

DIOSA



Method to Madness
COMICS

Chapter One: "Rebirth"

"RUN, YOU FOOL!" states the warrior woman readying her spear. "There's no way that the Godslayer will be satisfied unless she bests one of us. You just make sure my essence is passed onto a worthy avatar. I sense my time on this physical plane in this body is coming to an end."

Her friend places a comforting hand onto her shoulder, "I sense it too. I don't have much time left either. I'll do my best. Just know that the Anunnaki smiles upon you this day for your sacrifice. I will find a new avatar for your efforts will not be in vain. Thank you again, Oya."

"Our *Nemesis* nears... Be off with you, Oshun."

Oya raised her spear overhead as storm clouds accumulated in the skies above. Oshun took that as her cue to leave. Oya had a tendency to lose herself in a fight – as strong and ferocious she was as a warrior in battle, she could never quell her mindset that she was unstoppable from the thousands of foes that she has bested in battle over the past millenia. That's why their group of deities – the Anunnaki – had trusted her to be Oshun's guardian. Oshun represented the best of their kind and if they were to survive this genocide of their kind by the Godslayer then they had to trust Oshun to find worthy successors to continue their work.

Lightning struck Oya's spear and transmuted the weapon instantly into an instrument of pure energy that Oya held in her hand. With a mighty throw, she threw it directly into the woods in front of her. The impact was instantaneous and left a massive clearing where trees that took root in that place for centuries prior were reduced to ashes. The smoke cleared leaving an armor clad woman standing in the wake of Oya's destruction. Oya recalled her weapon with a mere thought as her *Nemesis* appeared in front of her in a blink of an eye with her broadsword drawn. She came down towards Oya with a cleaving motion, but Oya held up her spear to block this mighty blow and kicked her away.

The Nemesis spoke as she slid herself to a stop back into the clearing.

"Very good. You're as good as the legends say, Oya. Mawu felt just the same as the rest of your kin. You can't protect Oshun from me forever. You can barely protect yourself."

Oya fired back, "WHY DO YOU HUNT US? ARE WE NOT DEITIES LIKE THE KING YOU SERVE WITHOUT QUESTION!!??"

"Yes, but I have my... *reasons*. No one asks Goldmire why he and his Hunters get exclusive rights to the prey they choose to target. Let's just say that there's a higher power out there that wants to level the playing field a bit. In that regard, I have no qualms in playing the part of the executioner."

Oya sneered, "Goddess of Retribution my ass... What will you do when retribution comes back for you TENFOLD??"

Nemesis smiled as she continued to rile up Oya's temper and fervor for battle, "You're welcome to try, but it won't be this day. I can ensure that."

Oya blindly lunged towards Nemesis again, but this time she hit nothing but the charred earth underneath her bare feet.

Nemesis' voice echoes around her, "The humans have such interesting toys in this modern age, do they not? I believe they call it a hologram, designed to fool the senses. I'll give Oshun your regards."

Not too far ahead, Oshun reaches a cliff overlooking the ocean where she can see several ships coming and going out to sea from local and international trade. As a deity, she can easily slip in unnoticed with a typical human disguise. She was free to continue her mission.

Nemesis' laughter rang out behind her as she approached from behind. Oshun's speciality wasn't combat but she knew how to defend herself as needed. Nemesis approached at high speed like she did to Oya but Oshun met her attack with a flash of blinding light illuminating from her hands. Even though the Nemesis stopped in her tracks she swung her broadsword in a wide arc, hoping to hit her prey. In this case, she manages to cut Oshun in the abdomen. The gash isn't too deep but alarming no less – this foe actually possesses the means to slay a god. The rumors of this Godslayer were not to be taken lightly.

While she's still blinded, Oya restrains Nemesis from behind and shouts to Oshun, "Take my spear and END THIS!!"

Oya's spear of lightning floated to her and Oshun looked at it with hesitation as her own essence slowly leaked from her open wound.

With tears in her eyes, she looked back to her friend and fellow deity, "I... can't. I don't want to lose you."

Oya grits her teeth in anger before shouting back, "DEATH IS NOT THE END OF FOR US!! IT IS ONLY THE BEGINNING! END THIS FOR OUR KIND CAN BE FREE FROM THIS LIVING NIGHTMARE!"

