

DIOSA

Chapter Two: "Loyalty"

"I can't believe you, Pris. You didn't see the newest episode of *Godai Fighter V*? You missed a really good one! The team finally got to Mistress Mefisuto's stronghold after evading all of the traps!" started by a sixteen year old Ximena Vega.

The seventeen year old Priscilla Lennox shrugged, "Sorry, I knew I said I was going to call you after, but practice took longer than I thought last night because..."

Ximena cuts her off by continuing excitedly, "Godai-1 ran up to her and gave her one of her patented Dynamic Kicks like this!"

Ximena clumsily kicks the air and manages to fall flat on her back on the sidewalk.

Priscilla shook her head, "Seriously, Xi. You have to stop doing that. I know that's your favorite show and all, but you need to be careful. Are you okay?"

"I think I may have bruised my ego, but you don't understand! It was SOOOO cool! I hope you get a chance to see it!"

Priscilla sighed, "It might be still on the DVR if I'm lucky. If not, I'm sure you'll DM me the link so I can stream it online -- *as usual*."

"Naturally. I wouldn't mind coming over and watching it again with you if you want."

Priscilla beamed back Ximena's eager and excited face, only to pose a question for her best friend.

"Xi, you like those shows so much, right? Then how come you never thought about taking some self-defense classes?"

"What for? Everyone's always going to find a way to stuff me into a locker one way or another. It's not that I'm a total badass like Godai-1 fighting all of Mistress Mefisuto's henchmen all on her own until the rest of the team had a chance to regroup."

"THIS is why," answered Priscilla as she threw Ximena back down onto the grass with a judo hip toss.

"Ouch. That stung a little there, y'know, Pris."

"C'mon, Xi. Give it a chance and come to class with me. I can't protect you ALL the time. Plus, wouldn't it be cool to study all of those fancy fighting techniques that you love in your anime and video games?"

"I dunno... What if I get a totally lame sensei? That would be a complete total drag."

Priscilla smiled as she helped Ximena up off the grass and helped brush the grass from back and out of her hair.

"That wouldn't be a problem in the least. I know exactly who your sensei would be."

"Then who would that be?"

"You're looking at her, Xi. I got offered the opportunity to teach a class last night. That's why I was trying to tell you why I missed the show last night."

"Oh my god, I'm so happy for you, Pris!"

"Thanks, dork. After seeing that poor excuse of a kick of yours, I'm tempted to sign you up into the kids' class."

Ximena stuck out her tongue, "Cut me a break, Pris. I know that sports were never my strong point like how all of that stuff comes naturally for you. I've been fine with living vicariously through you in that regard."

Priscilla laughed, "I hate to break it to ya, Xi, but the rent is past due on that one. If you're not careful, I might be forced to knock your lights out - literally - if you don't take this seriously. I mean it, Xi. I don't want you to take shit from anyone. This is going to be the first step in you being able to stand up for yourself someday."

Ximena gulps hard, "I'm not going to make any promises, but for you, Pris, I'll give it my best shot."

"Sensei is always telling us that nothing in this world is worth having or worth doing unless it means effort, pain, difficulty. No kind of life is worth leading if it is always an easy life."

"Per Theodore Roosevelt... Interesting. Maybe I misjudged your sensei prematurely, Pris. Sounds like he's got a good head on his shoulders."

“Oh totally. He normally has *Godai Fighter V* up on the flatscreens in the dojo during class, but y’know, last night was a special occasion...”

Ximena tugged her best friend by the arm, “Speaking of which, I owe you a treat. Milkshakes and a cheeseburger on me. It’s the least I can do for your promotion. C’mon, it’s the perfect snack to go with our anime binge tonight.”

Priscilla sighed in defeat, “You’re not going to give this up are you, Xi?”

Ximena shook her head, “Nope!”

“Just know that if you torture me tonight, I’m totally dragging you through the ringer in class tomorrow!”

“That’s a small price to pay for some quality time with my best friend!” Ximena smirked as she hugged Priscilla.

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"I'm running out of time..." starts Diosa as she thinks to herself after snapping back to reality. Her body remained hovering in the air above the clouds as she dwelled on her thoughts. "Now isn't the time to be dwelling on the past. I've had these powers for only a few hours now and I'm still not any closer than I was before I had them to get Priscilla back home safe and sound."

Oshun spoke within her mind, "I know this quest troubles you, child, but you're not alone. I want you to save my friend as well. I gave you this gift for you to do what I could not. Oya had always been a much more capable warrior than me. I spent my days versing myself with knowledge - something I'm sure that you can relate with..."

"Oh definitely. When we were kids, Pris was good at sports and would always be the first one chosen to be on teams by the other kids. Then when we were in high school, she would be the one asked out on dates and to parties. People never gravitated to me in the ways that they were drawn to her. I couldn't ever find myself jealous or envious of her position either. Pris was always so kind and protective of me. She never let anyone make fun of me nor bully me whenever she was around..."

Oshun asks, *"So she was your guardian then?"*

"Yes, you can say it that way. To this day, I'll never understand that about her."

Oshun muses, *"If she's anything like Oya, then she saw the same things in you that she saw in me. It took me a long time to realize my own potential and have faith in my abilities. Oya took it as her sole responsibility to protect and nurture me until I saw it too."*

*"That's easy for you to say, Oshun. For me, all of this still doesn't even feel real at all. One minute, I'm my plain jane normal self, the next I'm a total **knockout** - in more ways than one - in this gorgeous new body, filled to the brim with power I don't have the slightest idea of how to control nor to wield properly! Finding Pris/Oya is one thing, but what exactly am I supposed to do when I'm forced to face her?"*

Ximena's surroundings instantly blur and disappear as Ximena finds herself back to her normal self standing in an empty void of time and space. The only difference being that she was standing completely naked in this null space.

