECTED SURPRISE

Leaving the place and driving back to the safe house was excellent. I was glad to be out of the range of Fenrir's henchmen. It had only been a few days since his press conference, and I was already sick of him.

Sick of it all, and ready to move on to dearest mother, not that it would be a fun fight. I still wasn't sure how that was going to go, since she hadn't left Mount Olympus in her whole life. Hera was the definition of a homebody or a recluse. The most extreme case of Agoraphobia in the history of both Gods and Humans. Sure she went outside, but she never left Olympus. That was like the same thing as never leaving home. It was sickening.

In the car that Athena had procured, we headed out on 7th avenue to our safe house. It would be nice to go back and cuddle with one or all of the women. The car that Athena had today was a crossover, a Buick of some kind, and just big enough for me. I liked the convertible since they had way more headroom when the top was down.

Stopping at a light, the white cargo van in front of us did as well. Suddenly the doors at the rear burst open, and a half-dozen men, armed to the teeth, leaped out of it. They had the anti-Paragon weapons I had seen over the last few weeks in Reign's reign.

They pointed them at us, and the leader spoke, or the one I assumed was the leader. "Make one move, and we'll take you out," he said with a gravelly voice. All the men had on body armor and

masks. No doubt it was bullet and knife resistant too. Not that those would do much against me.

“Those won’t work on me,” I said. I knew full well they had stuff that could take away the powers of Paragons, and even had the ability to transfer powers from one Paragon to another person. Just thinking of that made me angry and reminded me of the pain that Fleur had gone through.

“So you say,” the leader said. “You really want to test that?”

I shrugged. There was little doubt in my mind those weapons wouldn’t work on me. Nor would they effect Athena, so it was an excellent thing that Felicity and Fleur weren’t with us. I would never forgive myself if they were attacked with technology like that.

“Do not engage,” Lola said. She had clearly heard the man. “We can’t afford to give them a reason to start the anti-Paragon task force again.”

I gritted my teeth. “Are you arresting us?”

Athena had a look on her face that said she wanted to know the meaning of this as well. “You don’t look like cops or feds,” she said.

The man laughed. “Not cops, or a federal agent,” he said. “Nor military, we work for a private company.”

“Walker Consolidated,” I said with a grunt.

“Actually,” the man said. “We work for Epps Technologies.”

That was a surprise, and it clearly caught all of us. Through the comms, I could hear gasps from everyone, and the look on Athena’s face had to match my own. I was beyond startled by this news.

Epps Technologies, along with Walker Consolidated and Ryder Inc., were the three most powerful companies in the world.

“What does Epps Technologies want with us?” Athena said.

“That’s a great question,” Lola said. She was typing so fast that I could hear her fingers pressing against the keyboard. Clearly, she was trying to answer that question for us.

“Mister Mako wants to talk to you and see if you and your team could work out a mutually beneficial agreement.”

I won’t deny it, I liked how he said my team.

“You can’t work anything out without us,” Fleur said.

“What about the rest of my team,” I said. “I don’t actually speak for them. We all make the choices before we act.”

That was how a good team worked and how they stayed together. Sure, at times, someone had to make the hard choice and take the hit for the others. Those were rare moments and not the norm.

The man pulled out his phone and stepped away. I could have attempted to listen, but my head was elsewhere. This was an unexpected occurrence, and I was still trying to wrap my head around it.

These men had the same technology, or similar, to Walker. While Ryder Inc. could have stuff like this, Duke would never stand for it. Being a Paragon himself and going to the most elite Paragon academy in the world.

After learning that Fleur went there, I had Googled it and saw they had a uniform. Part of me wanted to ask if she still had it and if it fit. A bit of roleplaying sounded fun to me. That was for later, and I needed to focus on these Epps men.

The man was gone for about a minute before he returned. "Mister Mako said the whole team's invited, and I'm to let you go talk to them." The man closed the gap between us. We had now drawn a crowd in the area as the traffic built up behind us. I was sure that the angry New Yorker was about to make an appearance. The man gave me a card after writing on the back. "If you want to talk, here is the time and place."

Then he and the others left. It was time to get back to the hideout and talk this out.

MAKING A CHOICE

We arrived back at the secret hideout much later than I had wanted. After meeting the Epps men, Athena made sure we weren't followed, and that added nearly an hour to the time before we got home. I was longing to hold Fleur, Lola, and Felicity.

When confronted with a fight, I want to fight, and then love. I was the God of War, and that was my norm.

While we drove, we had talked it out some, but nothing had been reached. Out front, McGarrett's truck was there. He had beat us here by a long shot. Even though he wasn't supposed to come. He was part of the team and needed to be in on the Epps talk.

I nodded as we entered. "I've been filled in," the police officer said. "I had been wondering what was causing the commotion on the streets."

"Sorry," I said. "I just seem to make problems."

McGarrett laughed. "You sure do."

"What is the plan?" Felicity said. "We've been going in circles."

The stunningly hot squirrelkin, who was the shortest person in the room, but one of the biggest personalities, hated sitting around.

"We talk to him," I said. "I think it's pretty simple. We are going against one of the most powerful men in the world, and his enemy wants to talk. Doesn't that make Mako and Epps Technologies our allies?"

"If it was that simple," Fleur said. "I wouldn't be surprised if this was a setup by my dad."

Not that I hadn't thought of that, but I was trying to be positive. Looking at the best possible outcome, not the bad one that would ruin our entire plan, one that we didn't have.

"She's right," Lola said, "but we do need to see what he wants."

I looked at the card that the lead goon guy gave me. On the back was a time for tomorrow morning at eight. The location was in Central Park, a place that could easily be used for an ambush, but also helped instill a sense that he wasn't trying to trick us. Since it was a neutral location, and easy for us to scout and make sure we weren't getting set up.

Voicing that to the others. "We can talk to him. In and out."

Felicity licked her lips and rubbed her claws on her hands. She was itching for a fight, more than even me. The squirrelkin really was my type, and I loved it. "Let's make this happen," she said.

I looked around to the others; we had formed a circle as we talked. Each of them was nodding. It was an agreement, we'd see what Epps Technologies and their current CEO wanted.

"Be smart," McGarrett said. "I can't go since I'm on the force."

"I know," I said.

"Is there no way you can get us some police presence?" Fleur asked. "Just in case it is a setup."

McGarrett pursed his lips. "No. It would draw too much attention. It's already bad enough that everyone knows we talk and help each other out. That would give your father some leverage against me and the force."

He was right, but it would have been nice to have some police backup. Not that Athena, Felicity, Fleur, and I couldn't handle anything they threw at us. "My only concern is the anti-Paragon weapons," I said.

"Mine too," Fleur admitted. "They scare the bejesus out of me."

With all that she had been through, that was understandable.

"I won't let anything happen to you," Felicity said. She smiled, baring her sharp fangs. Her tail moved behind her faster than usual. The squirrelkin was in her protective mode and ready to keep us all safe.

"Nor will I," Lola said. "I'll make sure everyone is safe from here."

Lola went to her terminal and started to work on just that. She probably began to hack the cameras in the area, and anything else that would allow her to monitor us and the surrounding areas.

MEETING THE MAKO

Waking bright and early so we could get some extra scouting in was a drain, but here I was. Up at the crack of dawn and dressed in some of the finest jeans in the city, and a shirt that had Felicity's favorite superhero on it, a character from a popular MMO. One that I had never played, but she talked about it all the time.

"Morning, sunshine," Lola said. My room was on the way from hers to the front of the place.

"Morning," I said with a yawn. I hadn't looked in the mirror, but I imagined that I had bags under my eyes. Just because I was a God didn't mean I didn't need sleep. I was millennia old and required my beauty sleep, just like any other person.

I held her hand as we walked to the front. Her touch soft against my own, her sweet aroma floated up to me. Whenever I was close to her, I felt happy and safe. I was relieved that she wouldn't be going with us on this mission. While Lola played a vital role in rescuing Fleur, she was still best behind the computer, where her true genius shone.

We were the last two to arrive in the main area. That was no surprise to me. Athena was always up and ready. Over the years, I could count on one hand the number of times I arrived before she did to the gathering point. Now once the fight started, I was always the one to engage first. It was in my carnal nature to fight first and ask questions later, while my sister was the other side of that coin.

Fleur was an early riser, as well. She was much like Athena in many ways, thinking ahead in the battle, trying to find the best time to strike and cause the most damage. That was a fantastic quality in a woman or person. Felicity was more like me in that area. Though she appeared to be up and ready. In her hand was a steaming cup of coffee.

“About time you arrive,” the squirrelkin said, speaking nearly as fast as Lola did at times.

“How much coffee have you had?” Lola asked.

Felicity shrugged. “I don’t know, I lost count.”

Lola moaned. “This is going to be a long morning.”

“Hey,” Felicity countered.

I kept my mouth shut, but I agreed with Lola. Felicity on a sugar and caffeine rush was going to be draining.

Yet, that was okay since I knew she was going to be hyper-focused on the task at hand. Felicity was nothing but concentrated when it came to the mission.

Before we left, we all made sure we knew the plan if this was a setup, and where to go. Planning was always the most important thing we could do.

Taking two vehicles to Central Park and parking on opposite sides of the place was part of it too. I rode with Fleur, while Athena and Felicity went together. This actually gave me a chance to bring up the outfit.

“You still have your academy outfit?” I asked. The park was in sight now.

Fleur glanced at me. “What if I do?” she asked.

“I was just wondering what you looked like in it.”

She smiled. “I’m sure that’s all that crossed your mind.”

I laughed. “You know me too well.”

“I do,” she replied. “Maybe we’ll see if we can work something out.”

That was all I needed. My head was lost for a moment picturing it all. But once she pulled into the park and got out of the car, I was ready to meet Mako and see what he wanted.

Jumping out of the car, I raced over to the meeting area to give it a quick look. It was just as I expected. Secluded, and a great place

for an ambush. Yet, I didn't see a single person around. Standing as still as possible, I listened for any and all sounds. No people. Nothing but the early morning sounds of the animals of the park. Birds chirping and crickets. Not to mention many other critters doing their thing. The closest people were too far away to be much of an issue, we would see them coming from a long way away, or hear them. Unless they were Paragons with the ability to move with stealth, and there was nothing we could do about that.

Ten minutes later, Fleur was next to me. "I saw no one," she said. "Neither did I. This place is devoid of humans."

Fleur nodded. It was a waiting game now for Mako and his team. I had no doubt that he was going to bring those goons with him.

Right on the dot, Mako and a group of four men arrived. The man was nothing if not punctual, that was something to like about him. It bothered me that many people these days and even in the past were always late. I was a military man, and can vouch for the saying that to be early was to be on time, and to be on time was late, and to be late was unforgivable. Yet, the people today just didn't seem to care about other people's time.

Letting that go, I focused on the man standing in the clearing that he chose to meet in. Mako looked much like his pictures did online. He was in his early sixties, with black hair that was fading to white. His olive skin was showing some wrinkles, but otherwise it would be tough to tell his age. Like most men with the money he had, he wore an elegantly tailored suit and held himself in a good posture.

"You see anything?" Fleur asked.

"All clear," I said. The men with him had weapons, but I wasn't able to discern what type they were. We all knew this was going to be a significant risk on our part. "The men are carrying, but that's to be expected."

Fleur nodded. "Let's go."

We were to go first, and then Felicity and Athena would join us. They were to remain hidden just in case we were ambushed after we revealed ourselves. Not that I expected that, but best to be safe. Have layers and layers of plans, that was the Athena way.

When Mako saw us, a broad smile covered his face. "I'm glad to see you decided to meet me," the older man said. Not he was

actually older than me, but he looked the part.

“What’s the saying,” Fleur said. “The enemy of my enemy is my ally.”

Mako smirked. “Something like that, but I would like to think we have more in common than just that.”

“Showing up yesterday with anti-Paragon weapons doesn’t help the cause,” I said.

Mako nodded. “If I didn’t have to keep up appearances for Fenrir, I wouldn’t have.”

Fleur tilted her head. “Keep up appearances? Last I heard the Epps and Walker were in a bitter feud.”

Mako nodded. “We are, and yet we do a lot of business. Much like you said about enemies, best to keep your allies close, but your enemies closer still.”

“Or something like that,” I added.

We all had a little chuckle. Athena and Felicity joined the group a few minutes later. “Nice of you to join,” Mako said. “As you can tell, no ambushes. No tricks on my part, and today my men don’t have weapons that can hurt you, or rather strip you of your powers.”

Felicity let out a squeak, and her face turned red. “Prove it,” she said. Her voice was steady; as Felicity spoke, I had to imagine the squirrelkin was focusing hard to pull it off. Looking at her, she appeared to be a ball of nerves.

The men all pulled out standard guns, from the look of them, Berretta M9. Standard issue for military men in the States. It wouldn’t surprise me one bit if all these men served in one branch or another. They had the look of military men, and I respected that.

“Good,” Fleur said. “What is it you are proposing?”

Mako smiled. “I’m not your enemy, I hate that people are doing things these days to harm the relations between Paragons and humans. Or powered and unpowered. Even though I have no enhanced abilities, many are my friends, and have helped me grow Epps Technologies.”

I laughed. “Money is a great motivator.”

Mako shrugged. “It is, but that’s not the only reason. Part of it, I will not deny it, but suffice to say, I have a personal reason as well. I

do not want the world to be divided. I do not want one or the other to rule.”

I liked what he was saying, but they were just words. Words can be spoken by anyone, but what he did meant more.

“What is it you want?” Athena asked.

Mako examined her before he answered. “To team up, for now, a secret team-up, Fenrir doesn’t hear about it. He would use it against all of us, but if we use my tech and that which Guardian can make, we might be able to outgun even the biggest weapons supplier in the world. With both Ares and Athena, add in this feisty kin, our two teams might be able to take out Walker.”

I wasn’t sure what to make of it all. We had the smartest person in the world working for us in Lola. The two strongest on Earth at the moment with Athena and me. The most skilled fighter in Fleur, and none of that mentioned Felicity. I just didn’t see what Mako was bringing to the table.

“We will have access to your tech and your people?” Athena asked.

Mako nodded.

“You have a large private security,” Fleur said. “Much like my father, will we be able to use them when the time comes?”

Mako again nodded. “You will.”

“We need a moment,” Fleur said.

“Take your time.”

We moved to the side to talk, and decide what our best course of action was.

Lola was the first to speak through the comms. “He is genuine, no signs of trying to trick us.”

“We need to get all the allies we can,” Athena said.

“She’s right,” Fleur added.

“I like him,” Felicity said.

It seemed to me they all had decided already. “I trust you.”

The choice had been fast and easy. We would be seeing what Mako was all about, and if we could take out Fenrir together.

Going back to the man, I said, “Let’s see if we can work well together.”

TALKING IT OUT

The trip back to the headquarters of team Ares was a silent one. This alliance with Epps, or rather more specifically Mako, was one I just wasn't sure about. Maybe I was wrong, and it would work out in the end, but right now, I had my concerns.

Over the years, I've been both pleased by surprise team-ups, but also have been burned by them. The last thing I wanted to happen was for Mako to be Fenrir's Trojan horse. I was around for that, and let me say this, it fucking sucked. A great strategy for the winning side, but on the others not so much. It felt like cheating to me, but Athena loved it. To her it was a great way to show intelligence and strategy. Fuck that shit.

Back at the hideout, we all sat at a table Athena insisted must be placed. It was what she called the war table. My dear sister was one for the dramatics at times and making things bigger than they needed to be. This was not one of those times. We were at war, and having a table that was here to make sure we stayed on topic was a great idea. Not that I was going to say that to her. Her head was already big enough.

Half an hour later, McGarrett arrived. He was in his police uniform with the shiny Captain's badge on it. He was one of the most influential police officers in the city these days. Building his name up more and more.

He sat down at the table with us. "I see the meeting didn't end in an ambush."

“Nope,” Felicity said. “Mako was rather civil and friendly.”

McGarrett nodded. “That is the rumor of the man. He might be rich and powerful, but he has a name for helping the little guy out.”

“That’s all I found on him too,” Lola admitted. “I just have trouble believing it. Everyone has deep dark secrets. Just a matter of time before I find them on the web.”

Fleur chuckled. “I’ve made you jaded.”

Lola blew her a kiss. “I’m not jaded, just learned that the more money a person has, the more likely the secret they keep is nasty.”

I really hoped that wasn’t true. If Mako double-crossed us, I would be furious, and go on another trademark Ares rampage. Like one this time hasn’t seen. Not that it would really help my cause, but I just wasn’t going to tolerate a betrayal.

“So you working with him?” McGarrett asked.

Fleur and the others laid out what happened and the outcome. It didn’t take more than a minute.

“I see,” McGarrett said. “What do you need from me?”

“Just more data on my father,” Fleur said. “He has been doing his best to make sure Lola can’t find a thing.”

It was true, the man made it nearly impossible to track him. Walker Consolidated was already impossible to hack. Lola was at her wit's end, but I had faith in her. The Guardian would find a way to learn more about Fenrir and his plans.

Though having McGarrett and the newly reinstated Paragon unit look into it was good.

All this was a lot for us, and we didn’t have an actual plan. I had little doubt that Athena was cringing on the inside, and the same went for Lola and Fleur. They were all planners, and we didn’t have a clue.

What we really needed to know was what Fenrir was up to, and how he planned to achieve it.

TRAINING

The next morning I woke up bright and early since I wanted to get some training in. That was part of who I was. Just because I was a God, didn't mean I didn't have to work at being a great fighter, and master of the sword.

It was true that I might not have to work out to stay in great shape, but I did. In all my years, I always have. There were plenty of Gods that didn't lift a finger for centuries and their bodies were precisely the same. That was something I wasn't going to risk and found my way at the gym.

Being this was Fleur Walker's place, the gym was state of the art, with all the bells and whistles. If I didn't keep up with the modern technology on Mount Olympus I would have been completely lost.

Though I basically ignored all the state-of-the-art stuff and stuck to the tried and true. Doing an excellent chest workout with the bench and the bar and dumbbells. Working the chest and then my triceps, I built up a good sweat.

Pleased with the routine, I made my way to the treadmill and ran. I might not look it with my size, but I actually loved running. The machine wouldn't be able to keep up with the pace that I could do, but going slow and steady at the top speed of the equipment was relaxing, and let me clear my head.

Since I had been here on Earth, a lot had happened. Most of it was my fault, and I was going to fix it. Letting Eris break free of Olympus had been a colossal failure on my part. Allowing her to set

up Reign and Fenrir was too. Not that that was entirely on me since Hera was pulling the strings of many of the people involved, even mine. I hated that and was going to fix it. Dad needed to see her for what she was and put Hera in her place. That was a tall task, and one for later.

After the run, I moved on to the hand-to-hand combat training. Just as I was about to begin, Fleur walked in. "You want to spar?" she asked

I chuckled. There was a good chance she had been watching me for a while and waited for this precise moment. This was something we both loved to do. Being fighters, sparring with one that pushed you to your limits made us better.

"You know I do." I smiled at her.

This was one of my favorite things to do. Outside of actually making love to her, holding her. Holding Lola. Felicity.

The sparring was a high with Fleur, and I was going to enjoy it. Fleur loved it too, and she told me more than once after. Each session of sparring almost without a doubt led to another type of cardio, and one that no one would pass on.

We circled around each other, looking for the best way to beat the other. I had first-hand experience in this matter, and not in the way I liked. The fight with Belladonna had been just that, and one I had hated.

Fleur made the first move with a feint to the right, and strike on the left. If I didn't have a God's speed, she would have landed the blow, but I was able to move to the side at the last moment and avoid it.

"I hate your speed," Fleur said. "Just not fair."

I shrugged. "Can't help what I've been given."

Her nostrils flared in a humph. "Still not fair," she protested.

She let it go and focused on her movements. It was hard not to get lost in her beauty as we took each other in for the next strike. Her red hair and smooth skin. Fleur had some of the deepest, most caring eyes I have ever seen; the deep green penetrated your soul if a person let them. I did.

She was in me, part of me with those eyes. I loved that. Her toned shoulders were on display, and I knew under the rest of her

outfit was a rock-hard body. One that would make any man envious and want to be with her. I was fucking lucky.

It was my turn to attack and I attempted a leg sweep, and she avoided it. Even with my faster than usual speed, she was able to. Her Paragon abilities really were in a league of their own. She might not have super speed, strength, or durability, but her fighting level was in a true league of its own.

The sparring lasted for thirty minutes. Each of us gaining an advantage for only a moment before the other recovered.

At the end, we both were panting and exhausted.

CARDIO, THE FUN KIND

Fleur was on top of me after the last attempt at taking me out. Her heart was pounding from the sparring session, and so was mine. Her large breasts pressed against me, and this time I couldn't help but react. My cock grew as I thought about her, and felt her against me.

"Someone is happy," she said.

"I sure am," I said. "You are absolutely stunning."

"You aren't half bad," she teased.

Her lips were close to mine, I couldn't contain myself. Kissing her, letting her body meld into mine. My hands roamed her glistening body and rested on her ass. That perfect-ten butt my hands didn't want to leave. The kiss was hot, intense. Fleur began to move on me, in a motion that increased the erection I had. My cock was more than ready for her, but that didn't stop her from teasing me as we kissed.

Her body moved in the most sensual way. Getting me going. More and more. Fleur knew what she was doing; I was barely able to control myself. I wanted to be in her. To have her. Even though I knew I would, the waiting was exhilarating.

I rolled the two of us over and took the lead on top. It was my turn to tease her. I let my johnson rub against her. Pressing fully against her dripping wet pussy. Dry humping her in the middle of the sparring area.

Both of us were still fully clothed and rubbing against each other. The passion we had was more than anything in the world. We wanted each other in every way.

Fleur reached up and started to take my shirt off. I stopped moving and helped her out, taking off my clothes, and then hers. Exposing her large, perky breasts with her pink nipples. Unable to stop myself, I began to play with them. Every time I saw them I had just had to touch them, feel them in my hands. Soft, luscious.

As I did that, her hand went down to my cock and stroked it. Then she fondled my balls and teased the edge of my ass.

It was time to retake control, no ass play for me today. I plunged my throbbing cock into her pussy and made love to her. Going slow at first, taking my time to enjoy her wetness. To feel every inch of her and fill her.

Picking up speed, I heard her moan. Loader and loader until she shouted my name out in pure bliss. In that carnal moment of love and lust. Of becoming one being instead of two.

AFTER THE LOVEMAKING SESSION, we both lay on the floor, covered in each other's fluids and happy. Making love to your soulmate was like nothing else in the world. I was blessed to have more than one. None of them better than the others.

"You're so damn irresistible," I said.

Fleur grinned. "Thank you."

Lying there in each other's arms, nothing else mattered. Not all the dangers in the world. Not the impending doom. Just the two of us. I wanted to stay here forever. To forget about all the troubles we were dealing with, but that just wasn't possible.

A buzz sounded. "If you two are done waking up the whole building, we could use you in the meeting area."

Fleur laughed. "I guess I was a little loud."

"Not loud enough," I teased. I loved hearing her scream out in bliss. Hearing all of my loves climax, and be happy. That was something I would never tire of.

“Guess we should dress and go see what they want,” Fleur said.

I groaned. “Do we have to? Another round.”

Fleur laughed and playfully punched my shoulder. “You’ll break me,” she said. “Though I wouldn’t mind going again. We have stuff to do.”

I closed my eyes and readied myself to go about the day. Not that I really wanted to.

“Fine.”

We untangled and dressed. I should probably shower and change into something other than my workout clothes, but I didn’t care. Everyone already knew what we had been doing. No reason to keep them waiting for us.

Hopefully, whatever Lola wanted was good. We needed more to go our way with Fenrir and Hera. Progress had been made, but it just wasn’t enough.

FENRIR SPEAKS

In the central area, everyone else was already there and huddled around a TV. That was never a good sign. As we sat, Lola and Felicity looked at us. “You have fun?” Felicity asked.

Fleur smiled and nodded. Felicity winked at us, and her hand went to the top of her pants. I knew she was saying that she did too. Felicity enjoyed both being part of the action, and just listening and playing with herself.

As much as I wanted to think about Felicity playing with her fantastic pussy, I focused on the TV instead. On it was Fenrir, and he was having another one of his steady stream of press conferences.

“He sure is doing this a lot,” Fleur said. “Growing up he used to talk about what a waste of time they were. What is he doing?”

That was an excellent question, and none of us had the answer. Not yet at least. Fenrir stood there with his smug smile and stiff posture. Taking him in, at times, one could see the family resemblance between Fleur and the man. It was easier to discern between Fleur and her brother Finn, who was locked up after we exposed him while he’d been working with my own sister, Eris.

On the TV, Fenrir walked to the microphone; he was at the place that Fleur and I went to when he first announced the anti-Paragon solution. His cure, or weapon against his Paragons and his own kids.

I hadn’t asked Fleur about it, but I wondered if he was a Paragon himself. Maybe it was her mother, who Fleur never talked about. I

was no geneticist, but with both Finn and Fleur being Paragons, one of the parents had to be one. At least, I thought so.

Fenrir cleared his thought. “Many have been wondering why I’m out to remove Paragons. Painting myself in a bad light. Hurting my own family as my kids are or were Paragons. Over the last few years, I’ve done studies, both independently and with the government. That isn’t all I’ve done. I can prove that Paragons cause crime. That superheroes make supervillains possible. That the plague that is the Paragons, kills.”

Fleur hung her head. “What’s wrong?” Felicity asked.

“He’s about to use our mother as a reason. To justify all this, and that makes me sad.”

Sure enough, Fenrir went on the offensive again. “My wife was killed by a Paragon, killed in the midst of a battle. A so-called hero killed her, and all in the name of protecting the city.”

I hadn’t heard of this, and now I felt like a jerk for never asking about it. “What happened?” Athena asked. My dear sister was never one to worry about if she had the right to ask something or not.

Fleur explained that while her mother had been out, shopping for Christmas gifts for Finn and her, a Paragon robbed a bank, and when one of the heroes at the time arrived to stop the robbery, her mother got caught in the crossfire and was killed. The police investigation confirmed it was the hero, but said it was an accident, and that there was nothing they could do.

It was horrible to hear, and I felt for her. Losing a loved one is hard. Losing a parent at an early age was never easy. No matter how many times I’ve seen people deal with it. None come out the same.