Oshun lowers her head in shame, tears continuing to stream down her face.

"Such a pity..." Nemesis smirks as she powers out of Oya's hold and beheads her with her broadsword in one clean motion. Oya's head rolls to the ground as Oshun looks in horror. Her

eyes glow with rage as she takes Oya's spear as her own and immediately hurls it at Nemesis, impaling her into the chest and binding her to one of the nearby trees.

"As long as I have breath in this body, you will not harm another of our kind. I leave you here as a warning for all of the Godslayers that may come after you."

Oya's spear fades away while Nemesis screams in horror as her body is turned to stone as vines and thorns bind her to the tree even tighter.

Oshun then knelt over Oya's body and returned her head to her shoulders, doing what she could to heal her form.

Oya spat, "Don't waste your magic on me... Finish your mission."

"Not without you, my friend. Not without you. Without you, I am nothing..."

Oya took her friend's hand as her body melted away, leaving only her essence in a ball of light.

"Let us be off then... Away from this wicked place."

Oshun took the ball while clutching her wound, nodding slowly. She dove off the cliff and into the ocean, disappearing deep within those murky waters.

Four months later...

Two young women are sitting on the beach along the coast of the area formerly known as the Florida coastline, now known as Costa de Leon after the formation of the Unified Nations.

One of the young women spoke to her friend, "C'mon, Ximena, it's Spring Break. Don't you want to finally meet some hot guys and cut loose for once?"

The nineteen year old Afro-Latina, Ximena Vega, looked up from her book briefly as she looked to her best friend laying next to her on their shared beach blanket. This corner of the beach was exactly like how most would describe Ximena - quiet and reserved. The Spring Break rave party was going on much further down the coastline but Ximena didn't want anything to do with that. She just wanted to catch up on her reading. Unlike her best friend, Priscilla Lennox, she wasn't outgoing or up for any "excitement" as she put it.

Ximena sighed, “Pris, I don’t know why you dragged me down here to come with you. Sure, the atmosphere is nice with the view and calming waves, but you know that the whole big social vibe isn’t really my thing.”

Priscilla latched onto her friend and hugged her tightly.

“I know but I want to share all my life’s special moments with you. C’mom now, Ximena. We’ve been doing stuff together since we were kids. No need to stop now. Besides, I’m going to pull you out of hiding out of that shell of yours even if it kills me.”

Ximena pushes her glasses up the bridge of her nose, “A turtle only comes out of his shell for the bare essentials of survival. With how crazy the world keeps getting every day from all of the stuff about wildcards and the Sentry Corps in the news, that’s how I rather live my life. In a couple more years, we’ll finish college and get boring office jobs, only to work 9 to 5 at our heart’s content until we retire. Really, Pris. I’m content with how things are – you having fun and I sit back on the sidelines. There’s nothing people like me and you can do against all of that.”

Priscilla laid back down onto the beach blanket.

“I get it, Xi. You never feel like you belong – even when we were coming up. Everyone would want to gravitate towards me and you would be left in the dust. I never cared about any of that. I just wanted to keep my bestie on my side. I’ve always had your back. I just want the rest of the world to see how wonderful you are.”

Ximena smiles, “Thank you, Pris. I feel like you’re the only person who gets me sometimes... Well, you and Mom.”

Priscilla laughs, “*Child* please, you know she was up over the moon in support of me dragging you along on this trip. Said you needed to get out of the house more often, especially now that you’re college.”

Ximena stuck out her tongue and asked, “So you’re my designated babysitter now? Wouldn’t it be the other way around? You’re the one always up to some sort of mischief.”

Priscilla plays innocent, “Who, me? You have to have me confused with someone else!”

“Please, I remember how you spiked my punch with that bottle of Mom’s sangria at prom!”

“Hey, you weren’t complaining when it got you to loosen up and talk to that boy you liked!”

Ximena blushed, “That’s besides the point. I vomited for hours the next morning!”

Priscilla smirked, “And you still got that dance and that kiss that night too. Whatever happened to that boy anyway?”