"W-W-Where am I?" Ximena asks as she awkwardly attempts to preserve some modesty.

Oshun appears before her, resembling exactly how she looked when they first met, towering over Ximena's petite height by at least two feet.

Oshun smiles, "That's where I come in. This is the plane where my spirit - much like much of Anunnaki who have lost their physical forms - continues to exist."

Ximena gasps, "Does that mean that you died to give me your powers?"

Oshun smiles, "I didn't give you anything. Your friend, Priscilla, was an excellent host for symbiosis but I choose you given the circumstances. You were compatible with my gifts like any woman in a fifty mile radius, yes, but I didn't 'give' you anything that you weren't capable of on your own. That indomitable spirit and that fiery passion to do everything in your power to save your friend - that's all from you, Ximena Vega. As Diosa though, you are like me, an Orisha. As shown with the abundance of *wildcards* (mutants in this continuity) as your kind calls them and other special beings roaming the Earth in these modern times, humanity has the potential for many great things, especially if they balance themselves spiritually and physically. Doing as such would allow one to obtain alignment with one's Ori. I merely assisted you to acquire this via iwa-pele. Don't fret, child. I would gladly sacrifice my mortal form again if it would mean that I could help you in any way."

"My Ori? *Iwa-pele*?" asks a confused Ximena.

"In your case, your Ori, or rather your divine self is the form you take when you become Diosa. Iwa-pele is the process of mortals working with an Orisha to achieve this balanced self. Simply put, I saw the good nature and strength of your character within you and offered to give you the tools to bring your Ori to the surface."

Ximena asks, "So what does all of this mean? Could anyone have been Diosa, but you picked me of all people?"

Oshun shook her head, "This is going to come as a shock, but many deities have a knack of overwriting themselves over a host, such as mortals like yourself, instead of the symbiosis that your friend and Oya have adopted. You are a special case, whatsoever. I sacrificed my physical form, thinking that I could bestow you with a fraction of my powers to save your friend, but it did something I didn't expect at all. I have never seen a mortal achieve a divine self in the manner that you have done. We share some similar powers from what I can read of your *aegis* and we are able to communicate like this on this plane of existence, but at the same time, I'm not bonded to you like our friends are."

Ximena looks confused, "My *aegis*?"

Oshun waves her hand over Ximena's head and small sparkles of light illuminate around her body.

Ximena looks excited, "That's so pretty. What is that?"

Oshun does a similar gesture over her own head and states, "That is your aegis. It is a term coined by Zeus' children, but what my pantheon has come to recognize as that aura that surrounds those like us or those that possess powers like us. Only other deities can see it. Otherwise, it is invisible to the mortal eye. That will be one means of tracking our friends. No matter where you go in this realm or the mortal one, there are always traces of your aegis one way or another. The only issue is that a lot of them are indistinguishable from others."

"What about Oya/Pris' aegis? Is it so much different than ours?"

"Not really, but given Nemesis' curse, there could be some complications with how long we will be able to track it, if at all in time. If more Godslayers find them first, then there is no doubt that they will cover up the trail to eliminate any possible competition for their prey... Not that many of the *Jaegers* could put down our kind anyway..."

"*Jaegers*? You mean those crazy bounty hunter guys that work for Reno Goldmire that saved the President a few years ago? Wow, I didn't know they were that hardcore to even try their luck against any divine beings. What about the Sentry Corps? Do they have the means to detect those like us?"

**** *Note for readers not versed in the scope of B3's universe: The Sentry Corps are a militarized police force armed with futuristic technology and body enhancements, mostly cybernetics, to deal with super powered threats and criminals. The Jaegers, or rather "Hunters", are bounty hunters for hire that are***

allowed to pursue their targets in the public eye. Both factions have a “rivalry” of sorts to capture/exterminate the most elusive and most dangerous of targets.**

"You're full of so many questions aren't you, my dear Ximena? Much like the hunters, they have a sorceress in their employ, yes, but no one that I am aware of in their ranks can detect our aegis."

"I'm sorry for so many questions, but this is just so much to take in," Ximena sighed.

"I understand, Child. That's why I am here to help you in any way that I can. When you are ready, I could offer you a wealth of my knowledge to hone your abilities. For now, we shall start with the basics."

"Such as?"

"Invoking your divine self at will."

"You mean becoming Diosa again? I thought I was stuck that way like Pris..."

"No, you can swap between Diosa and Ximena at will. I merely opened the door. Now you should be able to commence the change as simply as breathing..."

"But... I don't know how I did it the first time. It just... happened!"

Oshun walked behind Ximena and rested her hands onto her shoulders, "Child, close your eyes and remember that moment. Remember that fire in your soul that burned brighter than ever before."

Ximena did as she was instructed and she closed her eyes and thought back to that moment. In her mind's eye, she could see her best friend standing across from her as her enemy as she stood helpless under the control of the Godslayer, Nemesis. Ximena remembered her resolve - to stop standing on the sidelines and to take action, namely to do everything in her power to save her best friend.

Ximena gave an audible gasp as her eyes shot open, illuminated with white light. Oshun smiled as the petite and demure Ximena slowly rose up in height. Her limbs were growing with more length while simultaneously adding more muscle to accommodate. Ximena's gasp turned into a moan of pleasure as she felt the warmth of the divine energy filling her body.