Reaching down, I gripped her hand, squeezing it tight, hoping she would be okay. That we could make her better. Her father using her mother’s death this way was wrong, and it was something I wouldn’t let stand.

“We’ll get him,” Felicity said.

“We will,” Lola added.

On the screen, Fenrir continued to talk. We had missed some of it but would be able to go back and re-watch. Lola always recorded

anything that might be remotely useful and had a bot that she created that would watch the recordings to alert her to the news.

Lola created some of the greatest programs I had ever seen. It was a wonder that she wasn't one of the wealthiest people in the world, like the men we were dealing with. Lola was just too kind to do what they did. Men like Fenrir had a mean streak and the tenacity to step on anyone to make a buck.

"With the help of President Stratton," Fenrir said. "We will be making it law for all police officers and military to carry our anti-Paragon weapons. Congress has already taken the law and is reviewing it. I am confident that it will pass."

That was sickening to hear. "He can't buy a bill, can he?" I asked.

"No," Lola said. "Sure, the President can try to get it passed, but it won't. This is just a show, but for what end, I don't know."

I had my doubts and worried that he was going to get his wish. At a minimum, the military was going to be armed with these weapons and that was a scary thought. How my dear mother was pulling this man's strings, I didn't know, but she was.

"Athena, have you heard from Poseidon recently?"

"No," Athena said. "I've been cut off, and he hasn't reached out. I'm worried that Hera found out. That he is locked up, and Zeus is just letting Hera run roughshod over our home."

"I love how you can both say that with such serious faces," Lola said.

Athena gave her a confused look. "I'm the Goddess of War, and he is a God. Why wouldn't we say that with straight faces?"

Lola giggled. "I just can't get used to it. For years and years, the Gods were myths. For them to be actually real, is just hard to take with a straight face."

Felicity laughed. "I can't argue with that. But I find it hot."

Athena smirked. "You find everything hot."

The squirrelkin shrugged. "So what if I do."

I wasn't about to add to the conversation, but Felicity finding it hot, was a turn-on for me. Not gonna lie about that. Though everything about her, Lola, and Fleur was a turn-on for me. They were gonna be the death of me, and my biggest weakness right now.

I loved them and had to make sure they weren't hurt. Hera could use that against me.

ZEKE

I stood up from the table and the TV. This was still pointless and not useful. Sure, we had the connection with Mako and Epps, but that was something we didn't know how to take advantage of.

"Anyone talk to Mako about this?" I asked.

"I was going to reach out," Athena said.

"Good." I didn't want to deal with the man, but I knew it needed to be done. "You do that; I think I want to talk to one of Fleur's contacts. See if he has heard anything in the Paragon community about Fenrir."

Fleur narrowed her eyes. "Who?"

"Zeke."

She smiled. "That man has a man-crush on you."

That was something I didn't want to hear. Man-crushes were something I would never truly comprehend. Sure, I got two dudes hanging out, drinking beers, and watching sports. Even used to understand talking about their conquests with women. That was something I used to do. Talk about all the times I fucked a girl and how tight she was. Now that was something I would never talk about. My time with my harem, strange to think of it that way, but that was sacred and never to be shared.

"Joy."

The girls laughed. Even Athena, who rarely did, but she did enjoy seeing me uncomfortable.

"I'll go with you to keep you safe," Lola said.

“Me too,” Felicity added. “Zeke is a minor legend in the Paragon underground.”

For some reason that didn't surprise me.

“I'll go with Athena,” Fleur said. “Have fun with Zeke. You want me to give him a heads up you're on your way?”

“No,” I said. Maybe a little too quickly as that resulted in more laughter from everyone.

I could tell that today was going to be a long day. One that I wasn't sure I was going to make it out of.

Going back to my room, I dressed in a pair of jeans and a shirt that had a wizard on it. I had to admit, I was a fan of the books. Wizards are cool, and kick some serious ass. Magic, in general, was fucking sweet to see. Too bad this wizard wasn't real; he would have been a great ally.

Felicity, Lola, and I took Fleur's convertible, while Fleur and Athena used Athena's car to travel to a safe location. We avoided using the hideout. Even though Lola was the best, even she wasn't perfect, and another might get through. A man like Mako with the backing of Epps Technologies was a high-risk contact.

I was much more comfortable in the convertible with the top down. The days might not be the warmest anymore as summer was turning into fall. Being from Greece in ancient times, I was much more of a summer man. I loved the heat, shouldn't be much of a surprise. The armor I had was minimal at best. While I might not get cold since I was a God, that didn't mean I liked the snow. The sun felt great as it covered a man in its rays.

Driving across town to Zeke's place was relaxing when I had two of the hottest women in the world with me. That helped a lot, so much so that every time we stopped, the people on the street stared into the car. Gaping at them.

PARKING AT SUCKER Punch Pawn Shop, I exited the vehicle. The place appeared to be busy at the moment. I hoped we would be able to sneak in a conversation with Zeke. He owned the shop and was a

Paragon. The man had the ability to tell if anyone was lying to him. It had limits in that he had to be looking them in the eyes. Yet, I wouldn't have minded having that ability.

Felicity smiled. "Feels like forever ago that we first visited this place."

She wasn't wrong, while it wasn't that long ago, it was another lifetime ago.

"Zeke is a great guy," Lola said. She had on her normal sexy teacher look. One that I never tired of seeing. Lola could make anything look sensual and mouth-watering.

Felicity had her spunky style going today. Gothic, punk outfit. She really had a wide range of clothes, and her tail as always was out and pointing straight up when she was excited.

People tended to notice me as it was, but with these two with me, we were sure to draw attention.

Either way, I was sure that Zeke would be able to help. The man had his ear to the street and contact with all sorts of people. Being a pawnshop owner meant he saw a wide range of clients.

Entering Sucker Punch Pawnshop, we were greeted by a bustle of people. The last time I had been here, it was empty, and now it had people all over the place. Many were just walking up and down the aisles.

My experience in places like this was extremely limited, but it had what I would expect. A little bit of everything. On one side of the shop was an array of musical interments and devices. Down the wall from that was more technology that didn't require locking up. At the rear, where we talked to Zeke last time, was a row counter cabinet with glass tops and locks. That held all the higher-end electronics and jewelry.

Leaning over the counter, Zeke was interacting with a client. Looking over some sort of item that the customer was blocking. Zeke was deep in conversation.

"Looks like he's driving a hard bargain," Felicity said.

"Zeke is ruthless," Lola said. "And with his ability he can spot anyone trying to rip him off."

That was something I hadn't thought about before, but it made sense. He would never buy a fake item, or at least an item that the

person knew was a fake. That had to help him keep a profit.

The three of us made our way to the rear of the shop to talk to him. As we strode through the place many eyes fell on us. We, or rather Lola and Felicity, received a few catcalls. Why men did that was something I didn't understand. Never in my life had I seen that actually work out for the guy. A waste of breath and time.

Both Lola and Felicity pretended not to hear, and we continued to Zeke. When the dark-skinned man noticed us, he waved and made a motion for us to wait off to the side as he continued to talk with the woman he was doing business with.

Zeke was average height and weight, with a thick beard and a shaved bald head. A look I would never try, but he managed to pull it off.

A few minutes later, he took the piece of jewelry to the back and returned with an envelope that held money in it, and a receipt for the customer. She didn't appear to be too happy, but took the payment and receipt and left the store.

Zeke walked over to us.

"She didn't look pleased," Felicity said.

The man shrugged. "Most never leave here happy when selling."

That had to take a toll on Zeke, but he didn't show it.

"Tough business," I said. There really wasn't one much like it in Mount Olympus, but it reminded me of the barter system way back in ancient times, and there was a reason that was gone. It sucked, and people were rarely happy with what they got in return for their goods.

"Pays the bills," Zeke said. "What brings you here, and where is White Angel?"

I smiled. "She is working with my sister today." I wasn't sure if he had heard about Athena or not, but was going to go out on a limb and assume he had.

"I see." Zeke knew Felicity from the time before, and the way Lola spoke, she had met him before as well.

"Guardian, Felicity," Zeke said with a grin. "I hope you two lovely ladies are handling these troubling times well."

I near choked when he said that. Lola grinned but held the rest of her face in check. "We are," she said. "Ares is keeping us safe."

"I'm sure he is," Zeke said. "A God can do that."

He knew I wasn't lying when I said I was a God. He might actually believe me, or just think I was batshit crazy. Either way, he knew that I believed.

"They sure can," Felicity said.

"Anyway," I interrupted. "We came to see if you heard anything through your channels on Fenrir, or anyone working with him."

Zeke nodded. "Lots going on, but here isn't the best place to talk. Meet me at my apartment tonight, eight."

"See you then," I said.

EPPS TECHNOLOGIES

I had hoped to talk to Zeke now, but later tonight would work. That meant we had several hours to kill as it wasn't even noon yet.

"What's the plan, oh fearless leader?" Felicity asked in a playful tone.

"You tell me." There was no plan as our first one already hadn't worked.

Lola pulled out her smartphone and gave Fleur a ring. They should have already had a meeting with Mako and seen what was going on.

The talk was a short one, but with the speed that Lola could talk, a lot was said.

"Mako was hoping that we could stop by the firm," Lola said.

"Sounds good to me," I said.

Felicity smirked. "Which one?"

"The one in Brooklyn."

The squirrelkin nearly jumped off the ground. "Yes."

Her excitement confused me. I knew that she was in favor of this arrangement, but that seemed a bit much.

"That is the place that Epps designs their latest phones," Lola said. She held up her phone. It wasn't stock by any stretch. "Like this one."

"Oh." I knew that many people were obsessed with their phones and would spend hours a day on them, just playing games that they liked. A phone was a phone to me.

“You can’t deny they are the best of the best,” Felicity said.

“If you say so.” I just used whatever Lola gave me at this point, and didn’t even pay attention to it.

“Oh my God,” Felicity said. “Trust me, they are so cool. You’ll see. Let’s go, chop-chop.”

We got in the car, and Lola gave me the address and put it into the car’s navigation system. The things humans created these days were truly beyond comprehension at times.

Back when I was born, and spent most of my time here on Earth, we used things in space to tell us where to go, but they weren’t man-made. The stars and the sun were all a person used to need. Not that I’m complaining about turn-by-turn directions. They make it really easy to not get lost, though when I was back on Mount Olympus more than once I saw them lead a person to the wrong place. Technology isn’t perfect by any stretch.

With New York City traffic, we arrived after lunchtime and parked in the tiny lot. Standing next to her car was Athena.

“About time you arrived.”

“Traffic in this place is murder,” I said. “They need to take cars away from some of the people.”

Athena laughed. I swear every time I left the hideout or my apartment for the short period I’d had it, I saw a person do something utterly insane driving.

“Where is Fleur?” Lola asked.

“Inside,” Athena said. “Mako wanted her to see the Epps seven or whatever it was.”

Felicity squealed. “That’s the latest phone, not even out yet.”

She was nearly jumping out of her clothes and eyeing the door. To rush over and see the thing.

“I see she’s a fan,” Athena said.

“Understatement.”

Felicity was the first one at the door and in the building. Like most places, the building was covered in sterile white paint. Plain, boring floors to give the place a neutral feel. In the hallways there were random paintings to give some life to the place, but not enough. An employee took us through a few corridors and dropped us off in a room.

This room was different than most of the building. It was painted a vibrant blue, and had several tables in in. At the far end, was one with phones on it, all placed evenly across it.

Mako and Fleur were looking at the phones. Felicity rushed over. And began to geek out with Mako and Fleur.

"I'm surprised you are over there," Athena said to Lola.

"I love tech, clearly, but I like making it more."

That was the Lola I loved. She wanted to make all her own stuff.

"You might learn from that thing," Athena said.

"I know," Lola answered. "But right now, we need to focus, and I don't want to get lost in the tech."

"Lola, that tech, and you, might be the difference between winning and losing," I said. "Go get lost in it. If it becomes a problem, I'll pull you out."

Lola eyed me. "You sure?"

"Yes. Go learn, invent. Be the savior, Guardian."

Lola grinned from ear to ear and joined them.

After a while, they all stopped examining the phones and made their way back to Athena and me. I could tell on all their faces that they were enjoying themselves, and that made me happy. Seeing the women I loved in one of their happy places was a great thing. One could never get enough of seeing the people they love happy and content with their life.

"You have fun?" Athena asked.

Felicity was still grinning from ear to ear, and her tail continued to twitch back and forth. She was super hyper as if she'd drunk ten cups of coffee. "Yes," the squirrelkin said.

It was adorable seeing her like this, and I wanted to lean in and give her a kiss. The others had a glow on them too.

"Have you learned anything that might help us with Fenrir?" Athena was on track and not about to be distracted from the task at hand. It was good that we had her with us. Since I was admittedly willing to let them bask in the glow of this high.

"Not yet," Lola said. "But Mako here mentioned something that Epps might have. I want to give them a look."

"Good," Athena replied.

The next several hours was Mako talking about and showing us all the tech. I really didn't need to be here since I was more or less a Luddite compared to the people here. Not that I actually was. I kept up with the times the best I could and blended in well. But this was new age shit, and I just hadn't kept up that well.

By the time we left, everyone seemed to have high hopes of working with Epps and what we might achieve.

A TIDY APARTMENT

That evening Fleur, Lola, and I made our way to Zeke's apartment. The two had been there before and knew the way. Zeke lived close to his pawnshop, but in a section that was a bit nicer.

How the neighborhoods could shift from one street to another was an amazing thing to me. This was something that was there throughout history. One road could be nasty and vile, with literally shit on the ground. The next one over in pristine shape, shined so well that a person could see their reflection. It was the same here in New York.

The pawnshop was in an area that I wouldn't call great, but the apartment was in an upscale neighborhood. Not like the place that the Walkers lived in, but still lovely. Like in fantasy when they talk about a wealthy merchant versus nobility, Zeke was the merchant and the Walkers the nobility.

Fleur parked, and we made our way to the door. Before we could even knock, Zeke opened it. He had a big grin on his face. "White Angel, so good to see you."

"Nice to see you too," she said. "Hope business is doing well."

Zeke smirked. "Never better."

That was the truth, if this morning was an example of what he has been doing. I really hadn't expected to ever see a pawnshop so full. Maybe that terrible reality show was actually showing some truth. I knew full well that the TV shows, even the reality ones

weren't really an accurate portrayal of real life. They claimed to be not scripted, but many were.

"That's good," Fleur said. "Always nice to see a business thrive."

"So, Ares said he wanted some help on the current situation."

I nodded. "Look, Fenrir is up to something. More than he is letting one."

"When isn't that man," Zeke said. "I've never met him, but I hear he is ruthless. Willing to kill even his own children. I mean what he did to his son. Disgusting."

That was an understatement. I'm glad I didn't mention Fenrir was Fleur's dad, as it appeared that Zeke might not know, or was just not willing to say it in the open. Either way, I wasn't going to bring it up.

"He's a pig," Lola said. "We need to stop him. He's not the only threat to the city, but to Paragons."

That got Zeke's attention. "I had a feeling, but no confirmation. Not good, man. Not good at all. I don't need some crazy people trying to take me out."

None of us did. My mother was crazy that was sure, and so were all the monsters at her disposal if she were to use them.

Once Here made her move and sent mythological creatures on us, we would be in for a rude awakening.

"So mister God," Zeke said. "What do you think Fenrir is doing?"

I shrugged. "That's why we're here. I have no fucking idea what he is doing."

"Other than trying to kill all Paragons," Fleur said. "And being a douche to the nth degree."

Zeke laughed. "Well I heard on the grapevine that he and the president are going to enforce concentration camps. Congress is on board, what with the Reign disaster."

That was terrible news, and I didn't like it one bit. The last thing the world needed was for the country to try to force all Paragons into camps and lock them up for just living.

"I'm going to kill him," Fleur said. Her nostrils flared, and she clenched her fists. She was angry, and it showed. Never had I seen her so disgusted with her father. "That is just wrong. How can the President and Congress be okay with this?"

Zeke shrugged. "Sounds like with Elric here, and some guy down in San Antonio, and one over in San Francisco causing a problem, they aren't happy. Not to mention, they don't like the idea of Ryder being one and having the power he does."

That was sickening.

"We can't stop him," Lola said.

"Tell me if there is anything I can do," Zeke said. "I just found this out after you guys left. I put out a few feelers and got that."

"Okay," Fleur said. "We'll let you know."

With that, we left and went back to tell the others.

OH SHIT

We sat around the table in and told the others. Even McGarrett was there, and he didn't look happy. "They have access to all the databases," McGarrett said. "The one here has all of you."

That made my stomach sick, and the look on the other faces told me they felt the same. This was such bad news.

Lola had her laptop out, and suddenly she went ghost white. I've never seen her with the expression she had on her face.

"What?" Felicity asked. She had been quiet for the most part. I had to worry about her. Being a squirrelkin meant she was very noticeable as a Paragon.

"It's happening," Lola said.

She turned on the TV closest to us, and on it was one of the political stations that showed Congress. Sure as day, they were enacting a law that made it illegal to be a Paragon. Grinding my teeth, I couldn't believe what was going on, feeling anger like never before.

"This is going to force a lot of people to go on the run," Athena said.

Just as she was saying that a call came in from a secure line.

"Ryder," Lola said.

It was a video call, and Lola put it on the screen. The man wasn't alone. With him were three women, and I had no shame in admitting, they were attractive, though not as dazzling as Fleur, Lola, and Felicity.

“You okay?” Fleur asked.

“Went underground after I received Lola’s message,” Ryder said. “So did Thorn, and a lot of the others I was able to contact.”

Lola had reached out to as many of the Paragons as she could to let them know this was about to happen. The problem was we didn’t have a list, not like the government did. Allowing them to have our info might not have been the brightest idea.

“How secure is your place?” Ryder asked.

“The most,” Lola said. “Fleur and I made sure of it.”

I had little doubt that we would be safe here. The problem was leaving, and now if we departed and were spotted, we would be hard-pressed to be able to get back and keep it that way. All of us had a lot of training in avoiding being followed, but this was going to be vastly different. The federal government just declared it illegal for all Paragons to live freely. To be who they were.

All this was the hardest on Felicity. Her pain was evident on her face, and I wanted to help her. To hold her and make her feel safe and loved. None of us should have to go through this.

The Bionic Man nodded. “Good,” he said. “My team will be ready to fight when you need us, but we won’t be taking any risks here.”

That was both smart, but bad for the city of Detroit. He was all that was keeping many of the citizens safe from criminals. The same could be said for here.

With me being forced to go underground, I wondered what the Third Street Dragons would be up to. If they would be our allies or turn us in. I had to look into that. I hadn’t been in contact with them since we’d defeated Elric and Reign. The leader had actually turned out to be a decent man.

“Okay,” Fleur said. “You heard from Major Thorn in San Antonio. He has a safe house?”

Ryder nodded. “It’s not as secure as either of ours, but he does.”

Thorn wasn’t a regular Paragon, he was once a soldier that had been turned into a super-soldier, and served in the military until very recently. I had to wonder how that was going to work for him. He would be an excellent ally for us once we started to fight.

“Good, and John in San Fran is safe,” Lola said.

I wasn't familiar with that Paragon, but it sounded like he went to the academy with Ryder and Fleur. If I was right in my guess, that meant he was another top-notch hero and would be useful in the future, either against Fenrir or Hera.

The talk with Ryder didn't last too long. No matter how secure one thought the tech they had was, it could be broke. Lola and Ryder might be the best of the best. But if a thousand people just beneath their talent level went to work, they just might break through. That was a risk none of us wanted to take.

Ryder cut the call, and we all sat there in stunned silence. Unable to truly comprehend how the world was changing around us.

It was like time was going backward, and we were living in a comic book. Or worse, a lousy movie. In my life I had lived through times like this and thought that was never going to happen again. Sure, even today across the world a lot of bad people lived and did things that made my stomach turn.

Yet, I didn't think the greatest nation right now would stoop to such a level. The president let a vile man and God twist him. Make him do something that not many would even think was okay.

The last time something like this occurred on this type of scale, it had left a black scar on the world. One that in some ways, was still healing. I hated that I might be part of this one.

"We have to stop this," I said.

Everyone stared at me. Like I had stated the obvious, which I had. But that didn't change the fact we had to, and the sooner, the better. This couldn't be allowed.

"How do we do that?" Felicity said. "We lost. Fenrir won."

Her voice had a defeated tone, and she slouched in her chair. "We can," I said. "I have faith in us. We are the best of the best."

"Clearly, that isn't enough," the squirrelkin said. "We lost. Fenrir won. I'm going to be turned into a fur coat for some rich lady to wear around in victory."

Just the thought of that made my skin crawl. I couldn't control my anger. "I will not let that happen. I'll kill every single person who tries," I growled. It had been years and years since I had this anger or rage in me. "No one will hurt you. I promise that."

Felicity looked at me. The others did too.

“Ares is right,” Fleur said. “Nothing will happen to you. To any of us—we can figure this out.”

Felicity didn’t look convinced. “I can’t leave here. I can’t live as a person right now. I’m a squirrel in a cage. That’s not natural.”

She was right about that, locking her up wasn’t natural or fair.

“Just for now,” I said.

It was time to find a solution and save the Paragons again.

CONSOLING

Felicity left the table and went back into the private quarters of the building. Everyone else remained seated, but I couldn't let her go back and sulk. She needed to know that she was loved and cared for. That she wasn't alone in this.

"I'll make sure she's okay," I said.

"Please make sure she knows we love her," Fleur said.

"Yes," Lola added. "We'll see if we can figure out our next move."

"Good," I said.

I stood, but before I made it to the door, my dear half-sister was next to me. "Ares," she said.

"Yes?"

"This feels like Hera's doing."

"I know," I said. "Nothing we can do about it."

Athena shrugged. "We could try to reach out to some of the others that are here."

I narrowed my eyes. "Who else is here? All the Gods are in Mount Olympus or in the Underworld."

"I'm not talking about Gods," Athena said.

I cringed at what I thought she was implying. "You don't mean seeking out the Titans."

"Lord no," Athena said. "But Poseidon's Cyclopes are here, and the Giants and plenty of others to aid us. Like the Centaurs."

"Most of them and I aren't on good speaking turns," I said. I've killed a lot in my life, and many of them were related to or part of

those groups. So had Athena for that matter, but she was generally more liked.

“I know,” Athena said. “But what if I, and say a certain Paragon that can’t be seen in the city, travel to some remote places to seek their aid?”

She was trying to help Felicity and us at the same time. I liked the idea of making Felicity feel like she was being useful, but hated the idea of not seeing her for an extended period of time.

“I’ll see,” I said.

“Good,” Athena said.

She went back to the table, and I made my way to Felicity’s room. I gave it a gentle knock. “Felicity,” I said.

“I don’t want to talk.”

“Fine,” I said. “But I’m not leaving. I’ll be here when you are.”

I sat on the floor next to the door and waited. Keeping a vigil for a woman I loved and cared deeply for.

How long I sat, I don’t remember, but it was hours. None of the others came, as they knew this wasn’t going to be easy. The squirrelkin was scared and hurt. Not to mention stubborn at times.

Eventually, the door opened. “You big lug,” she said.

I stood and pulled her close to me. Hugging her. Her sweet scent filled my nostrils, and her soft touch against me was relaxing. “I love you,” I said.

She looked up into my eyes with her deep penetrating gaze. One that could melt any heart. No way anyone would ever hurt her. Make her a fur coat. She was too kind and gentle for that.

“I love you too,” she said.

We went into her room and sat on the edge of her bed. It was small and barely big enough for me. With her being so petite, and very much the kin that she was.

“You’ll be okay,” I said. “You know we will protect you, even though you don’t need it. You’re the fiercest fighter I know.”

She smiled. “I don’t need protection, but thank you. I just can’t be stuck here and not able to leave.”

“I know, that isn’t right. But the city is too dangerous. Anywhere that normal humans are is too dangerous.”

“So that means I’m stuck here,” she said.

“Not necessarily,” I said. This was going to suck, but it would make her happy. Keep her safe, and that was the important thing.

I laid out what Athena had suggested.

“Are you saying I will get to meet some crazy Greek myths?”

Nodding, I couldn’t help but smile. Indeed she would meet some myths, ones that she might not be happy about. “Safe” around them was a relative term. A centaur was just as likely to kill a person as Fenrir was a Paragon. Though they might relate to her being part human and horse, not that they were the same. Still, some kind of bond might be possible.

“It will be dangerous,” I said. “But you won’t be here, and in very little danger from Fenrir and the government.”

I knew that the creatures that Athena would seek out were the ones that hated Gods or only liked certain Gods, and did their best to avoid us. That meant they most likely wouldn’t work for Hera.

Though some of the ones that I knew would work for Hera hated Gods too. But they were true monsters, and the people that Felicity could be seeking out were not monsters, just misunderstood.

GETTING READY FOR SOME ACTION

Felicity settled down, happy that she might still yet play a large part in beating Fenrir, or even more important, my mother. That was the thing that had really been bringing her down. She didn't want to be stuck on the sidelines.

The fiery squirrelkin was used to being part of the action. While she might not have been one of the most well-known heroes in the city or the country, she was always out helping those. Doing her part to be there for the weak. For those that weren't able to help themselves.

She was one of the kindest, most caring people I had met. She really wanted to help the people around her. To be part of their lives. It was one of her greatest qualities, and I loved it.

Holding her hand, we walked back to the front. I had little doubt that the others would still be there. Plotting out our next move. Seeing if there was any way to stop this terrible law from going into effect.

I wasn't a Paragon, but that didn't stop me from caring. Even back in ancient Greece, I would have tried to prevent something like this. Fuck, I attempted to stop this from happening the last time it occurred.

The last time I was on Earth before this was back in World War II. I came here and joined the British Army. And was one of the men that stormed Normandy. Being part of D-Day was one of my

highlights. Helping the allied forces make their move against a man that deserved to rot in hell.

It still bugged me that he took the coward's way out. Killing himself and not standing up for what he had done. That pissed me off, but there was nothing I could do about it. I'm sure that Hades was making sure that man was paying for his crimes now.

Shaking my head and focusing on the here and the now, Felicity and I exited the back area, and sure enough, they were all still here. Lola was typing away at her command hub. McGarrett was on the phone, talking nearly as fast as Lola did. Fleur was on a conference call, and Athena was in the corner, using one of the magical God's ways to talk to what many would call a mythological creature.

