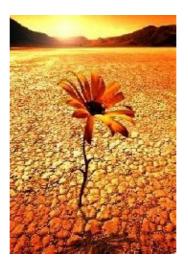
By: Arid Land Kate

A great war has been raged and the world has been destroyed and is now a broken shell of its former self. Very few people are left on the damaged earth. Only a handful of survivors of the great war remain and among them is fifteen-year old Gilia, who cannot remember anything of her past before she met her two companions, Grey and Finch. Together they struggle to survive on their broken planet and yearn to return the world to its former glory. But nothing left on their world is as it seems, least of all its occupants...



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Arid Land

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Chapter 1: My story

Arid Land

A Shadow Of The Past

My father leads us outside to the stone monument that towers over us in the centre of the Tribe. Once we get to it, he places his gleaming amulet with its golden stone into the dish that juts out of the monument.

"Now you must both take the oath," my father says to us.

"Why have we got to take an oath if we had a ritual?" he asks my father. I guess I should call him my guardian now. I smile a little at the thought. My guardian...

"No special reason I just want to be sure," my father replies. My father then puts his hands over the dish and starts muttering strange words in a language I don't understand, "Gilia,do you swear to carry out your lifes purpose, no matter what happens?" my father asks me.

I don't really know what he means by my lifes purpose but despite this I reply, "I swear."

My father then turns to him, "Shayne, do you swear to protect Gilia whilst she carries out her lifes purpose, even if this means sacrificing your own?"

Shayne has a determined look in his eyes as he replies, "I swear it. I will always protect her!"

Chapter One- My Story

I move silently over the gritty sand, stalking my prey. The desert sun is unmercifully bearing its scorching heat down on my back, despite the shadows. The scrawny hyena I am stalking suddenly whips around, its eyes wide and alert. I can see the rapid rise and fall of its chest, its prominent ribs sticking out against its flesh. Its glassy, unblinking eyes, are trying to find me in the shadows. My hand flashes to my knife with swift, natural movements. I raise the knife above my head. The hyenas eyes finds me and it turns to run. With a sharp flick of my wrist I send the fatal knife flying through the air. The sun catches off of the silver metal and reflects a blinding light into my eyes. I am momentarily blinded. The knife lodges itself in the hyenas head and it falls to the ground. I run to the felled creature, select a second knife out of my belt full of knives. The animal is kicking its legs hysterically. I slit its throat with my knife and retrieved the first one from its head. The animal became still. I attempt to pick up the beast, and instead of the great weight I am expecting to be laden with, I find it is extremely light in my arms. We will not get much meat out of this kill. It looks as if it has not eaten much in its life, and it is still young. It was a messy kill. I am mostly able to catch my prey in the neck and end its life with one hit. Oh well. Hopefully ill get lucky and find a lone wolf. It is not uncommen to find animals out on their own. Food is mostly so hard to come by that when animals do actually survive birth, the mothers dump their offspring in the barren, empty wilderness as there is not even enough food for themselves. I begin to turn and walk in the other direction, my kill in my arms, through the scorching heat of the sun, when I see a shadow cast above the overhang of rock. It is definatly the outline of a person. It must be someone at the edge of those rocks. I whip around to see who it is, but my eyes find nothing. I turn around and continue in the direction I had started in, and the shadow was gone.

Panic builds up in me, and when I look down at the ground, I realise I am running. The unchanging landscape rushes past me, and I feel a refreshing, cool wind on my face created by my rapid pace. Who was that? I know it wasn't Grey or Finch. They wouldn't even be capable of spying on me without running down and laughing

about it with me. Grey, Finch and myself live out in the desert alone, always vigilant of danger. I've not been with them for long. Nearly a year now. They found me in a particularly barren, empty part of the desert. I was nearly dead out there on my own. I had been wandering the desert alone, in search of civilisation, or just another person. I was dehydrated and searched day and night for a source of water. I couldn't remember how I got to where I was, just that I had to keep moving to get to... something? Or was it someone? I can't remember anything about my life before I was wandering the desert alone. My age, my parents, where I came from. Nothing. I somehow remembered my name, Gilia, and a strange, fleeting feeling of deep care for someone, but I can't even remember them. Then one day, my third day without water, I saw a sight that made my heart soar. It was an Oasis. I dragged myself over to the Oasis, all the while the sun was quickly sinking in the sky, and yearned for the cool water to go down my throat, and for the shade of the palm tree to protect my body, that cast a shadow down near the Oasis and promised me refuge from the blazing sun. The sun felt like it was causing me to evaporate. When I finally reached the Oasis, I was overwhelmed by the cool water and let out a sigh of relief. I lay on my side in the Oasis's cool water and drank it this way. I drank until I felt like I would burst.

When I was strong enough, I searched the surrounding area for food, and had the extreme luck to find a small orange creature with large ears that I took to be a fox. I killed it with a small knife I had found in my pocket, my only possesion, and then cut some bark off of the palm tree to make a fire with. I struck some stones together until I got the result of a small, spluttering fire. I roasted the fox over the fire and enjoyed quite a big meal for something so small. Days turned into months, and I would not venture far from my Oasis. I always kept it in my sight. I lived mostly off of olives that I found out in the desert, and roasted them over the fire. Sometimes I was lucky and found more stray foxes or an animals abandoned kill. I kept the crushing waves of loneliness at bay by only thinking of getting food for the day. Whenever any wolves came near me I would kick sand over my fire to extinquish it and hope that they would not find me. Then, slowly, I noticed the level of my Oasis decreasing quite rapidly. Probably from the rise in temperature and the amount of water I used from it each day.

Then, after about a month, I noticed my Oasis had completely dried out. I had felt the bottem of the Oasis's bottom, which was hopelessly dry and hard. I dared not move from where I was for fear of running into a pack of Dingoes, Hyena's, Wolves or even mountain lions, After a while, my throat became so dry, it hurt, I found myself gasping all the time and my lips began to crack. I just lay on the ground all day, with sand finding its way between the cracks in my lips. Time passed by me with no meaning. Each minute was torture to me. One day, when I tried to bring life back to my ash filled pit, I caught my hand on the sharp edge of the stone I was using to light my fire, I than fainted. Each night I shook so violently, it would hurt me. I wrapped my arms around myself each night, but all that did was make me feel as if someone was trying to pull my arms from my sockets. Because I was so weak, I could no longer gather food, and soon the rumble of my stomach became more than just a longing. On my fourth night without water, just when I thought I had seen my final day, a ring of glowing orange eyes encircled me. I heard quite paws approching me quickly, and began to hear a chorus of low growls rising up in the throats of the wolves. At this point I would find death as a relief from the burning pain in my throat, the twisting, stabbing pain in my stomach and the feeling of weakness that made me feel as if I was being stabbed with pins and set on fire at the same time. A great wolf threw its head back and began to howl, calling the other wolves to close in for the kill. I saw the circle of orange eyes slowly close in on me. The wolves were so close I could smell their hot breaths that made me gag, and see drowl dripping from their mouths. I didn't blame these wolves for trying to kill me. If they were half as hungry as I was, they must have been in agony. Even if I wasn't weak, I couldn't fight this pack, All I had to defend myself with was a pocket knife. Suddenly, I heard more footfalls and the wolves growling stopped. I saw their heads flicker to the east, then they ran off to the west, yelping wildly. I looked to the east to see what had scared the wolves, and saw three dead wolves lying on the ground. But behind the dead wolves, two figures were proceeding towards me with bloody swords drawn...

I still don't know what led Grey and Finch to me, but i gratefully thank whatever force it was. The two figures that found me were of course, Grey and Finch. When I first saw them, I was terrified of them. They looked so formidable in the syncronised way they moved together. They both had their swords drawn with their bloody tips pointing at me. Both Finch and Grey had their lips twisted in rage, their eyes narrowed and both their bodies were tensed. Really, you could see they were formidable allies. But something made them stop and put their swords away as they saw me curled up on the ground, looking up at them, my eyes wide with fear. Probably decided that someone so docile looking could bring no harm to them. Suddenly one of them, the slightly smaller one, approched me. As he got closer, his face was illuminated by the torch he was carrying. He had dark, wavy hair that was cut short by a jagged rock, judging by the uneven length. His deep brown eyes were glaring at me, then suddenly his face broke into a huge smile that made him look much less fearsome and more handsome. Looking at him then, I decided he was quite a good looking boy. He then crouched down by my fire, without saying a word to me, and brought life back to the smoking remains of my fire.

"Its a good thing we found you when we did, big wolves like that wouldn't hesitate to eat a sweet little thing like you," he had said, holding out his hand to me. I hesitantly took it, thinking he was meaning for us to shake hands, then felt myself being lifted up into the air as he pulled me to my feet. "My names Grey and that's Finch," he said, indicating somewhere behind him as he introduced the other boy to me, who was sitting down on the sand. Finch rose and then joined us.

He was nearly a head taller then Grey and had curly blonde hair, that was the same colour as the sand, that sat on top of his head in an messy, unmanagable pile like a birds nest. He had piercing green eyes, which reminded me of a cats, which were trained on me, scrutinising me.

"So what about you?" asked Grey.

I'd guessed he meant my name, but my throat hurt so much and I had not talked in so long that it took me several attempts before I finaly croaked out, "Gilia," in a barely audible whisper.

"Pretty. Unique to. I haven't heard that one before," Grey's voice was smooth, gentle and words flowed easily out of his mouth. I could listen to him talk all day.

"You know we should give her something to eat. Shes all skin and bone!"

This new voice had scared me. When I first heard Finch talk his voice was deep and his tone was harsh and angry. He had scared me, causing me to flinch into Grey, and I then flinched away from him when I found myself touching him. Grey found this hilarious, and even Finch had to laugh at this. I stood there feeling foolish as I came to grips of there being two people here, alive, with me. Finch proceeded to one of the dead wolves and began to prepare it for a meal, while Grey went off to find some water. I was left by the fire trying to make sense of what had happened.

Chapter 2: Grey

Chapter Two- Grey

I finally make it to the patch of cacti that marks the entrance to our camp. Somehow, I have managed to hold onto the hyena I killed earlier. At least we will have some food tonight. We always get much more food on the days that Finch hunts, as he is the best hunter anyone could wish for. I slide the dead beast through a secret break in the cacti that is just big enough to crawl through. I go through the small crawl space as soon as I see the carcass moved. As soon as my head emerges from the hole, Grey rushes over to help me up, smiling down at me, looking almost shy. He is so cute when he does that.

"How was the hunt?" He asks as I am brushing myself off. I don't want to tell Grey about the person I saw watching me. It would only worry him and he would probably try to track this mysterious person down.

"Slow." I reply looking down at the ground, hoping Grey will not see the blank expression I always wear when I am lying to him. "Got bored after a few hours and decided to just bring this back. Probably would be all I would be able to get anyway."

Grey suddenly grabs my shoulder to make me face him. "Are you sure you're ok? I don't like you going out alone. Next time you go to hunt, i'm coming with you." Greys voice is almost stern as he tells me this. He worries about me to much. I look up into his deep brown eyes and am momentarily stunned. Did Grey always look this handsome? I feel something strange stir inside me and look away from Grey to regain my normal thoughts.

"Grey, please don't, really i'm fine." I give him a fake smile, but he must think i'm playing him for a fool as he drops the conversation. Grey walks off to find Finch so he can prepare our small meal.

I remember my first night with Grey so clearly. It was not hard to see that night because of the thousands of stars in the sky, and the full moon hanging in the sky shining down on the world. We were feasting on roasted wolf and sipping water from handmade wooden cups. Well, Grey and Finch were sipping water, I was gulping it down as quickly as I could manage and, even though I had been hungry for so long, eating even little amounts of food began a series of stabbing pains in my stomach. I knew though, as long as these two were around, I would be ok. As soon as we had finished our meal, Finch had walked off a bit of a distance, mumbling something about keeping watch. Just as soon as Finch had left, Grey began to attack me with a series of questions. It seemed that everything he asked me, I didn't know the answer to. Where did I come from? Did I have any family? Was I from a tribe? He had asked me how old I was, and I had guessed fourteen as I liked this age. The sun was rising in the sky, and I had not had any sleep. In fact, I had felt alert and vigilant. Apparantly Grey was not tired either as he kept up his questionaire until long past sunrise.

In return for my few answers to his questions, I learned that Grey was nearly sixteen, and had been wandering the desert for three years.

"So where did you come from?" I had asked him. It was about time I had asked him something to as I did not like being questioned about myself. I don't know why, but I had felt stupid about my small amount of knowledge on my own life.

"You wouldn't be able to listen to my story. I must admit, its a bit of a mover." Grey said, pulling a smile with one side of his mouth. Somehow the expression made me think of a puppy.

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"Try me." I said, sliding over the sand to be closer to him. This had the desired effect as his breathing seemed to speed up as he realised how relaxed I was around him.

"After three years I forgot how girls can make you feel." He had said. Just as I was begining to ponder over this statement Grey began talking again. "I was once in one of the biggest tribes in the land. We lived in huts that were the size of sheds. Sand was heated and mixed with various plants and water to make a cement like mixture. Our huts were shaped like hills except there were rises on top that acted as chimneys to let out the smoke that came from our cooking fires. Everyone kept to themselves and didn't talk to anyone who didn't live in their hut. The Tribehead did not like us communicating. The Tribehead lived in a lived in a house at the top of the village on top of a hill. In all tribes, was a leader called the Tribehead. The Tribehead would pick some girls from the age of three who would be destined to serve him in just three years time. The Tribeheads wife and children were not allowed to leave the house because of an incident that happened before, in the same tribe, where one women killed the Tribeheads wife in the hope that the Tribehead would pick her as a new wife. She was pubically executed. Once a week, the spokesman of the tribe would tell tales of the old world. Marvellous stories of massive buildings and many houses clustered together which were even bigger then the Tribeheads. The spokesman was also responsible for teaching young children. Up until the age of nine, every child had to attend a daily lesson that was actually just devoted to teaching about the old land. Once a child reached nine, they had to attend special classes. These classes taught children how to perform one type of task. The tasks were doctors, foragers, hunters, builders and blacksmiths. If you could not perform one of these tasks, you were destined for basic home life or shopkeeping." Grey had then turned to me and he seemed to see how intently I was listening to a tribes daily life, as he seemed to smile at the thought of having such a good audience. He stared at the dying flames of the fire before continuing. "All kids had to try each task for a month. At the end of that month, their were tests in each task which would determine which task you did. After it was decided which task you were best at, everyone was split up and put into groups that performed these tasks. Seeing as there was nearly no training involved in the lessons, what task you got depended on your natural skills and build. I had a certain skill for finding edible plants. I just seemed to know what plants could be used for food or healing. So, when we had a class on foraging, it was evident this was my task. I could climb up any tree without breaking a branch. When we had our test on foraging, one part of it was selecting an edible berry out of three. Two were poisonous and one was edible. I knew in seconds which was the edible one. Another part of the test involved me searching for plants that could be used to treat a stab wound. It was just a recognisation test really. Of course, I got the task of foraging and joined the group. We went out of the walls of the tribe except sundays. That was when the spokesman told tales of the old land. It was mandatory to go."

"What happened if you didn't go?" I asked

"You would not be allowed to buy anything from stores, not even food. You would be left to fend for yourself for two weeks. And that would include all members of your hut." The look on Greys face showed he knew a lot about this.

"Tribes must have taken their tales very seriously." I said.

"I think it was more out of respect for the old world and its occupants." Grey replied.

"So why did you leave?" I asked.

