**Chapter Twenty-One: A Mother’s Rage**

**Year 1991, Washington DC, United States of America**

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“How dare you kill my son? I will kill you! I will kill you all!”

The nearly incoherent shout rang through the air like a summer thunderstorm and I went from feeling like an invincible god reigning over the world to feeling like an insignificant ant under somebody else’s boot. Under the bright beam of light coming from her shining gold and silver gaze, all of my supposed might melted away to be replaced by fear. I could feel that primal part of myself that kept me alive flicker like a dying flame, unable to hold up under the suppression of her will. She didn’t wield any blades or brandish flames. She simply manifested her hate into a weapon and reality itself seemed to howl in agony as all the space around me started to twist and shatter before reforming again. The cycle continued to repeat seemingly without end but after each excruciatingly painful round, I felt myself fading away.

I was dying. For all the power that I felt coursing through my veins like molten lava, for all the potential I had discovered hidden inside me just begging to be unleashed, I still couldn’t do a damn thing to stop her from killing me.

The change came too suddenly, one moment I was on cloud nine enjoying the high of absolute power, the next moment I was being crushed like a bug. It happened so quickly that I didn’t even have the time to process my sudden impending doom. Before I could come to grips with the new depressing state of affairs, the situation changed once again. A giant whirlpool of water appeared in the sky above us, momentarily distracting the terrifying woman and giving us a temporary reprieve. A gigantic blue man as large as a ten story building fell out from the center of the massive inverted waterspout suspended in midair and landed in front of me, Sara and Carla, shielding us from Medusa’s wrathful glare. He stood silently in front of her and didn’t so much as flinch even as her iron crown disappeared, setting free waves upon waves of green hair which then turned into hundreds of slithering snakes. She angrily flung giant fireballs which were so hot that they singed my hair even though I was meters away from them, she called down blizzards that had shards of ice that looked like they could rip everything apart, the snakes on her head screamed out unnaturally and the air itself started turning into stone, but amidst all the chaos, the giant blue man continued to stand there and took everything she threw at him without taking a single step back. He was like a giant blue mountain, stable and unmoving.

When she saw that her attacks weren’t working, Medusa screamed hysterically and threw herself at the giant blue man and beat her tiny fists on his vast chest.

“Why are you doing this Atlantian? This has nothing to do with you! You have no reason to stop me. They took my son from me! Do you understand? They took my son from me!”

She continued to scream and sob uncontrollably as she beat her fists against him, but there was no real power left in her feeble blows.

“That is enough Medusa. Stop this right now.”

A third being suddenly appeared out of thin air, the slowly materializing figure took the shape of a woman. I struggled to see what the new arrival looked like but the memory of her was like a slippery fish. I could see her clear as day, but when I tried to remember what she looked like, all I could remember was that she was female.

“You know that this is not their fault. Greed and envy had already consumed Mathew’s heart. His end was inevitable.”

“No! I could have saved him! You are the Weaver. You knew what was going to happen. Why didn’t you tell me? If I had just talked to him…”

“No. Every time I interfere with fate, there is always a price to pay. I have already moved beyond the confine of this plane so that price must be exacted from someone else.”

“You mean…?”

“Yes. This was fated to happen the moment I helped you and Perseus. This was the price you had to pay, the pain that you had to bear as penance for going against providence. In fact, if things hadn’t ended up the way they are now, you would have been forced to kill your son with your own hands.”

I looked at the three beings before me, two talking to each other and one remaining stoically silent and standing still. I felt the power rolling off of them and I finally realized what true gods were like. I had become powerful enough to play around with the so called “Greek gods” but Medusa could have crushed meeffortlessly without raising a single finger. Furthermore, the giant blue man was able to stop Medusa cold without even fighting back. Although I had no evidence, I felt like the woman who appeared last was leagues above even the giant blue man. I felt stifled when I realized how powerless I was in the face of such overwhelming might. I felt uncomfortable with the thought that I wasn’t the most powerful one. It just didn’t sit well with me that there were beings that surpassed me. As if responding to my unsettled thoughts, the black liquid inside my soul started to seethe and churn violently, pouring itself into the purple star. I felt my power swell as the star’s size expanded and it became a darker shade of purple.

Power coursed through my veins like molten metal and the unpleasant feeling of getting dominated by an unreachable power vanished. I felt like if I was able to absorb all of the dark liquid into the star, I would be able to swat down the three super-beings before me like flies. Unfortunately, my fantasies of making them grovel beneath my feet were interrupted when the blurry lady appeared before me and gently placed her right hand on my head. All of my accumulated power evaporated, leaving nothing behind. The large purple star deflated like a balloon, expelling all of the dark liquid it had consumed and returned to its original warm yellow color. With the cold purple power being cut off from going into my brain, I finally realized how uncharacteristically I had been behaving. After I remembered all the terrible things I had done and all of the gruesome acts I had committed, I bent over and started retching.

The blurry woman gently patted my back and spoke reassuringly, “You shouldn’t take all this to heart, that wasn’t really you. The power in you is potent, but it is tainted. The more of it you use, the more it will influence your actions. It is better if you don’t use it unless you need to and if you think it is necessary, use it sparingly while keeping an eye on your state of mind. Remember, whoever the enemy you are fighting might be, they are nothing compared to the thing sealed inside of you.”

The dark ocean in my core was calm again but it no longer stayed silent. Before I knew of its existence it was completely inert but now it refused to be ignored. It whispered dark thoughts into my head. The whispers did not speak in something as mundane as human words. No, they spoke in unintelligible tongues that still somehow managed to express exquisite songs, songs that told of the unimaginably addictive taste of power, the allure of domination, and above all, the agony of being unable to have absolute supremacy over all of creation.

“Is this what I am? I can feel an insatiable hunger growing inside me. I didn’t feel it before, but I can’t suppress it now. I want to consume everything. I crave to devour the world itself! What is happening to me?”

“I’m very sorry Jonathan. The burden that you are asked to carry is immense, but I know that you are strong enough to bear it without breaking. Your will is strong enough to resist the whispers of the evil that lurks in you. Your soul might harbor something inherently malevolent, but you are more than a match for it. When the time comes, I have faith that you will make the right choice.”

The blurry woman put her hand on my shoulder for one last pat and faded away into nothingness, leaving behind a few quiet words that I barely caught.

“I’m sorry Jonathan. I’m sorry Joseph. I’m sorry for what I did to you and what I must put you through in the future.”

Joseph? Who is Joseph?

<I think that was my name.>

Darky? Did you figure out who you are?

<I’m not sure. It is all very blurry.>

“Pick up your friends and go. I don’t want to see your faces ever again. You are no longer welcome in my sanctuary.”

Medusa pointed behind me and I noticed for the first time that Carla and Sara were lying on the ground with blood coming out of their mouths, eyes, noses and ears. Medusa’s initial attack seemed to have hit them harder than it hit me. I helped Sara up and supported her after she nearly collapsed trying to walk on her own. After a little hesitation, I did the same for Carla and I supported both of them as we left through a gash in space that appeared to receive us. The last thing I saw before leaving was the silent blue giant vanishing into a whirlpool of water after he saw us off with a glance from his entirely blue eyes and Medusa’s eyes flashing maliciously after he was gone.