It was a sight to see, and one that made me happy. "See," I said. "All working to keep us all safe. Especially you."

For a brief moment, Felicity's eyes watered up. She nearly cried, but she was too strong for us to all see that. She did her best not to.

"I know," she said. "Just hate feeling useless."

"Never, ever will you be that. Trust me on that," I said.

Again, she had a broad smile on her face. Her little squirrel ears twitched, and her nose too. She really had the most adorable face, and I just wanted to stare at her all day. Take her in. Let her know she was loved, but we had to save the world. Again.

"Go talk to Athena," I said. "She'll be able to set up all that you two will be doing."

I walked over to Lola, as the other two were deep in conversations. As I approached I mentioned, "It looks like Felicity will be joining Athena."

"Yes."

Lola shrugged. "Not happy about that."

"Me too, but she is happy and wants to feel useful."

Lola nodded. "I understand, but she can be helpful here too."

I wasn't as sure, but this wasn't something to get into a debate about. "What are you doing?" I asked.

"Seeing if we can find a loophole in the law or a way to sway the government to not do this."

That was a long shot, but I hoped she found something, anything to get us out of this mess. I had to hand it to my mother, she found a

way to make this even harder for us here. Putting all the Paragons into camps was a great way to make it easier for her to slaughter them.

Get them there, and then send out some of the vilest monsters at her disposal. She could unleash the Gorgons, the Minotaur, or chimera. An incredible thought occurred to me—if she had the thought of freeing and releasing Typhon on the Earth.

I hoped she wouldn't be that crazy and dangerous, as he would destroy it all and make it uninhabitable for even the Gods. Though that might be her last-ditch move, and I feared that. I wasn't even sure if I was capable, with the aid of only Athena, of defeating him.

I shook my head and focused on now. "We need to get these ruled unconstitutional," I said.

Lola shrugged. "One would think that was already in place, but I can't find it. Not sure if we can."

That was just plain stupid that this was going to be allowed. For all the talk of equal rights, and the like.

"We'll figure it out," I said.

"Hopefully."

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

That night was the last one I would be spending with Felicity for the foreseeable future, and I didn't like that one bit.

Throughout the day, she packed and readied to leave with Athena. The plan was to depart first thing in the morning. The destination wasn't told to us, just in case someone got caught. The last thing we wanted to do was get them into more trouble than they already were.

I hated her leaving and going with my sister. Right now, Felicity and I were in my room alone. She was on the couch next to me. Curled up, resting against me as I played with her hair. Her tailed whipped back and forth as I did.

She was truly incredible. "I won't be gone that long," she said.

It felt like I might never see her again. I knew it was a very likely chance with all that was going on. The world was a fickle place, and she might not make it out of this alive. That none of us would. Even a God can die, but not by mortal means. Hera was doing so much to kill the humans; I might just die as collateral damage.

"I hope you get back soon," I said. "I hate the thought of you being gone. We all do."

Felicity peered up into my eyes. "I have to do this," she said. "I can't stay cooped up like a frightened animal. I'm a fighter, and I need my freedom."

I knew that all too well. "I know," I said.

Leaning down, I kissed her soft, luscious lips. Letting her body press closer to me. Pulling her tighter and tighter. Not wanting to ever let go. To meld us into one.

My heart raced as we kissed. Holding her made the world better. Her lips heated up, and my hands began to explore her body. Her toned and stunning body. Every inch of her. She was beautiful and so exotic. So different, and yet the same.

Her own claws were playing with me. Rubbing against me in all the right places. Making me even more excited than I had been a second ago. Making the world go away. Just Felicity and I were here. Nothing else.

Melding into each other and becoming one was like nothing else. I needed this and never wanted it to stop.

Felicity slowly stood up and began to undress. Giving me a mini striptease. Taking off her form-fitting clothes to reveal her toned and tanned body. Her body truly was a mix of what she was, and it was marvelous, and I loved it.

Taking in her small but perky breasts, the flat abs. Along with her glorious pussy as she stripped off the nearly-there panties she wore. My cock was rock-hard, more than I had ever been. I wanted her now. To be in that pussy filling her with my member that was throbbing in my pants.

“Take me,” she said. “All of me.”

I sprung to my feet, and carried her to my bed, and placed her down, as I ripped my own clothes off.

Starting at her feet, I kissed. Making my way up her legs and skipping her intoxicating pussy, I moved to her stomach and then her breasts. Nipping on her nipples, and then letting my hand move to her clit, I rubbed. Letting my tongue tease her as my hand did the same.

Felicity moaned, and her tail darted back and forth. Her claws gripped into me tightly. “Ares,” she screamed. That was the first of many.

Moving back down with the kisses, this time I went to her vagina and used my tongue on her clit this time. Sucking on her lower lips and letting my finger enter her. She was dripping wet, soaking the bed.

This was one of the greatest joys in the world. Making a woman orgasm over and over. Hearing her say my name. Nothing was better in the world. Nothing would ever top seeing the woman I loved happy and in bliss.

After I make her squirt her juices over my face, I slid up, and let my rock-hard cock tease her. Play with her.

“Ares,” she purred. A guttural love sound for her. She wanted me to make love to her. To enter her and pleasure her more. “Please.”

I smiled. With one last tease of the tip of my penis, I plunged deep into her. Making love to her for the rest of the night.

GOODBYE, FELICITY

The next morning, we all stood at the front door. Athena and Felicity were packed up and ready to go. I'm not ashamed to admit it, but I got teary-eyed. Seeing her there in her spunky little traveling outfit, and bouncing on her feet. Raring to go. It was hard to let her.

"Be safe," Lola said.

"I will," Felicity said.

"I'll keep her safe," Athena said.

My sister would do all she could to make sure Felicity made it through this adventure. Felicity really had no idea what she was getting into. I don't think any of them really understood what was going on.

While they had grown used to Athena and me saying we were Gods, and even accepted it somewhat, I doubted they realized what Felicity was going to see. What she was going to experience as she went on this adventure.

"I know you will," Fleur said. "We'll miss the both of you."

Athena smiled. "We will be back before you know it, and I'm sure by the time we are, you'll have this whole thing with Fenrir fixed, and we can focus on Hera."

"Hopefully," I said.

That would be the dream, and we wouldn't be wasting time. Epps and Mako wanted to talk again, and we would be, very soon.

Lola gave Athena a hug, and then Felicity, with a small kiss. Followed with Fleur doing the same.

I was the last one, and I didn't want to. Felicity and I had, in a way, said goodbye last night, over and over.

"Athena," I said. "Be safe. You know how dangerous this is."

She nodded. "It is, but we have to. Hera is playing dirty. We need to as well."

I cringed. "Be that as it may, no unneeded risk."

"I promise," Athena said. She nodded at me and exited.

Now it was just Felicity and me alone, by the door. The fiery squirrelkin peered up at me with her large doe-like eyes.

"Gonna miss you," she said. "Keep them safe."

I smiled. "I'll do my best, but much like you, they can hold their own."

"I know, you big lug," she said. "But please."

This was a lot harder than I thought it would be. "Oh, Felicity . . ."

"I know," she said. She pulled me close and held me tightly. Then we kissed. A long deep one, and she pulled away and left me there standing alone.

Never in my life had I missed someone so fiercely, and she had just left. While I hadn't known her for a long time, she was part of me. Just like the others, and I needed them in my life. For now and ever.

YET ANOTHER MEETING

Later that afternoon, the three of us took a conference call with Mako.

“How are you holding up?” the man asked.

I wasn’t sure how to answer since Felicity departed today. Not knowing where she was, killed me.

“Making do,” Lola said. “Not easy to deal with this legislation.”

Mako nodded. “None of us saw it coming,” the CEO of Epps Technologies said. “I thought I had an ear to the ground with Fenrir, but clearly not.”

“You doing anything on your end to stop it?” Fleur asked.

“I’m afraid I have very little pull with the President and many in Congress.”

“Backed the wrong people,” Lola said.

Mako shrugged. “Can’t pick all winners. It happens.”

That was beyond strange to me, that many of the wealthiest people did control the government, and got them to do their bidding. That was the only way that Fenrir got this law into place.

And to make it worse, it wasn’t like we would be able to put new people in place to change this anytime soon. Politics was something I had avoided for most of my life, and let the other Gods and Goddesses deal with. There were some of my kin that loved dipping their fingers into that part of life. Themis being the most prevalent one.

Not that any would dare meddle these days, and that was a shame. If I could have one of them come and stick their fingers into the pot, we might be able to sway things. Stupid Father and his ban.

It really boggled my mind that more haven't left Mount Olympus and joined me. Hera or Zeus must be keeping a very close eye on them.

"What can we do?" Fleur asked. "My contacts are all about starting a war."

Part of me really liked the idea of a full-scale war against Fenrir. Thinking back through time, not many wars were waged against a company. Usually, it was the company or the little man attacking the big bad country. The oppressor in the past wasn't typically just a single business. Not to say that didn't happen, and wouldn't in the future. Just not the norm.

"War would be bad," Mako said.

Lola and I both nodded. "Trying to avoid it," I said.

"Good." Mako had a look of concern on his face. "Though I don't know. We need to win the people. How Fenrir got them to back him, I do not know."

"Can't we use social media and your phones," I asked, "stuff like that to spread the truth?"

"In theory," Lola said. "The problem is we aren't influencers or celebrities. That is who has the power there."

"I'm Ares," I said. "Doesn't that give me power? She's the White Angel. We have Major Thorn, Bionic Man, and how many other people."

"As nice as those names sound," Mako said. "All Paragons. Need regular humans and Paragons."

He was right, and that was something I didn't have an answer for.

INFLUENCER

The next few days were a blur for me. Little happened, and we barely left the hideout. McGarrett had to take to sending cryptic messages. While the mayor of the city didn't like the new law, she couldn't oppose it. The governor of the state had shown support for it.

That was going to make things hard for us here. At least, a few of the states had their governors voice concern, and one straight up said he wouldn't support this law. That he himself had been saved more than once by a Paragon, and the people he was being saved from weren't other Paragons.

One out of fifty wasn't the best, but it was a start. Surely the others having concerns was something to build on.

Lola was the only one for whom it was relatively safe to leave our home. She had gone out to the grocery store to get us food. Now more than ever, I felt just like Felicity thought she would. Being safe and careful just wasn't in my nature, and I had to do something.

"We can't stay here all the time," I said. Lola was putting up the last of the food. "I'm going stir crazy."

"I know," she said.

Fleur walked in. "Got a call from Mako."

We hadn't heard from him since the day that Felicity had left. I had been beginning to wonder if he was going to abandon us and leave us to the fate that Fenrir had sealed for us.

"What did he want?" Lola asked.

“One of the plans we did talk about was trying to sway the public,” Fleur said.

I laughed. It was a plan, but one that was just a small part of it. Very far-fetched.

“And?” Lola sat at the table in the large kitchen/dining area and drank a bottle of water. The kitchen was basic, and used to just meet our needs. The fridge was large and held a lot of food and beverages. The cabinets were black with a granite countertop.

“You have him a list of people, and he refined it. Now we have four people to reach out to.”

Lola shrugged. “That list was terrible. Not my best work.”

I doubted that it was terrible since this was Lola. She was the smartest person in the world and one of the hardest workers too. None of that even mentioned her fantastic body and passion for life.

“So,” I said. “Who do we go talk to?”

“This influencer in Jersey.”

“Finally,” I said. “Let’s go talk.”

“Not so fast, mister,” Fleur said. “We need to plan for being seen.”

“Why?” To my knowledge no Paragon had been actually arrested yet. All sorts of stuff was being put into place, however, to start doing that.

It was all over the news these days. With the talking heads going on and on about where the vile Paragons should be housed. Some even suggested sending us all to Gitmo. Or making a place worse than that.

It amazed me how fast all the media turned on the Paragons, seeming to forget all the good that many of the heroes in the world had done. Sure, some of the villains had caused a lot of damage, but that wasn’t the only side. Many of the worst criminals around weren’t Paragons.

“Any news from the Third Street Dragons?” Lola asked.

I shook my head. They hadn’t responded yet. That was something I really needed to look into.

“Talk to them,” Fleur said. “We need them to get in and out of the city unseen.”

“Okay,” I said.

THIRD STREET DRAGONS

It was hard to blend in while I was out, but I did my best. Being a large man, I would draw attention. Thankfully, New York City was used to seeing many different types of people. These days the city was a true hodgepodge of people, and that helped me blend in.

Arriving at the Third Street Dragons' base of operations, I saw a familiar face out front. They always had a guard on duty out front to give the leader, Lincoln, a heads up. As soon as I was close enough the man nodded to me.

"We've been expecting you," he said. "Lincoln is in his office."

Frustrated with them knowing I wanted to talk, but them not having replied to me, I grunted and entered the building. The first floor of the place was a convenience store that almost exclusively sold to gang members or their families, since it was in the heart of their territory.

Above the building, was a different story. Some of it was offices, and other parts appeared to be apartments. The randomness of it all confused me.

The room that Lincoln used for his place was on the second floor, and had a quick exit from the building. Not that he would ever be able to use that if I was coming for him. I didn't even bother knocking on his door this time. I was mad about him ignoring me.

The leader of the gang looked up from a sturdy desk as I entered. He had a grin on his face. "About time you showed up," he said.

"I contacted you," I said. "You could have gotten back to me."

Lincoln shook his head. "No, I couldn't, too many people watching this place. You might not even be able to get out of here."

I groaned. It wouldn't be the first time I made a hot exit from here. "Lucky me."

"Not my fault, man," Lincoln said. "This Fenrir and the politicians have it in for you Paragons. I've lost a lot of good men."

"They all in hiding?"

Lincoln nodded. "Yeah. Not many Paragons out on the streets. Worse than before. Reign was better than this, fuck, Eris was better. Right now, it's chaos out there. I don't want to risk any of my men."

"Smart. Fill me in on what's going on."

Lincoln did just that. The gangs in the city were forming up new ties and connections. Using the lack of Paragons to their advantage like they did when Reign had made it illegal for Paragons to be in the city. Lincoln heard rumors that this was going on in all the major cities in the country. That the crime rates had increased by thirty percent.

That was something that McGarrett had told us, and that made me sad. This alone should have been enough for the people to see how much damage they were doing, but it wasn't.

"I'm telling you," Lincoln said. "The gangs that are forming up now. Ruthless. They have no fear of the cops. No fear from Paragons. I thought I was bad; they make me look like Mother Theresa."

That was a bad sign. Lincoln was deep down a criminal, a good one, but still a criminal.

"Not good. Look, I need your help."

I told him what I needed and how we were working on fixing it.

"All right," the leader said. "I'll see what I can do."

"Great."

I left, and hooped he was wrong that I wouldn't be able to walk away free.

FIGHT OR RUN

Sure enough, déjà vu. Stepping outside of the Third Street Dragons building I was greeted with a line of cars. None of the police, but clearly government issued. Almost to the point of cliché. Big black Suburbans, as if they couldn't find something better. Not to say I didn't like the SUV, but I swear they are all the TV or movies use for government vehicles. I had no clue if that was the way it was in reality.

"Ares," a voice sounded through a megaphone. "You are a Paragon, and therefore under order AP one hundred and one, you must submit to our authority."

I was barely able to contain myself. That was the best they could do and say. "Listen, buddy," I said. I didn't speak loud as I was sure he would hear me. "I'm not a Paragon. I'm a Greek God, or Roman, or whatever you want to think of me as. Therefore, I do not fall under your stupid little law."

"There is no such thing as Gods."

I rolled my eyes; I had gotten used to that. I'm sure they just thought I was letting my Paragon abilities go to my head.

"I don't want to hurt you," I replied. I had no intention of letting him arrest me or take me to some camp. "But this isn't legal. And if I'm not mistaken, no Paragon has been taken in yet."

"By order of the President of the United States, you are ordered to submit for your crimes."

Now I was angry. Since I have been back on Earth, I've done nothing but help these people. Stand up for the humans, and I'm still trying to do that. If they would just open their eyes and see how they were being manipulated by Hera. By the people that supposedly cared for them.

"You have ten seconds to comply. If you do not do so, we will be forced to use force and strip you of your powers."

I gritted my teeth. This man, whoever he was, pissed me off. In the air, I noticed a channel four news chopper. With that in the air, there was little doubt that the world was watching. I could run and not let them get what they want. But I've done that too much.

Another option was to stand up and fight. Let them see that I wasn't a Paragon, and their stupid little weapon was useless on me. That might strike the fear of God into them. Or a God, and have them realize that I was what I said I was.

More and more people arrived on the streets. Dressed in black, and armed to the teeth. They wanted a fight, and I was more than ready to give them one. So far, I had done nothing to instigate this.

"I told you," I said. "Not a Paragon. I have broken no laws. You have violated my constitutional freedom."

"You have no rights." His tone was vicious and vile. Hate must course through his blood and soul. A Paragon must have hurt him, and now he was getting his revenge. "The law of the federal government gives us the rights."

I sighed. "I'm going to leave since that law you're talking about violates that of the constitution and the founding fathers. Let me tell you, Washington would be disappointed in you."

Little did they realize that I had actually talked to the man, albeit only once, and for less than a minute, but I still did. He wouldn't be pleased with what was going on in the country. He would be furious. As would the rest of the leaders of early America.

"You are not allowed to leave."

Ignoring them, I began to walk down the sidewalk in the direction from which I had arrived. There was no way I would be able to go back to the hideout again.

"Do not attack them," Fleur said. That had taken a lot longer than I thought. None of us left the secret lair without our comms these

days. Save for Athena and Felicity, and I had little doubt that wherever they were, both were watching this too.

This might be the next OJ and white bronco. People would be talking about this for a while, and I didn't like that at all. I didn't mind the attention, but only if it was for the right reasons. This wasn't it.

"Freeze," another voice said.

I did no such thing and continued on my way.

"Ares," Lola said. "Just jump over them and run."

That was a very viable option, but the more I thought about it, the more I wanted the world to see them attack a man who was just walking. See how wrong this was. To show them that the people of this country were under attack from their own. That the far-reaching people like Fenrir and the president were overstepping.

"Please," Fleur said.

Both of their voices held concern for me and fear. They didn't want me to lose my powers. They were more and more on board with me being a God, but they still feared me losing my powers.

This would be a big moment for me. For us. For America, and the rest of the world. They were about to attack a God, one that was trying to save the country.

The man closest to me pulled out his anti-Paragon gun and pointed it right at me. Soon he was joined by four other men. They were all military men and had the highly trained look to them. I loathed the idea of having to fight them and hurting them. They were doing their job, but so was I.

Taking a deep breath in, I looked up to the heavens, or to Mount Olympus. I could almost feel all the eyes on me from above. Some probably hoping this actually worked on me so they could find a new God of War. Some hoping that it didn't, and maybe they would be able to join me here.

Now more than ever, I knew this was a pivotal moment in the war with Hera. The conflict with the humans that I didn't want.

"Please," Fleur said. Her voice weak, filled with pain and fear.

"I have to," I said. "This is important. The world needs to see them do this. See how bad your father is. How bad the President is."

"It won't do any good," Lola said.

Having them in my head this way made this harder than I thought it would be. I loved them and had faith I would not be harmed. Though I was causing them pain by doing this, and that stung, it would be over soon.

Not stopping, I walked towards the men and tried to go around them. I wasn't going to engage them and hurt them. They would be the monsters here, and all those watching on the news would see it. Two more new helicopters arrived in the sky above us. Not to mention down the street; I saw a line of news vans and trucks. This really was getting the attention of the world.

Doing my best to control my breathing, I ignored the pleas for me to stop. They were coming from both Fleur and Lola and the men.

"Fire," a voice boomed in the air.

The men looked at me with a longing in their eyes. Looking back at them, they knew, and I knew. Doing our job. What we thought was right.

The first man fired his anti-Paragon gun at me. The pain that it sent through me was the most intense I've ever felt. Worse than the Paragon that could hurt me. Worse than the time a Titan used celestial bronze on me. Worse than the wrath of Zeus and his lightning.

I screamed out in pain, "Ahhh!"

But I didn't stop walking. I wasn't going to give in and let them win. I was the God of War. I was the one who could beat Fenrir and my mother. I knew I was here for that and would win. I had faith in that, and in Fleur, Lola, and Felicity.

One step. Two Steps. The pain nearly caused me to topple over, but I didn't.

The next man fired him at me, and the pain was reinvigorated in me. My eyes watered from the agony, but I didn't stop. Through the earbud, I could hear both women crying. Both fearing I'd lost my power.

I could feel it still in me. The power of the Gods still flowed in me. The weapon did weaken me, make me feel less powerful, but I was still a God.

"How is that possible?" I heard one of the men say. They were looking at me with disbelief. Some with horror, some with admiration

on their faces.

“Take him out,” the leader said.

The men closest to me looked at each other. Hesitating and not wanting to attack me. I completely understood why they were reluctant.

THAT SUCKED

The men got over their hesitation and attacked me with all their might. This was what they were trained for, and I wasn't going to be mad at them. Though it fucking sucked balls right now.

While I still had my powers and abilities, I hurt all over my body. The first one rushed at me, and I barely avoided him. Things around me were moving much slower than I was used to in a fight. Usually, when in a situation like this I moved faster and could see the world through the eyes of a man moving more quickly than the rest.

Not today, and it sucked. "This is what it is like being you," I said.

The men around me gave me strange looks, but I wasn't speaking to them. Fleur and Lola were still there and talking. Crying.

"You're human," Lola said.

I laughed. "No, I'm not. Just slowed temporarily."

The men here gave me looks. "Who are you talking to?" the closest asked.

"None of your business."

Through the comms, I heard nothing but silence. Since I knew they were in the central area watching me, I had to show them that I still had my powers, and show the world too for that matter.

More than one article talked about my ability to make a magical sword appear out of nowhere. It had been a topic of heated debate on a few discussion boards. I know I shouldn't waste time reading about myself, but hard not to. In truth, I had been looking up other Paragons and found the stuff on me.

It wasn't going to be easy, but I needed to summon the sword that Hephaestus made for me. Using my magical strength, I reached into the void that held my weapon. My body strained as I tried to pull the blade to me. The power was slipping from me, and I hadn't pulled it out.

One of the men lunged at me, and I briefly lost my connection and almost lost the link to my sword. By a miracle I managed to avoid the man and not lose the magic in me. This was going to be harder than I thought.

"You stupid humans," I said. "I'm trying to help you. And you attack me."

"You aren't helping us," one said. "You've killed people."

I narrowed my eyes. "I've not killed a single person. Gone out of my way to not."

"Not you specifically," the man said. "Paragons."

I groaned. "Then so have you. Humans that is. More than any Paragon. You want me to go over a history lesson?"

The man glared at me. "No human has killed as many as some of you, Paragon."

I had a simple answer for him. "Hitler."

That had him stumped. "It's not the same," he finally said.

In that moment, my fingers latched onto my sword and pulled it to this realm. Up until then I had to look like a fool to everyone around me.

"See," I said. "Still got it."

Now I heard tears, but also relief through the comms. "You have to get out of there," Lola said. "You have proved your point."

I nodded. "I'm trying."

The men saw the swords and backed away. "You wouldn't," one said.

"Try me," I said. Though I wouldn't, I couldn't let them know that.

The men stepped aside and let me pass. That was unexpected, but not going to look a gift horse in the mouth. I took off at a full sprint, and while not my usual speed, it was still plenty to lose the men.

This time I didn't run all the way to Connecticut or Pennsylvania. I didn't even leave the city, but as I ran did think about the old man I'd

met the first time I ran away. If he was still out there, he might help take down Fenrir. He'd been a friend of Fenrir's father and saw Fenrir as a child.

I made a mental note to mention this to Lola and Fleur. Sure, we would be going to see the influencer, but all the options on our plate would be good.

Stopping, I holed up in a building that had seen better days. It reminded me of several of my visits in the past. Well before the luxuries of today. More of my time had been spent without the luxuries that many of the people today take for granted. No electricity or indoor plumbing. Let alone TVs, radios, and computers. Today was a vastly different world than the one I had been born into.

"What's the word?" I asked.

It was a long second before one of them answered me. "The news has nothing," Fleur said.

I could hear the chatter of Lola's fingers over the keyboard. She was looking to see if she could find anything. "Nothing I can find," Lola said. "Though I can't get access to Fenrir and this new branch or agency."

"Okay," I said.

Leaving the building, I hailed a cab. Hoping I wouldn't be noticed. Thankfully, I wasn't and made it back to the hideout after taking several taxis, a trip on the subway, and walking. That made my arrival back home a long and tedious one, but I was sure that I hadn't been followed.

As I walked through the door, both were standing there. I didn't even make it a step when they hugged me. Pulled me in close and tight.

"You were so stupid," Fleur said.

"I know." Not that I really thought I was stupid, but rather that I did what was needed.

"At least it seemed to work," Lola said. "You are trending."

I rolled my eyes. "Trending. That is such a strange thing. The world really is connected in a way I had never expected."

"So much for Gods seeing all and knowing all," Fleur said.

I've told them before that wasn't possible, but it was hard to believe sometimes. A lot of things had been written over the years

that made it harder for me to explain.

“You aren’t a Paragon,” Fleur said.

I smiled. “How many times have I told you.”

“I’ve lost count,” she admitted. “Even with all the other evidence showing you were Ares, I guess I just didn’t want to believe it.”

That was understandable, and I wasn’t going to get on her about it. Not many people can accept that Gods are real. That the myths they grew up hearing stories about were indeed a reality. That was a lot to accept, and why many fought against me and what I stood for.

“I’m just happy that you are okay,” Lola said.

“Semi-okay.”

I still hurt like no other and needed some sleep. In all my battles with the Titans, the giants, and other monsters of the ancient world I had never experienced this level of discomfort. This much fatigue was foreign to me too. I was ready for several days’ sleep. Or rather a mini-coma.

“You do look like hell,” Fleur said.

“I feel it, that weapon packed a punch.”

Fleur shook her head. “I really thought they took your powers. When you summoned your sword.”

The evidence was still there; she cried and cried. Both before that and after. I felt terrible about what she went through. What I put both of them through today, but it was needed. We had to show the world how bad this was. What they were doing, and show them I was just who I said I was.