Ximena Vega's body reacted to the abundance of divine energy that was emitting from her body. Every second that passed brought more changes to her body as she closed her eyes in pleasure. Ximena could feel herself gaining more height inch by inch, but her attention went to the

changes starting at the top of her head first and foremost. Her naturally short hair lengthened down her shoulders and gained a volume of rich black colored wavy curls.

Her body continued to grow taller, clearly leaving her normal petite stature behind as she gained shapely curves that were foreign on her thin figure, but fit right at home on the form that she was acquiring. She subconsciously bit her bottom lip as her lips swelled into a sexy pout while her facial bone structure molded itself to enhance her appearance for the better.

This transformation continued throughout her body, working its way downward. Ximena's shoulders broadened and expanded outward to frame her stronger arms. Between bated breaths, her chest rose and fell slowly as her lungs filled up with more air to continue fueling this wonderful change. With each breath, her bosoms would not fall as much as the previous breath as her formerly non-existent breasts were inflating into healthy orbs. The barren plains on her chest gave birth to mole hills before setting into majestic mountains, topped by two peaks - namely her hardened nipples from her arousal. They jiggled slightly before settling into their final size - a little shy of a DD cup.

Ximena's torso wasn't left out of this transformation. Before her abdomen left much to be desired, but now it was just desired as her washboard abs decorated her torso. Much like her shoulders, her hips widened to give room for her rear that wasn't being left out of this transformation. Her once flat, bony rear was receiving the same treatment as her bosom did mere moments earlier. She felt her rear inflating as it swelled in size to compliment her hips. It stopped swelling once Ximena gained a heart-shaped rear that would definitely be best described as "bootilicious" in some social circles.

Ximena was still caught up into the feeling of complete bliss that accompanied this transformation as her body surged with one final pulse of divine energy. Her muscles swelled once more to enhance and augment her shapely figure to live up to the divine standards that it remodeled her for while simultaneously giving her ebony skin a slight caramel complexion. Ximena instinctively flexed her toned arms and stood on her tiptoes of the feet that capped off the sexy divine pillars that were her legs as she sensed the newfound power filling through her limbs.

The wonderful change wasn't quite done yet. It had one more job to do. The divine energies wash over her naked form once more, starting from her head to her shoulders before covering her entire body and dispersing at her toes. It crowns her head with a golden tiara before running down her bare shoulders after accenting her enhanced facial features with a subtle hint of make-up and coat of red gloss over her lips. How the gods would know the finer details of cosmetology is a discussion for another day... She instinctively removed her hands from her exposed breasts while the energies decorated her neck, shoulders, and arms with golden armor and accompanying brassiere with sacred, timeless jewels studded into the plates. The energies wash over her fit, trim waist and washboard abs to cover her exposed midsection with a golden thong to preserve her modesty before spiralling around her hips and materializing into a skirt.

The divine energy doesn't stop there as it continues drifting down her toned thighs and spirals around her accompanying calf muscles. Ximena instinctively rose up on her tiptoes until she was levitating a few inches off the ground, which allowed the energy to collect at the bases of her feet and materialized into a pair of stylish knee-high, golden scrapped heeled boots. The divine energy dissipated as quickly as it emerged while Ximena Vega, now transformed to Diosa once more, gently floated to the ground.



Oshun strode in front of her as she slowly opened her eyes and smirked, “I can confidently confer that the experience was rather... pleasurable for you.”

Diosa blushed, “I-I-I... U-U-Uhhh... It was that obvious, huh?”

Oshun grinned, “I’m the goddess of divinity, femininity, fertility, beauty and love, my young Ximena Vega. Consider that feeling as part of my gift... A transformation of that divine nature is commonly painful for the host, especially when the deity assumes that host’s body as their own. I never assured myself into your mortal shell. I merely opened the floodgates to what was already there.”

Diosa looked confused, “I don’t understand. What is that supposed to mean?”

Oshun pointed at Diosa’s heart and replied, “Diosa was always inside you. I only provided the means for you to bring her out.”

Diosa laughed, “I’m sorry, Oshun, but I’m finding that hard to believe. Even more so with the fact that I fought Nemesis like I have been doing this all of my life! Any minute now, I just know that I’m going to wake up from this crazy dream and have a good laugh about it with Priscilla.”

“Deny it all you want, Ximena Vega, but you tapped into an instinct that only eight percent of your kind is capable of, that deities hone their minds and bodies throughout their entire

existences, hoping to master. That was what gave you the capabilities to defeat Nemesis. And I think with my training, you will be able to tap into it at will to overcome any threat in your way..."

"An *instinct*?"

Ximena's mind's eye flashes back to that fateful day on the beach once again. She remembers her burning desire of wanting to defend herself, wanting to protect Priscilla, and wanting to stop Nemesis standing in her way - only for her body to go on auto-pilot in a sense. She found herself as Diosa reacting and not actually acting to the task at hand. It was still such a foreign concept to her, much like this voluptuous body she now stood eye to eye with Oshun in.

She looked back to Oshun and asked, "Are you sure that's what I did? Maybe I was just pumped up on adrenaline. That *instinct* thing sounds too anime, even for all of *this*..." She gestured down to her shapely figure.

Oshun mused, "You could be right, but if you are able to pull off that feat again, then you will know that I was right."

"Level with me Oshun, I read legends of heroes and heroines all the time. Never did I imagine in my wildest dreams that I would wake up one day as a walking triple threat!"