"Getting there. One day a sandstorm started. It was particularly bad. It stopped travel through the desert as it was so hard to see and navigate the sands. And, also, getting back to the tribe was another big problem. On the third day of the sandstorm, early in the morning, I awoke to shouting outside. Everyone had went out to see what it was, and in the middle of the road that wound through the tribe, was an old man, not from the tribe, running in circles, waving his arms above his head and speaking in a strange, unintelligable tongue. The

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Tribehead came out to see what was happening and saw the man. Now trust me, this guy looked like no kind of threat. He was wearing rags, had a long tangled beard and moustache and was about as tall as me back then. But the Tribehead ordered the man to be killed without waiting for any explanations." Grey was looking out over the sandy hills, the fire illuminating his eyes which were filled with a burning anger. "I couldn't stand to live among people who knew nothing but murder! So that night I left. Luckily the sandstorm had calmed a bit. I randomly wandered the desert, with a strange force deciding my course. I survived off of water from cacti and ate fruit. Luckily I ran into no wild animals. Foolishly I hadn't thought of taking anything to defend myself with. I kept an eye out for anyone wandering the desert, like the man that entered my tribe, but found no one. After a while I missed the company of other people. Loneliness engulfed me like a wave. I needed to see someone, even if it was only one other person. But I knew I could not go back to my tribe, as I would be killed as a traitor, and I couldn't enter another tribe as I knew I would be killed on the spot. I had been on my own for weeks and I began to feel as if I was the only person left in the world. Then one day as dusk was falling and I was up a tree harvesting fruit, I saw smoke rising up in the distance that could only have been lit by a lone person. I set out for it immediatly, no longer caring about rest or food. It was like some force was pulling me towards people, and I couldn't break away from it, even if I wanted to. Days passed, and I felt as if I was going in circles. The only thought I seemed to form was, surely I should have found someone by now? One day I just collapsed. I wasn't tired or dehydrated, but I was just convinced that I was the only person left in the world. That somehow the small handful of people left had died and I was the only person left in the whole universe. I no longer had the will to go on and just sat on the sand. After a few hours, just as the sun began to sink in the sky, I heard soft footfalls approaching me quickly from behind, but did not dare look for fear it was another of the deserts mind tricks. Suddenly, I felt a strange prescence behind me, which was strange as I couldn't before feel people behind me. I turned and was met by a sword right at my face, only inches away. I looked up and saw that a trembling hand was holding the sword. I looked at the face of the first person I had seen in months. I saw Finch staring at me, anger and fear having a battle on his face. "Who are you and where did you come from?" He had asked me. I could hear the tremble in his voice, ""My names Grey and I come from a tribe." I had answered. His sword moved closer to my face. "But I left." I had finished. Finch pulled his sword away from my face a bit, unsure of what to make of me. "Look, I can help you. See, I don't have any weapons, what could I do to you?" I had quickly said before he changed his mind and decided to kill me. After that, Finch and me traded knowledge, and by the end of the night, decided to stay together. Finch taught me to hunt and I taught him to forage. We soon became great partners." Grev had then looked at me as if waiting for an answer or something.

"You've sure been through a lot." I replied, wondering if I should have said anything more.

Grey quickly returned with Finch. When Finch saw my kill, he made a face.

"And how much meat did you expect me to get off that?" Finch asks me

"I'm sorry. I'll be sure to complain to the manager of the store about this one." I answered and Grey and Finch burst out laughing. You know things are bad when my jokes are funny.

"Come on, lets get this thing over to camp." Says Grey, as if trying to be responsible. Grey and Finch started to head off and I began to follow them, my pace quickened, as I tried to keep up with them. My gaze wandered upwards and far off in the distance, at a point where I can just barely make them out, I see a person standing on top off a high hill, and i'm probably wrong but it looks like they are staring right at me.

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Chapter 3: Confession

Chapter Three- Confession

Somehow, Finch manages to coax a nice meal out of my kill. Roasted hyena and some strange fruit that Grey found served as a kind of stew. Seriously, I don't know how we would survive without Finch. Our food would be horrible if he wasn't here. There seems to be a strange feel hanging in the air. Finch keeps staring pointedly at Grey, exchanging looks with him. I think I must have missed something. I may corner Grey later and find out what that's about. I hate being out of the loop.

We eat dinner in silence, but not the awkward kind, but the peaceful kind. Even though no conversation is exchanged, there is always a good atmosphere during dinner. Just being around Grey and Finch makes me happy. I don't remember much of being alone, but somehow I remember the crushing, hopeless feeling that filled me when I was alone. It made me feel as if I was dying inside. Things have never really been awkward between me, Grey and Finch. Finch has always treated me like a little sister. And Grey, well Grey was always so...shy around me it seemed but he would never hesitate to talk to me non-stop. He always acts so glad to see me every morning and would always say he missed me during the night. Ha. Well that's just what Grey is like, and his weird traits will never make sense to me and I have long since accepted this. If he ever said or did anything weird I would simply think to myself, thats Grey for you. No other explanation needed. But tonight felt different. I was used to the weirdness in our little group being contained only to Grey, but it seems this time, Grey has included Finch in it and, what is worse, Finch seems to know whats going on in Greys weird mind.

After our meal, which passed in silence, with a lot of weird looks passed between Grey and Finch, I go to our little house. Well, we call it a house but its actually the ruins of a large shed. In it, lying in heaps on the ground, we have some patchy sleeping bags, that we found broken when we moved into this place, that Finch had tried to salvage by sewing them together with bits of tumbleweed. Grey had tried to fix the gaping hole in the roof by attempting to replicate what he said was the cement mixture used in tribes. The roof had fallen in twice with Greys failed mixture. Luckily we had placed our sleeping bags in at the walls of the house and the hole is in the middle of the roof. I look up at the patchy roof now that Grey has finally managed to fix and wonder how old this structure is. My mind begins to make sharp turns as I try to figure out how long the world has been like this. I know it hasn't been like this forever, Grey said of tales of an old world. Of course, these could just be legends running through tribes. It'd be easier to say if I knew the first thing about a tribe. And, although it is only early afternoon, I feel a sudden wave of exhaustian overcome me as I try to find the answers to my questions, and fall into a deep sleep as soon as I lie on the rough material of the sleeping bag.

I feel my arm being shaken and am unwillingly dragged out of my dreamless sleep. I open my eyes and find myself staring up into Grey's deep brown ones. I let out a small squel as Grey's proximity takes me by surprise. He raises his eyebrows at me in a questioning manner and then smiles slightly.

"Whats wrong? Why did you wake me up?" My voice is a bit harsh as I demand answers out of Grey. I'm not mad at him. Just worried about what would cause him to wake me up.

"The moons really beautiful tonight." Says Grey softly. What? Grey wakes me up just to tell me how beautiful the moon looks? What is wrong with him? I feel as if I could hit him. Seriously, sometimes I think it would be impossible too find someone more stupid then Grey. I think the opposite sometimes as well, but his kowledge and his stupidity seem too cancel each other out. "It would be a great night too look at it." Grey continues. Now he's telling me his plans for tonight.

"Have fun!" I reply and put my head back under the fur blanket covering me. I wonder who put that over me. Most likely Grey, I can't imagine Finch doing it without asking Grey to do it first. Grey pulls the blanket back off of me looking agitated.

"The moons really beautiful tonight." He repeats, looking at me expectantly. It hadn't occured to me until now that Grey was hinting at me to go outside with him. I am being slow tonight. I get up and follow Grey outside, who appears too be grinning madly, and wonder to myself why he wants me to look at the moon with him so much. Finch probably has a fair idea. Finch...who is back at our little home. Is this about us looking at the moon, or Grey getting me in private for a couple of hours?

Grey guides me away from the camp, crawling through the cacti before me so he can help me out, and leads me up a hill where we do indeed get a great view of the moon, which hangs in the black sky looking like an enourmous, but very fragile object that could shatter at the tiniest provocation. Truly, it is beautiful.

"Wow, you're right Grey, this is really beautiful." I breath out. I turn to Grey and find him staring at me in awe. His eyes seem to look deep into me, as if he is gazing into my very soul. I stare back at him, trying to get my eyes to look as far into him as his are into me so I can get some idea of what he's looking at. Looking at Grey in this way seems to fill me with powerful waves of many different emotions that takes my breath away. I feel myself begining to get hot. I try to tear my gaze away from his, but Grey seems intent on holding it, keeping me trapped under his influence. After what feels like an eternity of us staring at each other in this strange manner, we both seem to break from each others hold at the same time. Waves of embarrasment seem to crash over me and also a strange sense of longing. I look up and see Grey gazing up at me through his eyelashes shyly. I never noticed how long his eyelashes are, weird. I feel my mouth pulling into a smile.

"So beautiful." Says Grey, staring into the distance, looking at neither the moon or me as he says this.

"Yeah." I agree. Grey knows that i'm not talking about the moon as I glance out of the corner of my eye at him. He caches my look and gives me my favourite side smile of his.

"Do you want to see this special place of mine?" Grey asks me. Grey disappears somewhere quite often so of course i'm curious.

"Ok. Is it far?" I ask.

"For a great hunter like you, it will be nothing!" Grey teases me. He gets up and holds his hand out to me to help me up. I got over the deja vu of this months ago. I take it, smiling up at him as if i'm mad.

Grey leads me through the desert for about an hour until we reach the rocky face of a cliff. I am surprised when Grey begins to climb this. I watch him, my mouth hanging open, for what feels like hours, until I finally see Grey heaving himself into a dip in the rocks about a quarter of the way up. Grey looks down at me expectantly over the edge.

"Come on up, it's safe." Grey calls down to me. It's not the climb that i'm worried about. It's the space that Grey's in. Already I am guessing its a small, enclosed cave where moving's a great task to be able t accomplish. I'm claustrophobic, so of course going up into a cave makes me feel nervous. Of course, I don't think Grey's leading me into danger so I begin to climb the face of the wall so Grey doesn't realise i'm claustrophobic, that is if he already hasn't. It's actually quite easy to get a foothold on this wall. It proves easy to find the right places to position my hands and feet. In just a few minutes, I am pulling myself up over the rocky surface and into a small, cave like structure. It is quite cool inside, and I do not get the feeling of being trapped in here. But the biggest miracle of the cave is the walls. They shimmer silver in a magical way and light up the cave with their soft hue. The walls give off the impression that someone has carefully sewn

glowing, silver strands all through the interior of the cave. It is truly magical and special and radiates a peaceful aura. This place feels as if it is protected by some unseen force.

"So? What do you think?" Asks Grey, his voice full of pride. I'm still overwhelmed by the beauty of this place that I am not able to answer him. Instead I make a sound somewhere between a gasp and a moan of longing. Grey must take this as a suitable answer as he continues. "I found this place when I was avoiding Finch for a while. But that was long ago. I think he just wanted me to leave him alone for a couple of weeks. So I stayed here then found him again after he cooled off." Grey's statement pulled me back to my senses.

"Why were you avoiding Finch?" I ask curiosly. Grey bites his lip at this question.

"That's kinda Finch's business that he wants to keep private. Sorry."

"That's ok. I understand." I say. What has Finch got to hide? I find myself thinking. I'm pondering this question when I hear Grey saying something.

"Must have been around for ages. It's got a weird feeling to it too. Like it's sacred or something."

"Grey what happened to the old world?" I can see that my question has caught him off guard.

"Well I only know the tribe tales but I don't know if their true." Says Grey. He crosses the cave and sits against the wall. I get in next to him, like the first night I met him, to try to get him to talk. "Lets just say they are." I say in what I think is an alluring voice. This makes him talk, as always. "Well apparantly a great war had started that involved the whole world. It was called the third world war..."

"The THIRD!" I interupt.

"Yeah, their were two before it." Says Grey. "No wonder the worlds in this state." I say. "Yeah I know. Anyway, it was apparantly was provoked by the major differences in the world. It was hard to tell who was against who as no part of the world seemed to have an ally. After years of war, a peace meeting was called in an effort to stop the war. This worked very well as the war almost immediatly stopped. But one squad of fighters from the south side of the world had gone missing during the war. Coincidently this was the squad with the weapon. Now all the soldiers fighting in the war had guns, weapons that could hit far off targets, kind of like the bow and arrow. But this squad, they were really large, they had thousands of soldiers. They were sent off to unmarked territory, the place they went wasn't even on the map, and they built a base to keep this weapon safe. The weapon they had was called a nuclear bomb, it could totally destroy large amounts of land when unleashed. The squad with the bomb was told when to release it and no one was able to communicate with them as they were so secluded. So, of course, they didn't know the war was over. The bomb was unleashed, and the world turned into...this. No one knows how. The bomn was definatly more powerful then intended though, no one would want this fate to befall the world. The people who survived started up the tribes for a sense of community and safety. Well, that's the tale the tribes tell. But I don't believe that. What has happened to the world Gilia?" I think Grey means this as an actual question, so I answer as best as I can.

"I don't know Grey. But i'm going to save this world." I meant the last part as a joke so I am expecting a smart remark out of Grey and am surprised by his answer.

"I know. And i'll help you do it."

"Why?" I ask, meaning to ask why he is humouring me, but Greys answer to this is even more unexoccted.

"Because I love you." He says this like this is the simplest answer in the world to him. I cannot make anything move, Grey has turned me into a living statue with his words. I can only form one thought that floats around my empty head, that's Grey for you.

Chapter 4: Rain

Chapter Four- Rain

I sit there stunned and watch Grey's expression begin too change as he see's me hesitating. He thinks I was meant too know this and expects an answer. My mind races back through time.

A few months back, there was terrible rain. That day, we were all back at camp and Finch was preparing some kind of bird that Grey had taken down with the bow and arrow. The bow and arrows were Finch's so we had all been practising with it, but this was new grounds for all three of us. After twelve wasted arrows, Grey finally took it down. Although, it was on the ground and only a few metres away so it wasn't a very impressive acheivment. Suddenly, just as Finch was trying to shove the bird onto a stick, rain began to fall from the sky. Rain was an unfamiliar experience for me and the only thing I could compare it to was someone dropping loads of small stones over us. The rain was actually the size of stones that someone had decided to stretch out and saturate with water. The rain fell fast and thick, blurring my vision. If I stretched my hand out in front of my face, it would slip in and out of my vision in rapid streaks. When the rain hit my bare arms, it felt as if it was actually small stones. Finch grabbed the dented pot we use for cooking and ran into the house. Grey lifted me up easily into his arms, as there was about as much chance of me moving as the dead bird, and followed Finch in. He then set me down in the doorway and watched the rain. I also watched the rain intently. There was something about the rain that made it look so angry and determined as it came cascading down from the heavens. It was like an army. It fell in uniformed lines just to plumate to its own destruction. Hours passed, and the rain just became faster and thicker. I could not judge the time because angry black clouds were blocking the sun. It started so suddenly, I was shocked when I could not find the sun. It had gone from a clear day to an angry black sky so fast, it was almost unbelivable. Standing up, the rain reached my ankles. I think Grey noticed this too because he shouted at Finch, who was busy putting things up so they would not get wet, to make his cement mixture. Luckily we have a closet in the corner where we keep supplies in case of emergencies, but we were expecting heatwaves. Finch labourasly mixed various plants in a bowl he had crafted, while Grey checked the roof for signs of leaking. Me, well I just stood in the corner like the useless prop I was. In my head, I felt like someone was punching me from the inside. We're all going to die! Was the only thought I could force my mind to make and it felt as if someone had put stones in my head and was shaking me hard. Grey saw the look of maddening panic that was frozen onto my face. He pulled me into his saturated body that held me steady like a rock, keeping me grounded.

"Its going to be ok Gilia. I swear it!" Grey spoke not in a soothing voice, but in a hard one as if he had already decided that he would not let this beat him.