“I need to sleep,” I said. “Can you monitor this all? I want to know if this was worth it. And I had a thought about this. Could we talk to Stan?”

Fleur pursed her lips. “You sure he is even still alive?”

I hadn’t thought about that, but I didn’t see why not. “Most likely, if Lola can find him, he might be a good source to talk to. See what he can tell us about your father and his father. Learn something.”

“I’ll try,” Lola said. “But first, you rest, and then we need to talk to this influencer.”

I groaned. “Yes. We will.”

LEAVING THE CITY

After sleeping for nearly a full day, I woke and felt much better. Parts of my body still hurt, but I would be fine in a day or two. One of the benefits of being a God. I healed faster than any human, Paragon or not. I heard about heroes and villains that could heal almost instantly, but I haven't seen any in person. Many of the powers here intrigued me, and I wanted to talk to the people that had them. The healing was one of them.

Out in the central area, I joined Fleur and Lola. A few minutes later, McGarrett arrived. In his street clothes. The man was born to wear blue, and seeing him in jeans and a dress shirt just felt wrong to me. He was Captain McGarrett and looked natural in the uniform. It was like that for me with a lot of people I've met over the years. They just belonged in the uniform, whether it was chest plates or battle fatigues.

"I can't believe you did that," McGarrett said. "Janet was scared out of her mind."

"Sorry," I said. I hoped that it didn't mess up the pregnancy too much. Stress couldn't be good for a woman that was expecting. "I'm fine, and like I said a million times. Not a Paragon."

McGarrett nodded. "I know. Anyone hear from Felicity?"

"No," I said. That was the worst part of all of this. She was out there and not able to contact us. She had to be worried, but Athena was with her and could tell her I was okay. Seeing the sword should help.

“I wish I could,” Lola said. “But they took no tech, and swore not to contact us until they made contact with Athena’s sources.”

Lola’s phrasing made me burst out laughing. “Even now, you won’t say what or who she is going to see.”

Lola rolled her eyes. “Fine. They are going to see cyclopes and giants, and more, other myths.”

“Until last night,” McGarrett said. “I thought you were just yanking my chain, but now. You’re for real. Crazy.”

“What can I say, I’m too good to be human.”

All three of them laughed. Lasting several minutes, they bent over in pain or joy; I was happy to see them relaxed. It had been sporadic to see my friends and lovers calm and happy.

Eventually, the laughter died. “We have a mission,” Fleur said. “The Third Street Dragons are expecting us.”

It was true, and we didn’t want to miss this window of opportunity. I turned to Lola. “Any luck on Stan?”

She shook her head. “It’s hard to track a homeless man.”

“Keep trying,” I said.

“You guys ready?”

Fleur nodded, and so did McGarrett.

WITH THE HELP of a few of the low-level members of the gang, we arrived at one of the subway stations. Next, we had to exit and go to a waiting truck that was going to smuggle us out. The gang was actually used to smuggling but in the other direction. Not much of what they did was to remove goods but to bring them in.

This wasn’t the first time they took out supplies, though it was a rarity for the gang. As we exited the subway station we saw the George Washington Bridge, and it was impressive. The horror stories of crossing the thing were legendary. Hours just to go that short distance. It amazed me.

Even back in my time, it didn’t take that long to cover such a short distance. Though when there are this many people in one place it was to be expected. That left me scared half to death to visit

some of the other cities across the globe. It was hard to comprehend how congested Shanghai or Mumbai would be.

Letting that thought go, I saw Lincoln leaning next to a small box truck. Riding in the back of that was going to be terrible, but we'd be hidden and out of sight from the eyes of everyone around us.

Lincoln grinned. He hadn't met Fleur in person until now, and I could tell he thought she was hot. "Eyes only," I said.

Lincoln shrugged. "You're the boss."

That was good to hear but didn't make me any more comfortable with all this. It wasn't that I disliked small tight spaces, but they weren't my favorite. I didn't feel in control, and that wasn't my norm.

"Just the three of you?" Lincoln asked.

"That's it," Fleur said. "You have an interesting organization."

The leader of the Third Street Dragons laughed. "You tried to take us out of business, more than once."

"I'm a hero," she said. "That's kind of what we do."

Lincoln smirked. "I get that. Look at us now."

"Ares vouches for you, so we trust you," Fleur said. "But if you step out of line . . ."

"Don't worry, hot stuff," he said. "We got this covered, and I want this Fenrir, and the law, gone as much as you do."

"The enemy of my enemy is my ally," Fleur said.

"Something like that," Lincoln said. "Though if you and the God dude are tight, you know I'm trying to be legit. Starting us up as a security firm, and importer."

"That's two very different businesses," Fleur said. "If you are for real, you and I should talk. I know a few things about business."

Lincoln eyed me. "Her dad is a big-time businessman," I said. "And she is too. I have a sneaking suspicion she has her hands in pots that might surprise us."

Fleur laughed. "I have no idea what you are talking about."

McGarrett looked at us. "I'm with Ares. I have a feeling White Angel has her fingers all over the city."

"Hey," Fleur said. "I'm not my father. If any of you ever actually asked what I'm doing for money, and what I own, I would tell you."

I made a note to ask her later. This was something I secretly wanted to know since she was a brilliant mind in that area.

“Well,” Lincoln said. “I just might ask to pick your brain.”

“Good.” Fleur appeared to be pleased.

It was time to load up and go for the treacherous ride in the box truck out of the city.

IT SMELLS FUNNY

With the door to the truck closed, it felt stuffy in the back. And smelled of marijuana and body odor. Plus, something I just couldn't put my finger on. It was a horrid smell and was going to make this trip long.

"Boy," McGarrett said. "This smells worse than my aunt Melinda's."

Fleur eyed him. "If your aunt's place is anything like this, I'd never visit."

"I rarely do," McGarrett admitted. "We have that one family member. Melinda likes to smoke, and she has seven cats."

"Oh lord," Fleur said. "Pass."

"Janet refuses to visit, but I have to. My mother drags me over with her."

That sounded terrible and made me realize the last stench in the box, urine. "Maybe we should have just risked being seen," I said.

"No." Fleur had a tone that said this was the only way. "We can't let my father know about our plans. Sure your stunt has gotten us some sway in the public's eyes."

"That's an understatement," McGarrett said. "This morning, I must have gotten two dozen calls. All asking about you. What the NYPD thought of this law, and if we were informed of the military presence in the city, which we weren't."

McGarrett didn't seem pleased with that last bit at all. "Maybe for once, the news in the city will be on our side."

I hoped he was right, and that they would see they were being played.

“Not likely,” Fleur said. “You forget that my dad owns two of the biggest media outlets in the city.”

That man had his hands in so many pots that it was surprising that he was able to focus enough to get anything done. “I hate him,” McGarrett said.

“Me too,” Fleur said. “He made me grow up in hell. He wanted me to pretend I wasn't a Paragon.”

That was wrong and cruel. He should have embraced that part of his baby girl. I would have, and helped her grow to be an amazing woman. Somehow Fleur managed to do that on her own. Too bad her brother hadn't been able to figure out that their father was scum.

The truck had been moving at a slow and steady pace, but it stopped. “Must be on the bridge,” McGarrett said.

He had to be right, the rest of the trip was slow going, but eventually, we made it across the bridge and into Jersey. Not that I wanted to be in the state, though it got a bad rap from what I could tell. It wasn't an armpit like many people like to call it, but I wouldn't be living here anytime soon.

“Where does this person live?”

“The Jersey shore,” Fleur said.

“Please tell me she wasn't on the God-awful show,” McGarrett said.

I had no idea what show he might be talking about, but if it was based there, I had a feeling it was something I wouldn't have liked. A few of the other Gods might, good old Dionysus came to mind. He had a taste for terrible shows and train wrecks.

“No,” Fleur said. “She wasn't on the show. A model that just happens to live there. Or an Instagram model.”

The world really had changed in the last few years. That we had to mention one wasn't just a model, but an Instagram one. I wasn't sure I was going to get used to that. Celebrities were always around and useful, so I shouldn't judge.

Another thirty minutes later, and the truck stopped. Then the back of it opened, and we were hit with a burst of fresh air. I inhaled deeply. “About time.”

“It isn’t that bad,” Lincoln said. He stood staring with his dark eyes. “I’ve ridden back there a few times.”

“You must have a bad sense of smell,” Fleur said. “It’s terrible in there.’

Lincoln shrugged. “Well, it has been a while. And the last few shipments got held up.”

He leaned in and smelled. “Yeah. Need to clean it.”

“How about you do that,” I said. “While we visit the person we need to see.”

“Sure thing,” Lincoln said. “Have fun.”

INFLUENCER

Arriving at the Jersey shore, I was surprised by the sight of it. In all my years on Mount Olympus, I never bothered to take a look here. From the way McGarrett and Fleur had spoken of the place, I had expected a horror show.

For the most part, it was just young people being young. Nothing wrong with that, though sometimes we made mistakes that would follow us for years. That was only thing about being young that sucked. One mistake could shape a person for the rest of their life. That sucked.

“So, where is this person?” I asked.

Fleur pointed to one of the nicer houses on the beach, and to a group of people on the deck of the house. “That’s hers.”

“Joy,” I said. There was no way we wouldn’t be filmed or seen by at least a dozen or more people. “In her pictures, I don’t remember seeing that many people.”

McGarrett laughed. “Having people would take away from her.”

Shrugging, I took in the place. The whole point of sneaking in and out was to be unseen by others. Not just the authorities and Fenrir. This mission just got a whole lot tougher, and I didn’t like that one bit.

“I’ll go talk to her and let her know who wants to see her,” McGarrett said.

“Please,” Fleur said.

I hoped that worked, and we didn’t have to venture into that beehive of people. While I’ve been in worse parties, right now, I

wanted that low profile. My body was still sore from the display the other day. I needed to recover and not fight for a few days.

Fleur and I stood there holding hands. "Ares," she said. "Please don't do anything stupid."

I smiled. "I don't plan on it."

"You didn't plan on it when you went to visit the Third Street Dragons, and you did then."

I sighed. "I'm sorry, I really am. That needed to be done."

She furrowed her eyebrows and pursed her lips. "So you say."

This was an argument, if it was that, that I couldn't win, and I didn't want to drag it out. "Fleur, I know I hurt you. Hurt Lola and Felicity. Even more people. I was put into a situation, and I did my best. We are fighting a war against not only your dad, but my mother. She has more power and years of knowledge than anyone in the world. Outside of, say, Gaia."

Fleur shook her head. "Just the thought that all that is real. It's overwhelming."

"I know." It had to be hard to accept and comprehend, but I had been trying my best to get them there. To show them the world was filled with things that people just didn't understand. That they saw, but that their minds replaced with something they could understand.

"Look." Fleur pointed to the house, and the woman I'd seen in the pictures appeared on the deck. Suddenly the crowd of people began to leave.

"He did it."

"No surprise," Fleur said. "One mention of the Paragon Ares and the girls will drop their panties." She had a playful tone to her voice and squeezed my hand.

"Ha, ha." I had no desire to be with that stranger. For once in my life, I was happy with who I had and wanted no more. "I'll pass."

"I know," she said.

"None can compare to you, Lola, and Felicity."

Fleur smiled. She knew I thought they were the most dazzling women in the world, and no Instagram model or TV star was going to get in the way of that.

Within a few minutes, the deck was cleared, and at least a half dozen people exited the house. It was the middle of the afternoon,

how all these people had time to party was insane. Didn't they know what was going on with the world? That made me wonder if this was even worth our time.

"Does she even care about Paragons, and what is going on?" I asked.

Fleur nodded. "Lola did a lot of research, and she was one that posted about Paragons a lot, and in good light."

It wasn't that I didn't trust Lola, but the scene that had been in front of us made me question if this was the right path. Another minute passed, and McGarrett strode to us.

"She's ready," McGarrett said. The tone in his voice was slightly off and made me wonder what was up. Maybe this person did want me. She would be in for a surprise when I turned her down.

McGarrett led the way to the house and didn't knock. He just went in, and standing there in a small but stylish living room was the woman in all the pictures. She was an attractive woman but didn't hold a candle to Fleur, Lola, or Felicity. Just didn't strike the right chord for me, but I could see why millions of men and women followed her and lusted after her. She had large breasts, that looked natural, and a tiny waist. Along with flat abs that made her almost unnatural in a way. Her short brown hair made her blue eyes stand out even more. Dare I say that she was Godly in a way.

"White Angel," she squeaked.

Fleur glanced at me. "Hi," Fleur said.

"I'm Samantha," she said. "Of course, you already know that. You're like my favorite Paragon. You're so badass. I want to be like you."

This was completely unexpected. "Uh. Thank you," Fleur said. "I'm glad you like what I've been doing."

"So much," Samantha said. "You're even hotter in person. I just want to eat you up."

I couldn't help but chuckle. So much for me being the one to get what we wanted and needed. Fleur was the one that was going to break her heart, and have to see if she'd help us. Part of me was relieved with that revelation. It was never fun breaking someone's heart, of crushing their dreams.

If that was what we had to do, I hoped not. Samantha might not actually want to bed Fleur, but from the look in the woman's eyes, and the way she was licking her lips, that was all she was thinking about. It was strange for me to not even register as I stood in the room. Typically, everyone saw me and knew I was the hero Ares, or a God.

Fleur cleared her throat. "Samantha, we need to talk. My partner, Ares, and I."

It was then that she saw me for the first time. "Oh, yeah. The big lug. I thought he lost his powers."

"Nope," I said. "Still got them. I'm not a Paragon like the others."

That didn't even impress her, but that was okay with me. Though still not what I was used to.

"Nice," Samantha said. "White Angel, did you want a drink? I have pretty much anything you would want."

"I'm good," Fleur said. "Like I said. We need your help."

Samantha smiled. "I can't believe that the White Angel is asking for my help. So epic."

I knew that many of the Paragons were celebrities in their own right. This was the first time I had seen it in person. It reminded me of the gladiators back in ancient times. They were heroes, and people chanted their names. One is still known and talked about to this day, Spartacus, who was super popular. While some back then hated him, he did well. I respected what he achieved.

Samantha was talking Fleur's ear off, not letting the White Angel get a word in edgewise. "Can I please take a picture with you?"

Fleur glanced in my direction; I could tell that she wanted my help. "You can't post any pictures of us here. Can't tell anyone that the White Angel was here," I said.

Samantha frowned. "That's no fun. I get to meet my hero, the person I look up to the most, and I can't even tell anyone."

"Maybe once this is over you can," I said.

That seemed to cheer the influencer up. "Once the fight with the government is over. Not easy," Samantha said. "Fenrir and President White are super powerful."

She went on a long talk about them, and into a depth that I hadn't been expecting with the way this conversation started. Samantha

might act like she was just about partying and celebrity gossip, but she had a brain. One that she had been hiding and masking with her looks and attitude.

“All that is true,” Fleur said. “But Ares and I have a plan. One that needs you, and anyone we can get to post against Fenrir. To make the people see that Paragons help. Do things to save the world, not harm it.”

Samantha smiled. “I know you said you don’t want me to post about you being here, but I think that will actually help.”

“How?” I asked.

“Make the two of you look normal, part of the regular people. That is something that Fenrir will never be able to do. It’s what makes people like me so much.”

It was hard to argue with her since she had a lot of success on social media. Not just one, but across most of them she had a large audience, and she hadn’t done much that I could find to account for it. She didn’t act or sing or do any of the normal celebrity things these days. She was one of those “famous for being famous” people. She didn’t even have a wealthy family to account for it.

“Ares and I need to talk in private,” Fleur said.

Samantha nodded. “Okay, I’ll go get some of my post ready. Let me know, and I haven’t said it already, but I’ll help.”

Hearing that was nice, and helped me relax. This was just one part of the plan, and one I suggested. It still made me nervous, and it didn’t take away the fear I had of us failing to defeat Fenrir, let alone Hera.

With Samantha in the other room, we huddled close together. “That was interesting,” I said.

McGarrett laughed. “I thought you were going to have a heart attack. The way you looked when she all about Fleur.”

I shrugged. “Not used to being the one ignored. Strange, and I kind of liked it as it went on.”

“Not the first time I have had a person react that way,” Fleur said. “But been a while, and I thought she’d be all about Ares. Look at the man, or God.”

“I am stunning,” I said, in a teasing manner.

“Anyway,” McGarrett said. Even though he wasn’t in his police uniform, he still had the presence. “What do you think?”

“She’s smart,” Fleur said. “And has knowledge in an area we don’t.”

“All true.” I hated not having this knowledge, and I needed to learn about it. Maybe I should have kept up to date on social media in Olympus, but I wasn’t sure how long it would last. It might be around for the long haul.

“So?” McGarrett asked.

“What do you think?” I asked him. “You are one that has more experience in this area.”

McGarrett laughed. “No one has experience in this area.”

That was probably true, and why we were all flailing for ideas on how to win. How to get out of this mess that I made.

“I think we do it,” Fleur said. “Let her take the lead in the social media part of winning this battle.”

“I do too,” McGarrett said. “Most people these days get their news from social media. It’s the best way to spread the story we want.”

“Then we go with it,” I said. “Just nothing too risqué.”

Fleur raised one eyebrow. “Me? Risqué, never.”

For some reason, I found it hard to imagine. With the way she was in the bedroom, there was a chance that I could ask her for some fun pics or videos. Though just for me. For others, I had no doubt she would never share.

BEHIND THE SCENES

After agreeing to move forward and have Samantha take charge, we called her back to the living room. The woman was midway through getting ready for pictures, with putting makeup on and doing her hair.

It was one of the most ridiculous things I have ever seen. Though it brought the phrase “putting my face on” to my head. It fit so perfectly, and she didn’t need to do this. There was no denying Samantha was an attractive woman, and didn’t need to layer on the makeup like this.

“What have you decided?” she asked.

“You know a bit more about social media than we do,” Fleur said. “We’ll follow your lead, but you can’t post anything until tomorrow.”

That would allow us to get back to the city and hide safely away.

“I can post pictures with the two of us in them?”

I cleared my throat. “I know I’m not White Angel,” I said. “But I need to be part of them too.”

The influence nodded. “Fine.”

If I didn’t have confidence in who I was, that might have hurt me. But I was Ares, the God of War. Some random female on Earth wasn’t going to knock me down a peg. She wasn’t into me, and there was nothing I could do about that.

Samantha led us back to her photo area. My jaw dropped at what I saw. One wall was a green screen, and the other was where all her makeup and clothes hung. Her photos were fake and staged.

I shouldn't have been shocked, but it made my skin crawl just knowing that the lady wasn't remotely who she said she was.

"Are all your photos taken here?" McGarrett asked.

"No," Samantha said. "I've had to resort to this, since when I'm out, I get photobombed too much. I'd spend three hours trying to get one photo. It was draining. Not what I want, but the only way I can get decent photos these days."

I felt terrible that she wasn't being allowed to do her job when she was in public. Though this still felt like a lie, and one that I didn't like being a part of. But we needed all the help we could get against Fenrir.

"What do you need from us?" Fleur asked.

"This might take a while," Samantha said. "I'm assuming you want various photos posted over days. To build up your cause. To make the people see you as human, but worrying about the life of those around them."

"That sounds very much what we want," Fleur said.

"And I can assume you won't be back every day to take more pics."

That would be out of the question with all the work we had to do with Fenrir. Not to mention, I didn't want to spend more time being smuggled in and out of the city.

"Correct," Fleur said.

"Then we have to do several wardrobe changes."

Samantha was right. This was going to be a long and tedious event.

I turned to McGarrett. "We might want to inform Lincoln that this is going to take a while."

McGarrett nodded. "Yeah. This won't be fun."

AFTER WHAT FELT LIKE A LIFETIME—WHICH was saying something for me—we had all the pictures we needed. The number that Samantha took with Fleur had to be way more than she would ever need, but Fleur let her.

I was in far fewer, and for once was okay with that. The hours dragged on, and I was more than ready to get back to the hideout and plan the next phase. For me, I hoped it was finding Stan.

Lola should be able to find the man, and I knew he had to be alive. I just knew it. He was a fighter and a survivor.

By the time we got back to Lincoln and his truck, the sun had already set.

“About time,” the gang leader said. “This isn’t freaking Uber.”

I laughed. “Sorry.”

The man shrugged. “Just saying, I got shit I need to do, and waiting around for you all day ain’t part of the plan.”

“Like I said, I’m sorry.”

“We’ll make it up to you,” Fleur added. “I would really like to talk business with you.”

She was up to something, and I wasn’t sure if that was good or bad. Knowing the Walker in her, she was looking to make some money. Not that I would blame her since money ruled the world. At least she went about it ethically.

The ride back to the city was much better. The back of the truck was still cramped and bumpy, but Lincoln had at least cleaned it out. No more urine odor to make me want to vomit. Going across the bridge took nearly two hours. How the people in the city ever got anything done in this traffic was a mystery.

By the time we finally arrived back at the hideout, my body ached, and I was ready for bed. It had been a very long day. Though we had to inform Lola of everything that happened today.

We had made sure to not take any devices that might be able to track back to Lola. It was hard being out of contact with her, but needed.

She rushed to us as we entered the building. “On my lord,” Lola said. “You had me worried sick.”

“I’m sorry,” I said.

“It couldn’t be avoided,” Fleur added.

Lola nodded. “I’m sure, but it doesn’t make it any easier.”

Fleur and I went into great detail on our day. It was a long story, and Lola appeared to be blown away by it.

“When will the photos start?” Lola asked.

“Tomorrow,” Fleur said. “Then continue at random intervals to keep my father and the authorities at bay.”

That had been very important to both of us. We needed to make sure that Fenrir didn’t know where we were. Though I worried about Samantha and the risk she was taking, Fleur was convinced that her father wouldn’t harm her. She might be put under surveillance or even tested to see if she was a Paragon, but nothing more.

I hoped she was right, since it would eat at me if her helping us got her hurt in any serious way.

PROGRESS

The next day I woke up refreshed but missing Felicity. I hoped she and Athena made it back soon. Most of all, I hoped that we got rid of Fenrir. We needed the people behind us to make that happen.

Today was going to be the start of that. Samantha was only one part of it. Lola had been hard at work too. She was a computer wizard. Lola found a way to contact millions upon millions of people with text messages and emails promoting Paragons. Showing them doing good, and not just those of us in New York.

I dressed in my standard attire these days, jeans and a shirt with some sort of character on it. Today the shirt was from a game with a character that had ties to Greek mythology that I had never heard of. He was pretty badass with his blades of chaos. I needed something like them, but they just weren't all that practical in a fight. Well not a fight that I would be in.

Leaving the room, I arrived where the magic happened. The magic of solving our problems. For once, I was the first one here and went over to one corner of the room, where they had set up a single-serve coffee machine, and small fridge. Since I arrived, Lola had gotten me food I like to snack on. Not that they understood my choices.

Today I made a cup of coffee and a bowl of Captain Crunch. To me that was a great breakfast and one that would give me the fuel I

needed to start the day. I didn't care how childish one might think the cereal was.

Ten minutes later, Lola walked into the room. She had on a form-fitting blouse that showed me just how amazing her body was. Not that I didn't know already, and she wore a short skirt that let her legs out. As a man I appreciated the outfit. Some might think it's wrong to stare at a beautiful woman, but I wasn't one of those people. Now catcalling was something else entirely.

She walked over to me and eyed my meal. I was eating and leaning against the counter. Taking in a large spoonful of the cereal.

"I don't understand how you aren't fat."

"I'm a God," I said between bites. "All calories are equal to me."

Lola rolled her eyes. "I really wish that was the case for us mere humans."

I shrugged. "Sorry."

I finished the cereal, took her into an embrace. Her floral scent filled me, and her body pressed against mine helped relax me. With Felicity and my sister gone I had been overstressed. They needed to get back, and we needed to arrest Fenrir.

Fleur entered a moment later. "Morning," she said through a yawn.

Looking over Lola, I saw that Fleur didn't look like she had slept well at all. None of us were getting the rest we needed. All pushing ourselves to the limit to solve this job.

"Morning," Lola said, and disengaged me. The hacker went to her computer station and started it up. "Looks like the first photo is out. Wow, you weren't kidding."

I walked over to her. "About what?"

"Samantha having the hots for Fleur."

It was when I saw the picture on social media that I knew what she meant. The way the influencer was looking at Fleur said 'I want to devour you.'

"Oh, wow," Fleur said. She was next to me now. "She really has a look in her eyes, but that is a great picture of me."

There was no denying that. Fleur looked amazing. I, on the other hand, looked like a disinterested douche bag. I didn't like that one bit.

“Look at the response,” Lola said. It was still early, but it was getting a lot of likes and comments. Reading through them was proof that the people were happy to see Paragons being shown in a positive light, and were relieved that they’d gotten out.

Samantha was right that they needed to see Fleur and me as people. That was something we might be able to get some of the other Paragons to do, and we could too. Create our own social media and post. Show them how we were just like them.

It was some food for thought at the very least.

“I didn’t get to tell you,” Lola said. “But I talked to Ryder and Thorn yesterday.”

Both of them were Paragons in other cities. Ryder had helped with Reign, or more importantly, Elric and his crew. Thorn was down in San Antonio, fighting the good fight.

“And?” Fleur asked.

“They were able to talk to some local officials,” Lola said. “Thorn being a super soldier and not technically a Paragon has been out and talking. He’s using his military contacts to help sway. His old General, while not a fan of Paragons, has been listening.”

“That is good,” Fleur said. “We need all the help we can get.”

It was that way for over a week. With us being mostly holed up in the hideout, and not being able to leave. Samantha’s campaign was in full force, and the others were reaching out.

For once, the media was shifting and showing both sides of the world. The good with the bad, and that was okay.

The local news showed the vile ThunderBolt fighting me and then showed me fighting Elric. This time painting me in a positive light, but also reminding everyone that it was Paragons I was battling, and that they needed to be controlled. Not allowed out to harm us. To kill everyone.

It made me sick to think that people actually believed that rubbish. Mako was hard at work with Lola in creating a campaign for political movements.

That was our real phase two, now that we were starting to get the general population to see that Paragons weren’t the problem.

One of the things that was still being played up over and over was my fight with the anti-Paragon units. The video of the men

attacking me played over and over. It was one of the most viewed videos on social media in history, and the fastest to get there. As I watched it, it was painful to witness.