Oshun looks confused, "A *triple threat*? Now you have me confused, Ximena."

Diosa laughed, "A bootilicious, bad ass babe. Just look at yourself if you need to see an example. I bet nothing could stand in your way whenever you set your mind towards something."

Oshun smiled, "Oya said her favorite thing about me was that I had an eternal fire within me that would never burn out. I have to admit that I can be rather... stubborn in my ways."

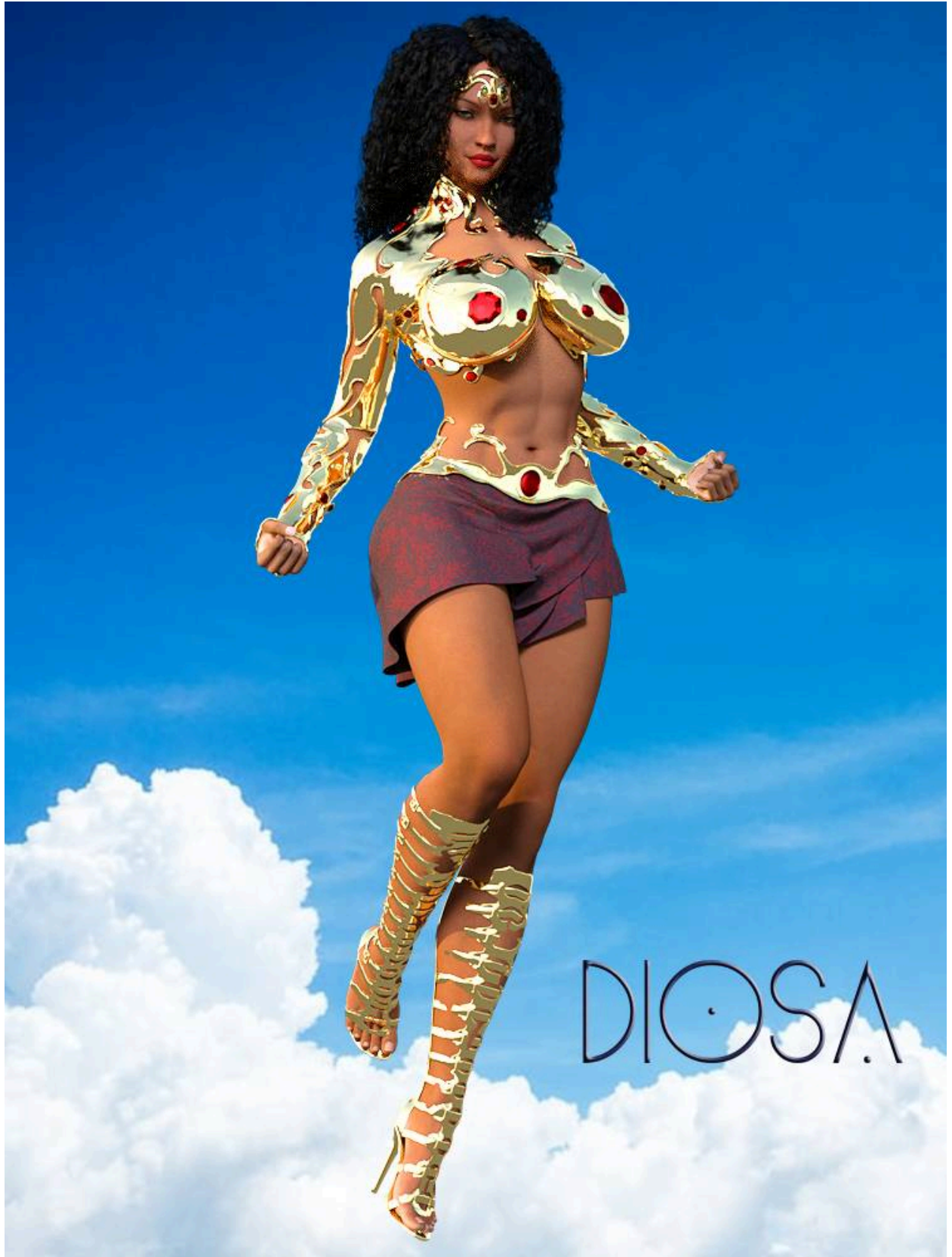
She rubbed her temple briefly.

"Unfortunately, I'm afraid that our time is up for this session, Ximena."

Ximena looks confused, "What do you mean, Oshun?"

"Maintaining this private space within this dreamscape is taxing on the reserves of my powers. Without a physical form, I must refrain from using too much of my powers before exhausting what little power I have left. Even worse... I could lose my connection to you forever and be unable to assist you. Fret not, child, I should only need a few of your mortal hours to 'recharge my batteries' so to speak."

Ximena blinked twice and found herself still levitating in the air, hidden among the clouds in her transformed state as Diosa.



She mused, *"No problem, Oshun... I could find something to preoccupy my time..."*

An animalistic, primal roar caught her attention as she swooped down to investigate.

"Could it be Pris? There's no telling what that Nemesis' curse has done to her the longer she's stuck like this. I have to stop her - no matter what it takes."

She glides down to the ground, only to walk through the incoming crowd of panicked and distressed civilians coming from the opposite direction. She gasps in horror at the corpses laying before her. Roads and walkways were bathed in the blood of whoever, or whatever, came this way.

Diosa bit her bottom lip as she nervously thought, *"There's no way that Priscilla is capable of anything like this. I-I-I couldn't bring myself to face her if she did harm so many innocent people..."*

She stopped in her tracks at the sight of one body having been torn asunder. Torso here. A leg there. And a portion of another leg over there. A skull found not too far away, cracked open like a coconut, with its contents littering the sidewalk.