Ximena sighed, “He signed up to join the military. I dunno, he could end up a part of the Sentry Corps after he makes it past basic training. It just seemed... odd. I didn’t think that he would want to follow that sort of path in life.”

“Sometimes we don’t know people as well as we think we do, y’know? Sometimes, I just wanna ---”

Suddenly, Ximena and Priscilla find themselves covered in trash from a trio of their classmates. The ring leader of this foul act smirks, “Oops, couldn’t tell if this was the trash bin or the local dumpster you two decided to spend the evening in.”

Priscilla immediately stands up and shoves this woman to the sand, “What the actual fuck, Zabrina? You’re always looking to start shit. The difference today is that I plan on endin’ it with the quickness.”

Ximena rushes in front of Priscilla as she lunges forward with her fist cocked back and holds her best friend back.

“Pris, let’s just go. She’s not worth it.”

Zabrina’s entourage helped their friend up as Priscilla and Ximena grabbed their blanket from the sand. Zabrina makes one more remark as the duo are picking up the garbage and tossing it into the nearby trash container.

“Whatever, Pris. I don’t see why you always hang around that loser anyway. We invited you here to hang out with your future sisters and pledge to the sorority. Not hang out with *Susie Nobody* over there. Consider your invitations to pledge revoked.”

Ximena looks shocked, “What?”

Priscilla motions to step back towards Zabrina to face her again but Ximena stood in her way.

“What did she mean, Pris? Did you just invite me because you didn’t want to feel guilty about joining their sorority?”

Zabrina shrugs, “Oops. Cat’s out of the bag now. Later, losers. Guess you two have plenty to talk about on the way home to that shit hole you call an apartment.”

Zabrina and her lackies walk off down the coastline, heading towards the party a few miles down the shore.

Ximena repeats herself to Priscilla, "Answer me, Pris. What did she mean?"

Priscilla sighs heavily, "Xi, it's not what you think. I wasn't going to throw you under the bus just to join their sorority. I just thought that maybe I could have my cake and eat it too for once. You're my best friend... You know that, but for once, I just wanted to do something for myself."

Ximena adds, "...While dragging me down here under the lie that you're doing me a favor by sugarcoating it that we were just going to hang out for Spring Break. I should've known something was up when you were coming back home at ungodly hours every other night. Why even drag me along, Pris? If you knew me at all, you would've known that I would've been perfectly content with just staying in my room all week. You didn't have to drag me all the way out here. You could've just hung out with your new sorority friends and moved on with your life."

"Xi, that's the thing! I thought I could've talked them into letting you join too! I get it - it was selfish of me to drag you all the way out here just for my own benefit, but how many times have I put my ass on the line for you over the years? I'm not the only selfish person in this friendship. I registered to the same college as you for we could still hang out - just like you wanted. I protected you from every two-bit loser or piece of trash that tried to take advantage of that big brain of yours all these years for what? Not to mention all of the sacrifices I've made to make this work between us. It's not easy being friends with someone who would rather keep their nose stuck between a book instead of other human interaction, y'know, Xi."

Ximena is at a loss for words until they both look at a voice coming from the water.

"Please... help..." says a woman stumbling out of the water and collapsing onto the shore.

Ximena and Priscilla put aside their differences for the moment and help carry her to their (now free of trash) beach blanket. Both girls get a look at her attire and features and one thing is certain that Priscilla points out.

"Whoever this lady is, she's definitely not from around here."

The African female wore a golden skirt with jewels decorating it from her waist down to her delicate feet, which were covered in matching sandals. Her braided hair was a mess from her time in the water, but still maintained and accented her beauty. A jeweled necklace decorated her neck and shoulders before cascading down over her chest, which was covered by a golden sash-like bra to match the rest of her attire and protect her modesty.

Ximena looked over her body for any physical signs of harm and saw a wound on her abdomen. It wasn't bleeding but it still looked like a fresh injury. She reached over to inspect it further until the woman in question opened her eyes and grabbed Ximena's wrist.

“That won’t be necessary,” she stated.

“Leave it to Ximena, watching her mom all these years and wants to attempt to be a nurse practitioner on the first ailing person she comes across,” jokes Priscilla.

“Your common practices of medicine will not be of use for my injury. I appreciate the sentiment.”