"Its ready." Finch's voice came out of nowhere and pulled me out of the world of safety Grey had lurred me into. Grey released me and leapt the distance between us and Finch. He grabbed the bowl, dumped its contents onto the floor, and gave the bowl back to Finch telling him to make more. Grey began to fashion a miniature wall with the mixture on the floor that stretched out across the doorway, while the water cascaded over it, carrying some of the cement with it. Bowl after bowl followed and I watched as Grey slowly trapped us off from the outside world. Hours passed then Grey finally stepped back to view his extended wall. I began to panic and my breathing sped up. I could practically see the walls closing in on me. I sank to my knees as fear crushed down on me, heavy as a boulder. We were stuck here. With no way out. No one to call for help. Grey turned to me with a smile on his face then he saw my expression and concern quickly replaced it as quick as the rain had replaced the sun. Instantaneous and unexpected. He came over, guided me to the wall, and sat down on the floor with me, holding me close. Subconciously I wrapped my arms around his body holding him close to me. Anchoring him to me so no force of nature could pull us apart. Hours turned into days and me and Grey sat unmoving even though the water lapped over our waists. Finch sat on a pile of rocks that we normally put the mixing bowl on, which was now floating around the room. Finch brought food over to me

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and Grey as there was no chance of either of us moving. We sat in waist high water for six days, unmoving, watching water drip through tiny cracks and gaps in the doorway that Grey had missed. Finally, we heard the hammering on the roof calm down too a pattering, then finally silent drumming. We waited inside for another day to make sure the rain had stopped and to allow the sand too soak up most of the water. On the eighth day of being trapped inside, Grey finally got up and made his way over to the wall he had fashioned. I felt like a balloon that had been tied up for so long and then had been released to float away and I began to shake as I felt the calm Grey had given me drift away. My eyes locked on Grey as he waded through the water to the door where, by some miracle, his sword was still propped up against the wall. He then lifted his sword above his head and brought it crashing down onto the cemennt. Because this cement was never the strongest and it never dried probably because of the water, cracks began to appear. The sound of the metal striking the cement woke Finch who was asleep on the pile of rocks. He got up almost mechanically and got his sword and went over to help Grey. Between the two of them, the doorway was open again in less then an hour. As soon as the bottem half of the doorway was open, water flooded out in a miniature wave. Even after the exit was opened again, I could not leave or even stand up.

"Thats your problem." Finch says to Grey, indicating to me. I had tried to give him a filthy look but I guess it must have looked quite pitiful because he laughed and walked out, slapping Grey on the shoulder as he left. Grey came over to me, looking pretty smug about something, and helped me get to my feet.

"Its okay, its over now." He said this over and over again as if soothing a distressed child. He had held me close and guided me out the doorway. Then he leaned down and kissed me. It was light and soft and lasted an eternity. It had started a fire in my heart that spread out through my entire body. Just as every part of me had caught Grey's fire, he pulled away and walked off. He didn't even give me a second glance. So in return, I didn't give a second thought about that tantilizing kiss that made me hungry for more. I convinced myself I had forgotten all about that kiss, so, of course, I had held onto every moment of it.

Chapter 4: Rain

Chapter 5: Remember

Chapter Five- Remember

Right now I find myself staring deeply into Grey's face trying too read the emotions on it; anxiousness, confusion, patience and a bit of anger. His face is illuminated by the glow of the silver walls, making his face look slightly hazy. As if I had iin fact dreamed up this perfect boy who I am so afraid of losing.

"Grey, I can't, I just can't." I say.

"Can't what?" He asks hoping that I will change my mind on this.

"This. Exactly this Grey." My voice is beginning to crack

"Why not?" He makes it sound like our getting together is the best possible course of action

"Well what happens if we break up? Each day we would have to face each other with the memories of what we had and resent each other our whole lives. It would never be the same between us. We wouldn't be able to stay together anymore if those memories played on us all the time." This is breaking my heart just to have to say no to Grey.

"I get it. It's Finch isn't it? It was always Finch with you!"What? Has he gone truly mental? I think. He has his teeth almost bared at me so he looks like some mad dog that is about to bite me. I think I would prefer that at the moment.

"Grey that's not it! Finch and me are just friends! I do love you Grey! That's why I can't do this." I feel tears spilling out of my eyes and try to staunch the flow to make myself look tougher then I really am.

"You sure you and Finch are just friends? Nothing else going on there?" Grey iis snapping these words out at me and each one hurts more then the last.

"Grey what is wrong with you? You know it's not like that between me and Finch." I am almost pleaing with him now.

"Really? Because now I feel like I don't know anything about you! I thought you knew how I felt. Or at least guessed." Grey is proceeding towards me and, for once, I don't like how close we are.

"I thought that you were so much more then what you really are but it seems your just like everyone else left on this world. Backstabbing and uncaring of anyone but yourself!" Grey throws these words at me like knives.

"I thought you were different to!" I scream at him and turn from him and run. Unfortunatly I had forgotten that I was in a cave some distance from the ground and find I have put one foot out in the open air and feel the rest of me follow it. I somehow manage to flip myself in mid-air and land on my back. I lie on the ground winded for a few minutes and realise this is just how I am feeling emotionally as well. Grey's declaration of love and then his attack of accusations have taken my breath away, leaving me struggling for air. I can almost feel Grey looking down at me now. Concerned but already trying to put me out of his mind. Locking me in a dark recess of his mind so he won't have to face me again. I get up and run. Away from Grey, away from tonight, away from everything. I don't want to face it anymore. I feel the wind whip past my face and love the feeling of the cold air on my hot, flushed face. I run past a group of hunting hyena's which have their heads turned and are looking at me, as if they know I killed another hyena earlier. Probably the only time they'll ever

care about each other. I stop on the top of the sandy hilltop to catch my breath and hear the faint fall of footsteps behind me.

"Go away Grey I don't want to hear it anymore!" I scream out.

"Who's Grey?" The voice that spoke is deep and leering voice which, although it's tone was scary, ran as smooth as velvet. I gasp at the sound of an unfamiliar voice and suddenly an image flickers through my head. A forgotten memory. A young boy smiling down at me who has pale skin, brilliant dark blue eyes and jet black hair. Accompanied with this image is a strange feeling of safety. My head is pounding as I am pulled back into the real world. I whip around and try to find the person who is following me, but he is gone.

"Wait, come back!" I scream at the wind. "Who are you?" I whisper to myself. I turn around and try to find my way back to camp, but I have been so disorientated by my overwhelming emotions that this seems impossible. I try to follow my footprints but find that at one point I have somehow ran in a huge circle than jerked off in various directions just to continue in the circle again. I cannot get my brain to work out where my starting point was so I find myself walking in the direction off the moon. The moon. The very thing that Grey had said I was more beautiful then, just earlier tonight. Before I know what I am doing, I find myself turning away from the moon, from any memory of Grey. I cannot handle that right now. I walk in one straight line for what feels like hours, only changing direction when something's in my way, keeping my back to the moon as much as possible. It's getting darker and darker and eventually I have to sit down and lean agaist the hard rock surface of a wall, and feel my eyes flutter shut and let unconsciousness take over.

In my dream I am running with a boy who I guess is around eleven. He looks exactly like the boy who came into my head earlier. I am younger to, about ten or even nine. I laugh madly as the boy pulls me along as he runs. We are running through rows of huts, that look like they are made out of mud, to a little patch of grass. It seems to take forever to get there but when we do we lie flat on our backs, side by side with the sun beating down on us.

"I can't believe what your dad did to you." Says the boy, turning to look at me.

"I don't mind." I reply.

"It's wrong. Isn't it like dangerous or something?" He asks

"I dunno." I say.

"Well won't people come after you?" He asks.

"What people?"

"I don't know. Evil people with twisted minds. I think that you need someone to protect you."

"I've got the whole tribe protecting me." I answer him.

"That's not good enough. You need a personal bodyguard. Hey, how about me?" He's so sweet and stupid.

"Ok then. From now on you are my personal bodyguard."

"Great! I won't ever let anyone hurt you." He says this so sincerly as if he has already made an unbreakable vow in his head. Suddenly my dream changes and I am standing in the glowing cave except this time the cave has no ceiling and I can see the brilliant moon which is the same colour as the glowing walls. I am all alone in

the cave. Suddenly I hear Grey's voice behind me.

"I feel like I don't know anything about you." He is saying. I turn around, expecting to have an argument started with Grey but when I turn around I see a stranger behind me. He is tall with tanned skin, midnight blue eyes and jet black hair. Suddenly the boy from my dream before this appears next to him and I hear the words "I won't let anyone hurt you." Get tossed around the cave, bouncing back to me off of the walls. It is impossible to figure out who said it. Suddenly I hear my name like a whisper on the wind.

"Gilia, Gilia wake up." I feel myself being shaken out of the dream but before I wake up, I catch some words come out of the tall strangers mouth.

"You have to remember Gilia." He is saying. Then I am pulled out of my dream like a drowning person out of icy water.

I wake up gasping and open my eyes just to have the sun blind me.

"Gilia, are you okay?" I look up and see Finch staring down at me, his eyes full of concern. Weird.

"Where's Grey?" I ask Finch.

"He came back to camp last night. Asked where you were. Grey said that if I wanted to find you I may go alone. What happened last night with you and Grey?" He asks. Yes, what did happen last night? I think to myself.

"Your guess is better then mine. I honestly don't know what goes through Greys head and you probably have a better idea then me." I say.

"Gilia, what happened?" Finch is almost pleading so I tell him.

"Grey told me he loved me then we had a fight."

"Oh that's bad. And I've got a feeling that I'm missing loads of details."

"You are. And yeah it's pretty bad." Couldn't be worse, I think but I don't say this out loud because I'm probably wrong.

Chapter 6: Fights

Chapter Six- Fights

I was right about things somehow being able to get worse. When me and Finch get back after hours of trekking, the sun is high in the sky. When we'd set off from where Finch found me it wasn't even dawn. Grey is sitting right in our little entrance and steps back too let Finch pass him, but jumps out of the way of me before I even reach him. Whatever, I'll pretend that that didn't annoy me. To test out how far Grey will go with jumping out of my way I walk towards him, herding him towards the cacti. He jumps back from me, realises that he is about to hit the cactus behind him, stumbles out of the way of that cactus just to fall into another one. I can't help myself and start laughing at him. Grrey quickly gets to his feet, his face red.

"Cruel to it appears. Well that's expected seeing as how you met up with your secret boyfriend last night." He sounds so spiteful that I flinch away from him. I am not even going to talk to him. "So you're not even going to deny thet you have a secret boyfriend? I guess that's why you won't let me go hunting with you. Although the guy did look a bit shady. I guess that's how you like them then hey?" I can't help myself now. Some girls would go for the cliche slap but me, I just turn around and hit Grey full force in the face with my fist, which causes him to fall to the ground, and I guess I broke his nose as it is bleeding and slightly off-centre. Well having a perfect face like that was practically begging for trouble. I don't even know what the whole boyfriend thing was about but still. Anyway, I feel better now that I have hit him. Grey gets up and advances towards me so I ready myself to hit him again but, before either of us can go any further, Finch jumps in between us.

"Knock it off you two! What's wrong with you?" Finch questions us both.

"Get out of my way Finch!" Grey growls in a low voice.

"No. What's wrong with you? Yesterday you were saying that if anyone tried to hurt Gilia you would personally make their life a living hell!"

"Finch MOVE. I am sick of her. If she doesn't leave, NOW, than I am!"

"Fine than Grey get what you want." I say and start to leave but Finch stops me.

"No, Gilia's not going anywhere. Neither are you Grey." Finch is almost pleading.

"Try to stop me. Maybe I won't leave today, but I will leave." Grey says. I know that he will indeed leave but just wonder when he will leave. Finch will do everything in his power to keep Grey here, even if it means tying Grey to a post.

"Forget it Finch it's ok, I'll leave. I've been on my own before." I say.

" And that turned out great didn't it?" I hear Grey mumble under his breath.

"Grey shut up. Gilia you're not going, we all need each other." Finch is looking so sad that it tugs on my insides. Would he really miss me?

"I'll never need her." Grey's mumbling to himself again.

"Grey we can hear you, and you don't realise just how much you do need Gilia. How much we both need her." Finch is saying and this makes me feel touched to my core. Finch look's slightly happy as he say's. " Ok so

Chapter 6: Fights

now that no one is leaving lets move on to the matter of dinner..."

That evening we are sitting around a dying fire eating dinner and, for once, the atmosphere feels very tensed as we are all staring hate at each other, and I think both me and Grey are trying our best not to just get up and leave. Grey's staring daggers at me, Finch is keeping a watchful eye on Grey as if he expects he expects him to jump up and run away at any moment, and I'm shifting my gaze from Grey to Finch thinking that they're both acting very weird. How did me and Grey go from being practically connected to the other to hating each other so much? And why is Finch sticking up for me? He's definatly a lot closer to Grey then he is to me. Does he think that Grey is wrong? I wonder if he truly thinks that Grey will go. I'm not to sure myself. Grey doesn't like to be alone for any period of time, even to hunt, but he is also very stubborn and if he says something, he will do it, and he never goes back on his word. Ever. None of us are eating the food in our bowls, some kind of weird bird I shot down earlier when Finch wouldn't let Grey go out to hunt and was to scared to leave me on my own with him, probably thinking that we would have torn the heads off each other before he even gets back. I'd went out of camp earlier and had shot about fifty arrows and retrieved them before I hit a low flying bird. When I'd got back to camp I heard Finch and Grey in the middle of an argument.

"No she is still going out to hunt! What's your problem with this anyway?" Finch had said.

"That guy is trouble I don't want her to go near him." Grey had replied, his voice was raised to a shout.

"What guy are you on about?" Finch had asked, he had still kept his voice calm.

"That one we keep spotting around here." Grey answered, still shouting.

"You mean the one you keep spotting?" Finch had said as if humouring Grey.

"Finch I have seen him." Grey had said in a hard-set voice."Whatever. I thought you didn't care about Gilia anymore." Grey had then made a noise halfway between a groan and a sigh. "Once you make up your mind if you're mad at Gilia for not guessing what goes through your thick head come see me." Finch had said and then walked off to prepare dinner. Grey had then whipped around and spotted me.

"Why are you back?" He snapped at me.

"Why are you still here?" I had countered. That had shut him up. Confusion swept over his face, probably still trying to get his brain to process what I had just said.

"Yeah well I....got here first!" He had said like a three-year old.

"Nice comeback. I've ran out of words that could possibly outbest that." I had said and walked away from him, leaving him to realise just how thick he had been.

"I'm full." I say so I have an excuse to leave when in fact my food lies untouched in my bowl. The look Grey gives me you'd think I had just committed a murder. What so I'm not allowed to talk now? I get up and walk down the small hill at the far end of our camp to the stream. We lucked out when we had found the house and the stream together. We don't drink from the stream though we just use it for washing purposes. I strip off out of my clothes, a thin white ruffled top and a pair of black leggings, that I had possesed since Finch and Grey found me. Since their is nothing wrong with them, I just keep them and wash them when I wash and let them dry with my body. I slip into the stream and wet my golden-coloured hair and rest my back against the rise that leads out of the stream. I remember that Grey had said that I looked the very same as Finch on our first morning together whilst Finch was preparing breakfast. I don't think I do. I'm tanned and Finch is pale, and my hair has much more colour then Finch's. I could easily say though that the only similarity between me and

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Finch is our eyes. I have the exact same dark green piercing eyes as Finch. Grey has kept insisting since then that it's more than that, but now I think he was looking to deeply into a coinsidence. As I'm bathing in the sun heated water I can't help feeling bad about how I have acted towards Grey. I shut my eyes and put my head under the water, a habit of mine that I do when my emotions are running high. Maybe it's something to do with the panic my body has of no air entering my lungs, or maybe it's something else but doing this totally clears my head. I kind of like to forget about the entire world, just shut it all out for a few seconds. It's so peaceful with absolutely no stress, unless you stay under to long. I lie on the sandy bed under the water until my lungs hurt from the lack of air. When I pull my head up from under the water, I find myself faced with the harsh realities of life. Immediatly I want to submerge again. I sigh quietly to myself and get out of the stream and put on my clothes and lie out in the sun to dry myself off. After just sitting around for about an hour I get up and go back to the centre of the camp and, although it is still very bright and quite early evening, I go inside, crawl in between the pile of furs that is my bed, and go to sleep.

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Chapter 7: Torn

Chapter Seven- Torn

The sound of light footfalls wakes me up. My hand flys to my knife as I sit up to see the source of the noise.