The more I watched myself being attacked, the more I understood what Lola, Fleur, and Felicity went through. It was a disgusting act. I had little doubt that the video was doing just as much good as Samantha and the others joining her. Which had been an unexpected surprise.

All across the world on social media, people were joining the fray and posting pictures of heroes saving the day. Or of Paragons just out having a meal. Not harming a person, and living normal life.

This was all going well, but a slow process. As good as we thought we were doing, it had no effect on the government so far. The mayor of the city had her hands tied, and even though she wanted to help, she was forced by the federal government to submit all the registered Paragons in New York City.

A FRIEND IN NEED

With things going to plan, I wasn't sure what I had to do. But we had to do more and put an end to all of this.

I was in my room, watching a movie, which I hadn't done much since I arrived back on Earth. It was different being here versus on Mount Olympus. I could watch any movie I wanted there from the comfort of my own living room. Not the case here.

As I sat on the couch thinking of Felicity and Athena, hoping they were safe, my phone rang. On it was a number that I didn't recognize, but I answered anyway.

"Hello," I said.

"Thank god, you answered," a familiar voice said.

"Zeke, what's wrong?"

The man sounded scared and there were strange sounds in the background. "I don't know how," Zeke said. "But some people found me and know I'm a Paragon. Trying to take me in. Fuck."

"Get him." I heard in the background. That made my skin crawl.

"Where are you?"

The next thing I heard was clangs and more screams. "Zeke!"

Nothing, the line went dead. I couldn't believe what I'd just heard. The anti-Paragon people had him, and they would be taking him to a camp. I couldn't allow that to happen. Zeke was a good man and helped me out more than once since I'd arrived on Earth.

I rushed to the front part of the hideout; thankfully Lola and Fleur were there, and McGarrett too.

Fleur looked at me. "What's wrong?"

"Zeke called," I said. "Some anti-Paragon people found him and it sounded like they got him."

Everyone's faces went ghost-white in horror. "We can't let them take him," Fleur said.

"Agreed." I was on edge and ready for a fight. These people were going after any and all Paragons. Zeke had never hurt a person, and his powers weren't the type to cause harm. Being a human lie detector wasn't going to hurt people. Not in the way that Fenrir was talking about.

McGarrett gritted his teeth. "I'll go back to my precinct and see what I can find out."

"Thank you."

Lola went to work on her computer system. Her long delicate fingers typed away.

It felt like a lifetime passed with nothing happening. The longer we took to react the more likely we would lose Zeke. I couldn't allow that to happen.

Finally, Lola found the location of the call that Zeke made to me. Fleur and I rushed out of the hideout, and she started to the car.

"No time," I said. Instead, I picked her up in my arms, and leaped away. I could move through the city much faster than any car could.

It didn't take me too long to arrive at the destination. Zeke was gone. Setting Fleur down, she looked even more white. "You okay?"

She nodded. "Not used to traveling like that. Just takes some getting used to."

I smiled. I forget that some people can't handle moving at the speeds a God can. "Sorry."

She waved me off, and we went to work. The area was between his apartment and his pawnshop. The place of the abduction was covered in a layer of grime. That was the norm these days. Had been ever since I arrived, and I felt partially to blame for it all. Bringing this chaos to Earth with Eris, and then Reign. Now we had Fenrir.

Shaking my head, I remembered I needed to focus on now. Find Zeke and then get him to safety.

With my enhanced senses, I took in the area. The alley we stood in was behind an apartment building, and some businesses. It wasn't traveled much and appeared to be used by the locals as a shortcut. One that Zeke probably knew extremely well.

On the ground was his phone, and one of his shoes.

"They left behind the only thing we could use to track him," Fleur said.

She was right and that didn't help my anger. Again, I felt like I was failing one that had helped me. Too many times had that happened in my lifetime and I needed to fix that. I was a fucking God and shouldn't be letting down those around me.

"There." I pointed to the end of the alley. The apartment building had several security cameras. "Think Lola could hack those?"

"If anyone can, it is her." Fleur made the call.

In the meantime, we continued to search for any other leads to find our friend. Maybe he could leave us a clue to find him. My phone rang again, this time it was McGarrett.

"The anti-Paragon force has no registered events right now," McGarrett said.

"That isn't good." If it was one of them we might be able to find him, but then again, we'd risk the anger of Fenrir. Not that I would mind putting it up for him.

"Though," McGarrett said. "A college here says a group has taken to kidnapping Paragons and trying to sell them to the force for money."

I groaned. That was disgusting. "Any leads on them?"

"Nothing that will be any use. Just that it's happening in Queens and the Bronx mostly."

That didn't help us much.

"Thanks," I said. "We'll figure out something."

"Sorry," McGarrett said. "I'll try to learn more."

"Be careful."

It wasn't the safest for me to be out and about. Since I was one of the most recognized Paragons in the world at this point, but I didn't care. I went around and started to ask some people if they saw anything.

No one was willing to talk, and I got the impression some of them wanted to, but they feared to be seen helping any Paragons out in the open. That infuriated me to no end, and just added to the tension I was feeling. Fleur was doing the same thing. We split up, hoping we could cover more ground and maybe Lola would find us a lead.

I had told her about what McGarrett had learned. She was busy with both that lead, and the cameras. With both of those we might be able to find Zeke. Luck had to be on our side. I looked up to my old home, Tyche was the Goddess of luck or fortune. "Tyche help me out. Give me something."

Fleur arrived just then and was on her phone. "Lola got the video."

I couldn't help but smile.

A CRUEL WORLD

Going back to the alley for some privacy, we viewed the video Lola sent to Fleur's phone. It was grainy and hard to see what was going on.

Zeke was running for his life, and behind him were a dozen people. It clearly wasn't the anti-Paragon unit. It had to be some of the people that McGarrett mentioned, who wanted to turn him in.

The video was so low quality that there was no way to make any real identification of the group that caught up to Zeke and gave him a beating. They ganged up on him, and kicked the shit out of him.

My blood boiled watching it unfold in front of us. It didn't last long, before they picked him up and dragged him away to a waiting cargo van that was just in the camera's view.

"Can you make out what that logo is?" I asked.

"I can," Lola said. "There is a flower shop, around the corner."

She gave us the address. That was our next lead.

The shop was close as Lola said. On the door was a 'be back in ten minutes' sign. "I'm not waiting," I said.

"Ten minutes might be all Zeke has," Fleur said.

The door was locked but wasn't going to slow me down one bit. Any Paragon with any amount of super strength could break down a door. Fleur didn't let me just bust it open. Instead, she used a hair clip and picked the lock. She had it open in less than a minute, it wasn't the most elaborate lock in the world.

As we walked into the flower shop, we were greeted with the expected scent of flowers. It nearly overwhelmed me. A bell sounded as we entered.

To my surprise, a person exited from the back of the shop. "How'd you get in?"

The person stopped dead in their tracks. "Ares?"

"That's me," I said. There was no time for beating around the bush here. "A car with your logo on it was used to kidnap a friend of mine."

The lady, who had to be in her late fifties or early sixties, looked stunned. Her jaw dropped. She ran her hand through her gray-streaked hair that was shoulder length. "That little shit," she said.

"Who?" Fleur asked.

"My nephew." The woman didn't look happy. "My brother begged me to hire him. Tobias has been nothing but trouble. He's been hanging out with the wrong sort recently and well, anti-Paragon people."

"I see," Fleur said. "Any ideas as to where he and his friends might take someone?"

"Please," I said. "I don't want my friend ending up in some sort of camp. He's never hurt anyone. His powers aren't combat related. He's a great man."

She nodded. "I'm not like my nephew. Not saying I'm some sort of Paragon groupie, but I see the need for them to help out with the powerful gangs and the like."

That was nice to hear. "So?"

"A warehouse in Queens," she said. "I think they have a few there."

I groaned. She gave us the address, and we left her. I hoped she was right, and if we could stop this little group all the better.

ACROSS TOWN AT THE WAREHOUSE, we arrived and it was clear that this was the place. Zeke just had to be inside. There were several cars parked near the place, and I could see the tire tracks of

the van going inside one of the large doors that would let trucks in and out.

“We got this,” I said. “Go in and take them out.”

Fleur nodded. “Don’t hurt them.”

As much as I wanted to cause them as much pain as possible, I knew that wouldn’t help our cause.

Taking a deep breath in, I charged the building. Zeke had to be in there, and if this Tobias’s aunt was right, others as well.

I crashed through a brick wall and sent them flying through the air. Fleur ran in behind me. We were in a large open room, that had been set up into a makeshift jail. Sure enough, there were several people being held.

Now more than ever, I wanted to kill those responsible. To make them pay for doing this. If they thought they could get away with this, they had another think coming.

With my speed, I ran through the place, freeing all the prisoners, and sure enough Zeke was here. He was covered in bruises and still not conscious. They did a number on him. Each and every person here was a low-level Paragon. This was horrid, and beyond vile.

Fleur went to work attacking all the kidnappers. They weren’t ready for us at all. I didn’t even have to join Fleur in the fight. With her superior fighting ability she took them out with ease.

In a matter of minutes we had the place taken apart. Fleur tied up all the people, and then turned to the Paragons. “Get out of here,” she said. “Go someplace where you can lay low.”

They nodded and rushed away. Zeke was on the ground. “We have to take him out of here,” I said.

“I know,” Fleur said. “I know a person that can watch him, and keep him safe. Let me call McGarrett first.”

She made the call, and the police would come and talk to these people, and I hoped arrest them.

SECRET HOSPITAL

Fleur directed me to the other side of the city, to a place that I hadn't been to since I arrived. It didn't look like much from the outside, but Fleur assured me that once inside, Zeke would be safe.

"What is this place?" I asked.

"Someplace I set up with Lola a long time ago to help out those in need."

Fleur and Lola had done a lot of great work in the city long before I ever arrived. There was a reason the White Angel was one of the most famous heroes in the world without me.

Inside, I was surprised to see a shelter for the homeless. Along with a place to treat people who were sick. I was in awe of it all.

If Fleur had done this, she was beyond a good person. A fucking saint.

We were greeted by a man dressed in a pair of torn jeans and a dress shirt. "White Angel," he said. "What are you doing here? Shouldn't you be hiding out?"

Fleur smiled. "I'm doing my best, but a friend of mine needed help."

That was when he saw me and Zeke.

"Take him to the back," the man said.

"Thank you, Isiah," Fleur said.

It didn't take long to have Zeke in a bed and a nurse looking him over. "Don't you worry," Fleur said. "Not many people know this place helps Paragons."

That was good to hear. “I can’t believe you have a place like this.”

“We try, it isn’t set up to help many. Just those that are on the streets, and if my father or even the police learned of it, it would be gone in an instant.”

She was right about that. It wouldn’t be much use for hiding too many, but it would keep Zeke safe in the short term.

We couldn’t stay long, since word might get out that Ares and the White Angel were here. That would cause Fenrir to send his goons, and that was the last thing I wanted to happen.

Thanking Isiah, we left and went back to Lola.

I was thankful to save Zeke, but it showed me how bad the city was. New York was in trouble, and so was the rest of the world. We had to fix this and make it better. I just hoped we had the right plan. That the paths we were going down would work.

BREAKING NEWS

After what felt like a lifetime, but in reality, was only a few weeks, I sat at the war table and watched the news. Fleur and Lola were on either side of me. McGarrett and Janet were here too. This was only the second time that Janet had ever been here, and she was impressed with Lola's setup, a bank of monitors that sat next to each other. Her keyboard in front of them. Lola somehow managed to keep the desk clear of anything else.

The two had geeked out over the computers and other tech the first time she was here last week. It was nice to see the pair bonding and relaxing, as the stress couldn't be good for Janet, and her pregnancy. The last thing I wanted to see was McGarrett's wife and future child be hurt by this.

Over the years, I saw a few of mine go through stuff that wasn't fair. Being the child of a God wasn't easy, and even though some of them knew me well, and let me be a good father, some wouldn't let me. That had hurt, and it was my own fault. Just because I was a God didn't mean I was perfect. I did the best that I could when I could.

On the screen was the mayor, and she didn't look happy. "Today was dreadful," McGarrett said.

I could only imagine; on the screen, the mayor was talking about working with the new federal agency that was headed by Fenrir. This man was like Reign on crack or speed. He had even more pull and power, and that was extremely terrifying.

“You did what you had to,” Fleur said.

McGarrett was forced to hand over all the backups the NYPD had on Paragons. “How does that affect us?” I asked.

Lola smiled. “Not at all.”

I breathed a sigh of relief.

“They have your old apartment on file,” McGarrett said. “And for Fleur, they have her father's place.”

It didn't surprise me that they didn't have this place on file, but her dad's apartment in Manhattan was a bit of a shock. “Really?”

Fleur smiled. “My way of sticking it to the old prick.”

“Does that mean he'll have to raid his own apartment?”

“By the books,” McGarrett said. “But we all know he isn't one to go by the books. He'll not let that make the news.”

While we had been successful in getting more and more bad press on him in the news, there was no way we would be able to get that on there.

As we watched the mayor, a call came in through the video chat, and it was someone that I knew well, Mako.

Lola answered it, and his wrinkled mug replaced the news program.

“Mako,” Fleur said. “What can we do for you?”

The man smiled. “It's what I can do for you,” he said. “I found a Senator that is willing to talk, and I have some tech that might be useful in avoiding the new Paragon sniffers.”

I groaned. That had been on the news last night. Walker and his company found a way to tell if a person was a Paragon without drawing blood. They just had to be in the area of one, and the device would sound alarms. That was going to wreak havoc on the Paragon community.

Many people didn't tell anyone they were Paragons. Not wanting to be heroes or villains, doing their best to live normal everyday lives. That was going to change very soon, once that device went into mass production.

“You found a way to mask?” Lola asked. “I've been trying but failing.”

Mako smiled. “It's rare that I can beat the great Lola,” he said in a playful tone. It was nice to see that even Mako, one of the richest

and most powerful people in the world, could have a sense of humor and respect Lola.

FENRIR NOT HAPPY

The next day, we got to see one of the best press conferences since I've been back on Earth. It was brilliant and made my day. It occurred as Fenrir left his mega-building, the one that was constructed to show just how powerful he was.

Walker Consolidated headquarters was the tallest building in New York City, and that was saying something. It pierced the sky higher than anything else in the world. Fenrir made sure of that.

If anyone asked me, I would call it an eyesore, but that was my own personal taste. Some of the articles written about the building loved it.

As the man exited the building, he was ambushed by the news media. They had taken to stalking him and asking him questions all the time. It was his own doing, and now it bit him in the butt. Fucking brilliant.

"Is it true that you are harboring a Paragon?" A blond reporter for one of the local stations asked.

Fenrir crinkled his nose, and his nostrils flared. His face was red with anger and disgust at even the thought of having a Paragon with him, or so I thought.

"I am not," he said. "My vile daughter, as you all know, is a Paragon. She goes by the name White Angel. She is no angel."

"She's a protector of the city," another reporter said. "We've seen it countless times."

Fenrir's lips formed a thin line, and the wrinkles on his face showed. "I do not buy that. We have seen many Paragons attack us for no reason, and that is why we have set up these new laws that have now gone into effect."

"But according to the NYPD Paragon unit," a reporter said. It was the blond one, and she appeared happy. "White Angel's home is the same as yours."

"My daughter, Fleur, just hasn't updated her current residence."

Fleur was watching with me, and so was Lola. The White Angel burst out laughing. "Wait for it," she said.

The blond reporter narrowed her eyes. "Sir, that isn't true. The record shows that she just changed it to your residence three weeks ago."

Fenrir had a look of shock and horror on his face. This was too great for all of us. Seeing the man that had made it his mission to take us all out, and hurt even his own daughter, be surprised by something. This might have been the first time Fleur shocked him.

"What made you do that?" I asked.

Fleur shrugged. "When I went with you to register, I decided to change it. Something Lola and I do every six months or so. Just to make sure that none of the villains get a beat on us."

That was very smart, and I was once again impressed with Fleur and Lola.

Lola snickered. "Before that Fleur used her brother's address."

That was no surprise and fun, as well. While being a hero was serious business, taking a moment to have some fun with it was needed. I was glad both had been able to do that and hoped we could do more of it in the future.

On the TV, Fenrir was in full-on spin mode. Trying to make the best of it, and now he was forced to let the new federal agency, that I'm sure Reign would have been proud of, into Fenrir's luxurious place. Along with the media, to show everyone that he wasn't letting Fleur live with him.

"I can't believe he is going to actually do that," Fleur said. "He hates letting strangers into his place."

"He had no real no choice," I said. "If he didn't, he would look like a hypocrite, and he can't have that."

“True,” Fleur said.

“I wish we could be there.” Lola had an evil grin on her face. “It would be humorous to see him flustered.”

“The real question is can we use this against him,” Fleur said. “If we can get an edge, we have to take it.”

She was right, but I wasn’t sure what that might be.

ALONE TIME

That night, after trying to figure out what we might be able to do, I sat in my room. To help clear my head, I turned on my gaming system and put in the latest American football game. It was a mess in some ways with the extras that distracted from that actual game, but I ignored all that.

For fun, I played a game with my two favorite teams, the Eagles and Lions. Just because I lived in New York didn't mean I was going to root for the teams here. Just something about those two teams that I liked. Not sure why.

Tonight, I was playing as the Eagles and throttling the Lions. No surprise there, since the Lions, for the most part, have been a terrible team and the Eagles a good one. As I ran up the score, I hoped to figure out more about Fenrir.

Lola was still trying to find the old man, Stan. As much as I hoped we could locate him, I knew it might not help. Part of me just wanted to make sure the man was fine. I knew better than most that humans didn't live forever, and that he might have passed away and entered the afterlife. Whichever one that was for him. I just hoped it wasn't Hades' domain, that place was awful, and I wouldn't wish it on my biggest enemy. Well, that wasn't technically true. I'd love to see Fenrir and Hera there, and hoped Reign was. But not most people, although I knew that a great many people passed through there.

A knock sounded on my door, and then Lola entered. She was dressed in her typical attire, a short sexy skirt, and a blouse that was

unbuttoned at the top to show just a tease of her breasts. Her long brown hair hung down to her shoulders, unhindered by anything.

As always, she looked stunning, and I had trouble taking my eyes off her. She was hot and smart, such an incredible combo and I was blessed to have her in my life.

Lola walked over to me in her sexy, swaying walk. One that just made me want to rip her clothes off and make love to her. The way her hips went back and forth was so enticing. I stared at her as she made her way to me. Both of us knew that I would, and that made me smile.

She sat next to me on the sofa in the room. The room was more like a studio condo. It reminded me of the way I lived for most of my life. It wasn't until the last millennium or so that I started to have larger houses, and separate rooms.

Sure, I could have long before that, but I was the God of War, and while the people might not like me at times, I still was close to them. I wanted to live like mortals to better understand them.

With the room, it helped relax me, and made everything much more smooth.

"You okay?" I asked her.

She shook her head. "I feel like I'm failing you all. I can't find Stan, I can't hack into Fenrir's systems. I'm useless."

It was hard not to laugh. This might be the first time I'd ever heard Lola have any self-doubt. To me it was comical, and not remotely needed. I turned to face her and saw the pain in her eyes. She really was feeling bad and not helpful.

I cupped her face and looked deep into her pained, but eloquent brown eyes. "Lola," I said. "Trust me, you aren't useless. Just because right now you haven't succeeded, doesn't mean you won't, and haven't. None of us are having much success these days. It's been a snail's pace to make any headway."

"Still—" she started to say.

"No, you are the glue of this team. The one that keeps us together and safe. If we didn't have you, none of this would be possible. None of it."

"That isn't true," Lola said. "I'm not a Paragon."

This time I did laugh. “Could have fooled me. The technology you have created. You keep us safe, and able to focus. You. Not me, not Fleur, not Felicity, not Athena, not McGarrett. You.”

“I just don’t feel like I’m pulling my weight.”

I knew how that felt, and understood. Having things get hard and not work out for a person was tough to get through. Even for the strongest of people, failure was difficult. Over the years, I learned the hard way that if I let myself focus on the bad, the negative, that I wouldn’t be able to win the war. That was a person’s biggest enemy. Not the people they had to defeat, but themselves.

“I have faith in you. I know that you will find Stan. That you will figure out a way to depose Fenrir. You are the smartest person I have ever met.”

Lola smiled. “I doubt that.”

Chuckling, I still stared in her eyes. My hands still on her silky-smooth skin, cupping her face. “You are.”

Suddenly she was crying.

“Oh, Lola.”

“You are too sweet,” she said.

That was a rare thing to be said about me. I was no God of Love or romance. That was for sure, but I speak from the heart, and always will.

“Lola, I love you. You mean the world to me, and I know in my heart that you are rare beyond compare. You mean so much, and I know we can and will win.”

She leaned into me and kissed me. Her tears dried up as we continued to kiss. Those gentle lips pressed against mine. Her smooth, soft body countered my rough, hard one. Lola might not look strong or powerful, but here and now she was.

Letting her take control, she pushed me back. Then sat on top of me, straddling me.

Even if I wanted to stop my cock from getting hard, I couldn’t. She turned me on, and now I wanted her. To be in her, and to make love to her. Lola kissed me, hard and with a passion that only she had. Her hips rocked back and forth as she dry humped me. Making my cock get even harder.

At times, she could be such a tease. Making me long for her, even though she was on top of me. Lola had that talent, and I loved it.

“I love you,” I said between her kisses.

She giggled. “I love you too.”

Slowly, she undressed me. Unfortunately that meant she had to stand up, but that meant my cock was free.

With my clothes off, she took all my member into her mouth. Every inch of my massive erection. Her tongue worked magic on me. Sending a chill through me, and nearly making me explode in a minute. It took all I had not to give in to the rising climax in me.

As Lola sucked on me, her hands moved up and down my body. Teasing every inch of me. Playing with my nipples and letting me suck on her fingers. It was some of the most intense moments I’ve had in lovemaking.

Unable to control myself, I exploded into her mouth. Filling her with my cum. “Lola,” I moaned in bliss.

She looked up to me and swallowed.

It was my turn to pleasure her and I did. Trading places, I undressed her and took in her amazing body. Her pale smooth skin, and her perky breasts. Those hard pink nipples were so inviting. As was her lush flower between her legs. I wanted to kiss all of her at once. To pleasure her in ways that no one but I could.

Starting at her neck, I worked my way down to her breasts, nipples. Teasing them with my tongue, and hands. Continuing down her body, I paused only briefly at her pussy. Then down her legs, until I was at her feet. Rubbing her feet and kissing them brought me joy. She looked up at me, with pleasure and relaxation in her eyes.

Then I made my way back up her legs. To her amazing lower lips and found her clit. Using my tongue on her clit, and my fingers in her. I sucked and thrust, doing my best to make her happy. To bring her to a climax and see her body melt into carnal relaxation and happiness.

“Ares,” Lola screamed out in delight. That didn’t stop me, I knew I could get her to climax again, and again.

After her third time, I slid up her body and entered her. Making love to her and forgetting about the rest of the world. It was just Lola

and me, nothing else. I loved her and she loved me. That was all that mattered right now.

SNEAKING INTO EPPS

The next morning, all three of us had a meeting with Mako in person. He wanted to pass over the technology he had, and to see if Lola could help improve it.

Just as we were about to leave, Mako sent word that his building was under surveillance by the anti-Paragon agents in NYC. That was going to make things difficult. Earlier this morning the agency released a list of their most wanted Paragons.

One guess as to who was at the top of it: me. Followed by Fleur, Felicity and Athena. At least, Fenrir didn't put Lola or McGarrett on there. We all knew for sure that he knew about them. With them watching Mako, it made me worry that Fenrir had learned about him and us too.

That was a very bad sign and made me wonder if he had some sort of device already in place that was watching Epps Technologies. That would be very bad for both Mako and us. I know that I could be a little paranoid at times, but with the way this trip to Earth had been, nothing would surprise me.

The last thing I wanted was for the ones I cared most about to get hurt.

"We'll have to be super careful," I said.

Lola smiled. She was still high from the night before, and our lovemaking. So was I for that matter. Anytime I got to make love to Lola, Fleur, or Felicity I was in bliss for a while. There was nothing like it in the world.

“I know,” Fleur said. “Mako said there was an underground entrance, and he doesn’t think it will be watched.”

I didn’t like the phrasing of that one bit. Just because it might not be common knowledge didn’t mean Fenrir and his new agency didn’t know about it. They seemed to have access to data and resources that no one should. That was the most frustrating part of it all. The unlimited access Fenrir had.

It grated me that he had the government behind him. I was getting sick of dealing with politics and corrupt mortals. The longer we had to deal with this, the more likely it was that my dear mother’s plan was going to work. That pissed me off.

Instead of using Fleur’s normal car, we picked up a much more inconspicuous car. A standard sedan that blended in the streets well. New York traffic was brutal, but it was easy to not be noticed if one didn’t want to.

As much as I would have liked to take a direct route to Epps Technologies, we didn’t. Maybe it was all of us being paranoid, but we didn’t want the government to somehow track us backward, if they could do that.

Fleur made the drive, tricky and hard to follow at times. The only good thing about this was that it allowed Lola to get work done. The hacker might only have her smartphone, but that was enough for her. With her knowledge and skills, she was basically tapped into her main setup back at the lair. That was amazing to me.

“What you working on?” I asked.

Lola smiled. “I think I finally have a lead on Stan,” she said.

“I knew you could do it,” I said.

She nodded. “Though it’s not good.”

That I didn’t want to hear. The man had been nice, and I really hoped that he would be able to help up. Even if it was just a little bit.

“How so?”

“I think he’s in hospice care,” Lola said.

That wasn’t good. He was old, and I had seen more than one person go there to die. As much as I wished I had the power to make everyone live as long as did, I knew that wasn’t possible, and would lead to problems that I couldn’t even imagine.

“We can go after our meeting with Mako,” Fleur said. “I would like to see him.”

“Me too,” I said.

Eventually we arrived close to the Epps building. Looking around, it didn't appear to be watched, but that didn't mean a thing. A group of covert federal agents would have the ability to blend in. Not be seen by even the likes of me, or anyone on the team.

“What do you think?” I asked.

“We go to the secret garage,” Fleur said.