Diosa subconsciously levitated above the ground as she didn't want to walk over the blood-soaked remains littering her path ahead. She couldn't see through the unnatural fog ahead of her, but she could definitely feel the aegis of something ahead.

"Okay, Xi... Now we see if we're cracked up for this hero gig. Time to put Oshun's training... or lack of thereof... to some good use."

She glided through the fog, only to be knocked back HARD through the nearby building. Diosa got up from the remains of the fallen brick wall, looking for the source of the attack. Diosa doesn't find her feral friend in the wake of all of this destruction. Instead, she found a demonic lion emerging from the fog.

"What the hell is THAT?" she asks herself aloud.

Diosa doesn't even have a chance to react as this creature opens its mouth and fires an arcane blast of energy. Diosa held her arms up in anticipation to block the incoming attack.

To her surprise, the attack is batted away harmlessly by another woman coming to her aid.

She asks, "What the hell are you doing just standing there!?"

Diosa looks confused, "Sue me. This is my first time on the job dealing with this type of thing, y'know."

"Just stay out of my way and assist me in purifying this beast before it does any further damage to the area."

Diosa took a moment to study her newfound ally's attire. She was an African-American woman decorated in similar golden armor as herself, but her short hair was braided with golden beads and studs to match. Her most distinguishing piece of her attire was the choker decorating her neck with a green emerald lodged within its center.

"She sure likes to show a lot more skin than I'm comfortable baring..." Diosa thought.

The demonic lion stood ready with another blast, but Diosa's newfound ally punched it in the jaw, preventing it from releasing the blast. The lion then coughed in response as a result of the arcane energies dispersing prematurely. Diosa got her bearings about her and repeated the same gesture to the opposite side of its face.

The woman smiled, "Now you're getting it. Tell me, what do people call you?"

"Uhhh... Diosa. Just call me Diosa. What's yours?"

The woman stared blankly as she focused on the task at hand before delivering another punch to the beast that sends it flying back into the ethereal mists that it originated from.

She then replied, "I have no name, but if you may call me anything, I am known as a Child of Venus."

Diosa motioned to pursue it until the Child of Venus halted her advance.

"Don't you know your purification spells? Take heed of my advice. Never step into those mists. There's no telling what traps these creatures may have in wait. Instead, cleanse these mists to be scattered harmlessly to the winds as Mother Gaia has intended."

Her hands illuminate and shone brightly as she dispersed the dense fog until the weakened demonic lion was exposed once more. This time, it cowered in fear of Diosa and the Child of Venus' combined presence.



Diosa went on offense again, firing an energized blast of light from her hand that sent the beast tumbling down the street and crashing into the fountain in the town's center.

Diosa looked at her glowing right hand, shocked, asking aloud, "Did I do THAT?"

The Child of Venus looks confused, "Why are you surprised? You're a Blessed One too, just like me. All of this should come as natural as breathing."

"Blessed One?"

"Your unique aegis tells me that you are like me, a goddess. I was blessed by my *Venus* to educate me how to use these gifts properly. I assume that you were blessed too, am I correct?"

Diosa shrugs her shoulders, unsure of what to say.

"I suppose that would be the best way of describing what Oshun did for me that day... So yeah, let's go with that for now."

“Assist me in purifying this creature for it won’t do any more harm to these mortals than it already has...”

Diosa looks sheepishly, “I-I-I don’t know how... I don’t think we’ve had that lesson yet in training...”

“Don’t despair. Clear your mind and focus your aegis on the task at hand. Rest your hand on its head like this and purge the darkness out of this creature.”

Diosa closed her eyes and in concentration and could sense the malign presence in front of them growing weaker by the second before evaporating completely.

“We did it!” she exclaimed, excited.

The Child of Venus shook her head, “YOU did it. I merely talked you through the formalities of the technique.”

What remained in front of them was a normal lion of its typical size and stature - not the behemoth of a beast that stood before them prior.

Diosa looks confused, “Then what happened to it? What caused it to turn into that *thing* and attack these innocent people?”

“It was infected by a malignant aegis... Something came through here with more wickedness in its veins. It was filled to the brim with so much hate and evil intentions that those sensations infected this creature...”

“*Pris...*” mumbled Diosa.

“What was that?” asks the Child of Venus.

“Did you see anyone else other than this creature when you came here?”

“No, but I was tracking an aegis with an erratic malign flare to it in the area. When this creature appeared, I lost track of what resembled a *woman*.”

“That has to be Oya then!” exclaimed Diosa. “Please, could you assist me in tracking her down?”

The Child of Venus’ eyes look down at the lion sleeping peacefully at their feet before looking into Diosa’s green eyes, almost pleading with her.

She reluctantly answered, “Why do you want to track down this malignant entity? Something with that amount of wickedness cannot be purified by the technique that I just showed you.”

“It doesn’t matter. The orisha, Oya... is out of control, cursed by the godkiller Nemesis. Her essence bonded with my best friend Priscilla. I would do anything in my power to free her from that curse before any more innocent blood is spilled.”

The Child of Venus sighs and gives a slow nod, “I will assist you in tracking your friend down. After that, we shall ensure that her curse is lifted once and for all.”

Diosa hugs the Child of Venus excitedly. She didn’t take stock of what she was doing and unintentionally grazed across her necklace. The Child of Venus responds by instantly pushing Diosa away and clutching her neck.