"Ssh. It's just me." I am startled by the gentle voice that Grey is using with me. I look up and see his face that has its normal kind look, illuminated by the glow of the moon behind him, and I startsmiling wildly as I think that maybe things have gone back to normal with me and Grey, but then my heart suddenly sinks. I look over at the corner and see Finch asleep in his own pile of furs and consider waking him up.

"Where are you going?" I whisper to him, hoping that Grey will give me a simple answer, like he's just going to the toilet. "Leaving." Grey answers quickly, delivering the harsh blow swiftly instead of drawing it out.

"Why?" I ask, my voice breaking on the word.

"Because I'm acting stupid around you. I'm hating you for not returning the feelings I have for you." Grey answers. He still doesn't understand that I'm just to scared to risk what we had, and now my cautiousness is causing Grey to leave.

"Where are you going to go?"

"I don't know. Away from here until I cool off a bit." Grey replies. I'm so scared that he will leave and not come back,or that something will happen to him, or that he might be found by a tribe. Just thinking about that sends chills down my spine.

"Don't go. Please. I don't care if you hate me everyday, just don't go." I plead on the verge of tears. Grey starts walking out of the doorway. I follow him out into the cold night air and follow him when he crawls through the cacti. Grey begins walking off towards the hill that he took me to last night.

"Grey!" I scream as loud as I can at him, making sure he can hear me and won't miss what I say. He turns around and faces me, his brown eyes are sparkling in the moonlight, boring into my own. "I love you." I say as tears tumble down my face. Grey looks up at the huge silver moon for a minute, lost in his own thoughts.

"Bye Gilia." He says and turns his back to me and walks off. I cannot move at all except for the tears streaming down my face. I watch Grey leave as he slowly becomes smaller and smaller until finally I can't see him anymore. My knees buckle and I sink to the ground. He's gone. He's actually gone and it's all my fault. He can't be gone. He can't. I think this over and over as I rake my fingers through the sand as if I'm looking for something to hold onto. I probably am. Something strong and warm and safe that I can use to anchor myself to the earth now that Grey is gone. I look up at the sky and remember all the nights that me and Grey had spent lying on our backs and looking at the millions of stars that are scattered across the sky. Grey had tried to explain constellations to me, insisting that clusters of stars were in the shapes of women or animals or things such as spades.

"Long ago people looked at the stars through telescopes." Grey had said to me once.

"A what?" I had aske

"A telescope. It's like a long tube that you put your eye to and you see things as if they're right in front of you. My tribe had one for stargazing because they thought it was possible to tell the future through the

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constellations order. Kind of like a story." Grey had explained to me.

"Who wants to know whats going to happen in the future? Things are only going to get worse." Grey had then looked at me, his deep eyes full of sadness because he knew what I said was true.

Another night flashes through my head. It was freezing cold and the wind outside was blowing the sand past so fast that all you could see was black specks whizzing through the air. I was shaking so hard under my many layers of blankets as the cold stabbed my entire body like icy knives. I had heard someone get up and the next thing I knew I felt Greys arms wrap around my body as he lay next to me. It was like he had sucked all the cold from my body and replaced it with a magical, fiery warmth that coursed though my veins like wildfire. He didn't say a word to me during any of this and I fell asleep in his arms. When I woke up he was still holding me, looking out of the doorway. I wondered if he had slept at all that night. Hundreds of memories fly through my head of me and Grey. Him teaching me how to hunt, quickly pressing me against a wall when an animal that I couldn't handle came by. Grey showing me what I could eat and us making a picnic with all the food that was edible. Greys arms on mine as he helped me aim with the bow, letting his hands slide down to my waist and then pulling me close to his body, causing me to laugh hysterically and throw my arms around his neck. Greys hand finding mine as we ate dinner together. Grey grabbing me by the shoulders and pulling me close to his body as we watched a thick sandstorm in the distance, praying it would not reach us. And another memory that keeps coming back to me. My first night with Grey and Finch I couldn't take my eyes away from the fire that had been brought to life. When I finally looked up from the dancing orange tongues of flame, I saw Greys eyes locked on me. He didn't look away when I looked up. He just kept staring at me. And what was weird was how Grey staring at me had made me feel safe. You'd think it would have creeped me out and make me feel awkward but it had me decide that, yes I think I will go along with these guys. It had made me trust him, and we both held each others gaze until Finch came over mumbling something about the temperature.

I had never realised before that I need Grey. I need his eyes on me when he thinks that I don't notice. I need someone to say something stupid to put a smile on my face. I need Grey to comment on an excellent hunt when I come back with either nothing or barely enough to feed one person. I need someone to look out for me. What baffles me most is that I never noticed how much I love Grey and that something has been going on between us for quite a while. I think I'm just scared of saying it in case it is destroyed by the harsh world.

The sky is slowly getting brighter and I can't stand staring at nothing so I crawl through the small gap back into camp and get a dire going in our small fire pit. I sit near it and wrap my arms around myself staring at the tongues of fire that flicker upwards, licking at the air. After a while of looking at the flames I feel my eyelids begin to droop and I do not make any effort to stop sleep overcome me.

In my dream I am running through total blackness, if I stretch my hand in front of my face, I can't see it. But I am not running blindly. I am running towards a light that pierces through the darkness and hurts my eyes when I look at it. The only problem is that this light is at the top of a steep and rocky hill that seems to go on forever. I start the ascent to the light only to discover that the hills surface is covered in ice, but I do not slow my pace as I race up this hill, yearning with every atom of my being to have this light. I am stumbling on rocks and slipping on the ice as I go, but I do not dare give up. The higher I go the more steep, icy and rocky the hill becomes, but I cannot stop now. The light is tantilisingly close and is teasing me. I get down on hands and knees and clamber up the steep incline, cutting my hands off of the sharp rocks. Finally I get to the top of the hill and my palms and knees are bleeding heavily. The top of the hill is flat and free of ice and rocks. I proceed towards the light and just as I'm a step away from it, it explodes with a bright piercing light. I feel like crying as I watch the lastr flecks of light dissolve into nothingness. Leaving me here alone in the dark.

I wake up and taste grains of sand in my mouth and my throat feels gritty so I guess I swallowed some. I open my eyes and find that I am lying facedown in the sand. I flip myself over and squint as the sun hits my eyes. I

Chapter 7: Torn 23

feel something slide off me and find that a blanket had been draped over me sometime in the night. Huh, I didn't hear Finch come over to me. Mostly I wake up at the slightest noise. I inspect the blanket and find that it is quite unfamiliar to me. It has been crafted in such a way that it looks like a wolf's face with a huge silvery moon behind it. Finch must have been working on this one for weeks and hiding it from us. No not us, I have to remind myself, just me. I wonder what else Finch could be hiding. I look at the smoking remains of the fire and spot the pot with some of last nights leftovers beside the fire. I clean up the pit, get another fire going and reheat the stew. I then pour it into two bowls and find myself gazing at the third bowl that lies, unused, in the sand. Finch gets up and comes out of the hut, starts on his serving of the stew and looks at the bowl that has been abandoned in the sand. He does not say anything about Grey.

"Nice blanket." He says instead, nodding at the pile of furs in a heap on the ground then looking at me as if confused.

"Yeah." I reply. Finch is probably to modest to say that he crafted that beautiful blanket. Who else could have done it? Grey's terrible at that kind of thing. Finch tried to show him how to make a blanket once, but by time it was done it looked more like a cylinder then a square shape so Grey didn't attempt it again after that.

"Hey do you want to come and hunt with me today?" Finch asks me.

"Sure." I reply and realise that I am already letting Finch try to fill in the hole that Grey has left in me.

Chapter 7: Torn 24

Chapter 8: Finch

Chapter Eight- Finch

Me and Finch hide our camp as best as we can before we leave to hunt. Finch covers the fire pit with sand and I ease the cupboard down to the ground and lie it flat on it's back so the things inside don't get damaged. We then hide all traces that people used this place like bowls and blankets. Now our camp looks like the ruins of a shed that has been left abandoned. When Finch is satisfied that our camp now looks deserted, we crawl out of the gap between the cacti and then cover the entrance with dead bushes and branches. Our precaution is not entirely stupid. We have never left the camp unattended before. Anything, or anyone, could raid our camp while we are gone, and I've got a feeling that Finch was planning for the anyone. I don't know if we're hunting today to hunt for food or to hunt for Grey because, although he hides it well, I know that Finch is worried about Grey and wants to find him as quickly as possible. Finchs head is whipping from side to side as we walk away from camp. My hand moves to the hilt of the sword as I see Finchs unease. Finch seemed adamant that he would teach me how to use a sword today. The only way I have this sword is because Grey had left it behind, I just hope that he at least has his knife in case he runs into any trouble, like a pack of hunting animals, but if he runs into a pack of wolves with only a knife to defend himself with, he's dead anyway.

"Stay close to me Gilia." Finchs is barely audible to me, which makes me more scared then if he'd been shouting. Why is he whispering? Now I'm really nervous and I seem to orbit Finch as I attempt to stay by his side.

"Finch, what's wrong?" I whisper back to him

"I have a bad feeling. Like something is watching us." He's basing his worry on a bad feeling? If I worried about all the bad feelings I got, I'd probably be huddled up in some corner away from any sharp objects. But I decide to go along with this. I've survived this long under Finchs guidance. But I'd never seen him like this before. He is looking as scared and anxious as the prey that I stalk on hunts, looking like he is ready to bolt at a moments notice. Whatever. Finch can chase shadows and I can chase Grey.

Waves of heat crash over us as we weave in and out between the sandy hills, travelling to some point in the distance that would lead us who knows where. The sun is travelling higher into the sky and there has still been no sign of any life. Not the flick of a quickly disappearing tail, not the gleam of bright eyes in the shadows, not the soft beat of a birds wings. Nothing. How is Finch paranoid about something watching us if their is nothing around to watch us? Me and Finch proceed through the barren landscape. Finch finally sits down for lunch after a few hours of complete boredom. I chew slowly on the fruit Finch has given me from a backpack that he brought with him and watch a ball of tumbleweed bounce on the sand and over a hill, disappearing from my view. At least the tumbleweed has more idea of where It's going then I do. Once we finish lunch we get up and continue in the same straight line we started in.

"Finch where are we going?" I ask at last. I have wanted to ask for hours.

"I don't know." Finch replies. At least he's honest. I don't reply as I don't know if there is anything that I can say.

The day drags past me slowly as Finch tries to teach me how to use a sword. He stopped me about an hour after we continued walking after lunch so I could get some practice. Now he has me practising my swings on a cactus but I can't get this sword to do what I want it to. It's harder to control then my knife because it's longer and I can't get a good grip on its hilt. I also slow down my strikes as I get near my target. It does not help that Finch is standing to close for comfort.

"Can you please get back?" I ask him, irritated as I nearly hit him when I miss the cactus.

"Trust me Gilia, I am nowhere near you!" Finch replies. Yeah you go and make me sound terrible at this. I aim another strike at the cactus out of anger and the sword gets lodged in there. I try to pull it out but it's not moving.

"Maybe you should stick with the knives." Finch says laughing as he pulls out the sword for me.

"I'll bear that in mind." I say, snatching the sword off Finch.

"Look I'll show you." Says Finch and he comes over to help me. He puts his hand on my arm to try to guide me, but I immediatly pull away at his touch. In the back of my mind a voice is screaming at me that what just happened was wrong. Finch looks confused and is staring at me. I wonder if he felt that to.

"Never mind." He seems to whisper to himself.

"Why do you want to teach me how to use a sword anyway?" I growl at Finch, feeling mad at him for just touching me.

"Well Sha..." He quickly stops himself. What's wrong with him? What was he going to say.

"I'm sorry what?" I ask. Finch looks a bit desperate as he stands where he is, his face has gone red.

"Well.....shan't you know how to use one?" He says looking pleased. Ok that was weird.

"Finch that made no sense." I say.

"It didn't did it?" He replies.

"What where you going to say?" I ask softly.

"So you don't remember anything about your past then?" He says quickly changing the subject. He knows that I don't so why is he asking?

"No just...a strange feeling and...a boy...I think." I answer.

"You remember someone?" Finch asks as if excited.

"Yes, recently. And I remember....caring about him. How weird is that when I can't even remember his name?"

Finch shakes his head. "That's not weird. I bet you'll remember him soon!" He says looking almost ecstatic. He is so weird, but I have a feeling he knows something. About me. But I know if I just asked him he probably wouldn't tell me so I try a different tactic.

"What about your past? Did you come from a tribe?" I ask Finch.

"Apparantly I once did but I can't remember it if that is true. As long as I can remember I was living outside of society. I used to live with my mother and my brother, Nate. My mother told me once that she had brought shame to our tribe and my father so she had to leave them. We lived in a hut that my mother had built that was tucked away in a corner of the desert, only about a ten minute walk from a stream. My mother looked after me

and Nate, kept us clean, cooked our meals and made sure we stayed at the hut when she went out to hunt, although she wasn't particularly good at hunting, there were plenty of nights when we went hungry. When I got older I started to hunt and my mother taught me how to cook and she eventually taught me how to heal wounds after I came back injured from a hunt. Nate stayed at home the whole time as neither me or my mother wanted to risk letting him come with me on hunts. Nate didn't look like me or my mother, I looked nearly the exact same as her. Nate had tawny eyes and light brown hair and was much shorter then I was at his age. I used to play around with the swords that my mother had stole from her old tribe for us. We were as happy as you could get. I gave Nate's old sword when I began to trust him." Finch says, nodding towards the sword that now hangs at my waist in its sheath. Immediatly I know that something bad ahd happened to Finch's brother. How else would he be able to give Grey Nates sword?

"I really cared for my brother." Finch continues. "Especially when my mother began to slip away. It wasn't to bad at first. She would just wake up in the middle of the night screaming and when I went to try to calm her down, she would ask me what had happened to my sister. But I know there's no way I could have a sister. If I did, then why wasn't she with us?" Finch asks, staring really hard at me, almost scrutinizing me like the first night we met. I guess Finch sees me as the little sister that he never had, and our similarity must only add more of a fire to that little fantasy. Finch shakes his head to break his stare away from me.

"No." He mutters under his breath. I look at him for a while, wanting him to continue with his story. I've been wondering about Finch for so long that he now has me entranced with his tale.

"But then it got worse. She started having fits and would break things. One night we were just sitting down eating and she went into a fit and started throwing the food around the place, and when Nate tried to calm her down, she hit him. Immediatly she was pulled out of her fit and she looked so sorry and begged Nate to forgive her. Nate was willing to forgive her but I just grabbed him, took our swords and the bow and arrows my mother had found, she didn't know how to use them though so it didn't matter, and left. I didn't want to risk that happening again. Not to Nate. My mother didn't come after us, maybe she felt bad about what had happened or maybe she just went into another fit, I have no idea. I took my brother as far as we could go before he got to tired. We got quite far actually, I think it was more so the night coming on that made us stop rather then Nate. But the thing that frightened me the most was that, not to far from where me and Nate were, was a tribe, and the size of the tribe made me think it held at least a hundred people. I tried my best to keep me and Nate well hidden. I only lit fires during the day and got rid of any black smoke as quickly as possible. The only problem was that I had to take Nate with me when hunting, so I tried to teach him how to use a sword, but he was terrible. He couldn't use the bow and arrows either, so I just took him with me and kept the animals attention away from him as much as possible. But then one day, when we were hunting a wolf for a meal, I heard growling behind me and when I turned around, I saw two mountain lions. They're horrible things, my mother had warned me about them before but I never really listened. I'd given Nate a sword, but I knew he would be of little use. Fighting them was extremely hard and, if anything, Nate just got in the way. I'm guessing one of the lions was weaker as I killed it quite easily, the only damage it did to me was make a cut in my stomach, but then once I killed the first, the second lion seemed to get more infuriated and more powerful. Until then, I had kept Nate out of the way of all this. I was battling the lion and struggling to block its swift attacks and I tried to land hits between its strikes. Then it suddenly stopped attacking me and ran somewhere behind me and before I knew what had happened I heard Nate screaming. I'd turned around and saw the lion on top of Nate who was on the ground. It had then lowered its head and bit him really deep. I had stuck my sword into its back as soon as it had raised its head again, but I was to late. I'd went over to Nate and saw that he had a wound half on his neck and half at his collar. He was bleeding very heavily." Finch looks up at me and, something I have noticed with him, Finch doesn't cry, he just has a deep, saddening look that makes you feel as if someone is tugging on your soul. I'm upset now because seeing him sad upsets me as well.