That worried me more than I let them know. The more I thought about it, the more it felt like a trap to me. That we would be fighting for a way out of the place and never actually meet with Mako.

“If you are certain,” I said.

“We have to,” Lola said.

She appeared to be okay with it. After locating Stan, she had gone to work on seeing if she could find any cameras here. The garage that Mako said would be the safest, had none. Again, I wasn't sure if that was good or bad.

“Very well.” I took a deep breath in and prepared for the worst.

THE WORST

Pulling into the underground garage, the hair on my skin tingled. It felt wrong, and just as I was about to voice my opinion we were surrounded by black SUVs.

“Fuck,” I said. Jumping out of the car. “Stay.”

Both of them nodded. We had talked about keeping them away from the Paragon weapons that Fenrir and the agency had been using. Since I had proved to be immune to them, I was the one to take the alpha of the attack and to get us out of here.

The lead car stopped right in front of us, and a burly man exited it. One that reminded me of a few stereotypical alpha males. He was just as large as I was, with big arms and shoulders. There was little doubt that this man worked out daily, and enjoyed fighting.

“Ares,” he said. “You have been summoned by Fenrir.”

I laughed. “Summoned is a nice way to put it.”

The man smirked. “You are the most wanted man in America.”

I shrugged. That was both amusing to me, and frustrating. I had to hope that all our efforts to show the truth were working.

“And if I refuse,” I said.

“Then I’ve been told to use any means necessary,” he said. The brutish man waved his hand, and two dozen men exited the SUV’s around us.

I really wasn’t concerned about them. Being a God had its benefits, and I would be able to take care of these men in a blink of

an eye. None of them appeared to have celestial bronze, or any other magical weapons. That was my only issue these days.

Moving with my godly speed, I took out the first goon with a leg sweep that he never saw coming. It was almost comical how the man went down to the ground. Screaming like the pansy he was.

From there the others were much better prepared, but not enough. No matter how much a mortal thought he was ready to fight me, he wasn't. The only ones that have been able to hold their own were Paragons, and not even all of them.

These guys were in over their heads and they knew it. Moving to the next closest, a jab to the chest and he went smashing into the SUV behind him. I held back on the punch, and it still caused him to dent the vehicle. That hadn't been my intention, but right now I wasn't pleased with this ambush.

As I fought, I had to wonder how they had known we would be here. Did Mako set us up? Or did Fenrir have an inside man other than him at Epps? I just didn't know, and that was yet another frustration.

Before most of the men could even react, I had them on their backs and needing a trip to the emergency room. The old me would have made that even unnecessary, but I was a hero, and they didn't kill. It would have made my life a hell of a lot simpler. If we could just kill all those that were in our way, we would be in a much better situation.

Now it was just me and the lead henchman. "Tell your little boss," I said. "That we do not recognize his authority and will not stand still. Nor do the people. He cannot and will not oppress us."

The man gritted his teeth and his nostrils flared. Sometimes my super hearing wasn't an advantage. His teeth sounded awful, and under his breath he muttered, "I'll fucking kill you and every other Paragon, you slime."

It took everything I had in my power not to turn around and kick him in the balls. He was a rude and vile prick.

The number of people that I have met on Earth, this time back, that were like him sickened me. There were always bad people, but these days it was worse than ever before. Why that was I didn't know, but it was the case. That being said, there were still some

people that made this worth it. Some of the best people I had ever met were here now too. It was such a shame that to have such good people, there had to be such bad people. Balance sucked sometimes.

Back in the car, I sat and turned to Fleur. "Time to go."

Lola sighed. "I was so looking forward to see the tech Mako talked about."

I knew that she was but there was no way we could stay here. "I was looking forward to Stan afterword," I said. "But we have to go back to the hideout and figure this out."

"We do," Lola said. "Such a shame."

SORTING IT OUT

Back at the headquarters, my heart still pounded from the fight. It wasn't the most intense one I had even been in. Yet, it had me jacked up. Not knowing how they found us had me going.

I couldn't help myself and I was pacing back in froth in the front part of the building that was our home. The cave for us to work out of, though it wasn't really a cave, but I noticed a lot of heroes called their places caves. Must be influenced by the one comic too much.

"Please sit down," Fleur said.

I stopped pacing and looked at her. "I can't, just too worked up. How did Fenrir and his minions know we'd be there?"

Lola was at her workstation tirelessly typing away. Her fingers were the loudest thing in the room right now. Drowning out the ever-consistent hum of all the electronic equipment in the room.

Fleur had turned the TV on to the local news. So far there had been no word on my attack. With how long it took us to get back, that had been a bit of a shock. We all had figured Fenrir would be using this against us.

Suddenly an alert came for an incoming call on our secured line. This had to be Mako, and he had a lot to answer for.

Lola jumped up from her station and joined us in the spot where we all could be seen by the caller.

"Mako," Fleur said. "What in the world was that?"

The man had sweat pouring down his face. Now more than ever he looked his age, and I almost felt bad for him. Almost.

“I have no idea,” Mako said. He pulled out a handkerchief and rubbed it over his forehead. “I think I have a mole.”

That was one of the scenarios that had been playing out in my head. It wasn't the easiest one to fix and deal with. If it had been Mako, that was a simple fix. Part of me didn't trust the man. He was really an unknown factor in all of this.

“How do we know it wasn't you?” I asked. My tone was harsh and not remotely friendly. Lola and Fleur gave me glances out of the corner of their eyes but didn't turn to face me.

Mako didn't appear fazed by what I said or by my tone. “I know it looks bad for me,” he said. “I told you to go there. I set this all up and that happens. I've been the one to start us working together. It looks terrible and I know it.”

All of it looked bad and made me never want to trust him or another outside person until we had Fenrir and my mother taken care of. Right now, I wasn't even sure I could trust my own family. Outside of Athena, none of them had been here to help. Dear Uncle Poseidon said he would help, but I hadn't seen any real sign of that.

“Mako,” Lola said. “Do you have any ideas as to who the inside person is?”

The older man nodded. “I do, but I would like to keep that in-house for the moment.”

That, I didn't like and made me question him some more. “Why?”

Mako sighed. “It's a person I care about, and I want to be one hundred percent.”

I could respect that, and understood it completely. When a person we love betrays us, it can be something hard to deal with and figure out. Now was not the time to press him, but soon he would need to answer for us.

“Take your time,” I said. “But we can't waste too much time.”

Our plans in social media had been working. And the lack of news from Athena and Felicity meant their plans were working too. It was up to us to find another way in and take Fenrir out.

“I'll get back to you tonight or tomorrow,” Mako said. “I'll make sure this doesn't happen again.”

“Very well,” Fleur said.

STAN THE MAN

That afternoon, we left to see Stan at the hospice. With little else to do, that was one of the few things that would make me feel productive. I needed that now more than ever.

Just waiting for others had never been one of my strengths, and I didn't see that developing any time soon. Throughout history I had always been that way. No matter what version of me the people worshipped. I led from the front and got my hands dirty.

Thankfully, the hospice was in the city and we didn't need to rely on the Third Street Dragons to get us out of the city again. How the old man had gotten back to the city, I didn't know.

Lola was a master at creating false documents, and backstopping them on the internet. Though they would never be able to get us out of the city. None of us had the ability to change the way we looked. Disguises worked to a certain degree.

Using Lola's fake IDs, we arrived at the hospice. Before we left Lola made sure that visiting was allowed, and the hours. We were right in the middle of the time allotted for that.

"We are here for Stan Keebler," I said.

The woman eyed me with a suspicious look. "Mister Keebler doesn't get many visitors."

That didn't surprise me, since he had been homeless. From what Fleur had said he didn't have much of a family. His work was his life for most of it, and now that he didn't have that, he was alone. That

was a sad thought. One that I didn't like at all. No one should be alone. We all need love, and family in our life.

"I'm a friend," I said. "I met him not too long ago, and he gave me advice and I just want to thank him."

The attendant at the front desk smiled. "Stan dishing out advice, that sounds just like him. Always wanting to help others."

"Very much so, and why I wanted to say hi. Let him know he helped me out."

"I'll see if he is up to seeing you," she said. "What is your name?"

"Just tell him the vet from Connecticut is here."

She gave me a funny look but left to see if Stan would see us.

Lola leaned in close to me and held my hand. Fleur was on the other side of me. Even though I only met the man once, I felt like I knew him much longer. He had shown me a wisdom that was rarely seen in most of the humans. Especially in this day and age. While I had to admit, I fully embraced much of the modern technology back on Mount Olympus.

While I was here, I saw the real damage some of that was doing. We were using social media to help us, but I couldn't help but feel like it created some sort of separation between us and the people that were right around us. I could not deny that it allowed people to be in touch with those across the globe.

That wasn't even to mention the obsession with smartphones in general, and other technology. Again, I loved the creations and the way they helped us find more knowledge and the like. It just meant that many people seemed lost in them and not in the world to which they belonged.

After several minutes, the woman appeared. "Stan will see you," she said.

Then she led us back through several hallways that had a very familiar smell to me. One of near-death. Very sterile. It was one of the many reasons people did not like places like this. The constant reminder of death and that they were mortal.

That was something I didn't have to worry about, but the smell still set me on edge. While I might not die, those around me would. They would one day be taken from me, and sent to the afterworld. Sent to Hades and his unrelenting control. I hated that thought and

wished it wasn't the case, but I didn't have the power to change that. Only my dear father could, and I knew he was too cruel to do something for me. He never had in his life.

Arriving at the room, the woman gestured for us to go in. Once inside the tiny room, it was instantly cramped with the three of us in it. Stan looked up from the bed and smiled.

"I thought I might be seeing you again." The fragile old man had a big smile on his face. One that said he didn't care about leaving here and knew that he had made his mark on the world. That was a rare face, and knowledge. Most humans feared death and leaving here. Thinking they didn't impact the world. They did. Trust me, all humans leave their mark on the world.

"You helped me out," I said. "And I need your help again."

Stan chuckled. "If you say so."

It was then that he saw Fleur and Lola. It was clear that he knew who Fleur was and again smiled, but this time a tear streaked down his face. "My dear little Fleur," he said. "It has been a very long time."

She nodded. "Stan."

"And the Guardian is with you."

Lola smiled. It was clear to me that she liked being recognized.

"Stan," I said.

"I'm guessing you want to know about the Walkers?"

I nodded. "I do."

"I don't see how I can tell you more about them than young Fleur here."

"Stan," she said. "I really don't know my father, and my grandfather even less. I distanced myself from them as soon as I could."

The wrinkled old man smiled. "Understandable. I'll tell you what I can about them."

Stan and Fabian started the company seventy years ago with a loan. Both of them had, at the time, a similar vision of creating technology to help move America into the forefront of the world. They started with smaller electronics, and then Fabian saw the potential of moving into weapons.

It was a long time before Stan relented and allowed the company to move into that area, and it paid off. The company started to make

more money than either knew what to do with.

The real change in Fabian came when he had Fenrir, and then lost his wife. She was one of the first Paragons, and her power wasn't controllable. She died from that, and Fabian never recovered.

"I didn't know that," Fleur said.

"Your grandfather kept it under wraps," Stan said. "Both your mother and grandmother died from Paragons."

Fleur nodded. "No wonder my dad hates them."

"It's not a surprise," Stan said. "But your mother and grandmother would be appalled. Both viewed Paragons as the next step. The way to keep the world safe from the unknown."

If only we could use that, help to convince Fenrir not to do this. Maybe seeing his own mother be pro-Paragon would help, or even his wife. Though I doubted that we would ever be able to do that.

"If you go to the old Walker building that we started in," Stan said. "You might be able to find a video I made with Irene. Once she learned that she might die, she begged me to help her record her final wishes. If Fenrir sees that, it might help."

"Thank you," Fleur said. That was just what we needed. It might not stop this completely, since Fenrir was under the control of my mother and she wasn't one to give up easily.

Now we had yet another plan to help defeat Fenrir and Hera. One piece of many, and I hoped each would be enough.

CHAOS AROUND AMERICA

The next few days were long and boring. I longed to be out and stopping all the bad in the world. The news was filled with awful things happening across the city, and the country. As much as our campaigns to prove that Paragons were people, and good, were working, many people in the country were still going out and hurting any Paragons they saw.

It hurt every time I turned on the TV and saw another attack against a Paragon. They had to take it too, unable to defend themselves for fear of making the situation worse for others. Since the few that did defend themselves and took action were turned into villains.

It sickened me to witness that as well. Seeing Paragons that were heroes before this all started and now they were hated. Not like Thunderprick, but actual heroes. Ones that worked hand in hand with Fleur, Bionic Man, and Major Thorn in the past. Not to mention others.

The magazine had shown them as some of the best, but they were being attacked not once, or twice, but more. They flipped and defended themselves. The news ran with that and made them out to be vile scum. Worse than even those that were actual villains.

That was what hurt me the most. I wanted to get out and help them. To travel to Miami, to Denver, or Portland to help them out. Yet, I couldn't even keep the ones here in New York City safe. It was maddening.

Fleur appeared next to me on the fifth day after meeting Stan. We were no closer to a solution and I wanted to run to the old building that housed Walker Consolidated, but it was under lock and key. By not only Fenrir and his men, but by the federal government.

It had been home to an explosion many years ago, and condemned. The fallout from that had nearly destroyed the reputation of Fabian, but Fenrir had been able to fix it all. Using bullying tactics and money that he threw around like it grew on trees. For him it did, and that was one of the many issues we had. While Fleur had money and that helped, it was nothing compared to her dad.

Not even Mako could help us in that area. He was still trying to weed out the mole in his company, and we hadn't heard back from him. That was starting to be a concern.

I didn't want to lose that ally, even though I wasn't so sure it was one.

All this weighed on me, and that didn't even mention that Felicity and Athena were still gone. I tried to reach out to some of the few supernatural beings that I could reach, and no word. That was bringing me down.

"You okay?" Fleur asked.

I shrugged. "Not really."

"I'm sorry," she said.

"Don't be." All of us were having a hard time with all of this swirling around us. Not being able to work freely made it all the more tough. I thought it had been bad with Reign, but he was simple in comparison. He was a power-hungry man, but he actually lacked real power. Unlike Fenrir who had the power, and the vileness to use it to get what he wanted. That was a very dangerous combination.

"I miss her too," Fleur said. "And I hate not being able to help."

"I just wish we could just go get that video."

"If it is even there." Fleur had a look of doubt on her face. She had waited until we got back to the hideout to tell me about the building going down in the accident. I should have remembered it.

That had been big enough that a few of the Gods on Mount Olympus had talked about it. Though I hadn't been that interested in

the incident, since it wasn't directly related to war. Sure the company made weapons that I had wanted to try out, but they weren't soldiers.

It had been wrong of me to ignore the men and women that didn't worship me. Even these days the soldiers really didn't, not directly at least. But in my mind any man or woman serving in the military did. That was the way I thought and felt.

Now I realized it wasn't just the people in the military or on the police force, but all the Paragons that fought for their cause. All the scientists creating weapons to help those fight. All the modern-day blacksmiths. While the current blacksmith might fall more under Hephaestus and work behind a computer as engineers, they were still part of my clan too.

Though right now, that wasn't the problem. We needed to get to the old building and see what it held. And had to hear back from Mako.

Not to mention, I longed to hear from my sister and Felicity. I missed the squirrelkin a lot and needed her here. All three of the women I loved helped me get through these hard times.

A WAY IN

The next day, Fleur walked to me in the large area that was used as the hub of the hideout. McGarrett was here, and so was Lola. They were over at Lola's workstation talking. I had ventured over to the mini-gym area to clear my head.

"Do Gods actually need to work out?" Fleur asked.

"That depends on what you mean. To stay fit, no," I said. It was true that I could eat anything and everything and look pretty much the same. If I wanted my body to change it was more a matter of what I wanted myself to look like. Magic was a tricky thing and I wasn't a master of that. My sister Eris was much better at that, as was Ate. Others had it down better than I as well.

For me it rather enjoyed the look I had. My chiseled face and body, and the hair. My appearance had served me well, and I saw no need to alter it.

"But?"

I smiled, having gotten a little distracted. "I need to train to keep up my skills in combat. That can and will go rusty. A millennium of training might let some talents stay in my mind, but still training is required to stay at my peak."

She nodded. "You are indeed at your peak."

Her tone was playful and inviting, as it always was these days. It was hard to believe that at first Fleur and I didn't get off to a great start. She had wanted nothing to do with me, and I had trouble

figuring that out. She was one of the rare people on Earth to not be drawn to me right away.

“What are they talking about?” I asked, pointing over to Lola and McGarrett.

“McGarrett might have found a way to get into the old Walker building.”

That was great news, and I hoped he was right. That meant we wouldn't be sitting around here doing nothing as the world was going into chaos. With both sides fighting for what they believed in.

It was beyond frustrating that the people were torn on the issue. I had hoped that more would see the Paragons as human and part of them. But Fenrir had done his job well. It didn't help that Eris and Reign before him had set up the table; he had swooped in and made the situation even worse.

Hearing the news that we might have a plan, I left the gym area and headed over to Lola and McGarrett. I hoped he was doing well, and that Janet was too. These days it had to be rough for him, being a cop and a known associate of mine.

The police officer looked up as I reached the two. Fleur was right behind me as well.

“Fleur says you have a plan,” I said.

McGarrett grunted. “Maybe.”

He didn't sound all that confident, but Lola had a look of excitement on her face. That was something and made me smile. “Lola?”

“We do,” she said. “I mean, McGarrett informed us of some old subway tunnels that he used to patrol that are most likely unknown.”

I liked the sound of that. The city had a vast amount of subway that was both in use and out of use. I remembered the subway from my last visit to Earth back during World War II. I made a trip to NYC then, and a few other major cities in the world at the time, London, Paris, Moscow. It had been interesting to see some of them.

Maybe once this was all done with Hera, we all could go on a trip to see the cities. I wondered what they all looked like now. I had no doubt that they changed a lot. I could see it all happening from Mount Olympus but it just wasn't the same as actually visiting the

city. Being in a place firsthand was intense and let one truly feel the city or place.

“Subways,” I said. “Probably dirty, smelly and filled with vermin. My type of place.”

Just like the good old days when I was worshipped by more people and had my full power. The glory days in many ways, back in the height of the Roman and Greek times.

“Only you would sound happy about that,” Fleur said. “That is the last place I want to be.”

I put an arm around her and pulled her close. Her scent reached me, vanilla. It was an intense one. I put my hand on her face and brushed her red hair from her face. Her intense, passionate, green eyes looked up at mine.

“You’ll be fine,” I said. “If there is anyone I know who can handle that place, it’s you.”

“I never said I couldn’t handle it, but I’m not going to enjoy it.”

I smirked. “You just might.”

Lola groaned and so did McGarrett. While I knew at times my flirting left much to be desired, Fleur seemed to like it. That was all that mattered right now.

“Anyway,” Lola said. “The two of you should be able to sneak into the subway and then to the site, but I think some help from your buddies would be nice.”

I closed my eyes. It was my turn to groan since she was talking about the Third Street Dragons, and while they had been helpful since my first encounter with them, they have also led to some bad luck.

For the most part, I wanted to avoid them, but I knew that would be impossible. I had to make the best of it, and I knew there was no way around getting help. As much as I wanted to use the police force to help, we couldn’t. McGarrett’s hands were tied with all the new laws and regulations.

The city was the biggest area for the enforcement of all the laws that the government was putting into place. At least, on the internet, many of the people were bashing the government. Even all the news stations were at least showing both sides of the story, and I knew that was a rarity.

“I’m ready when everyone else is,” I said.
“Make the call,” Fleur said.

THE NASTY SUBWAY

The call to the gang didn't take long, and the leader was more than willing to help. His business was going through a transition and the chaos that was going on didn't help him. The gang had both Paragons and regular humans in it. The Paragons were only the lowest of the low levels, but that didn't mean they weren't being chased by the government, and since they were part of a gang that made it worse.

They were the bottom of society in many people's eyes. Shit ran downhill and they were the shit. Many of the Paragons that had been captured or arrested in the last few weeks were in gangs and the like.

That helped fuel the fire that Fenrir had started. Using that, he went around and touted how they were cleaning the streets of violent criminals, and the *heroes* did nothing. Not that any Paragons could help since it was now completely illegal to use superpowers in the city. If one used any powers in public, it made them America's top most wanted.

They would join Fleur and me on the list. I was proud to be on the top of the list, and so was Fleur. To her it brought shame to her father, and that was a laugh. I wasn't sure how much it actually hurt the man, since I wasn't sure he actually loved her. Maybe at one point he did, but no longer.

A few hours after making the call, the Third Street Dragons met us at Penn Station. It had taken us that whole time to get there.

Again, Fleur took many different detours to make it hard for her father and anyone else that might try to track us.

Once we arrived, the Third Street Dragons shuffled us into another truck. "If I ever have to ride in one of these again after this," Fleur said. "That will be too soon."

I was in agreement with her. While they had cleaned it up and it no longer had the foul odor, it still wasn't my first choice. Hopefully, soon we would be able to work out in the open again. No longer relegated to hiding.

That was going to be the only way we would be able to defeat my mother.

The ride over, again, was tedious and uncomfortable but at least this time it wasn't nearly as long. The truck would stop in a place that would let us enter the subway unseen by anyone, and with no cameras, which was a rarity these days.

Once inside the actual subway, we were greeted with an odor that make my stomach curdle. A mix of decay, feces, urine, and rotting food. Not something that anyone can get used to, not even a God.

"This is awful," Fleur said.

"I know."

We both did our best to breathe through our mouths, but that just made it linger there. Nothing was going to make this a pleasant experience. The best course of action was to get through this place fast, and to our destination.

How McGarrett made it through this place when he was a beat cop was beyond me. It looked like he might be the last cop to actually do his cop duty and come down here, but from what he said that might be because it wasn't important anymore with the building going down.

With the possibility of the building being contaminated, the NYPD did not appear to want to risk its officers getting sick. Can't say I blamed them. The last thing I'd want to do was come down here on a daily basis.

It was dark, damp and smelly. And to make it worse, I was in my Greek God outfit, and Fleur was in her superhero costume as well. Hers provided her with some protection from this, albeit not that

much. Mine did nothing at all. I was going to need to shower for a week straight after this was over.

The slog through the place was terrible. I lost track of the number of times vermin ran in front of us. I didn't bother trying to guess what they were. They were big, hairy and that was enough.

"I hate this," Fleur said.

"You're not alone," I said. "A shame that Felicity and my dear sister can't experience this."

"For real."

Most of the trek was made in silence. We had even gone to comm silence. Taking out the devices in case they could be hacked. We all mused that we were being over-cautious since Lola was the best in the business, but better safe than sorry. I silently thought it might be that Lola had not wanted to hear us walk through this place and hear us complain about it.

Fleur had her phone out, which providing the only light and held the map we needed. My memory was not something I took great pride in. While it wasn't terrible, directions in a place like this was something I didn't want to rely on either of our memories for. A map was non-negotiable for me.

"Almost there," she said. She had been staring at the phone most of the way, and I didn't blame her. It had to distract her from the surroundings.

"Good." We couldn't get out of this place fast enough.

"So," Fleur said. "Lola told me just as we left that we might have to crawl up a tunnel that used to be a sewer."

I groaned. "Like I said, fun stuff."

Fleur chuckled. "So you say."

Fleur stopped and looked around, and sure enough there was a small tunnel that went up, that smelled even worse than anything else and that was saying something. I couldn't believe that in this trip I would be doing something like this.

I looked up to my old home, and cursed. "Hera," I said. "Fuck you."

Fleur laughed. "Can she actually hear you?"

"It depends," I said.

That gave Fleur a look of concern. "You're serious."

“If we focus on a place or a person while at Mount Olympus, we can hear them. See them clearly.”

With my vision I could see Fleur blush. “So you’re saying that one of your Gods might have seen us.”

I shrugged. That was something I hadn’t thought about before, but sure it was a possibility, although I hoped that they would look away. I sure as hell didn’t want to see most of them fucking someone.

“Don’t worry about it,” I said. “Let’s go crawl through some old shit.”

OLD SHIT

The old sewer line was just large enough for me to fit in. Fleur had plenty of room behind me. Not like that mattered as I went up the tunnel, all the old crusty feces and everything else clung to me.

This was going to be one of the worst experiences of my life. I've seen bodies mangled from war. Smelled them decay. Seen the ancient times and shit on the street, or in outhouses. This was worse than it all.

As I did it, I thought that there was no way the guy in that movie escaped the prison crawling through this shit. I nearly puked a few times when some of the old crusty stuff got on my face or in my eyes.

The climb only lasted a minute or two, but it was the longest minute of my entire existence.

Climbing out of the tunnel, we found ourselves in the basement of the building. It had rubble all around it, and stank to high heaven, though I think that was me.

Fleur exited a half minute behind me. She crinkled her nose, and covered her mouth as she looked at me. "You look disgusting," she said, muffled by her hand.

"You're welcome," I replied. She had some of the conk on her, but it wasn't too bad. She still looked hotter than ever.

While I was sure I looked like one of the monsters that I feared would be arriving soon to attack us. If we don't find a way to stop my

dear old mother.

“Where to?” I asked.

Fleur had been here many years ago, and could hopefully find the area that we needed.

The building had come down, but only the top part of it. It wasn't structurally sound at all, but the basement was intact, and so were a few of the lower levels. That was where we would most likely run into the guards that were waiting for us.

“The office that Stan talked about was in the basement,” Fleur said.

That was one of the only reasons that Fleur was up for this. If the video had been stored up on the top floor, there was little chance that it had survived, but Stan had a secret office in the basement with a vault where he stored his secrets that he didn't want Fabian to have access to. Nor Fenrir. Stan was smart to keep his knowledge out of their hands. They would have used it for profit alone.

The more I learned about the old man, the more I thought he was a good one. He might not be an actual soldier or warrior, but he had the spirit and wanted to help those around him. I respected him, and his knowledge. It's hard to teach a God something and he had.

“Lead on,” I said.

She searched the area and found a shirt and handed it to me. “At least try to get some of that off,” she said.

I did my best, but the shirt just wasn't made for this task. Once I had the shirt off my face, we went out to the hallway and Fleur took us to the office that Stan had told us about.

So far we hadn't seen a soul, nor heard one. “You think the reports are wrong about this place being watched?” Fleur asked.