Ximena nervously states, “I was just trying to do the right thing. That’s all.”

“Ximena Vega, I can sense you have a kind heart.”

Ximena snatches her hand back, “H-H-How do you know my name?”

The woman sat up on the blanket and stated, “You are going to find this hard to believe, but I have been looking for one like you. I am the Orisha known as Oshun. I have been searching for a new avatar to take my place. Our time is coming to an end on this plane. I seek a new vessel to continue our will. I have chosen you for that task.”

Oshun’s hand illuminates and a sphere of light emerges.

Ximena immediately backs away, “No, no, no. I wasn’t even meant to be here. I don’t want to get mixed up into anyone’s problems. I’m not anyone special.”

She gestures to Priscilla. “Give it to her. As far as I’m concerned, she’s the best person I know. She’s stood up for me time and time again even when I didn’t deserve it. If anyone deserves a gift, it’s Priscilla.”

To Ximena’s surprise, Priscilla gets pissed off.

“What the actual fuck, Xi!? This is something that could change your life forever. Isn’t this what you have always read and fantasized about in all of your books and video games? Don’t you want to finally be able to make a difference in the world instead of settling for mediocrity? This is your moment, not mine. I can’t promise to be protecting you from the rest of the world forever. At some point, you have to take a hold of your own destiny.”

The sphere of light in Oshun’s hand pulses at Priscilla’s words and shoots into her chest as even Oshun looks surprised.

Priscilla’s eyes glow white as she feels her average 5’4” body filling with a foreign power, gaining muscle mass and added height while maintaining her feminine form. This physical transformation ends as quickly as it started as the being that was once Priscilla Lennox roars

with a mighty laugh of triumph. What remained of her clothing hung from her new form like tattered rags, preserving her with just the right amount of modesty – as long as she didn't do too many swift movements.

Ximena was the first one to break the silence, "Pris, is that you?"

The 7'2" ebony amazon that towered in front of her replied, "More or less, Xi. Explain to me how could you turn all of THIS down?" She stated as gesturing down to her amplified figure before continuing. "No one is going to make your destiny for you, Ximena. You have to walk through that door yourself. I'm done babysitting you – that goes for you too, Oshun. I'm going to live my own life now."

Oshun looks quizzical at Priscilla's words, "Oya, that's not how this is supposed to work. We agreed not to allow our personalities to overwrite our new vessels. That will only allow the hunters to find them easier! Return the girl's body back to her."

The eyes of the woman that was once Priscilla Lennox illuminate once more as she hurls a spear of lightning at Oshun's feet, knocking her back a few feet. She motions to throw another until Ximena stands in the way, surprising herself even though she is protecting this woman that she doesn't even know.

"Pris, I don't know what the hell you think you're doing, but this isn't like you at all! You're not selfish. Sure, you make mistakes, but nobody is perfect. I know I'm sure as hell not. Why pick on her? You got your gift or whatever. Just go and enjoy it. Do like you wanted before you dragged me here with you."

The warrior woman slowly gritted her teeth at Ximena's words, slowly losing herself to her anger within, "Weak-minded fool... if it weren't for you, we wouldn't even be in this predicament today... If you weren't so GODDAMN weak!!"

She shouts as she subsciously summons and hurls another lightning charged spear at Ximena. Oshun shoves Ximena to the ground as the spear goes through her and narrowly avoids contact with her face.

Oshun held the weapon in her chest with her hands, smiling down at Ximena. Her essence poured out onto her hands as she held onto the weapon, instantly evaporating into the air.

"Child, I would never force this destiny nor any other upon you against your will. My life on this plane has been full of sacrifices, numerous trials, and heavy burdens to bare. My greatest joy has been calling the one who has bonded with the one you call Priscilla, my best friend. I'm merely repaying the debt I owed her."

Oya's personality fully consumed Priscilla's own at the sight of this blow, "You fucking fool, Oshun. I asked you to do one thing when we had the Godslayer at our mercy and you choked. You continue to have this foolish notion of mercy and kindness. For what? What did mercy get, Mawu? NOTHING. She's just as dead as the rest of our kin. You protect this girl for what? She doesn't desire anything to do with our cause nor does she have anything of merit to aid us in our cause. At least her friend has such desire and strong will about her in this vessel."