"I'd tried to do all I could to heal his wounds, but I didn't have all the things I needed and Nate just wasn't strong enough. Once he died I'd left as quick as I could because I couldn't bear to look at my brother just lying there, unmoving. I was so mad for days, more then that, and slaughtered every single kind of animal I could find but I never ate them. The thought of eating one of those vial creatures sickened me. I didn't really eat anything for days, I wouldn't risk eating fruit because I didn't know what was safe to eat. But then I met Shayne and..."

"Who's Shayne?" I suddeny demand.

"I didn't say anything about any Shayne." Says Finch quickly looking red again.

"You're a terrible liar Finch you know that?" I say

"It doesn't matter Gilia! You know the rest from Grey." He yells at me and walks off. What's his problem if this Shayne guy doesn't matter. I suddenly hear the words that the blue-eyed boy from my dream a couple of nights ago had said to me as if it is being whispered into my ear, the smooth voice sends a shiver down my spine.

"You have to remeber Gilia."

Chapter 9: Drained away

Chapter Nine- Drained Away

I wait where I am for a while, allowing Finch some time to return, before I head back to camp. He could have at least come back. What was the point of us leaving camp at all? All I gained was a fight with Finch, and as I set off, I am fully aware that I might be alone for a while. At least until Grey decides to come back. I know Grey will come back, he just needs time, but if I have truly annoyed Finch, I probably wouldn't see him again.

I'm walking through the sandy dunes, the dark sky falling like a black curtain, when animals finally begin to make a reappearnce. Birds are soaring through the sky, fast and low. A huge rat nearly runs over my feet as it searches for food before the night truly comes. About ten wolves are approaching from in front of me, running fast. Oh no not this again. The creatures are growling and these wolves look well fed, their bellies fat from a recent meal, I can smell their breaths, which reak of raw meat and that horrible smell of their hot breath, even though they are still a good length away from me. Well I'm better cared for this time to, true I am hungry but not starving, and I am strong and armed. I pull out my knife, I won't even consider the sword, ready for them. If I run, they will catch me, and I'll just be that much easier to take down. I have more chance living if I try to fight. I throw the knife I am holding at one of the wolves, which falls to the ground as I catch it in the neck, and quickly pull another one out of my belt. I throw another one at the oncoming pack and just barely catch the side of a wolf, making it even more agitated. The pack is nearly on me and I am throwing my knives at a furious pace, but only one hits an oncoming wolf in it's stomach, causing it to fall to the ground. I reach for another knife, the remainder of the pack only metres away from me, and feel my heart sink as I realise it is my last one. I better make it count. I throw it at the wolf closest to me and am satisfied when I see it fall to the ground. The wolf that was just after the one I just took down suddenly pounces at me, not even allowing me time to draw the sword, and knocks me to the ground, its teeth bared only inches from my face. Its claws dig into the side of my stomach and I cry out in pain as the wolf keeps pushing its claws deeper into me. I am saying a silent goodbye in my head to Grey and Finch when I suddenly feel the wolf thrown off of me and see it fly across the sand a good hundred yards. I sit up, which causes me to scream with the pain coming from my side, and look around to see who saved me from that beast. I can't see anyone. The only living thing near me is the remaining wolves, which have momentarily frozen in fear, but already two are slowly starting to edge towards me again. I double over with the pain in my stomach, my head spinning wildly causing the world to tilt over on itself, and put a hand at my wound, which is glistening red with blood when I pull it away.

"Gilia!" I hear my name called but it's neither Grey or Finch. It's that guy with his silky smooth voice. Wait how does he know my name? I wish I could find out. Solve that little mystery before I die. I suddenly get a weird feeling, as if my energy is being very quickly drained away. Just as the sensation of being drained has stopped, I see a ball of dark, crackling light race across my vision and head towards the wolves. The dark light hits the ground where the wolves are and explodes in a dome of pure darkness with strange golden flickerings here and there. Looking at it sends a chill down my spine, it is impossible to see into but I can hear the yowling of the wolves trapped inside it. I feel the effort it is now taking me to keep my eyes open and feel my head pounding and my side feels as if someone is twisting a knife in me. The dark dome of energy finally ebbs and I see the wolves lying dead on the ground. What was that? I can't keep my eyes open anymore but I still have a hold on my conciousness. I lay balled up in the sand and listen to the silence. So peaceful, no sounds of anything trying to kill me. Then I feel someone touching my arm with a feather-light touch, as if I might break. I let out a low moan as this persons touch seems to be sending adrenaline through my veins, but then I let out a cry that catches in the back of my throat as they lightly try to examine my wound. I hear a sigh and feel myself being lifted off of the ground and am now in someones arms. I think that the jostling about knocked all that was left out of me and I slip into unconsciousness.

I wake up back in our little house in camp. I am bundled up in many layours of furs and whenever I attempt to move.stabbing pains in my side crash over me that nearly knock me out. My hand goes down to where my wound is and I feel that it has been bandaged. I pull myself up into a sitting position, which causes excrutiating pain, and look around to see who brought me back. I look down and almost laugh as I see that beautiful wolf blanket has been put over me. I lightly stroke the soft blanket. I must admit, I hate wolves with a passion but this weird blanket is actually just a piece of art. I look over at the far wall to see the sword propped up against it, at least I was able to hold onto that, I want to give that back to Grey when he comes back. But lying on the floor on top of a simple fur blanket, are all my knives, lined up perfectly straight snd they all appear to have been cleaned. This is just confusing me way to much now so I choose to ignore it, to forget about the miracle of someone bringing me back alive and trying to heal me, but that's not the kind of thing that I forget easily. I get up and feel my side scream at me in pain. As I walk outside into the quickly falling dusk, my head begins to spin and I am violently sick as soon as I get outside. My throat is on fire so I go back inside, get one of my knives, and hack at the exterior of one of the cacti surrounding the camp, yearning for the sweet liquid inside. I am sipping on surprisingly cool water, which I caught in a cup as it came out of the cactus, when I begin to think about food which causes my stomach to turn just with the thought. I feel so dirty that it is uncomfortable but I don't want to risk bathing in the stream because of my wound. So instead I huddle up in between the fur covers and go back to sleep.

I wake up to the smell of food, which makes me gag. Finch must be back then. I look out the doorway and see that night has fallen and try to work out whether I have been asleep for a few hours, or if I have been asleep for a full day. I hear Finch get up and approach so I pretend to be asleep. I don't feel like talking reallly.

"Do you want any food?" Finch asks, without even checking to see if I'm asleep.

"No." I say. Silence follows for about a minute.

"You may want to check this out." Finch says. What could be so important that I have to get up. I grudgingly get to my feet, which sends a painful shooting sensation through my side, and follow Finch outside. I am surprised when I see him crawl through the cacti and leave the camp, but I just crawl through as well. When I pull myself up from the ground I see that Finch is on top of the small hill. I join him on the hilltop.

"What's wrong?" I ask. Finch just points down the hill and into the distance. I look to where Finch is pointing and notice the smoke that is rising up from a fire that appears small from this distance. I squint and make out the shape of a person, who looks hazy from the light of the fire, and get a faint sensation of the adrenaline I felt when I was attacked by the wolves.

"It's not Grey is it?" I ask Finch.

"No. If it was Grey I don't think he would be able to stop himself from coming back." Finch replies.

"Who do you think it is then?" Finch doesn't answer my question.

"What should we do?" I ask instead. Finch just looks at me.

"What can we do?" Finch says, answering my question with another question. I hate it when people do that.

"I don't know, attack them? It's two against one so we would probably win." I say.

"You're injured and I can't kill someone." Finch replies.

"Why not? You're great at fighting!" I say.

"That's not what I mean, I mean I couldn't live with myself if I killed someone innocent." Ugh, Finch and his morals really annoy me.

"What if it's someone from a tribe who wouldn't hesitate to kill us?" I question.

"Why would they attack us if it really is two against one?" Finch says.

"Well what if they run into Grey. He's unarmed!" I say.

"How would they even know about Grey? They might know about us but if they do they probably think that we're the only people around."

"So what if they attack us in the middle of the night?" I retort.

"Then we'll set up a watch. I'll take the first watch, you go back to camp and get some sleep." Finch says, eager for me to leave. I follow Finch's advice and head back to camp, leaving him at the top of the hill, and as soon as I am back through the cacti, even though I have been sleeping non-stop, I crawl in between the fur covers a re-enter the twilight zone that is my dreamless sleep.

I wake up feeling well rested and get up and realise that my side has stopped hurting and is now just feeling numb. Upon this discovery I decide to take a dip in the stream. I go outside and feel the heat of the morning quickly hit me. I walk down to the stream and quickly strip off and get in, but I leave the bandage on as I am not to sure if I should uncover my injury. I wash my clothes, get out of the stream and redress into the wet clothes, knowing they will be quickly dried by the sun. I feel so refreshed and happy now that I have had a wash. I go back to the centre of camp and only now realise that Finch still isn't back. I feel bad for making him keep watch last night when he mustn't have had much sleep anyway. He must be asleep on top of the hill. I quickly get a drink then leave the camp to search for Finch so I can take over the post of look out from him and, as bad as I feel for even thinking it, so he can quickly make a meal. When I reach the hilltop I am surpised to see that Finch is not there. Panic suddenly floods through me and I look down the hill to where the dull fire is, which has been made useless with the coming of the dawn, and realise the stranger that was down there is gone as well. I am really scared that this stranger has attacked Finch, and before I know what I am doing, I find that I am running down the hill to the dying fire. When I get there the first thing I notice is the sword lying next to the fire, which is about the only thing around, and feel a small bit of relief. At least this person isn't armed. I look down at the sword and realise it is a very strange weapon. The metal of the sword is the same colour as a pitch black night. Weird, I pick up the sword, curious, and am surpised when I discover that holding this sword feels as if I just have a grip on the air, it is that light. Holding the sword sends a strange tingling sensation down my arm, and looking at it reminds me of the ball of energy that went past me when I was attacked by the pack of wolves. I hear footsteps behind me, which causes my blood to freeze, and I drop the sword and turn around and feel relief flood through me when I realise that it is Finch.

"Gilia what are you DOING? Are you CRAZY?" Finch hisses angrily at me in a whisper.

"Where were you?" I say cautiously, not wanting to anger him more.

"I was on top of the hill." Finch replies, his voice still angry.

"No you weren't. I was up there looking for you and I couldn't find you." I reply.

"Yes I was, you just weren't looking hard enough!" Finch says.

"Finch, you weren't, the hills not that big that I wouldn't be able to see you if you were up there!"

"Come on Gilia, we're going back to camp!" Finch says as he grabs hold of my wrist and tows me back, I try to pull away but Finch has an iron grip on me. As we reach the top of the hill I twist around and see the person back at there camp and, even from this distance, I know they are staring at me, their gaze going deeper then just looking at me and I feel a shiver go down my spine as I twist back around, breaking this persons stare from my eyes.

Chapter 10: Found

Chapter Ten- Found

I sit inside our small house, mechanically rubbing a finger up and down the smooth metal surface of my knife, deciding how to leave. I don't want to leave Finch on his own, but he has pushed me to it. As soon as we had got back to camp, Finch had found an excuse to be angry again as he discovered that we had no food left for breakfast. He had started pacing about the camp, cursing under his breath. When I had offered to go out and hunt this caused him to explode and he was shouting things at me, most of which I didn't understand, but I did catch the words "Stupid", "Immature" and "Crazy" leave his mouth which had angered me.

"Why don't you go out to hunt then?" I shouted back at him.

"How could I even trust you to stay here by yourself when I'm gone?" He had shouted at my face, his voice had climbed to an interesting, high-pitched level that made him sound like a mouse that was getting squashed. After that, Finch was silent and would not even look at me unless he wanted me to do something, but even then he was barking out orders at me, apparantly addressing the sky by the way he looked upwards, and his harsh voice cutting through the silence had caused me to jump. I've never seen Finch so mad, actually, I don't think that I have ever seen Finch mad at all. When things were normal, when Grey was around, Finch never really talked at all. He would just sit in the corner and then disappear each day. I had never really paid much attention to this before though, in fact, I found it useful as it allowed me and Grey to get some alone time. It was also very useful the way that Finch ran like clockwork and would always disappear from camp as noon came, but would return with the falling of the dusk, which he did everyday, without fail. I'm surprised as I realise that I actually know very little about Finch. Do I even know how old he is? I don't think I do, I can't believe that never before occured to me. But Finch is never really involved in my daily life. He's just the guy that keeps to himself all day, laughs at some jokes at dinner, and makes the food. The best part of each day would be when Fich was gone so I would be waiting for noon to come all day so me and Grey could talk without having to censor our conversations around Finch, because saying what we wanted to say to each other around him was just a little awkward.

I had tried to leave the camp earlier about an hour after we had arrived back from the strangers camp, but as soon as I had started towards the exit through the cacti, Finch had appeared out of nowhere and blocked my way.

"Where are you going?" He had shouted accusingly at me.

"I'm leaving Finch! I don't think I'll come back." I had said quickly and softly.

"No, you're not leaving. Now just go to bed or something." He had commanded angily to me. I had then walked away from him and into our small house, mumbling angrily under my breath. I had then sat down on my pile of furs and started to polish my knives. I've been doing this for a couple of hours now. I finish polishing my final knife and walk to the doorway and hold it up skywards, catching the metal off of the sinking sun to check for the gleam of cleanness. I let the light reflected off of the knifes metal dance around the room before I put the knife into my belt. I stand in the doorway of the hut for a moment, indecisive as of what to do now, when an arrow lodges itself in the exterior wall of the hut only inches from me, if it had hit me, it's safe to say I wouldn't still be standing here. I look around the camp and see Finch near the patch of cacti holding the bow in his hands with the quiver of arrows on his back.

"Not even nearly high enough." Finch says to himself quite loudly.

"Finch what the hell are you doing!" I shout angrily at him. Finch looks at me and then seems surprised when he sees the arrow lodged in the wall close to me.

"Trying to shoot a bird." He replies gruffly.

"What bird? It's a bit hard to mistake me for one!" I say. Finch then reloads the bow and points it up again. I dive to the ground as he lets go of the arrow. A second later a big, dead bird lands beside me.

"That bird." Finch says simply. I pick myself up, to angry to even say anything, and go down the hill to the stream, just to get away from Finch.

"I'm guessing you don't want dinner then?" Finch calls after me.

"Shut up Finch!" I yell back and resist the urge to throw a knife at him. He's not that stupid to actually ask that question seriously, he just being malicious now. I wish we had a second way out of the camp. The only way out is the row of cacti as the camp is surrounded by a huge rock wall that winds around the whole camp, but finnally breaks for the clusters of cacti. I want to leave, I don't care about leaving Finch by himself anymore, I'm just scared that one of us will end up killing each other. I sit on the sand bank of the stream with my feet dipped in the shallow waters, deciding what to do. Maybe I could find Grey and apologise, I still don't really know what for but I don't think that even Grey knows, and just have us two stay together. This course of action does sound as if it is the best thing to do, but I think getting away from Finch is the hardest part of it all. I pull myself out of the stream and decide to just be blunt with my leaving. I head, once again, for the patch of cacti, and am surprised when I notice Finch is not there. I exit the camp without being stopped, and proceed in what I think is the way that Grey went when he left.

"Gilia!" I hear Finch's voice shout out from behind me. I knew my escape was to easy. I turn around and see Finch standing next to the entrance to camp.

"So you're leaving to then?" He questions angrily.

"Yes Finch. Did you really expect me to stay?" I retort.