That was highly doubtful since her father knew that we would try anything to get to him. He had to fear this place and what it represented. While he had the massive new building, this one still sat here as a reminder of a failure of the company, and that was a failure on his part.

He valued the company and everything about it. If it failed, he did. The same had to be true for this new anti-Paragon stance that he had.

Fleur entered the office and stopped dead in her tracks.

NOT ALONE

Standing there in front of us were Fenrir and one of his biggest bodyguards. They had a torch and were trying to get into the vault. This was something I hadn't expected.

The man turned around to face us, and he didn't look happy. "I see you heard about this too," Fenrir said. "I wonder what you think is in here?"

The vile man rubbed his chin and glared at us. Every time I was in the same room with him, I felt dirty and wanted to wash. My skin still crawled from the talk we'd had. This man was the scum of the earth.

"Nice to see you too, Father," Fleur said. "What I think is in there is none of your business."

Fenrir laughed. "Well, why don't you just wait right here and we'll see what lies inside."

I had no intention of waiting around with him. There was no doubt in my mind that he had already alerted the authorities and they would be on their way.

"Fleur?"

She looked at me with a pained expression. While she often talked of how much she hated the man, it was clear to me that she still thought of him as her father, and that was a bond that was impossible to break.

One I knew too well. Even a God like me has his daddy issues, and of course, mother ones too.

“Get inside,” she said. “And be quick.”

“As you wish,” I said.

Fenrir glared at the two of us. The man started to pull up a weapon that was on his side. While I couldn't make it out, there was no doubt that in my mind it was one of his anti-Paragon weapons.

I didn't let him even get it all the way up before I reached him and broke it in half. Fleur was next to me in a heartbeat and had her own father in a chokehold. She was being gentle with him and taking him out.

The burly man with the plasma cutter spun to face me with the weapon in his hand. The intense heat hit me like a volcano. While I wouldn't die from it, that didn't mean I wanted to let hot plasma burn my clothes. I dodged to the left, and ducked down, with a sideswipe.

Letting the man fall to the ground, I only caught the plasma cutter so he didn't burn himself or bring the building down. With the gentlest touch I could, I knocked the man out.

“Get in and now,” Fleur said.

With a grin, I reached to the vault door: they had been halfway through, and that gave me a nice place to grip the door. Using that, I pulled and the metal groaned. It was in place, but not good enough to stop me. I pulled, and the metal gave way.

A thunderous bang surrounded us as the door broke from the vault. With ease, I tossed the door to the side, and Fleur let her father go and entered the vault. It was the same size as the room.

It was filled with many treasures. Stan had been a productive man in his time working with Fabian.

“Take it all,” Fleur said.

I picked it all up and piled it into the bags that we had brought. Our plan the whole time had been to empty the vault and go over it once we got back to the hideout. What I hadn't expected was the vast number of CDs, VHS tapes, and the like in here. Not to mention the random prototype weapons. I wondered if Lola or Mako might be able to use those to help us out.

With my godly speed, I collected all the stuff in the room. To a mere mortal it would be too much to carry, but I managed. The issue would be getting it all out of here.

“This won't fit in the tunnel,” I said.

“You can make a bigger one,” Fleur said.

This was turning into some fun for me. Making my own tunnel to the subway sounded extremely fun. We left the room and Fenrir on the ground. Part of me wanted to crush his skull here and now, but that would add fuel to the fire.

At the place we entered the tunnel, I set the bags down. “Don’t take too long,” Fleur said.

She was right that time was very important. We had to get back to the Third Street Dragons and fast. I could already hear the sirens in the distance, not that Fleur could yet. We had some time.

I took a deep breath in and pulled on the sewer that we’d crawled up in. The fastest and easiest way to make a tunnel for us was to use this one, but make it bigger.

First pulling it to me to loosen it up. Then I pushed into back into the subway. The hole was already bigger, but not big enough.

Kneeling down, I used my fist and strength to punch the hole bigger, and made my way through the hole.

As I reached the bottom, the bags fell on my head, and Fleur was right behind them.

I picked up the bags, and the two of us made our way to the waiting truck.

A SHOWER

Back at the hideout, we had a lot to sort through. I let the other two start and instead went back to shower. I had to get this grime off of me. I couldn't stand the way I smelled at the moment.

In the hot shower, I let the water run over me. Fleur had some of the best soap in the world, and I used that. Scrubbing and scrubbing, I tried to get it off.

The door to my shower opened, and Fleur was standing there. She had taken off her outfit, and her amazing body was on display. Her large, luscious breasts were there for me. Her pussy was out, and her toned abs.

"Can I join you?"

I nodded. "Anytime you want."

She giggled. I had thought for sure that she would be knee deep in the stuff we'd brought back, but I was happy she was with me instead.

She entered the shower and took the soap and lathered up her body. I couldn't take my eyes off her. "You okay?"

Fleur was not a weak woman by any stretch of the imagination, but right now she appeared vulnerable to me. "I'm fine."

"Fleur."

She looked up at me. The water running over the two of us. The soap washing off her body. Her pale skin shining in the water. And her eyes so passionate and yet so scared.

"I wanted to hurt him," she said. "To kill him, but then I didn't."

“I know.” It had to be hard to be face-to-face with her father. The man that raised her, but turned on her. He was one of the worst fathers around, but that didn’t change anything for the innermost part of Fleur.

“Why?”

“He’s your dad,” I said. “No matter how much of a monster he is, he’s still your dad. He might not be the best person, but he’s your blood. It’s okay to hesitate. To not want to kill him.”

“He’s done so much wrong in the world.”

It was true that many of the bad things that had happened since I arrived could be tied to both him and my mother.

“We will capture him,” I said. “Make him pay, and in time you might be able to help him see the error of his ways.”

“I hope so.”

“The video will be the start,” I said. “We can do it all.”

She smiled up at me and then rested her head on my chest. I hugged her. Her large breasts pressed against me and caused me to get hard.

Fleur giggled. “Is that all you think about?”

“Not all,” I said. “But a lot.”

She knelt down in the shower and took my growing penis into her mouth. Her tongue worked magic on my cock. The intensity of the blowjob caused me to come much sooner than I wanted to. Thankfully, I could do that more than once.

Exiting the shower, I took her to my bed and laid her down. I didn’t care that we were both dripping wet. I caressed her body and kissed her from her feet to her lips. Then back down.

Every inch of her body was mine, and I wanted to touch it. Feel it under my hands, under my lips.

My cock was hard and ready for her.

“Fuck me,” Fleur moaned.

She didn’t have to ask me twice. I slid up her body and entered her moist pussy. My penis slid in and filled up her pussy as we made love.

My throbbing cock thrust deeper and deeper into her. Filling her with me. As we made love Fleur moaned my name over and over.

I lost track of the times we came.

A CALL FROM MAKO

A short time later, after another shower, I changed my clothes and went out to the main area of the building. Fleur had beat me back there and was already with Lola.

“About time,” Lola said. “I thought the two of you were going to make me do this all alone.”

“I would never,” I said.

“Haha,” Fleur said. “You are the better one at this stuff, but I try to help.”

“You two,” Lola said. “I hope you had fun and saved some for me.”

“Always.” There was no doubt that I could again, and for her. She was just a dazzling at Fleur. Just in a different way, with her glasses, and hot for teacher look.

Lola had made progress on the huge pile of stuff we’d brought back, mostly by separating all the disks into a pile. This was going to take a long time.

The three of us went to work and made several piles. CDs in one. VHS in another, and one for the weapons. One for the paperwork.

I had no idea what most of this was.

An hour into it, the base phone rang, and Lola jumped up. “Mako,” she said.

“Cover this up,” Fleur said.

In the corner were several tarps, and I used them to cover the piles. Most of it would be off the camera that was used for the calls,

but better safe than sorry.

Lola answered the call. "Mako."

"I see the team is there," Mako answered. "I'm sorry for the delay."

The last time we had talked he had a mole to deal with, and I hoped he'd fixed it.

"Did you figure it out?" I asked.

The two looked at me with displeasure. Sometimes my lack of beating around the bush annoyed them. But I saw no point in wasting anyone's time. We had a lot to do and figure out.

Sure, we had more people on our side, and the latest news was saying the government was now split and might be taking back the laws. That was great news.

"I found the person," Mako said.

"And?"

Again, both glared at me. I shrugged, not caring at the moment. What I wanted to know was if he found out and fixed it. Then he could help us deal with Fenrir.

"My personal assistant," Mako said. "She leaked our meeting to Fenrir. Trust me when I say she is no longer an issue."

"Good," I said.

Now he could help us hide from Fenrir and maybe defeat him. Right now, Fenrir was ahead in the technology game. That had to be fixed.

"When can we meet?" Lola asked. She was licking her chops to get ahold of the stuff that Mako promised last time.

"Tomorrow," Mako said. "But I'll come to you with the tech. We only have enough for your team."

That was fine and all we needed.

"Perfect," Fleur said.

We set up a time and place to meet. Lola was a little disappointed about not going to the Epps building again.

THAT EVENING, near the time that Central Park closed for the night, we stood in a place where we'd been once before. One of our several meetings with people, but this time it was dark. The air was crisp this late at night, and not many people around. Almost all of the people had already left the park, as it was nearly one in the morning.

Mako arrived right on time, and with him was one other person. Who carried a briefcase that was handcuffed to his right arm. I had never actually seen that done in person and found it almost comical. That would stop someone like me or many of the other Paragons from taking it. It might, big might, stop a man in Fenrir's employ. Though I highly doubted that, since they would just kill the man and take it.

"Mako," I said.

Fleur was next to me, and so was Lola. I wished that we had more people. In the brief time that Athena and Felicity were with us, I had grown accustomed to having more people. Without them, I felt empty.

"Ares," he said. "White Angel, Guardian."

"You have the masking devices?"

He nodded. "I do," he said. "We have four of them; in this case are three."

"Who's the fourth for?" I asked.

The man twisted on his feet. "For the reason that I'm working for you. My daughter."

Lola narrowed her eyes next to me. I was probably the only person who could see her clearly. Any of us clearly. This part of the park wasn't lit up very well.

"I found no mention of children," Lola said.

Mako chuckled. "Then my team has done its job."

"She's a Paragon?" Lola asked.

"She is. Not a powerful one like Ares, or White Angel. The lowest level one can be."

That made her very vulnerable to Fenrir and the humans that were out attacking any Paragons they saw. There would be a good chance she'd end up in the prisons that Fenrir had been building across the country, or dead.

I had wondered why he wanted to help us, and now I understood. As much as it was about equality, it was personal for him, just like it was for us.

“Where is your daughter?” I asked. “In the city?”

“Not now. She had been at the academy, but I pulled her out.”

“That might have been the safest place for her,” Fleur said. “No one knows where that is, that hasn’t attended.”

“I know,” Mako said. “But if Fenrir did find it . . .”

“Couldn’t your brother tell him?” I asked.

“No,” Fleur said. “He didn’t actually go. He failed the test to get in. Mako’s daughter must be smart and driven to get in.”

It surprised me that Fleur’s brother hadn’t made the cut. He had that ‘I’m an overachiever and can do anything’ look.

“You forgot to mention that your brother was beyond obsessed with Harvard and didn’t really try.”

Now that made a lot of sense.

THE VIDEO

For once, a clandestine meeting went well for us. I had been beginning to wonder if that was ever going to happen. Technically, it wasn't the first one. Our adventure out to see the influencer and Stan went well.

It just felt like whenever we met with a person that was actively trying to help us, we ended up in an ambush.

This time we had what we needed, and were making progress.

"Tomorrow," Lola said. "Or today, however you want to look at it."

We had just gotten back, and it was late. Even I wasn't used to being up this late. In the movies, and comics, many of the heroes patrolled at night, but that hadn't been what our team had done.

Lola continued. "The Senate is going to vote. Our plan with the social media is working. I found the one video that Stan mentioned as well. We can post that online, and email Fenrir tomorrow as well."

"When did you find it?" Fleur asked.

"Just before we left."

"Put it up," Fleur said. "I want to see this."

I was sure that we all did since this was Fleur's grandmother. A person that helped shape Fenrir, and in a way Fleur.

Lola went over to her workstation, and a few minutes later, a video was playing on the screen that we used most for TV and the like.

At first it was nothing but snow, then a woman came into focus. She was a spitting image of Fleur. The same red hair, and angular

face with narrow lips. Her green eyes shimmered. The eyes were alike too. She was the woman that Fleur inherited her beauty from.

“She looks just like you,” Lola said.

Fleur nodded. “She does. I’ve seen her pictures before. My brother used to tease me about being so much like her.”

“Both of you are strong, powerful, and beautiful,” I said.

Fleur smiled at me. “Thank you.”

“Fabian,” her grandmother said. “I know you are mad. Hate what I’ve become. Hate how the world has changed. I have no regrets. This is me. This is what you and I dreamed of. What we knew would happen. The next step is here, and I’m proud to be part of it.”

“Even if you are going to die?” a familiar voice asked. Stan was the man behind the camera, and it was nice to hear him speak.

“My death,” she said. “Is no one's fault but my own. I was trying to understand this. Testing on myself. No regrets. I’m a scientist, and I wanted to understand. Paragons, as we are calling them, are pure. Simple and human. That much I’ve learned.”

“What about your son?”

“I will miss dear Fenrir and the chance to see his children, but I know that he will be a great man and help usher in a period of love and peace with Paragons and humans.”

I couldn’t take my eyes off Fleur. The rest of the video was in one ear and out the other, but Fleur watched intently. Tears streaked down her face.

“She is a strong and smart lady,” Lola said once the video was over.

“Post it to the world,” Fleur said. “And to my father. It might not help, but then again, it might. Even if it sways the Senate and the people.”

Any help it could give us was needed.

The three of us went to bed that night completely drained, but hopeful of the future.

A NEW HOPE

The next day was a flurry of activity. Lola released the video as soon as we woke up, and it was all over the news. The media had no choice but to run with it.

There was no doubt that the people made it loud and clear that they too wanted peace between Paragons and humans.

Throughout the country the people spoke about wanting the heroes back. That they felt safer with them around and needed them. It was amazing, and if the Senate voted to keep Fenrir in power, they would have riots across the country.

“We are winning,” Lola said.

I knew that was the case, but it didn’t feel like it. On the surface it did, but deep down I still had some doubts. “I’m going to go for a walk,” I said.

“You sure that is smart?” Fleur asked.

“I’m not sure if that device that Mako gave us will work on me, or if they can even track me,” I said. “But I’ll use it.”

“Okay.” Yet, Fleur didn’t appear happy with it.

As much as I was happy about this, I needed to see it in person. See the people happy about this. Get out and view it first-hand. That was what I was used to. It was nice to see the news programs shifting their point of view, and the internet. I was a soldier first and foremost. That meant I needed to see the intel. Be on the front lines and fighting.

Dressing in a t-shirt with yet another character on it, this time a kid with an arrow tattoo on his head, I left the hideout and went to the city. I jogged fast and got a safe distance away before I slowed for the people to see me. I was in the heart of the city in Manhattan. Not that far from the first time we ran into Elric, and he tried to scare us from looking into him and his gang.

The city was filled with people, and many of them didn't pay attention to me at all. They were all lost in their lives and moving about with no concern at all. That much hadn't really changed since I arrived, and I knew that it might never.

While that was the majority of the people, when I reached Times Square, I saw people carrying signs and shouting. It was all in favor of Paragons.

"Stop Fenrir!" one shouted.

Another held a sign that read, "We need our heroes."

It was all in support. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. The news hadn't been wrong, and it made me smile. Humans really were a tough race. Maybe even more so than the Gods. They could adapt and evolve, which was something the Gods just seemed incapable of. Even as I tried to be different, the blood lust in me was hard to fight. More than once I nearly gave in and killed people. I just couldn't, even if they deserved it.

"Oh my God," a person said. "It's fucking Ares."

I turned to see at least a dozen of the pro-Paragon supporters behind me. As I faced them, they all cheered.

"Ares! Ares!"

This wasn't the first time I've been cheered and worshipped like this. Yet, it was a first since the big anti-Paragon mess had been going on. It felt different and earned. I loved it.

More and more joined them. Soon it was a large mob of people chanting my name and cheering me on. I had no idea what they wanted, if anything, from me. I stood there, waving at them. Smiling like a buffoon and trying to make them happy.

"Thank you," I said. "We can bring back the heroes."

"Yay!"

Suddenly, in my earpiece that I was wearing, I heard Lola. "You are on the news."

I figured that would happen, and hoped it didn't draw the attention of the anti-Paragon unit.

"Should I leave?" I whispered.

"Yes," Fleur answered. "No doubt that they will be sending the closest unit to you."

"Thank you," I said to the people. "Keep on letting the world know what you want."

I leaped into the air and bounded away. Getting over a building in a single leap. Then I sprinted back through the city. Happy and sure that we would be able to take out Fenrir and have our win.

Though that was still just one step. Hera was the real problem, and she wouldn't back down.

THE VOTE

Back at the hideout, we were glued to the TV. All of us; even McGarrett and Janet were there watching with us.

Much of the coverage was the talking heads, no matter what station we turned on. But the Senate was going over all that the President and Fenrir had done.

It was clear that right now, they felt it was an overreach and had to be fixed.

As usual, when dealing with politicians, they said a lot of stuff that meant nothing and didn't need to be spoken. Each one pandering to the others, and pretending that they were the ones with the real power. When it was them working together that actually made power.

This was one of the many reasons I actively avoided politicians. They wasted time, money, and pretty much everything else. If they would just get to the point, they would have been done much faster.

"They sure like to hear themselves talk," Janet said. She had the ever-present glow of a pregnant woman. It made me happy for her and for McGarrett.

I laughed. "Which ones?"

"All of them," she replied. "Even the reporters. It's like they just love the sound of their voices."

"They sure do," McGarrett said. He leaned over to his wife and kissed her, and placed his hand on her belly. She still wasn't showing that much. It would take some time for that.

Seeing them so happy together, and excited for the baby, made me want another one. Though I just wasn't sure if that was in the cards for me. My kids in the past did great things but awful things too. Being a demigod wasn't easy, and many had trouble handling it.

While the main reason for Zeus to stop us from coming to Earth might have been the Paragons, another part of it was our kids. They did a lot of damage over the years. Playing significant roles in all the wars that occurred over the eons.

They might not have been the ones to start them, but they played a role in them. I won't even deny it, one of my own kids played a huge role in the American Revolution. As did I for that matter, not that my son knew it.

No dad of the year award for me. Not that time, since the mother kicked me out and didn't even let me near the boy. That had made me question if I should have any more, and so far I hadn't, but I was thinking about it now.

Shaking my head, I went back to the screen, and they were about to finally vote. I turned away and waited for the others to tell me the results. Watching stuff like this in the past, for me, had been bad. As dumb as it sounds, I didn't want to jinx it.

The wait was horrendous. It felt like time slowed to nothing like I was back in one of Elric's time bubbles.

Then I heard them cheer; they must have passed the vote to get rid of all the anti-Paragon laws.

"They did it," McGarrett said. "I won't have to listen to Fenrir, and that bozo he put in charge of the New York unit."

That was great news. "What do you think Fenrir will do?" I asked.

The table was silent, none of us really had an answer to that since we couldn't read minds.

"He'll act fast, and strike out at the Paragons," Fleur said.

"You don't think the video will have helped at all?" Lola asked.

"No," Fleur said. "This will make that a washout. He isn't used to losing."

That was true, and something I hadn't thought of. Now it was time to wait and see. I didn't want to let Fenrir strike, but we couldn't be the aggressors.

SEVERAL HOURS LATER, Fenrir made his first move. Of course, it was another press conference. I swear the man loved to stand on that podium he built for these things and talk. To see his mug on the news later.

He really was a narcissist. The term did, in some ways reflect the man from my times, Narcissus. He was the first to be in love with himself and spend way too much time looking at his own reflection, and for a time it was considered bad luck.

Again, we were all glued to the screen to see what Fenrir Walker had to say. He was a vile man and looked the part very well. On the stage, he didn't look happy. Anger covered his face and his posture.

"I know that the government has turned its back on us," Fenrir said. "But we all know the people, the true people, don't want this. All those pro-Paragons are brainwashed by them."

I couldn't believe that was the route he was going to go. Fenrir was very much a sore loser, and it showed up now.

"I will not stop," he continued. His face was red, and his nostrils flared. "I will find Ares, White Angel, Major Thorn, Bionic Man, and their precious Academy and remove them all."

The crowd was a mix of cheers and boos. That was no surprise, since he was bound to try to get the people that backed him up, and hated Paragons just like him.

"What about the video," a person asked.

"That phony video of my mother," Fenrir said. "Fake news."

The crowd was silent, and that hung in the air. "So much for that helping," I said.

"We knew it was a long shot," Fleur said.

While that was the case, that didn't mean I was happy about it.

"I challenge you, Ares," Fenrir said. "Man up, and prove to me that you don't mean to hurt us."

"And how does he expect me to do that?" I asked. Not that he could hear, or anyone else would know. "I think I have done that."

"He already has," a voice in the crowd said. "So far, you have been the only one to attack. The only one to fight."

Fenrir's nostrils flared. "I'm doing what is best for the people. And I will continue to do so. And with that in mind, I'm going to take matters into my own hands. With me in charge, I'm taking over the city, and instating a kill-all-Paragons policy."

Then, around him and around the city, hundreds of people in mecha suits appeared.

"Fuck," I said.

CHAOS IN THE CITY

I jumped to my feet and said, "We have to get out there."

There was a good chance this was the stupidest thing we could do, and I knew that.

Lola dashed over to her workstation and started to work. She projected her screen on the monitors closest to us. "He's already got the city."

"How?" McGarrett asked.

"It looks like he had men at city hall and the police stations. The TV stations are all out too."

That wasn't good. "What about the bridges out of the city?" Janet asked.

"Those are covered too," Lola said.

I knew that Fenrir was dirty and could stoop to a low level, but this wasn't something I had expected.

"We should have killed him," Fleur said.

"You don't mean that," I said. "We are better than that."

If I had been killing, many of my problems since I had been back would have been removed. Sometimes being the hero, or bigger man, sucked.

Fleur hung her head. "I don't, but it would be the smarter thing to have done."

"No, it wouldn't," McGarrett said. "If we ever stoop to the level of the people we are fighting against, then we are no better. Killing is never the answer. Rules and laws are in place for a reason. Just

rules and laws. If we kill the people that don't believe in what we do, we have lowered ourselves to their level. We become the oppressor."

I couldn't believe what I just heard, but the man was right. McGarrett was a wise man, and he knew what he was talking about. I had seen it over and over throughout the years. People killing since they thought it was the right thing, and justified, and in no time at all, they turned into the person they fought against.

"You're right," Fleur said. "I just can't believe this happened. That my father would do this, and now we have to fight again."

"We do," I said. "And we are greatly outnumbered."

The alarms on the outside of the building went off. Lola turned on the cameras, and to my great delight, on the screen were Felicity and Athena. They had returned from their adventure, and both appeared to be in good spirits.

Seeing Felicity melted my heart. She was as adorable as ever with her short brown hair and bushy tail. I missed her more than I could even put into words.

Soon they were in the building, and while they had some scars from the side quest they went on, they appeared happy.

"You made it back," Lola said. She was hugging Felicity already. We all had greeted them at the door.

"We did," Felicity said. "Though Fenrir made getting back hard. I never knew that I could hold my breath that long, and let me tell you, do not swim in the Hudson River, it's disgusting."

Fleur laughed, and the others soon joined in. "Not a place most New Yorkers choose to swim."

"I know," Athena said. "And that is why I did. It's been cleaned up and safe."

"Didn't feel that safe," Felicity said. "I'm going to be traumatized for life."

She was clearly playing it up and having a joke with it. But I worried about the rest of the trip for her. The creatures that she went to see could leave a person in shock.

"The trip?" I asked.

"We'll see," Athena said. "The two of us made our case to the creatures, and some seemed open to fighting against Hera, but none

straight up said they would join.”

“I guess it was too much to ask that they join us right now,” Lola said.

As much as I wanted to talk about the monsters and Hera, we couldn't. Fenrir had made himself a foe that we had to take out and now.

“We'll tell you more later,” Athena said. “Do you have a plan for Fenrir?”

“No,” I admitted.

“Ares.” Athena gave me a look that said she was disappointed. “I thought you were trying to look at the long term and not just rush in.”

“I am, but none of us saw this outcome. We had put in place a lot of small plans to undermine him, and they worked.”

Athena smiled. “That they did, almost too well.”

Maybe she was right about that, we forced him into a corner, and the cornered animal was bound to lash out, and in a way that one didn't expect.

“What do you think?” Fleur asked. “I'm too close and torn on it all.”

Athena nodded. “You have done well, all things considered.”

My half-sister was right about Fleur. Fighting family made the task a thousand times harder. Something Athena and I knew all too well.

“You have to take out the mecha suits, and the man,” Athena said. “And if possible at the same time.”

I groaned. That would take a team much larger than what we had. I might be able to deal with one of the checkpoints that Fenrir had put up in the city, but I was one God, and Athena was the only other one.

“I worry about that,” I said. “Many Paragons will lose their powers.”

Athena nodded. “For now, I think there is a way to reverse it. Science or magic is fickle.”

“I don't want to risk it, nonetheless.” If Fleur and Felicity lost their powers, I would be devastated and not sure I would be able to continue the fight against Hera.

“We know the risk,” Felicity said. She stood tall, at least for her. I had missed her so much. Her adorable fur and tail. I just wanted to pick her up and kiss her, but didn’t. “I will fight, and I will take out as many as I have to.”

Athena smiled. “I think that we need to talk to some of our Paragon allies and non-Paragon allies. Set up a strike as fast as possible.”

REACHING OUT

The rest of the night was spent sending out messages and making calls. I was the one with the least amount to do, since I didn't have the contacts that Fleur, Felicity, or Lola had.

I was tasked with the Third Street Dragons, and Mako. The first call I made was to the Dragons, and their leader, Lincoln, was a good man.

"Ares," he said. "I thought I would be hearing from you."

I grunted. None of this was easy, and even though the Dragons were a gang, albeit one that was trying to go straight, I didn't want to cause them harm. I had gone from hating them to trusting them.

"We are going to strike," I said. "At once, reaching out to anyone willing to help."