“I-I-I’m sorry...” she stammered. “This sacred heirloom is very precious to me. It means more to me than my life itself.”

Diosa waved her hands to apologize, “No, it was my fault for not knowing. I just got a little carried away that I actually have some help with this impossible task that I have been burdened with.”

“Let us be off then... I shall lead the way.” the Child of Venus flew ahead.

Diosa excitedly nodded and flew closely behind her, but quickly withdrew to her thoughts.

“Talk about good luck! First, I ran into this gnarly demonic lion and met this Child of Venus, who taught me how to purify evil from others. Oshun wasn’t even able to get to that lesson before our training was cut short. If that wasn’t sweet enough, she offered to track and lead me straight to Pris. At this rate, I can get Pris back home and I can actually sleep in my own bed tonight!”

It is not long before they reach a clearing in the nearby woods.

“The sun will set soon and our quarry will have the advantage of night on their side for her escape,” calmly stated the Child of Venus.

Diosa looked around cautiously, “I don’t see anything. Where is she?”

“Her aegis is all over this space. She is definitely here, possibly watching us from the shadows, waiting for the best moment to strike...”

At that very moment, the statuesque amazonian warrior that was now Oya, who had bonded her essence to Ximena’s best friend Priscilla, came crashing down into the Child of Venus with a maneuver that savvy professional wrestling fans would recognize as a Missile Dropkick. The

force of the attack shook the surrounding forest, the force of a mighty gust of wind as it sent the Child of Venus flying through several trees.

Diosa immediately called out to her, "Priscilla! It's me! Don't you recognize me?"

Oya charged right at Diosa with a powerful haymaker, but she held her arms up to defend the blow. Diosa's high-heeled feet slid across the ground as she held her ground while Oya pummeled her with haymaker after haymaker, looking to break through her defense. Eventually, Diosa felt her back collide with one of the trees behind her, leaving her trapped between a rock and a hard place. Diosa kept her arms up, only to find herself knocked through the tree with minimal effort from her attacker. With Diosa reeling, Oya took the opportunity to hurl an energized spear at Diosa. This time, her attack hit her target - square in the shoulder as Diosa found herself pinned to another tree.

Diosa cried out in pain as the spear burned within her shoulder and collar bone.

Ximena thought to herself, *"So I guess there's limits to how durable I am in this form after all... Shit... there goes those aspirations of being the new Supergirl on the block."*

Oya manifested another spear and hurled it towards her prey, but Diosa was able to catch it in motion. She took a moment to study its composition and mused, *"By all accounts, I shouldn't be able to grab light out of the air, but maybe I'm able to because the light does what I want it to do. I was able to use her own constructs against Nemesis, so why would this be any different?"*

Diosa looked towards Oya closing the gap between them and took action. She hurled the spear of light right back at her, but upon impact it hit Oya like a bolt of lightning. Between gritted teeth, Diosa extracted the burning spear from her shoulder and returned it back to Oya as another powerful bolt of lightning. The two blows brought Oya down to her knees. Diosa held her shoulder and winced slightly as she walked towards her friend.

She approached Oya with her hand extended like earlier when she performed the purification spell on the lion. Oya's body was swatted away like a gnat as the Child of Venus used the uprooted tree in her hands like a baseball bat. Oya's body flew across the forest and through several trees and boulders, much like the Child of Venus' own moments earlier.

The Child of Venus pursues her prey, looking to finish Oya off as she crawls on all fours in an attempt to regain her bearings.

Diosa flew forward and stood in the way of her two friends - one old and one new.

Diosa demanded to know what was going on, "STOP!! I'm not going to let you harm my best friend!!"

The Child of Venus' face remained calm and stoic. "Get out of the way, Diosa. She is marked by the one who wishes to end my Venus' life! There is no SAVING one like this. Only in death that she can truly be purified."

"How the hell do you know that when you stopped me before I could even try!?"

"My Venus ordered for the eradication of the Nemesis and all of those like her. NO exceptions. So stand out of my way or I will be forced to remove you from this plane of existence as well."

"I'm sorry, but I'm not moving an inch. I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for everything that she did to me. Oya AND Pris are victims, just like those people who were slaughtered earlier."

"Foolish girl. There will be countless more victims if your friend is allowed to continue running amok. What would have you done if it was your friend that laid those humans to waste and scattered their remains across those streets? Would you have been strong enough to quell that beast if your so-called friend was that monster? I think not."

Diosa gritted her teeth through pained breaths as the Child of Venus continued.

"Death is the only purification that will bring damned souls like her any true peace. You know that my words ring true. Now, move out of the way so I can squash her like the insignificant bug that she is!"

The Child of Venus swung the tree once more, but Diosa held her ground, batting the tree away and breaking it in one smooth motion with her unaffected arm.

She spat back in defiance, "NO!"

The Child of Venus' face washed over with a look of utter disgust.

"I hate to see that I was clearly wrong about you. I thought that you had potential to be one of us, when it's clear that you're merely an obstacle standing in the way of my Venus' goals. I give you one chance, Diosa. Step aside and allow me to purge that filth from this plane of existence or continue standing in my way, only to learn to quickly regret that very decision."

Diosa didn't budge an inch.

"If she becomes a monster, then that will be my burden to bear too. I'm never losing hope that I will be able to bring her home safe and sound. For a long time, she was my light out of the darkness. This is my way to do the same for her. I'm not **EVER** giving up on Pris!"

The Child of Venus sighed heavily, "So be it then. You've clearly made your choice."