"No. I knew you'd try to find Grey. Gilia, listen to me, you can't go after him! Come back and wait here, he will come back!" Finch says desperatly.

"This isn't just about Grey! I do want to find him but I can't stand being around you!" I throw my words at Finch like stones.

"Gilia don't! It's not safe out there, especially for you." Now Finch is implying I'm dumb or something.

"What kind of danger would I be in that wouldn't possibly happen to me if I stayed with you?" I demand. When Finch does not answer I continue the way I was going, my pace fast so I can get away while Finch is still a bit baffled.

"Gilia you have a Tribe after you!" Finch calls out which causes me to freeze. After a minute or so I am finally able to react to this.

"What do you mean?" I shout without turning around. I hear Finch let out a loud sigh.

"I mean you have a Tribe searching for you who are hell-bent on killing you." Finch says grimly. What is he on about? How would he know? I couldn't even imagine why anyone would want to kill me, never mind a

whole Tribe! I turn around quickly, aa knife in my hand, and throw it furiously in Finch's direction. The knife hits the cactus closest to Finch, but it did cause Finch to jump out of the way.

"Why are you telling lies just to keep me here?!" I question angrily.

"Why are you trying to kill me? And I wasn't lying!"

"If I wanted to kill you you'd be dead, and how would you even know if a Tribe was after me?"

"Just forget it Gilia! Go, don't go, I don't care, just stop with all these questions, please!" Finch shouts at me, looking annoyed. I stand where I am for a minute then, once again, continue on my course feeling cold-hearted and cruel for leaving Finch.

I walk until I can no longer see Finch behind me before I allow myself to stop. Where am I going? Well that's easy I want, no need, to find Grey. But where do I go to find him? I stand where I am for a moment, thinking of where Grey would and could go. Then I slap my hand to my head as I realise.

"Of course, the cave!" I say to myself as I finally realise this is where Grey has gone, that's where he always goes. From here, I would say that I'm less then an hours walk away from the cave. I look up at the sky, which is wearing an orange hue. I think I can make it before nightfall. I run as fast as I can the way that I remember Grey taking me before, ecstatic that I know what I'm doing and how to find Grey, but annoyed that I didn't figure it out before. It's not like it was some major puzzle, it just required the faintest bit of common sense to work out where he went. After all, it's Grey I'm looking for and he is extremely predictable, most of the time... I'm running fast, still full of energy even though I've been going for almost half an hour, when I see the rock face of the wall leading up to the cave, only a minute or so away frrom me. I stop wildly as I nearly slam into the wall and notice that a torch has been stuck in the sand just before the wall. I don't know why there's a torch there, it's not that dark. True, the sky is beginning to grow dark, but you can still see. At least I know that someone is here, I'm just hoping that it's Grey. I scramble up the wall frantically, cutting nearly all of my body off the sharp stones covering the walls surface, and pull myself up with the small ledge jutting out before the cave.'

"Grey!" I scream into the cave as I pull myself in, and am horrified by what I see. Inside, slumped against the far wall, is Grey who appears to be unconcious and is bleeding heavily from a wound in his stomach. I look around the cave for signs of an attacker, and see a boy, who looks a bit older then me, with dark black hair, who is just a few metres to my left in the corner of the cave, and he's holding a thin, black sword which appears to be shimmering gold and is covered in blood. I watch, momentarily frozen, as this guy proceeds towards Grey again and raises his sword. Then I pull myself out of my shock and get a knife out of my belt and go into action. I lunge for the boys throat and just barely scrape it with my knife, leaving him with a small cut. At least that turned his attention away from Grey as he turns to me, his sword still raised. His dark blue eyes lock on me and the arm he is holding his sword in drops to his side. Something inside me stirs as I look at him.

"Gilia?" He murmurs softly in a smooth voice as he reaches a hand out to me. I take my chance and go at him again, but he is ready this time and jumps out of the way just as I am about to dig my knife into his stomach. My knife instead clashes off the wall and I turn in fury to look at him, anger hot in my eyes. He just stares back at me, dumbfounded.

"Gilia, please, wait..." He begins but I just charge at him again. He runs to the ledge outside of the cave and almost perfectly jumps down to the ground, rolling as he lands which I guess must make the landing a lot easier. I throw my knife at him in frustration and feel a small satisfaction as I see the knife catch in the boys leg. He pulls it out, throws it to the ground, and begins to limp away. I'm in half a mind to go after him but

then I remember Grey. I rush over to where he is and bend over him, trying to see if he;s still breathing. I feel so relieved as I see the rapid rise and fall of his chest but I don't know what to do. I look at his wound, which is not very deep but I know I wouldn't have the first idea on how to treat, and feel so useless. Why am I here, Why can't Finch be here? Finch would know how to help Grey. The only thing I can think of doing is trying to wakr him up. I try saying Greys name to stir him, but that doesn't seem to work so I begin lightly shaking him, which also seems to have no affect. I feel hopelessly desperate now and so I pull out my canteen of water and just throw some of this in Greys face. I have only just begun thinking that was probably the worst thing I could do when Grey is pulled back into consciousness, coughing and spluttering.

"Grey!" I squeal as soon as his eyes open and before I know what I am doing I am kissing him and he is kissing me back. I feel the fire that I felt from kissing Grey before, just that this time it is more furious and determined and way more powerful. I don't know how long we are like this before I decide that maybe it is best if I pull away, but whenever I try Grey just pulls me back into him, not wanting this to end. I feel such a rush as the fire I feel seems to be pumping through my whole body. I feel as if where I am or whats going on or that nothing in the world matters as long as I am with Grey, he just makes me forget everything when I am with him. Grey finally pulls away from me and looks into my eyes.

"I guess I really do need you." Grey says weakly as he idely brushes a piece of hair out of my face. I smile at him faintly and Grey holds me and I am holding him and I know that I never want to let him go again.

Chapter 11: Tribes

Chapter Eleven-Tribes

"I wonder what Tribe you're from." Grey says dreamily as I am treating his wound.

"Grey I don't even know if I'm from a Tribe." I reply flatley.

"Well, what's your last name?" Grey asks me.

"Last name?" I say, my voice climbing to a curious note.

"Yeah. In the old world they were used to seperate families, but after the war they were all but lost so the Tribes picked them up again but used them as tribal names, to highlight what Tribe you're from." Grey explains. He knows so much about this kind of thing.

"So whats your last name?" I question as I finish washing down Greys injury.

"Faith." He replies.

"So your name's Grey Faith?" I say testing out the name and laughing lightly as I do.

"Yes, or it was. Because I left the Tribe I guess my last names kind of...invalid. So now I'm just Grey."

"Just Grey." I repeat smirking.

"I wonder if you're a Salvation..." he says to himself.

"A what?" I reply dressing Greys wound. And I used to call Finch crazy when he said we should all carry around spare bandages and things like that, but in all honesty it did sound quite stupid at the time.

"Salvation. That's another Tribe. I can't imagine you being from there though, they're such a ruthless Tribe. They're the Tribe that everyone looks down on,"

"Why?"

"I don't really know. They are such a mercilous people, apparantly they frequently attack a smaller Tribe. No other Tribe's really attack each other. But here's where the story gets unbelievable. Apparantly they can control magic or, as they call them, "powers". When I was in my Tribe I also heard rumours that they were looking for someone,"

"Looking for someone?" I repeat, remebering Finchs words from earlier.

"Yeah, I've heard that they're looking for that person so that they can "restore the world". Ha, can you believe that? A whole Tribe looking for one person. Everyone thinks that Salvation are nuts so when Tribes hear tales of the Salvation Tribe, they tend to ignore them," Grey says. It does all sound pretty unbelievable actually. After a short silence, Grey's talking again.

"I think that you're probably a Guardian," he says triumphuntly.

Chapter 11: Tribes

"Is that another Tribe?"

"Yes and from what I know they are a quiet, small Tribe just tucked away in the corner of the desert. They're the Tribe that get attacked by Salvation, and from the tales other Tribes have heard, Salvation kidnapped a lot of the members and some just fled the Tribe. It would make a whole lot of sense if that's where your from, its just such a shame you can't remember. I wish I knew how to help you," Grey says sweetly.

"How about you help me now by focusing on getting better. I don't care what happened in the past, as long as you're ok and here with me in the future," I say as I lean in close to Grey.

"What's going on with us Gilia?" Grey asks me, a pleading tone entering his voice.

"Something really special," I reply and kiss his lips softly. Grey smiles at me but then I hear him draw a sharp intake of breath and his hands fly down to his stomach.

"Oh, Grey I'm so sorry!" I say as I realise that I am leaning on his injury. I quickly pull myself off of him.

"It's ok, don't worry, I'm fine! It's just a little sore," Grey says through gritted teeth.

"Grey stop talking, please, you'll hurt yourself!" I exclaim, my tone bordering on madness.

"Hardly! I haven't seen anyone for days, and then you show up and save me, I think. Trust me, I feel ok as long as you're here," I feel myself blush as Grey says this. Does he even realise how sweet and perfect he is? And here I am, tongue-tied under Greys gaze. Why can't I say what I want to say around him? I always end up saying the exact opposite when I try!

"Grey I...You're so... You're so wonderful I can't put it into words and I'm just so... I'm so..." I try to find the right words but I can't, I just can't! Ugh, why won't my head work when I'm around Grey? Grey then grabs my face between his hands and makes me look at him.

"Gilia," Grey begins, his brown eyes sparkling from the silver light illuminated by the walls. "I'll tell you what you are. You are the girl who was...hurled into my life. You're the girl whos eye I have been forever trying to catch. But, most importantly, you're the girl who I love and more then I deserve. I think I finally figured you out. You're so...Guarded, so scared of loss and hurt. You don't want to let anyone into your heart in case they...Rip it apart. I understand that now, when I was thinking about what you had said to me when I told you I love you. I'm sorry I was so stupid, throwing that all on you!" Grey looks worn as he says this. Now I feel myself crying.

"What are you on about?" I say as I let my tears flow. "You don't deserve me? Do you realise how wrong you are. It's me that doesn't deserve you! And I should have realised before that there was something going on with us, I had no cause to BE so guarded in the first place. I belong with you, I'm just to selfish to realise that, but you deserve better then me! But I guess you don't have much of a pick anyway."

"Even if I could pick from billions of girls I'd still choose you in a heartbeat," Grey says weakly. What he has just said is making my heart flutter madly, but I notice the weakness in his voice. I look at Grey more closely in alarm and realise that all the talking must have took all his energy out of him. Just as well I had the foresight to bring a backpack and fill it with just about eveything. I love these backpacks. We had found four when we had discovered the hut along with four water canteens, some herbs and spices, a large knife (Which Finch now has full command of for cooking) and my twelve knives. All of this we had found inside the cupboard in the hut, along with a picture of an young man who had a young woman and two small children with him. What I found most fascinating about this picture was the amount of greenery that surrounded the

hut and snaked up it's walls like skeletal arms. But this picture also unerved me as the man was casually leaning on a long metal tube with wood at the end, which Grey had told me was a gun when I asked him. This sickened me, why would anyone have a weapon near small children?

I rummage around in the bag and pull out two wrapped up blankets, then I unstrap a third from the bottom. I unroll one and spread it out on the floor and then help Grey lie down on it. Then I throw the other two over him.

"Stay there," I say as I get up and go to the ledge of the cave.

"Where are you going?" Grey says in an almost helpless voice.

"Nowhere, I'll be back in a minute, just please, don't move," I then rush out before Grey can protest again and am met by the bittingly cold wind that sends a shiver down my spine. I look up at the sky which has an overcast of dark grey clouds covering the moon and the stars, causing me to lose nearly all sight, the only light coming from the soft glow of the silver hued walls inside the cave. My throat hurts as I breath in the icy night air. I am squinting as I look around, trying to see something, and a soft glow in the distance catches my eye. I try to focus on it and realise it is a fire in the distance, and from here it looks the size of a normal fire in a pit, so it must be pretty big. A shiver crawls up my spine, but it's not from the cold. Something's happening, and something is never good, especially if I am somehow involved. I watch the black smoke from the fire curl upwards into the sky like monstorous fingers. What is going on? I know it is terrible to think it, but I hope with all my heart that it is Tribes fighting. Maybe that Salvation Tribe is attacking the Guardian Tribe. But somehow, thinking of a Tribe being this near too us scares me. What if they were too find me and Grey? We would most likely be killed instantly, and even if it was Greys old Tribe we would still be murdered. Actually, I think that if it was Greys Tribe, there would be no chance of us getting away, especially Grey, as I think they would feel more passionally about ending him then another Tribe would. The way Grey has told it is that you don't just LEAVE a Tribe and get away with it. Suddenly I am thinking of what Grey said to me a while ago, about me being from a Tribe, Guardian I think he said. What if he's right? If I am indeed from a Tribe, would they label me as a deserter and try too kill me? Welcome me back with open arms? I feel myself zone out of real life as I begin too wonder whether, if I am from a Tribe, there was anyone I left behind, anyone who was upset when I disappeared. I hope not anyway. I am sick of hurting people.

I am pulled out of my thoughts when I hear Greys slightly panicked voice, "Gilia, are you ok?" I turn around slowly and see Grey, still in the bed I have made him, staring at me, concern heavy in his gorgeous brown eyes. I walk back into the cave and sit with my back against the wall next too where he is lying on the ground. I remain silent as I lean against the uneven surface of the wall, trying not too think about the things I will never know. "Please tell me you have more blankets in that bag," Grey says in an almost despairing tone.

"I'm okay. N-not even cold," I reply, not even wanting too let this argument start.

"Gilia, you're shaking. Take one of my blankets," Grey says. I look down at my body and realise that I am indeed violently shaking. My whole body is numb with the cold. I look over at Grey and realise that his skin is a slight shade paler then usual and his full lips have taken on a tinge of blue. And, as much as he is trying too control it, Grey is also shaking from the cold, even though he has the two blankets.

I shake my head at him. "N-no way! You need them m-more then I d-do!" I say, struggling too make my chattering teeth stop.

I hear Grey sigh, he's probably realising that he won't win this fight, and he puts an arm around my waist and easily pulls me over to him, lifting up the blankets and throwing them over me and him. "Better?" he asks.

"Not e-even close!" I say, and I wrap my arms around Grey and allow myself to sink into his body. Immediatly a powerful warmth courses through my body. "That's w-way better!" I say, causing Grey too laugh softly.

"It's better for me too," Grey says. After a short pause, I hear him say something. "Do you think this is normal?" Grey asks.

"Do I think what is normal?"

"Us," Grey replies simply. Oh. That.

"Of course it isn't normal! But does it really make any difference?"

"I guess it doesn't," Grey says as he plays with my hair.

"I've been thinking, maybe we should make our own little Tribe. But, you know, do it right,"

"Not many members in our Tribe," Grey replies jockingly.

"Well I'd call it cosy..." I begin.

"Cosy? Really?" Grey says smiling down at me.

"What else are we? I think we have it kind of good. Nice little hut, nice location..."

"A small, fairytale hut tucked away in the beautiful sandy regions of the world..." Grey begins, he has changed his voice too a high-pitch as he jokes. I put an arm around Greys neck.

"You better not be making fun of my Tribe," I say playfully.

"Wouldn't dare too," he replies as he pulls me in closer to him and very softly kisses me. I kiss him back for about a second before I decide too pull away from him in case I inflict more injuries onto him like before. "And what would our Tribe be called?" Grey asks still carrying on the joke.

I actually take a moment too seriously think about that before I reply with certainty, "Dawn."

"Isn't that more of an actual name?"

I shrug and say dreamily, "I like it. It's a beautiful name."

"I truly love you so much," Grey says as he pulls me in closer to him, which I didn't think was achievable. I rest my head aginst Greys chest and close my eyes. This has been such a long day. I feel Grey rest his head on top of mine and I think I actually fall asleep like this.