Oshun coughs as her essence flows from her wounds and out of her mouth, "That's where you are wrong. In BOTH of these two women, I see the future of our kind."

Ximena panics and scrambles and runs away from the beach, hoping to escape all that has transpired.

Oya's laugh echoes behind her, "Look at her run. So much for the 'future'... You can stay right here and waste away like nothing. I'm going to do what I should have done before I went with you and Mawu. I'm going to hunt down the Godslayers like the animals they are and skewer all of their hearts on the tip of my spear."

Oshun's vision began to blur as her form began to dissolve into the wind. Her final words escaped through her lips, "Don't... lose... yourself..."

Oya's eyes glowed as she unleashed a mighty roar at the loss of the one she called her best friend, Oshun. One could definitely sense that Priscilla could feel Oya's pain echoed throughout her soul as she watched her own best friend, Ximena, walk away and possibly out of her life for the last time.

Roughly an hour later, Ximena returned to the condo that her and Priscilla had rented for the week. She slumped down to the floor with her back against the door. She buried her face in her knees and cried. This was too much for her. From her argument with Pris to saving the orisha on the beach to Pris getting possessed by another angry orisha and getting super powers that tried to kill her, she was having a panic attack.

Ximena held a hand to her chest and slowed her breathing down to calm herself down. It took a few minutes, but her heart stopped feeling like it was going to explode out of her chest violently and nervous jitters and anxiety went away.

"All of this couldn't be real, could it?" Ximena asked herself aloud as she wiped the tears from her eyes.

"Xi, you live in a world where robotic soldiers patrol the cities and someone new manifests wildcard abilities every other day... What makes this so hard to believe?" says the voice of her best friend coming out of Priscilla's room carrying a duffle bag with all of her belongings in it.

She shook her head and Oya's voice echoes throughout the condo, "I've disposed of the filth off the beach. Those ones will trouble you no more." She gestured out of the window to show all of the sorority women that bullied them earlier piled up along the shore, beaten up rather badly.

Ximena gasps in shock at Oya/Priscilla's handiwork, "That wasn't called for. They could easily report you to the authorities. Look at yourself, you're no better than they are – abusing the power that you have."

Oya/Priscilla's eyes glow an eerie white as she instantly slapped the air in front of Ximena, causing a gust of wind to forcefully blow her out of the door and go tumbling across the beach.

Her voice boomed, "How DARE you compare me with that common filth!? After all that I've done... all that I have sacrificed... I still continue to protect and aid you, but you still lack any gratitude for my gift to you. So be it, I'll leave you here with the rest of the filth of my old life while I make one anew."

Ximena crawls to her feet, pleading with her friend.

"I have a confession too, Pris.

I'm nothing without you by my side, urging me to be the best me I can be. That's why I wanted you to have Oshun's gift.

Ever since we first met, I have wanted to be *just* like you... Even to the point where I felt jealous of how everyone admired you. When we got to college, I feared that you were going to find better friends and I would lose you forever. I thought that if I could hang with you long enough, all of your confidence, determination, and compassion for others would rub off on me. I wasn't mad that you dragged me along on this trip. That was all an act – I just thought if I could get you away from the sorority girls that I could just continue keeping you to myself just like we've always been. You're an amazing person – inside and out. I don't care what Oshun's friend is selling to you in your head right now, but I know deep down that you're still my friend."

Oya/Priscilla's face softened as Priscilla was regaining control while Oya's rage subsided, but that was the opening SHE needed... Oya is slammed into the ground within a blink of an eye, only to find Nemesis kneeling next to her with palm firmly pressed onto her forehead as she recites a mantra in a language that Ximena didn't recognize.

Oya's rage assumed control of their body once more but it was too late. What little control Priscilla had before was quickly slipping away as she felt her mind being swallowed whole by darkness within. In her mind's eye, everything was dark and silent. She was a prisoner within her own body now as Nemesis smirked at her handiwork back in the physical world.

Nemesis stood up and spoke to Oya, laying into the sand, "Rise, warrior."

Oya's eyes glowed white as she obeyed Nemesis' commands without question.

Nemesis asked, "Where is the other one that was with you? The one that bound me to that tree?"