She raised a hand overhead and collected a large sum of energy into a giant sphere of light.

Diosa looked over her shoulder at Oya still struggling to get her bearings.

“Hang on, Pris. I’ve got you, just like you’ve been there for me all of these years. I’m going to protect you. I made myself a promise and I intend to keep it.”

Diosa extended her arms above her head and steeled herself in position to stop the massive sphere of light coming towards her. To the Child of Venus’ dismay, Diosa caught it in motion, but didn’t completely stop it as the force of this mass of energy was forcing her back as her heels dug into the dirt below her feet.

Through grit teeth and gasps of pain, Diosa shouted to Oya, “Get out of here! I got this!”

A confused Oya staggered up to feet and looked at Diosa as she responded in a soft voice, “Thank... you, Xi...”

She then limped away into the surrounding forest with the Child of Venus looking to pursue her target.

The Child of Venus spat, “NO!! YOU WON’T GET AWAY FROM ME!!”

“Oh no you don’t!!” shouts Diosa as she summons a burst of strength to hurl the light mass back at the Child of Venus.

The Child of Venus clenched her fist and detonated the sphere of energy as it was in motion, causing the area to be engulfed into a massive explosion.

The Child of Venus found herself fanning through the smoke as she coughed briefly while looking for the remains of her adversaries.

Diosa laid among the remains, her golden armor cracked from this conflict and her skirt covered with ash and char from the explosion. The Child of Venus scanned their surroundings, but there was no sign of Oya. Enraged, she hoisted Diosa back to her feet by her hair and forcefully woke her up with a punch to the gut.

The Child of Venus narrowed her gaze back to Diosa as her eyes fluttered open from the blow.

"Wake up, Sleeping Beauty. I'm going to ensure that you will regret your decision to stand in the way of my Venus' goals. Your friend may have escaped my wrath this day, but you won't - that I swear to you."

The Child of Venus released Diosa, leaving Diosa standing on her own knees as she clutched her abdomen.

The Child of Venus didn't give her any breathing room either as she struck again with a kick to the temple, sending her body tumbling across the vast expanse of what remained of the charred remains of the forest. The Child of Venus pummeled her body over and over again, thrashing her around the area like a volleyball from the unrelenting blows.

Diosa crawled on all-fours, looking to get her bearings as she thought to herself.

"Shit! I don't know how many more hits like that I can take from her. I'm no stranger to getting my bell rung from self-defense classes and the years of getting bullied before Pris came around, but this bitch hits like a freight train. I have to do *something*! Otherwise, she's just going to end me and go right back after Pris!"

Tears welled up into her eyes as she balled up her fists in frustration. The Child of Venus strode across the barren threshold to resume her offensive.

"Alas Diosa, I truly thought that we could have been friends. Sadly, I can't deny my Venus' will. She is the one true law and order in this world. Unfortunately for you, we were both wrong. I was wrong to think that I could convince you to follow my Venus' will and abandon your foolish loyalty to your friend. That same foolishness will cost you your very life."

"Believe in yourself, Ximena..." a voice whispers into Diosa's mind.

Diosa slowly stood up on shaky legs as the Child of Venus erupted into hysterical laughter. Diosa fell back down to her knees as the Child of Venus loomed over her shaking her head.

"Nothing in this world is worth having or worth doing unless it means effort, pain, difficulty. No kind of life is worth leading if it is always an easy life."

Diosa smirked.

She thrust her body forward with an Elbow Smash to the Child of Venus' midsection, causing her to drop down onto her knees. With the tables turned, Diosa sprung up again. This time she connects with Jumping Knee Smash to the skull. The blow sent the Child of Venus flying back in a similar manner as Diosa mere moments prior. Unlike Diosa though, the Child of Venus stopped herself in motion and propelled herself forward in flight to retaliate. Diosa caught her breath and met her head-on, easily evading her high-speed strikes.

Diosa seemed to be watching her movements in slow-motion as she studied the Child of Venus' attacks.

"She has great power, but she doesn't know how to fight properly... Why couldn't I see this before? Her attacks are so raw and unfocused because she lacks any techniques or any fighting form..."

A voice whispers in Diosa's mind again, *"You couldn't see it before because your mind was clouded with doubt."*

The Child of Venus grows increasingly frustrated as Diosa evades her every blow gracefully until Diosa grabs her arm and wrenches her arm behind her own back. Diosa then connected with a knee lift to the gut, sapping some of the Child of Venus' air from her lungs from the force of the blow. She relented with a spinning back fist, only for Diosa to duck this incoming attack with ease and retaliate with a knife-edge chop to the throat. The Child of Venus backed away at the last instant, but Diosa's attack hit something - her diamond decorated choker. The chop sliced the gemstone clean out of its socket.

The Child of Venus' heart sank to the bottom of her stomach as she reached out for her precious gemstone as it pummel down to the earth that they were floating above. She sped down looking to catch it, completely ignoring Diosa. That proved to be a costly mistake as Diosa took this as the golden opportunity to end this. She grabbed hold of the Child of Venus' body and used her own momentum to propel her into the ground with a spinning piledriver.

"Hmph... And here Mom said nothing would come out of all of those years of watching lucha libre with Dad..." thought Diosa.

The Child of Venus crawled helplessly out of the crater, her fingers inching closer and closer to the gemstone laying on the ground in plain view. With the nirvana that she sought within her reach, the Child of Venus gasped with horror as Diosa picked it up instead.

Diosa held the gemstone up to her face and asked quizzically, "Why is this so important to you?"