I don't know how long it has been, an hour at most, before I am woken by a faint noise. I open my eyes and look around the cave which is illuminated by the walls soft silver glow. I can't see anything. I try too move, but I realise that Grey is still holding me and he is fast asleep. Great. Instead of getting up I try too focus on the sound. It sounds like a weird dragging noise, and every now and again I hear...grunting? What IS that? Then I see a hand grab at the ledge of the cave and I scream, causing Grey too sit bolt up, his eyes wide.

"Gilia what's wrong?" Grey asks me. Before I can answer, somebody pulls themself up onto the ledge outside the cave and they just lay there for a second panting. I try too see who it is, but it's too dark too tell. Grey tries too get up too see who it is, but I just cling to him tightly whenever he tries too get up. I'm so scared that it's the blue-eyed boy who attacked him earlier. After about a minute, the person gets up and walks into the cave. My heart leaps into my mouth in fear and I nearly scream again. But a second later the persons face is illuminated by the silver light radiated from the walls and I laugh lightly in relief.

"Finch? What happened?" Grey asks as he too realises that it is Finch. Finch looks terrible. He appears to have burn marks in places on his bare arms, his face is covered in cuts and some of his hair has been burnt. Finch runs a hand through his hair anxiously, and some of it seems too almost disintergrate in his hand.

"They...they burnt down our camp and tried too take me down with it. I don't know who they are, but a Tribe is coming," Finch says, then he looks directly at me and his tone turns more somber, "A Tribe is coming, and they're...they're after you Gilia."

Chapter 12: On The Run

Chapter Twelve- On The Run

I am frozen, useless, as I am still holding tightly to Grey like he is a lifeline. No, this can't be happening. I didn't actually believe Finch when he said a Tribe was after me, but now they have attempted too launch an attack on me.

"Finch, what are you on about? Why would a Tribe be after Gilia?" Grey asks desperatly.

"I don't know Grey, if I did I would tell you," Finch says, his voice in a soft whisper.

"Finch...What exactly happened?" I ask, my body beginning too shake again.

"I don't really know. After you left I decided too just call it a day and I went to bed. Then not even two hours later I was woken up by a lot of noise. Sounded like a load of people in the camp. They kept saying your name and about how you must have left. I didn't really know what too do so I just stayed inside the hut hoping they would leave. They said something about sending you a message and the they started boarding up the doorway of the hut. I tried too get out at this point but as soon as I was outside some guy hit me around the head, which knocked me out, and I guess he threw me back in. When I came to, the doorway of the hut was fully boarded up and the place was on fire," Finch says, a tone of boredom in his voice. I can tell he hates telling his tales.

"How did you get out?" I ask, but I know it's probably in vain.

"With a little help," Finch says mysteriously. I knew I wouldn't get a straight answer out of him.

"But-" I begin, but Grey cuts across me.

"It doesn't matter now. These people are out too kill. Finch, how can I keep Gilia safe?" Grey asks.

"I'm sorry YOU? What, so you think that I'm just going too ditch you now that some heats on your tail?" Finch replies, frustration creeping into his voice.

"Finch..." I begin, but I am once again cut across.

"I know what you're going too say, and don't worry about it. I can't just leave you two, you're like family to me," Finch says as his lips tug into a smile. Finch is so caring, in his strange and mostly unseen way.

"Finch what do we do?" Grey demands impatiently, his voice has taken on a bit of a formidable tone.

"I don't know Grey what can we do? She's got a huge mark over her head and a whole Tribe after her!"

"Easy solution then. We fight," Grey says simply.

"Grey I don't think..." I start to say, but apparantly I'm not in this conversation anymore.

"Fight them? Really? Grey, it's a Tribe, there has too be at least a hundred of them against us! Anyway, it seems none of us are in any state too be fighting!" Finch yells angrily, clearly losing his patience with Grey.

"So? I'd prefer too go down fighting rather then simply hand Gilia over!"

"Why not?" I suddenly say, realising this is a sensible solution. This suddenly re-engages me in the conversation.

"No," Grey says simply to me.

I pull away from his hold on me, "Yes Grey! The way I see it, it's me or all of us!"

"Finch?" I ask desperatly, hoping that his preference for Grey rather then me will play in my favour.

Finch is biting his lip, wanting too say something but knowing he can't. "Well...Maybe it would be ideal for us all in the long run but...I think I can speak for myself and Grey when I say that we're just too selfish too let you go. Maybe we should just stay here..."

"NO!" Me and Grey shout at the same time. Confusion crashes over Finchs face.

"Why not?" Finch asks.

"Some maniac tried too kill Grey. Maybe that guys with the Tribe that burned down the camp, I don't know, but he could easily come back!" I explain quickly.

"What did he look like?" Finch asks.

Really, he's asking me what the guy looked like? "I didn't see him great but from what I could tell he had black hair, dark blue eyes..."

"What?" Finch almost cries out.

"Well I'd draw a picture but..." I say sarcastically.

"Are you sure that's the guy who attacked Grey?"

"Positive. Finch, you're going too have too start explaining some things real soon because you are starting to really confuse me."

"It doesn't matter. So I guess the only option is for us too run," Finch says as if finalising this.

I turn to Grey, "You know what Tribe is hunting me, don't you?" I ask him.

"Well...Yes. I'm pretty sure it's Salvation but that would mean...You're who they're looking for. You are, or at least Salvation think you are, the person who is meant too restore the world...If I was told it was meant to be anyone else, I'd still be calling the Salvation Tribe deluded, but if it's you...I think I could easily believe it," Grey says almost cautiously.

"Well why do we have too run from them if they believe that I can restore the world? Surely they wouldn't kill me if they think I'm the solution too their problems, the whole worlds problems for that matter. Shouldn't we just find them and..."

"No way Gilia! I may believe what they think of you being the worlds cure, but that doesn't change the fact that the whole Tribe is full of pyschopaths! They'd still kill you in an instant, no matter what they think. I don't want too be waving the white flag to them,"

"What, so we should just be on the run for the rest of our lives?"

"Some people would call it romantic..." Grey teases.

"Personally I don't see how," I reply, feeling as if I'm telling Grey off or something.

"Guys, back to the matter at hand here," Finch says in frustration.

"And what exactly is that?" I ask.

"Well I'm thinking of how are we going too get Grey down from this cave but...."

"Finch I can get down, there's no fuss there," Grey replies.

"Are you sure?" I ask him.

"Well if not you two will have too leave me up here,"

"I'm never leaving you again!" I reply certainly.

"Can you two just please move! You'll have time too love each other later!" Finch says desperatly.

"Okay!" Grey says as he gets up, the pain he is feeling reflected onto his face. I help Grey as us and Finch go outside to the ledge.

"Ok, so how do we do this?" I ask Finch.

"How did you do it before?" He asks me.

"I fell out!"

"Oh. Well that's one way too do it. Not the most ideal solution for us though," Finch says sarcastically. But before we can think about this more I notice somethigng down on the ground. It looks as if the darkness is...Moving. I walk closer to the edge so I can see what it is more clearly. Just as I am at the edge I see at least thirty faces look up from the moving black mass. We left it too long. They have found us already. I look over my shoulder back at the cave as if this will help me work out what too do.

"Gilia, get down!" I hear Greys voice call out and I turn too see what looks like a black mass coming right for us. I feel myself pushed against the rock surface of the ledge, and am surprised when I realise that it is Finch who has tackled me to the ground. I lift my head up as much as possible just in time too see the black mass collide with the ledge we are on, and immediaty the ledge breaks and I am falling through the air, and Finch seems to fly off somewhere to my right. Time feels as if it has slowed down as I feel the air whip almost painfully against my face and I look around me desperatly, hoping that somehow Grey made it back into the cave. I feel my heart sink as I see him just off too my right. I don't know what is going through my head as I reach out for Grey and him for me. Just as our hands are about to touch, I feel as if I am picked up by a whirlwind. I can't see anything anymore, Grey is gone, the whole world is gone, I think I have gone blind. Then all around me there is piercing white which streches as far as the eye can see. Just as I am trying too comprehend where I am now, I feel my head slam against what I think is a smooth rock ground, and everything slips away from me.

Chapter 13: Death Sentences

Chapter Thirteen- Death Sentences

Grey

I desperatly look around for Gilia as I am falling through the air. This is it, we're going to die. I finally find her and even now I am breathtaken by her beauty. Her long, glossy, golden hair is flying upwards in crazy waves and her beautiful, sparkling green eyes are desperatly trying to lock onto mine. I see her reach her hand out to me and I fling out my arm to try and hold onto her. Just as my fingers are about too brush her soft skin, Gilia's momentum slows as if she has been picked up by a wind. I look up and see Gilia suspended in mid-air. Then, with a burst of bright silver light, she is gone. No. How? How could she be taken away from me so quickly. I feel as if my heart has been shattered in a single moment. The pain of my heartache is terrible but it doesn't last long as I hit the ground and hear a sickening snap just before I feel the force of my impact with the earth. I feel a tidal wave of pain start at my right leg and spread out across my whole body. I have definatly broken my leg and, judging by the pain when I breath, maybe a rib too. I let the pain overcome me and let my world slip away.

"You crazy, murderous excuses for human beings! Let me go! What is your problem, huh? She's gone, it's finished. You malicious monsters have got what you wanted, now leave us alone!" I try too open my heavy eyes when I hear Finch's crazed voice. My eyes open the slightest fraction, causing everything to be dark and hazy. The soft glow of torches slightly illuminates the world for me. I see Finch down on his knees on the ground as two people behind him are tying his arms together. A man stands in front of him and he crouches down in front of Finch.

"It is no way near over. We will find her and her pathetic excuse of a guardian. She's lost, in every way possible," The guy says, his voice a quiet murmur. Then he straightens up, pulls back his knee and smashes it into Finch's face, causing Finch's body too go lifeless. The two men holding Finch haul him up between them.

"What should we do with him?" one of them asks.

The guy who kicked Finch replies, "Take him back to the Tribe, I'm sure he'll be usefull for something,"

"And the other one?" The same man asks nodding towards me.

"I'll take care of him, or what's left of him anyway. You just make sure that he doesn't escape. And keep an eye out for the boy," I then hear the two men walk off slowly and I realise that I'm now here alone with a Salvation maniac. After the other two mens footsteps can no longer be heared, I hear the guy approach me. I fully shut my eyes and hope I'll pass for dead. I can't let this guy kill me. From what I have heard, it sounds like Gilia is indeed alive and lost. And I have to find her, before Salvation does. I hear the guy laugh lightly as he stops just as he reaches me, "If only it were that simple..." he says to himself. Suddenly I feel myself kicked hard in my ribs, causing them to scream at me as the pain I felt earlier returns with a vengance. The power the guy put behind his kick has caused me to roll over the sand for a while before I finally stop, my stomach to the ground. My leg feels as if it is being twisted forwards after all the tumbling. I feel a lump rise in my throat and I push myself up with my arms and begin coughing painfully, blood coming out of my mouth as I cough, Which splatters over the sand and eventually forms a small pool of red. The guy waits until I stop coughing blood before he approachs me again.

"Who are you?" the guy asks in a whisper that sounds like a hiss, "You're certainatly not that annoying Guardian boy. But you seem too mean something to her." I don't answer him, not wanting too tell him

anything. I feel my shaking arms fail and I fall back onto my stomach at this guys feet.

"I said who are you?" he repeats as he brings his foot down against my broken leg really hard, causing me too cry out in pain.

"Grey," I choke out.

"I meant what Tribe are you from, stupid boy," the guy is still preasing down hard on my leg.

"Faith, but I deserted," more pain is creeping into my voice but I try to control it.

"Well Grey it seems this is your final bow. Oh and rest assured, your friends will join you soon enough," the guy says, finally pulling his foot off my leg.

"You will never kill Gilia, or Finch!" I say and I pull the guy by his leg, causing him to fall, and take the knife from his belt and press it against his neck,"Now it's your turn. Who are you?" I ask with a sneer.

"Adrian Salvation. What does it matter to you, you're dead anyway!"

"I'd like to know who to look for when I come to find you. No one threatens my girlfriend and-" but I stop myself. Girlfriend? Is that what she is to me now? Adrian then takes advantage of my hesitation and pushes his legs into my chest, sending me flying through the air backwards. My back hits the ground with a painful thump and I feel the knife fly out of my hand. I see Adrian get up and pick up his knife. Then he's coming for me again, with knife in hand. He grabs me by my top and looks at me like I'm the most pathetic creature he has ever seen.

"Do you know and interesting little fact?" Adrian says, and he lightly runs his knife down the side of my face, creating a shallow but long cut which creates small droplets of blood that run down my face, "Predators have a keen sense of smell and can smell blood from miles off," he says as his eyes are drawn to the spot on my top where my wound had soaked my top with blood. He grins evily as he plunges his knife into my still open wound. I scream from the pain, which causes Adrians smile to widen, "I'll think you'll make a nice midnight snack for the wolves." he says as he gets up and walks away. My hands are wrapped around the knifes handle and I'm trying too summon the courage to pull it out. Slowly, which makes it more painful, I pull the knife out while I feel my eyes watering. I cast the knife to the side and put my head against the sand, panting. I look up at the sky and notice that, already, vultures are beginning to circle the sky above my head. I'm as good as dead anyway.

Authors Note- I know this is short but I needed to do this chapter or else there would be MAJOR confusion. If anyone thinks I didn't do Greys point of view right, tell me and I'll change it. Thanks!

Chapter 14: Discovery

Chapter Fourteen- Discovery

My eyes are irritated by the white all around me before	re I even open them. I try to sit up, my eyes still closed
due to the bright white, and feel someone put their arr	m behind my back and help me up.

"Grey?" I ask.

"No," a mans voice replies almost sadly. I open my eyes and have too immediatly squint. Leaning down over me is a young looking man with hair so light it is almost white.

"Who are you?" I ask.

"You don't remember me?" he asks.

"No. should I?"

"Hmm, maybe not...."

"Who are you?" I repeat in frustration.

"Rhythian," he replies.

I begin to laugh manically which annoys me as I can't seem to stop, "What's your LAST name?"

"You don't want to know," Rhythian replies.

"Ooh, you're a Salvation aren't you?" I accuse, my voice sounding slurred.

"Yes, but I won't hurt you!" Rhythian assures me. Yeah, that's going to make me trust him.

"Drop the act, I know you will. But I've given up anyway," I say giggling madly. Rhythian looks at me as if in wonder, his strange grey eyes with silver bordering his pupils full of concern, "Are you ok?" he asks.

Suddenly, my head shoots back through time as I feel a sense of deja-vu. This, almost EXACTLY this, has happened before. I remember something but viewing the memory is like trying to see through a thick fog. I remember Rhythian leaning over me once before, asking me with concern if I was ok.

"Why am I here?" I ask as I am pulled out of my memory.

"I couldn't just let you fall into Salvations hands," Rhythian replies.

"You ARE Salvation so I guess that's kind of happened. Where are we?" I ask.

Rhythian looks around him, "I don't really know, I call it the space in between."

"Why?"

"Well I always pass through here when teleporting so..."

"TELEPORTING?" I question, laughing again.

"Yeah. How else did you think I saved you from falling to your death?" Rhythian says with a smirk. I frown slightly. I'm probably wrong but Rhythian seems a bit full of himself.

"Hey, can you do me a favour?" Rhythian asks.

"Calmly and quietly follow you to your Tribe?" I guess.

"No," he answers seriously, "What I want you to do is more of an...experiment. Are you injured?"

"Nothing new," I reply, now fully aware of a bow and arrows on Rhythians back.

"Are you injured at all?" he asks. After some hesitation I turn a bit so Rhythian can see the rip in my top that exposes the deep cut in my back, which I decided just to take the bandage off of.

"Someone did that?" he asks.

"SomeTHING!" I reply.

Rhythian nods, "Ok, how do I do this? Hmm..." Rhythian seems to be talking to himself.

"Do what?" I ask, my voice full of fear.

Rhythian looks at me as if surprised, then he snaps his fingers, "I've got it! Ok just focus for me, try to...zone out."

I try just out of curiousity of what Rhythian is doing. I focus my mind, swim through my head, the whole world is gone. The only thing that reaches me is Rhythians voice. "You're doing it, keep focusing! Now...put your hand at your wound."