Oya spoke with a blank stare and lack of emotion in her voice, "Oshun has perished. It... was my fault. An accident." A lone tear ran down her face.

Nemesis cursed under her breath, "That's unfortunate, but she managed to find you a suitable new vessel. I guess I have you to thank for breaking Oshun's spell with her demise."

Ximena found her voice and shouted at Nemesis, "What did you do to my friend?"

Nemesis looked at Ximena nonchalantly and replied, "I used the same spell on her that I used on Mawu before Oya and Oshun were forced to kill their fellow Orisha for me. I wanted to repay Oshun with that pleasure but I could use a warrior with Oya's skill set to aid me in hunting down the rest of their kind and properly disposing of them - for good this time."

"C'mon, Pris, shake it off! I know you're still in there!" pleads Ximena.

"Save your breath, girl. Your friend isn't there anymore. Even if she were, I made sure to lock Oya's rage and fervor for battle to be the dominant personality with this spell. Better yet, I'll demonstrate it with a showcase on YOU!" laughed Nemesis.

"Kill her," spat Nemesis.

Oya grits her teeth as she materializes two spears of lightning out of the air. She hurled the first at Ximena, landing at her feet.

Ximena notices this and stands up, only to watch the second whiz by her head, narrowly missing its target.

Nemesis looks confused, she shouts to Oya, "I said KILL HER!"

Oya roars in response and readies another spear and immediately charges across the beach towards Ximena slowly walking towards her.

Ximena thought, "All of those times Priscilla had my back time and time again, watching out for me, protecting me from harm and bullies. She knew the right thing to say to make me smile or to make me laugh even at the lowest times of my life. I watched Oshun die today and ran away from the destiny that she had in store for me, but I chose a destiny for myself right here and now."

She spoke the words aloud as Oya grew closer, “Pris, I’m not going anywhere. It’s my turn to protect YOU!”

With those words, Oya’s attack is diverted as the warrior goddess finds herself blown away by a force of explosive energy originating from Ximena.

Well, that woman who used to be Ximena Vega. A woman in similar stature and physical build of Oya and Oshun steps out of the explosion of light where her adversaries were unaware of what had transpired within. Her face decorated with raven black curly hair to accent her caramel colored skin. Her eyes sparkled as they darted around looking at herself, as shocked as Oya and Nemesis were at this transformation.

Oshun’s voice echoes in Ximena’s mind, *“Do not despair, child. I kept my word. I never forced this destiny upon you. Instead of bonding with your soul like Oya did with your friend, I have gifted you with my power – to save your friend and possibly many more. You are still you – more or less.”*

The being that was once Ximena Vega looked down at herself to take stock of all her physical changes. While she didn’t gain as much of a muscular build as Priscilla did after bonding with Oya, she did now sport some more than healthy curves – in the front and in the back – as noted as she could tell from the ample bosom she now sported heaving up and down as she breathed and the added “junk in the trunk” she had in the rear. This new form contained her modesty with an elegant top, but exposed her new ridges of muscle in her abdomen and bottom curves of her breasts. A decorated belt held a matching skirt to her fit, yet trim waist. Her toned arms were dressed with flowing sleeves that added to her sense of elegance, while her delicate feet were contained with knee-high stiletto style heels. A tiara decorated her forehead while she brushed much longer, wavy raven black hair from flowing into her face from the wind coming off the seafront.

Nemesis grits her teeth as she surveys Ximena’s new form, “This is Oshun’s doing. There’s no other way.” She quickly regains her composure as she turns to Oya, “No matter. My orders remain the same – *kill the girl*. I don’t care who or what she is.”

Oya resumes her attack as Ximena continues to look down at herself in shock and awe.

She sees Oya closing in at the last moment merely holding a hand up, causing Oya to smash into an invisible wall. Oya fell to her knees with Ximena quickly dropping down to tend to her friend. She caressed her cheek and searched for any signs of Priscilla within her mind and body.

“Pris, it’s time to wake up... I’m here to take my friend back home,” she whispers.