"We are in," Lincoln said. "Just tell me when."

That was easy, and I knew it would be. Lincoln didn't want his city to be thrown into chaos or under the control of Fenrir and his tyranny.

My next call was just as easy. Mako was on board and ready to stop this. He was just happy that he had his daughter out of the city already and in a safe house, that he wouldn't tell me the location of.

With my two calls down, I went over to the gym area and went through the motions and watched the others making call after call. I had no idea who they were reaching out to.

Athena joined me. "I hate this," I said.

"I know."

She knew all too well that I didn't like feeling useless, and that was what I was right now. Once the fighting started, I would be in the center of it, but right now I was dead weight.

"Do you think we can defeat him?"

"I do," Athena had her confidence on full display. Right now, she had her godly look. A true Goddess and one that knew she was powerful. I was lacking that at the moment. "With you and me. Not to mention the allies you have found."

"Me?" I had none. Not really.

"Look at the team you formed, hard at work to save the city. They do this for you and for themselves. Just because *you* don't have more contacts, doesn't mean the people you surrounded yourself with don't, and that you aren't part of that network."

It helped, but only a little. "I just hope it's enough."

"It will be."

HOURS LATER, Lola set up a call that must have had a hundred people on it. I had no idea who most of them were, but they wanted to help. To stop Fenrir, and make America great, and keep it safe from Fenrir and Hera. They would do whatever they could.

Athena took the lead in planning the attack with them all. Asking me for help when I could provide it. On many of the monitors were people that I had read about, Bionic Man, Major Thorn, and more. Mako and Lincoln were on the call too.

To my surprise, Lincoln had talked to a few of the other local gangs and got them to join in the assault. That was going to help a lot. Never in my life had I expected this many people on all sides of the law working together.

I had no doubt that a man like Major Thorn wouldn't usually be caught dead working with a gang leader, being a military man. It was amazing to me that we, or rather the rest of the team, pulled this all together.

"Once you all arrive," Athena said. "We'll set up the attack time."

Many of them had to travel to New York.

On the news, the government was talking and speaking of taking action. Maybe sending in the military, but I knew they wouldn't stand a chance. Fenrir knew all the technology they had and would be able to defeat it handily. We were the only chance the city had.

THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM

The morning after planning, the arrival of the people helping us happened en masse. Setting up shop in the surrounding areas, many joined Bionic Man in the building they used to interrogate Elric and his people not that long ago. Several went into Connecticut or just north of the city.

We had several Paragons and non-Paragons already in the city helping as well. The Third Street Dragons were taking charge of that with the leadership of Lincoln. McGarrett helped as well in the staging of the people. Both he and Lincoln had a knack for logistics and where people should be.

It was truly amazing.

In the meantime, I went back to my room to not get in the way of the setup. Lola, Athena, and Fleur were hard at work. I knew a battle was coming, and I needed to clear my head.

I didn't want to go into berserker mode in the battle and kill every human that I crossed paths with. That would be bad and not helpful. While they would be people that were fighting against the cause, they might be useful when Hera struck. I had no doubt that once we defeated Fenrir, she would unleash another attack on the Earth.

What that attack might be, I had no idea, but it would happen. The assault from her would be deadly and devastating. Not that this attack by Fenrir wasn't; it would cost us dearly.

I hoped that we didn't lose anyone and have to mourn them. That was a stupid thought since this was a war, and that meant death. As

sure as anything in the world. Being the God of War I knew that all too well.

Many that worshipped me knew that they would be soon in the grasp of Hades. That was something I hated since Hades and I never really got along.

The door to my room opened, and Felicity walked in. She had on her hero outfit, and it looked stunning on her. I missed looking into her deep brown eyes and running my hand through her short hair. Seeing her large tail whip around. She was truly remarkable.

“I missed you,” I said.

The squirrelkin smiled. “I missed you too, you big lug.”

She was in my arms before I knew it and kissing me. Her lips were soft and delicate against mine. I wanted this, needed this.

I don’t know how long the kiss lasted, but she pulled away. “When this is done, we need to spend some quality time together,” she said. “All of us.”

“We do.”

“Until then, we need to get ready.” She was right, but that didn’t stop me from pinching that ass of hers. It was one of the best. “Ares.”

I shrugged. “I can’t help it. I missed all of you.”

“Patience.”

“Not my strong suit.”

It was true that I lacked patience for most of my existence.

SOON EVERYONE WAS HERE, and the time was set for the evening. Although it wasn’t ideal to let Fenrir have this much time to set up his men and put the fear into the people in the city.

It was clear from the little bit that we went out in the city, using the devices that Mako made. For a moment I thought we would have no use for them, but they were turning into a lifesaver.

Fenrir had his minions out in droves, using his tech to scan for Paragons. I couldn’t leave, nor could Felicity. Fleur went out once with them, and she came back with horror on her face.

“It’s terrible out there. The whole city is scared, and he’s attacking any Paragon on sight, using the weapons to depower them.”

“He’ll pay,” I said with an angry tone. “The attack needs to start now.”

“In an hour,” Athena said. The sun was setting, and that was when we would strike to take out the man and all his people.

Fleur, Felicity, and I would be taking Fenrir out. Athena would work with one of the Third Street Dragon teams. Lola would be staying behind to monitor it all. Be our eye in the sky, as she did so well.

The wait helped me think about the future and what was to come. When this was all done, I wanted to spend my time with my loves. Travel and relax. As much as a God and Paragons could. I knew that there would always be villains to fight, but we could take an extended vacation, many of them.

THE ATTACK

We left the base and headed to city hall, since that was where Fenrir was spending his time. He made it known to everyone that he was there, and he still wanted to have his showdown with me.

I wasn't going to disappoint him and let him think I was afraid of him. Fenrir had to know that if I wanted to kill him, I could. The man had to realize that he really was no challenge for me if I used all my power.

Though he also knew that I wasn't going to do that. That did give him the upper hand, but I wasn't going to let that get in the way.

The three of us would take him out and arrest him. McGarrett had gone to his precinct with dozens of loyal men and women of the New York Police Department. Athena was at Walker Consolidated with the Third Street Dragons, and Bionic Man was going to join them.

The others were going to the areas where Fenrir had sent his men. Our force was strong, but it still didn't match Fenrir's in size. Most of the people with us were Paragons, and that had to count for something.

The drive over was difficult with the forces for both sides on the street fighting. It was the everyday person fighting Fenrir's regular troops. Thankfully, he hadn't fallen to the level of having his mecha suits battling ordinary humans.

"I love that the people are fighting for us," Felicity said.

"Me too," Fleur added. She had a determined look on her face.

“Are you sure you are up for this?” I asked.

She didn’t even take her eyes off the street. “I am.”

“Don’t you worry,” Felicity said. “I know our girl. She’s gonna pwn her dad.”

“Good.”

Once we arrived near city hall, the attacked happened. Lola was the one in charge and telling everyone it was a go. I heard her speak through our comms, telling everyone.

“Go, go, go.”

All at once, around the city, I could hear fights starting up. I hoped that they went well for our forces.

With the command from our Guardian, we jumped out of the car and raced up to the city hall. It was an iconic building in the city, located in Lower Manhattan.

Part of me didn’t want to fight here, as I feared we would cause unrepairable damage to the building, but it wasn’t possible to avoid.

Just as we reached the top steps, a half dozen mecha suits appeared. Out of the ground. Fenrir must have been busy, or planning this for much longer than we had realized.

“I got this,” I said. I didn’t want either of them to get too close to the weapons that could strip them of their powers.

I went to the one on the far left and summoned my blade. It would be able to slice them to shreds. The only mecha suit that I’d had trouble with was the one that Reign had worn not so long ago, and that was because it was made out of the same material as my sword. None of these would be.

There just wasn’t much here on Earth for them to use, and we made sure that Reign’s suit didn’t fall into the wrong hands.

With my speed, I sprinted down the line, taking all the legs off the mecha suits. I could have just as easily taken the heads off, but that would have been cruel. As it was, none of the men in the suits would be walking again.

All the suits toppled over, and blood poured from them all. Since I didn’t want them to die, I pulled out another item I had on my body. A torch, and used it on my blade. It was going to hurt them like hell, but I stopped the bleeding.

“Why’d you do that?” Felicity asked.

“Mercy,” I said.

The squirrelkin nodded.

“They deserve none,” Fleur said. “But we must be better.”

I could tell she was still having to struggle with it. It pained me that she was so torn on this. Hopefully, once we get rid of her father, it would be better.

The next obstacle that Fenrir had for us arrived in a blink of an eye. Forty men exited the building and formed a line in front of us.

“This is going to be fun,” Felicity said. She was licking her lips and baring her claws.

“That it is,” Fleur said. I knew that both my partners were among the best fighters in the world. Especially since that was Fleur’s Paragon ability: to master all fighting techniques.

The two women didn’t even wait for me. Fleur went to the right, Felicity left, and they began the fight. There was no way that these men stood a chance against them. I didn’t have to join the battle, but there was no way I would let them have all the fun.

Plus, if any of the thugs tried to use an anti-Paragon weapon on them, I was going to make them regret that choice.

I reached the one in the middle and punched him. Even though I didn’t use much of my strength he went flying backward into the doors of the building, cracking them. He would be in pain, but that was it. I spun to the next man, and he had a look of disgust on his face.

“You think you are helping,” he said. “But you’re not. Just making Fenrir right.”

I didn’t bother answering him. He was clearly wholly brainwashed, and I wasn’t going to get through to him. It was a shame that so many people had fallen under Fenrir’s spell. This wasn’t the first time this had happened, but that didn’t make it easy.

Dropping down, I did a leg sweep, and the man fell to the ground. Beyond him, I could see Felicity in all her glory. Claws slashing at the men, and her fangs bared to them. The men cowered in fear of her and her abilities. I fucking loved it.

Turning away from her, I prepared to take out the man behind me. He stood in awe, but not of her, but me.

“Fucking Ares,” the man said. He ran away down the stairs, and I let him go. He was not a threat to us.

“Stop,” another said. “Don’t be a pussy.”

I laughed. “You should follow his lead.”

It was the man who was next to him. “I’m not scared of you.”

“You should be.” I had put up my blade, as I didn’t need it, but I was in a funny mood and summoned it again. “You can’t possibly hurt me. I could kill you in a blink of an eye.”

“Then do it,” he said.

“No, you will be needed for the coming storm.”

The man flared his nostrils and rushed at me. I put out my free hand and stopped him in his tracks. He couldn’t get any closer. With ease I picked him up, my hand holding his head, and tossed him into the doors, letting him join his companion.

The fight for Fleur was going smooth. She danced around the men, making her way to me. She only had one more to defeat, leaving a pile of men and women on the ground moaning behind her. She made the fighting look like a ballet, one of the best in the world.

Turning around, Felicity had done the same, both taking out more than I had. I let myself play with them too much. Oh well.

Felicity was breathing heavy but had a shit-eating grin on her face. “Fucking brilliant.”

“You were right,” Fleur said. “Fun, and I needed that. Too much time cooped up and not fighting.”

“Sorry,” Felicity said. “Maybe I was the lucky one.”

“Maybe,” Fleur said.

“Shall we?” I gestured to the doors that were mostly cracked opened from the two men I’d smashed into them.

WORST DAD EVER

Just as we entered the building, we were greeted by Fenrir, who was by no means alone. With him was yet another large group of fighters. This time armed to the teeth, and I had little doubt that they all had anti-Paragon weapons with them.

I wasn't going to risk it. Without waiting for anyone else, I made a dash around the front area and took all the weapons they had off them. A flash moving around the room and disarming them. I could have knocked them all out, and I might still.

Each and every gun they had, I bent in half and tossed to the ground behind them.

"Impressive," Fenrir said. "And just proves my point. How can we let someone who can do that live? You could kill us all in a blink of an eye."

"I could," I said. "And yet I haven't. Not even once have I killed a person here. I've gone out of my way not to kill. Out of my way to make sure every person I've fought was only hurt. That no one was sent to Hades, or whatever place they may go."

Fenrir laughed. "No person that you have let us know about has been killed. Since you have been back, plenty of people have died."

"At your behest, Father," Fleur interjected. "You had them killed. The only killer here is you. You are the one making people scared. You are the one making the world a dangerous place. Not Paragons."

“Don’t you dare call me Father,” Fenrir said. “My children are dead. My family is dead. All because of Paragons. They killed my mother, my wife, my son, and my daughter.”

Watching Fleur, she was barely able to stand. “I’m right here. You might not love me anymore, and I might not you. But I’m still here.”

“I see a villainous killer.” Fenrir didn’t even try to hold back.

“Fuck off,” Felicity said. “You are the worst father in human history. I saw the video. Your mother didn’t die from a Paragon. She died from an accident. Just like my mother. Stop blaming the world around you and own it, you prick.”

“Attack,” Fenrir said.

Felicity reacted before anyone else, leaping into the air with Paragon-enhanced speed and agility. She was slicing a man with her claws before Fleur and I joined the battle.

Without their anti-Paragon weapons, our foes were no match for us. We had them all on the floor in a blink of an eye.

Fenrir stood there with a clenched fist and pure hate in his eyes. He reached into his pocket and pulled out a device. “I didn’t want to use this,” he said. “But I guess I have no choice.”

“What is that?” Fleur asked.

“I have set up several bombs across the city that will kill or strip all the Paragons of their powers.”

“You can’t do that,” I said. “You’ll kill millions of innocent people.”

“There are no innocents in the city,” he said with an angry tone. He was clearly filled with rage and hate. “They all turned on me.”

“I got you covered,” Lola said in our ears. I had nearly forgotten she was listening in. Watching it all. “McGarrett found one, and I hacked in.”

That was great news to hear.

Fleur smiled. One so big that there was no way that Fenrir couldn’t see her.

“What’s so amusing?” the man asked.

“Go ahead,” she said. “Blow up the city. You’ll be remembered with the likes of Hitler, Stalin, Ivan the Terrible.”

“Hardly,” Fenrir said. “I’ll be like Washington, Lincoln.”

“You have gone mad,” Felicity said. She rushed to the man, and he tried to blow up the city. Nothing happened.

“What? How?” Fenrir said.

Felicity reached him and knocked him to the ground. Fleur walked over to her father and kicked him in the head. He was out cold.

Now it was up to the rest of the team.

VICTORY

With Fenrir in our grasp, we made our way to the police precinct. McGarrett was there and in control.

He walked to us with a big smile on his face. "You did it," he said.

"No," I said. "We did."

The man gave me a big bear hug. This might be the first time that he did anything like that.

"That we did," he said. "Fleur, Felicity."

"McGarrett," Fleur said.

"Captain." Felicity gestured to Fenrir. "You have a dirty, flea-infested cell for him?"

McGarrett laughed. "Not sure about flea-infested, but I got a place for him."

Felicity shrugged. "I guess it will have to do."

"What's the latest?" Fleur asked. "Haven't really had much contact with the Guardian."

McGarrett nodded. "She's pushed beyond the limits of a normal hacker, or controller, but doing a great job."

That was true, and I was going to have to repay her. In whatever way she wanted. Lola might not have been on the ground fighting with us, but she was the hero of it all.

I was just a tiny part of today's fight. A really small piece, and for once I was okay with that. Working with so many people even though I didn't see them work, was great.

"So?" I asked. "Athena? Bionic Man?"

“From what I have heard, all have taken out their places.”

That was good news, but at what cost.

“How many?” Fleur asked.

She didn’t have to say, we all knew. How many had lost their powers? How many died today to stop this man? We might have been lucky where we were, but there were going to be some that paid the ultimate price.

“Six lost powers, and ten dead,” McGarrett said.

That was a lot to take in. “Who? Anyone we know?”

McGarrett nodded. “Lincoln didn’t make it.”

I couldn’t believe it. He might have been the leader of a gang, but he was a good man. “Fuck.” That was all I could say, all I could get out.

“I’m sorry,” Felicity said. “I know you liked him.”

“The world lost a good man,” Fleur said.

“It did.” We didn’t start off on the right foot, but in the end, Lincoln was trying to make the world a better place.

“Anyone else?”

“I didn’t recognize the names,” McGarrett said. “We got lucky here. A few of my men are hurt, but no major injuries.”

“That is great news,” I said.

The rest of the time at the precinct was a blur. While it was a victory, I didn’t feel like it. Losing a friend, no matter how many times, always hit hard.

Fleur and Felicity gave me some space to deal with the loss. To compose myself.

While we were there, more and more news came in about the fights. Victories across the city and the President of the United States signed a national state of emergency and was sending in the military to help clean up the mess. But was seen on the TV saying we did the right thing. That the Paragons saved the day.

The President was in full back-pedal mode and trying to save his bacon. A typical move, and I didn’t begrudge the President one bit.

HOME

After the fight, and all the news, I was beat. Getting back to our place was exactly what I needed. Athena was already there, and of course, Lola. It was nice to see them both.

“Glad you made it, sister.”

Athena smiled. “I told you we would destroy our enemy.”

“Just one of many.”

“Way to be a party pooper,” Felicity said with a teasing tone.

I shrugged. “Can’t help it.”

Right now, I just didn’t feel like we won the fight. Fenrir was in prison; the government was back to backing up and supporting Paragons. All the old laws were already back into effect.

Any Paragon that wanted to be a hero could, so long as they told the police they were going to be out doing just that.

It wasn’t the best system in the world, but it had worked for years. There was no need to fix something that wasn’t broken.

“You okay?” Lola asked. She had a look of concern on her face, and one of love too.

“Not particularly,” I said. “It’s that we won, but the cost was high. Not to mention we still have my mother.”

Lola brought me in for a hug. “I know, but we can win. You all proved that. This was something that none of us thought possible. For the first time in history, a hundred Paragons and non-Paragons fought a battle together.”

It was true, and they would need to do it again. This was a cakewalk compared to what it would be like fighting an organized army of monsters and Gods.

Felicity and the others were right. I needed to be happy about this victory and not worry about what was to come. Not fret over the people that we'd lost. Even if I did lose a friend. I couldn't let that cause me to lose sight of the big picture.

I knew that in this war with my mother I was going to lose friends, and maybe even loved ones. That was a harsh reality, but it was the way the world worked. It always had, and I knew that.

McGarrett and Janet arrived to celebrate with us. The officer carried a cooler full of his favorite beer, one that I had never heard of. He set it down on the table that we used for all our meetings.

The officer looked at us all and nodded to me. He handed me a beer, and to everyone but Janet. He held his cup in front of himself. "We had a great victory today," McGarrett said. "Stopping a tyrant from ruining our great city."

"Hear, hear," several said.

McGarrett nodded. "Though we lost people today. Let us not forget those that paid the ultimate price for us. Helped us win. They will not be forgotten."

Everyone took a drink. I followed suit and thought of Lincoln. Of the war to come.

We all sat at the table and talked about the battle. Each story was different but eerily similar. The officers thankfully only had one mecha suit to defeat, and the man in it was not very good. McGarrett laughed so hard while he told the story that beer came out of his nose.

It was nice seeing everyone so happy and relaxed. This was the first time since I arrived that everyone felt this way. Everyone but me. That was okay, and I was at peace for the most, seeing my friends and loved ones happy.

Athena told the story of the raid from her perspective. She hadn't been near Lincoln when he died, so she couldn't tell me how, but she had tried to bring him back, and failed.

The talking and drinking went on for hours. Soon it was late, and we all needed to sleep. Tomorrow was bound to be a busy day.

I was the first to leave and head back to my room. It wasn't often that a mortal could outlast me, but today they did.

I went into my room and showered. Letting the heat of the shower ease the tension in my muscles. The steam filled the air around me, and I stared up to Mount Olympus and thought of the Gods and Goddesses.

“What's your next move, Hera?”

Not that she would answer me, not directly. But I wish I knew.

With that done, I went back to my room, and all three of them were sitting on my bed, waiting for me.

SHOWING THEIR LOVE

They still wore their outfits from earlier and were covered in the fight. All three of them were the most dazzling women in the world. Just seeing them sitting there on my bed with looks of concern and love on their faces. It helped. They knew that I needed them and wanted to make me feel better.

“Ares,” Lola said.

I walked over to her and sat in between Lola and Felicity. Fleur moved to be on my lap. They all leaned against me. Not saying a word. Just holding me. Letting me lead.

I didn't want to talk about the day. What I wanted was to forget about it all. Move forward and be happy.

With that in mind, I put my arms around Felicity and Lola. I kissed Fleur's head, and she looked up to me as I pulled away. She didn't let me get too far. Her lips met mine, and the others' hands begun to explore my body.

Fleur's soft, gentle kiss was deep and passionate. I loved her, and she loved me. We had grown close in the short time I had been here on Earth. All three of us had, and I was a better God because of them. A better man with them in my life, and able to do more.

Before I knew it, they had me on my back and my clothes off. So much for me being in charge. Not that I was going to complain about them having their way with me.

All of them knelt at the foot of the bed and slowly undressed for me. Seeing Fleur's enormous breasts and her toned abs. Lola's

delicate body and breasts were just as amazing, but in such a different way. Felicity's breasts appeared larger than they actually were on her tiny frame. Her bushy hair that covered parts of her body. I just loved it all. Her tail flapped back and forth behind her.

"I love you," I said. "All of you."

"I love you," they all said.

Their hands went to work on my body. Rubbing me down and releasing the tension I had. Helping me forget all the pain and suffering. Letting me focus on them and nothing else. It was truly incredible having them here.

Lola kissed me, and Felicity's mouth moved to my cock. She used her teeth to tease me, knowing I was the only person on the planet that would actually like that.

Fleur played with my nipples while I got that epic blow job from Felicity. Being with them all at the same time was insane. They worked in unison to pleasure me. To give me the best sexual experience of my life. It was working.

Lola switched out the lips I got to play with as she sat on my face. Her pussy was already dripping wet. My tongue darted to her clit and played with it. My hands rested on her hips, and I licked her.

Suddenly I was inside Felicity. I knew each of them and the way they felt. All so different and incredible. The squirrelkin's pussy squeezed hard on my dick. She was tight, and she clenched down on me even more.

Each movement of her was intense and sent chills through me. She was trying to make me come already. It took everything I had not to shoot my load into her already. I wanted this to last forever. To never stop and live the rest of my life making love to all three of them.

The night continued as I entered each and every one of them. In every position we could think of. Fleur squirted so intensely that she forced my cock out of her. Lola was gentle and kind as we made love.

I wasn't sure how long we made love. Nor did I care. All that mattered was that I was with them.

NOT GOOD

I lay in the bed, awake as the others slept. Their naked bodies were intertwined, and I loved watching them as they lay there. It was peaceful and relaxing. Yet, I needed to clear my head.

Back on Mount Olympus, when I needed that, I went for a walk. With that in mind, I carefully got out of the bed and dressed. I didn't want to wake them up and worry them.

I was happy and thankful for my time with them. There was just this nagging feeling I had, that I had to get outside and see something.

After dressing, I walked through the building. When I got to the central area, Athena was there with McGarrett and Janet. The three of them had fallen asleep at the table. The beer was gone.

McGarrett was going to wake up with a killer hangover. Poor guy. Though he had earned it. I exited the building to a clear night sky. Not a cloud out there.

The air was fresh, and a slight breeze made it even chillier. I didn't mind one bit as it helped distract me. Yet, I couldn't shake this feeling that something was going to happen. Something big.

"Hera," I said. "What are you playing at."

She had to be the reason I felt this way. My mother wouldn't ever give up. Couldn't give up. She hated Earth and all that it stood for. Always had.

Many thought I was the least liked God, but it was her. She didn't have the love of the men, and that angered her.

I went to the left and made my way to the streets of New York. It really was the city that never sleeps. Even at this time of night, four in the morning, there were many cars out. My type of place.

With no destination in mind, I wandered. Watching the people around me. Hoping to figure out what in the world Hera was doing. Why I had this unnerving feeling in the back of my head.

Soon I was next to the Hudson River, and a dolphin was there. I didn't think that was possible, but then it started to speak. In a voice I knew all too well.

"Ares," the animal said. "You have to stop her."

"Poseidon." It was just weird talking to a dolphin, and one that way out of its home. How it lived, I didn't know. "What do you think I'm trying to do."

"To make her angry," he said. "She's about to start her next phase."

I could feel that already. "And?"

"She's opening a portal to unleash all the monsters, Gods, and Goddesses on her side."

I groaned. "Not good."

"No, but it means that some of us might be able to help you openly."

"Then, get your fuggly butt here."

"In time, but tell Athena the Cyclopes will help. I've talked them into it."

That was good, at least we had one group behind us. I knew that was one that Athena went to and tried to convince. I guess it took both her and Poseidon to talk them into it.

"Okay," I said.

Suddenly, the ground shook around me. The night sky brightened up, and the portal that Poseidon had just mentioned opened up.

Streaming out of it were many of the most dangerous monsters the world had ever seen. Minotaur, Sphinx, Cerberus, Nemeon Lion, and more.

We were going to have our hands tied for a very long time. To make matters worse, in the center of it all was Hera. For the first time in history, she was on Earth.

The dolphin was gone. It was time to get back to the others and let them know. This was going to be hard to defeat.

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I want to thank you, the reader, for taking time to read my book. That means the world to me. I appreciate it. There are no words to truly show how grateful I am. Thank you.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gideon Mills grew up in the Midwest in the 90's. The X-Men animated show was his first introduction to superheroes, and the love continued on after.

One of Gideon's greatest achievements was serving in the US Army.

Gideon loves watching MCU movies, DC TV shows, reading, running, and riding his mountain bike.



ALSO BY GIDEON MILLS

Paragons: Gods and Superheroes

Paragons 2: Gods and Superheroes

Paragons 3: Gods and Superheroes

AUTHOR NOTES

Thank you for reading. If you enjoyed this book, please leave a review. It would mean the world to me and help others find something they might also enjoy.

Book Three of *Paragons* was fun to write. Seeing Ares grow, and the others too. Sometimes the story goes the way you think and other times not so much. I loved how this one turned out, and look forward to the rest.

Writing superheroes and gods has been an adventure and I'm loving seeing where it leads. I have many ideas and thoughts for both this series and many others. I hope to get them out to you all to read.

If you want to see more in this world, please reach out and let me know. I would love to hear from you. You can contact me at my email authorgideonmills@gmail.com.