She soon got her answer as she could see the Child of Venus' aegis growing weaker as the gemstone slowly reclaimed that energy for its own.

The Child of Venus hissed, "GIVE... IT... **BACK!!**"

Diosa narrowed her eyes, "Why should I? As long as you have this, you're only going to keep coming after me and my best friend. If I give this back to you, what's going to stop you from striking down my best friend in cold blood?"

"I won't ever stop hunting her and things like her... I cannot deny my Venus' will... Without it, I cannot serve my Venus to the best of my abilities..."

Diosa sighs, "Then I know what I must do then... for all of our sake."

Without pause, she crushed the gemstone in her hands, reducing it to dust.

The Child of Venus screamed in horror before seizing up and violently thrashing about on the ground as her remaining aegis left her body in a blinding flash of light. What remained drew a gasp of shock from Diosa's lips.

"It can't be..."

A young African-American woman, looking to be approximately the same age as Ximena Vega herself, laid on the ground in a deep slumber.



Halfway across the country, a patient wakes up in the local hospital.

Her nurse handed her patient a cup of water as this young woman sat up in the bed.

"Can you state your name for me, Miss?"

The patient's eyes drifted away in thought before speaking softly, "Zabrina... Zabrina Sawyer..."

"Very good. Do you know what day it is?"

Zabrina shook her head, "I'm sorry... I'm drawing a blank on that one. The last thing I remember is partying with some friends on Spring Break at the Costa de Leon resort."

"That's no problem. There was an accident and you bumped your head pretty hard from the look of your X-Rays. Nothing seems to be broken though. The doctors want to keep you and your friends for a few more nights before we send you home. Is that okay?"

Zabrina delicately touched the bandages on her head and complied with the nurse, "I don't remember much after getting to the resort, but I understand the situation. We must have really *turnt up* then..."

"Just take it easy next time so you won't end up here again, or worse."

Zabrina nodded slowly, "Yes, ma'am."

"This is all well and good and all, but did anyone call my parents and let them know that I'm here? I think I should let them know that I'm alright."

The nurse assured her concerns, "Rest easy. You have your benefactor to thank for taking care of all of that."

Zabrina looks confused, "My benefactor?"

On cue, a statuesque woman walks into the room wearing a pinstripe pants suit, with each footstep caused by her stylish stiletto high heels echoed behind her.

She waved to Zabrina sitting up in bed.

"Don't be alarmed. I just wanted to be here when you woke up from your nasty fall. I'm Helena... Helena Dumond. I own that resort in Costa de Leon that you and your friends were staying at. When I heard what happened, I couldn't sit idly by and let this transpire on my watch. All of the expenses are being covered by me."

Zabrina is in awe, "THE Helena Dumond? Thank you so much... I-I-I don't know what to say. That was so generous of you."

"Think nothing of it. I reigned in my own chaos in my youth too. I'm just glad that all of you are alright."

Zabrina asks, "But what did you tell our parents?"

Helena smiled, "The truth! I personally called them and let them know that I offered to pick up the tab at my resort and will get you all home safe and sound for classes on Monday morning. Nothing more, nothing less. There's no need to worry them about a few bumps and bruises. Sit back, relax, and enjoy yourself."

The nurse chimed in, "Don't you worry about that, Miss Dumond. We'll make sure she gets some rest and relaxation for the remainder of her stay."

Helena smiled, "Sounds lovely then. I'll check back on you kids later. I have a meeting to attend. Chao, darling. It was a pleasure to meet you, Ms. Sawyer."

Helena and the nurse left Zabrina's room together. The nurse immediately spoke up.

"All of the patients have no memory of what transpired on that beach. None of them have any idea of who or what defeated the Godslayer. We could probe further, but if we dig deeper it could possibly leave long-term effects on those girls' psyches."

Helena smiles, "That won't be necessary. My agents were able to purge that site of any evidence before the Sentry Corps or the Hunters could come snooping around where they aren't wanted. Keep me posted on their conditions and if anything changes."

Helena stepped onto the empty elevator while the nurse returned to the front desk. She would then take the elevator down to the parking garage where her limousine was pulled up for her arrival.

She smiled at the driver, who eagerly stepped out to open the door to the backseat and closed it once she got comfortable. Helena Dumond was already a strikingly stunning woman, but she took a moment to take stock of her appearance in the vanity mirror. She approved of what she saw by blowing a kiss to her reflection. Her moment of vanity was interrupted by the buzzing sound to signify an incoming phone call. Helena sighs heavily as she raises the device to her ear.

"Yes?"

The voice on the line states, "One of the Children of Venus has fallen... and the target has escaped. What are your orders, My Lady?"

Helena smiles, "No matter. It's not a primary cause for concern at the moment, just merely the cost of doing business. Can't make an omelet without breaking a few eggs. Fortunately, I have a lot of hens laying golden eggs to spare."

"Did you want this site cleansed like the resort?"

"No. That's not my mess to clean up. Let the Sentry Corps handle it. Besides, we have to throw them a bone every now and then to make them feel important. I want you to continue to monitor the situation because sooner or later, whoever or whatever is causing these incidents is going to make a mistake and I want to be right there to catch them red handed."

"Yes, ma'am. We're going to pull the city surveillance feeds and see if we can find anything before they arrive though. I'll report back if those results prove fruitful."

She ended the call as she gripped her phone tightly out of frustration. It didn't take much more effort for her to snap the device in half until it was a mangled pile of circuits and plastic in her hands. She gave an annoyed sigh and pulled a spare from the center console.