Nemesis immediately intervenes by making her move in an instant, just like before, but what happened afterwards is something she wasn’t prepared for. Ximena saw Nemesis’ motions

clear as day with her newly awakened abilities and responded accordingly. She armed herself with Oya's lightning spear and hoisted Nemesis up into the air with it as if she just went spear-fishing. Ximena held her up above her with ease before jumping up into the air and slamming Nemesis into the sand, leaving a sizable crater from the impact and sounds of Nemesis screaming with pain as the electricity went through her body.

Nemesis staggered to her feet but fell back to her knees as she winced in pain, "No... You're nothing like Oshun... You're something else entirely. Tell me who or what you are, dammit!"

"Who am I? I am..."

Ximena's mind flashed back to her childhood when her Hispanic mother would tell her stories of gods and goddesses from both her own native culture when her African-American father would chime in with tales of the orishas that his own mother passed down when he was a child. She smiled at the memory and merely uttered the word that her mother would refer to her as her pet nickname for her child - my *diosa*.

"Diosa."

Nemesis looked confused, "*Diosa*... as in Goddess!? You're nothing like any goddess I have encountered in my travels. I refuse to believe that. I am duty-bound to his Excellency and I have never fought any god with your strength."

The woman formerly known as Ximena Vega, now calling herself Diosa, stood in front of Nemesis looking at her hands. They lacked any signs of harm or damage from wielding Oya's spear and performing her miraculous feat of strength thereafter. She felt something within her that was foreign to her until this very moment - confidence.

*"I **can** actually do this,"* thought Diosa. *"She's right though. I don't know what I am or what I'm fully capable of, but it's definitely off the charts in this new body."*

Diosa's moment lost in her own thoughts left her defenses down as Oya attacked from behind. Diosa snapped out of her trace and moved out of the way at the last second, causing Oya to impale Nemesis through her chest with her spear.

The mind-controlled Oya backed away in horror before dropping to her knees and holding her head in frustration. Diosa walked over to comfort her, softly stating, "Calm down, my friend. It's over..." Oya backhanded her friend away, knocking her down the coastline and ran off down the opposite end of the beach.

Diosa stood up unfettered by the blow, but shook her head to clear the cobwebs. Before Diosa could pursue her friend, Nemesis gave a mighty laugh as she coughed up blood.

“You may have broken my spell or maybe not. Only time will tell how that worked out. Either way, your friend will not be the same as she once was. I made sure of that when I first cast the spell. Oya is a pet, continuing my will. She will seek out conflict and revel in destruction until she is the last one standing. She will start with your pantheon of gods then to my fellow Godslayers then to every man, woman, and child. There is no saving your friend from the cycle of bloodshed I have set her on! Hahahahaha!!!”

“You’re wrong about her. Your control over her is not absolute. We both have seen proof of that today. You can die here, knowing that you failed on your petty revenge on Oshun and her pantheon. I’m going to pursue my friend and protect her from herself, no matter what it takes.”

Nemesis coughed up more blood as her life was coming to an end, spitting out the words, “A fool’s errand...” before her body fell into the sand and evaporated into ashes, only to be carried off by the incoming tide.

Diosa looked to the distance as the sun began to set.

She looked out to the waves smashing into the shore from the rising tide, losing herself to her own thoughts once more.

“Priscilla’s out there – the literal manifestation of a woman possessed by something out of her control. I made the mistake before of denying myself of my destiny but as fate would have it, those around me got hurt for my stubbornness and failure to take action. I don’t understand this great power bestowed upon me, but will gladly use it to bring Priscilla home. It’s the least I can do for all that she has sacrificed for me.”

Oshun spoke within her mind once more, *“I may not be able to assist you physically, young Ximena Vega, but I can educate you in your heritage and make the best of your abilities as Diosa. My ability to communicate with you is weak, but as I recover my essence on the astral plane I can pass on more of my knowledge to you in due time. For now, I leave you with only this.”*

Diosa’s eyes illuminate as knowledge fills Ximena’s mind. To her surprise, she begins floating slowly off the ground.

“I can fly?” asks an excited Diosa to herself. Her body shoots up into the skies, taking flight throughout the clouds above.

Ximena Vega didn’t know what the future had laid out ahead of her, but was certain of one thing – it was never going to be the same now that she was gifted the powers of a goddess, transforming her into **Diosa**!