I move my hand down to my wound and feel a weird tingling sensation as I touch my side. I gasp in relief as I feel a coolness spread through my side, "What's happening?" I ask.

"Just wait, hold it....Ok now look at your side."

I open my eyes and look down at my side and gasp in surprise. My wound is gone, no sign of it has been left, not a single mark. I push my hand against my side and feel no pain and laugh normally. "What happened?" I ask Rhythian.

"You're a healer!" he exclaims.

"What do you mean?"

"Well I'm a teleporter, just like some people command fire, others storms or fog. But healing is extremely rare. I didn't think it was possible to have a power that could CURE?!"

"Oh, wow!" I say suddenly. Rhythian then blinks and is gone, but I gasp as I feel his hand at my shoulder. I turn around and see him behind me, "How?"

"Teleporter," he repeats.

"How is that possible though? Can everyone do something?"

"No, only people who have had rituals for powers. But you also get people with more then one powers which are called elements. Look, I don't think I'm the person to explain the dynamics of powers to you, I don't understand it much myself..."

"Why are you helping me?" I ask.

"We've met before. And your friend would kill me if I didn't help you."

"Do you mean Grey?" I ask. Rhythian shakes his head. "Finch?" I try.

Rhythian looks up at this, "No but the name certainitly sounds familiar...Do you only know two people?"

"Well, now I know three but that's it,"

"Woah. He DID do something to you.."

"I'm sorry, he?"

"I don't know, maybe it wasn't him," Rhythian says quickly.

"Who do you mean?"

Rhythian sighs, "The guy who spear-headed the search for you. Adrian," Rhythian spits out the name.

"You don't like him?" I guess.

"Of course I don't! The guy's only eighteen but he seems so...unstable. Everyone knows he has his eye on getting to the rank of Tribehead, but I don't want someone so mental ruling us, and the Tribehead we have now is pretty bad. I don't know much about Adrian because he is just never seen, but from what I understand he possesses elemants. He's also determined to kill you, but all of Salvation are supposed to be. I'm the odd exception as you can see."

"How "Unstable" are we talking?"

"He takes a strange enjoyment out of other peoples suffering and my advice to anyone, especially you, is to keep a thousand mile radius between yourself and him,"

"You said he spear-headed the search?"

"Yes, but you'll be fine. Just stay here for a while and he'll move on when he can't find anyone to mess with,"

"Anyone?" I say, my voice breaking on the word.

"Yeah, he doesn't really care who he focus's his anger on once it's built up,"

"Take me back, now!"

"No why?"

"My friends are there. You have to take me back to Grey!"

"This guy, Grey, he means something to you, doesn't he?" Rhythian asks.

"He means everything to me," I admit sheepishly.

Rhythian bites his lip, "Wait, can I just try one last thing, call it a test if you want."

"What are you doing?" I ask as Rhythian pulls a knife out of his belt.

"It's Gilia, right?" Rhythian asks. I nod, not caring at the moment how he knows. "Well Gilia you better be able to do this," Rhythian says.

I'm about to ask what he means when I see him drive the knife deep into his arm. Rhythian falls to his knees and the knife clatters to the ground beside him. "Rhythian!" I exclaim and rush over yo where he is. What do I do? Of course, I can heal him! I try to zone myself out like I did before, and in my head I feel as if I touch off a spark of energy. I feel a tingling run down my right arm and, unsure of what else to do, I put my hand at the injury Rhythian made. Rhythian gasps in pain when I first touch him, but after a second he is sighing in relief. I watch as Rhythians injury seems to slowly close up, glowing where my hand is against his arm. After about five seconds of this, I feel as if energy is just bouncing back into me. I pull my hand away from Rhythians arm and look at him uncertainatly.

"I think you'll be able to handle yourself alright," Rhythian says as he gets to his feet.

"Why did you DO that?"

"To make sure you'll be ok. Now, I think I have to tell you some thongs about your powers. First, if you use them to often or for to long you will tire yourself, and you need energy to use your powers. Also, if you use your powes on someone else it will wear you out more as you would have to expel them to another person. And finally, when using your powers, you will be extremely vulnerable, you won't be able to do anything else while casting out your power. Have you got all that?"

"Yes. Does this mean now that, say I was dying, I could just heal myself?"

"Here's the thing, I don't think you could. The amount of energy you would need to put behind your power to save someone from death is an exorbatant amount. I doubt you or any other person would be capable of it,"

"Well then that makes my power pretty useless,"

"Not necessarily, it is still an extremely handy power to have. Just make sure that you don't get caught in a position where you could die,"

"Thanks for the advice," I say sarcastically.

"No problem. Want me to take you back now?"

"Hold on, could I ask you something?"

"Sure,"

"You said we've met before," I begin.

"Yes," Rhthian confirms.

"When we met was I... was I with someone?"

"Yes,"

"Where are they?"

"I don't know," Rhythian answers sounding guilty. I just nod, unsure of what else to do. "Ready to go now?" Rhythian asks holding out his hand to me. Am I? For some reason I feel almost scared of going back, but that's ridiculous. I shake my head to clear it and take Rhythians hand and feel my breath taken away as everything rushes past me in a blur of white.

I get the feeling of being caught in a whirlwind again as I see the familiar yellow and orange shades of the desert. My feet hit the sand softly and I let go of my hold on Rhythian. The sun is climbing up into the sky, conveying to me it's late morning. How long was I gone? It didn't even feel like an hour but apparantly I was gone to that strange white world for about twelve hours. I turn to face Rhythian as I get a sudden thought, "Hey do you want to stay with us? Me and my friends I mean."

Rhythian shakes his head sadly, "I have to get back to Salvation. I'll make them think you're dead if you want."

The offer sounds horrible but I jump on it, "Will you? That would be great. The last thing I need is another attack."

"I can't promise that everyone will believe it, Adrian certainatly won't. But it will reduce the number of people after you. Not many people are that fond of Adrian so I don't think they'd go on night raids with him. See you soon." Rhythian says winking at me and with a burst of silver light he's gone.

"Bye," I whisper to the soft wind that Rhythian seemed to have created. I hope that he'll be ok. I look around at the great expanse of desert and try to decide where I am. I know, it's a desert, it all looks the same. But this part has slightly more vegitation then what I am used to. Right near me there's a tree, an actual live tree with green leaves. I don't think I've seen a tree before. And there are breaks in the sand to make way for patches of grass. I lean down to a small patch near my feet and pull out a tuft of grass. I hold the ttuft up to my nose and drag in the frsh sweet scent of the grass. I can only describe it as smelling alive. A small movement of the long grass off to my left catches my attention and I throw a knife at the grass, hoping it's a bird or something. I can't remember the last time I ate. It was before I was attacked by the wolves when Finch and me had shared a small handful of fruit. How long ago was that? Until now I had been able to ignore the stabbing pains of my stomach but now they are so noticeable that I am doubled over with the pain of hunger. I painfully approach the patch of grass I had thrown my knife at and have to rummage around in the long grass to find what I hit. My hands run over soft fur and I grab at the a small animal. I lift it out of the grass and try to decide what it is. To the best of my knowledge, I would say it's a rabbit of sorts, but I'm not sure if you get rabbits in the desert. Thinking on it, I'm not even sure if you really normally get wolves in the desert. I make a note to ask Grey when I find him. Finch might know to, but I don't really like asking him things. It always makes me feel as if Finch is superior to me or something. I desperatly rummage around in the grass for some sticks for a fire, I don't feel like hacking at a tree. I come up from the grass with about twenty sticks in my arms. I make a small fire as quick as I can and prepare the rabbit. This is all taking to long for my stomach, which growls at me impatiently. I put almost half of the rabbit onto a stick, unsure of what else to do with it, and hold it over the fire. The whole time the meat is cooking is torture to me. I can smell the cooking meat, which causes my mouth to water and my stomach to complain. After what feels like an eternity, I decide the meat is done. I've absolutely blackened it. While I chew on the dry, burned meat, I think of how much I truly appreciate Finch

and his cooking skills. My stomach feels as if it will burst as I try to cram in the last bite of the blackened rabbit. I lean back on my elbows in the sand, satisfied and full. As I idely stare up at the sky, I notice something. Small black specks flying in a circle in the sky. Vultures. Before I understand why I'm doing it, I'm up and running to whatever the vultures are circling, trepidation filling me. For some reason, I feel as if it didn't take me long enough to reach the spot of the desert over which the vultures are circling. My eyes scan the sand and I see something that makes me want to turn around and run. Lying unmoving in the sand is Grey.

Chapter 15: Surrender

Chapter Fifteen- Surrender

"GREY!" I scream as I run over to him, falling beside where he lies in the sand. My eyes scan Greys body to see what's wrong with him, then I see that his wound at his stomach has re-opened and I think he's broke his leg. For a moment, I'm scared that Grey's dead. I try to push the thought from my head but it lingers in my mind adamantly. I check and discover that Grey isn't even unconcious, he just doesn't seem to have the strength to acknowledge me being here. No wonder. I'm on my knees in a pool of Greys blood, I don't even know how no animals came by him, with the exception of the vultures, one of which lands next to me and I swipe at it angrily.

"He's not dead!" I yell, feeling insane when I realise I'm yelling at birds now. I try to zone out but everytime I try, I am sickened by the hot and wet blood surrounding me. But if I want to be anywhere near enough to Grey to heal him, the blood will be an inevitable annoyance for me to face. I try again but can't seem to as I can almost smell the blood. I know I'm going to be sick.

"Come on," I say to myself. I once again attempt to get into my head, thinking that I must if I want to save Grey. I feel success as I get the impression that I'm floating through my head. I feel myself touch off the epicentre of my power and a tingling sensation spreads across my body. I quickly put my hand at Greys stomach, feeling concerned when he doesn't even react to me touching his injury, and send my power down my arm and into Grey. For a few seconds, there is no effort to this, but then after a minute I feel as if I have been running for miles non-stop. I push at my powers from inside my mind, but it feels as if I am trying to push a wall. I feel my hold on my power slip and I'm gasping madly as I re-enter the real world. I groan in frustration when I realise I have lost control of my power.

"Gilia," Grey murmurs quietly. Hearing him acknowledge my prescence makes me feel huge relief. I might be able to save him yet. I regain the control of my power and once again throw it all towards Grey. I feel light-headed and I feel my body shaking from the effort of keeping my power going but none the less I continue the flow of it down my arm. I don't know how I know, but I can tell it is working. Greys moans of relief back up this as I continue to mentally push out my powers. I feel it slipping again, but I adamantly hang onto it and continue to make it flow to Grey. This is really exhausting me. My head is spinning wildly, I am shaking more furiously and I feel sick. I feel my focus waver as I begin to see stars, then everything is gone.

I'm still shaking as I try and figure out what happened. I feel my body being held up in someones arms.

"Gilia, are you ok?" I hear Greys voice waft to me, sounding echoed and magnified. I open my eyes and try to get my blurry eyes to focus. I find myself looking up at about three Greys. Nice. My vision restores itself and Grey is back to one and he is looking down at me with worry in his eyes but the rest of his face emotionless.

"Gilia talk to me," Grey says looking on the verge of tears.

"There were three of you. That was nice. Not that I'm complaining about the one of you. Three of you just means two more guys for me to keep saving. But still, it was nice," I say in a whisper. Is that actually all I am able to say?

Grey looks horrified for a moment then he bursts out laughing, "You are so amazing, you know that right?"

"Yeah...I mean no I'm not! YOU'RE amazing! Probably setting a record for the most near death experiences in twenty-four hours."

"I don't think that they count as near death experiences if you're there to save me. How did you do that anyway?"

"I don't know. Where's Finch? If he's in half the state that you were in it's safe to say there will be more fainting to come."

Grey looks somber, "Gilia, Salvation got him."

"What? No," I say not believing it for a second.

"I'm sorry Gilia, I couldn't do anything..."

"Grey, this is a horrid joke. Where's Finch?"

"I'm not joking Gilia," Grey says.

"Ok. Where are they?" I say attempting to get up from Grey.

Grey just wraps and arm around me to hold me down, "No Gilia, we can't save him."

"Why not?"

"It's to dangerous,"

"You were all for attacking Salvation before. Or do you think we don't stand a chance without Finch?"

"It's not that it's just...You have so many people after you I can't possibly risk you."

"Grey they are probably torturing Finch as we speak!"

"I know," Grey says and I realise he is crying. I feel my heart sink as I realise we have truly lost Finch. I think Greys crying made me discover this. Finch is more or less dead and it's all my fault. I feel myself crying as well and feel Grey pull me in closer to him.

"I wish you two had never found me then this would have never happened!" I sob.

"Don't even say that! That would mean neither of us would have met you. Finch is smart he'll find a way to...win." I don't like Greys reply. Win? What does that mean? It doesn't sound great and for some reason I think Grey's suggesting that Finch will find a way to kill himself or something. I begin to sob harder. Grey swears as he realises what he said has made me feel worse. Grey just starts rubbing my arm and making soothing noises but it really doesn't help.

"Does Salvation know I'm alive?" I ask.

After some hesitation Grey replies, "Yes."

"And they think you're dead."

"Definatly."

"Good. I can work with that."

"What do you mean?" Grey asks. "Oh nothing. What should we do?" I ask. "Lie low." I nod then rest my head against Greys arm. I wonder if the trouble follows me or the trouble follows Grey. I'm still snivelling when Grey asks me something. "Gilia?" he begins. "Yeah?" "What are you planning on doing?" Grey asks. Damn he's in a smart mood today. "I can't tell you." "Of course not," Grey sighs. "So, do we stay here?" I ask. Grey thinks about this for a moment, "No. There's a Tribe not far from here, Salvation wouldn't expect you to be anywhere near them." "What Tribe is it?" "Faith." "Is it safe for you to be there?"

"Nope. It's safe for you though."

"Forget it. I'm not going there if they're looking for you."

"They're not looking for me as such. Just keeping an eye out and maybe they have placed a price on my head," Grey says a bit stupidly. I sigh. "Ok so, we'll leave tommorow. That ok?" Grey asks me.

"No," I reply.

"Too bad." Grey says almost childishly. I sigh and close my eyes. I need to catch up on some serious sleep. Grey changes his position a bit so it is more like he is holding me rather to him rather then holding me down. I begin to drift off and still I hear Grey sobbing softly thinking that I can't hear him.

I wake up and my eyes sting from crying. The sun is setting and the sky is orange. It's quite beautiful. I'm lying in the sand with a blanket over me and am happy when I realise I have been moved a distance from the sickening pool of blood. Grey's gone though, so I jump up concerned. I walk up a small hill that's in front of me, quiet in case danger lies ahead. I reach the top of the hill and see Grey sitting there, his back to me, watching the sunn sink in the sky. I can tell he needs to be alone to mourn Finch in his own way so I quickly and quietly go back down the hill. I can't imagine what it's like for him. I'm heartbroken over Finch and I wasn't particularly close to him, but Finch and Grey were such good friends. Always talking to each other and hanging out with each other. I never really hung out with the two of them at the same time as I had no interest

in their conversations. Grey had forever been asking Finch about fighting techniques while Finch asked Grey about life in a Tribe. I had made an effort at first but then I slowly began to waft away from the conversations. I realise that now is my best chance to do anything so I continue to head away from the hill, walking into the distance. I begin to cry as I realise I am leaving Grey without a goodbye. I can't let him know I'm going though so I have to just be strong and go. I will walk right into Salvation's Tribe, try and free Finch, kill as many members as I can as well. I know this is a mission I won't return from. It doesn't matter to me though if I can save Finch and keep Grey safe. I feel a bit sad as I suddenly think that I am going to be throwing away all the effort Rhythian must have made in convincing Salvation I am dead, but it's a small price to pay for my friends safety. For Greys safety. I left my backpack behind me for Grey, so he doesn't immediatly know I'm gone and so he can have it when he realises what happened. I've been walking for five minutes before someone charges at me unseen from the side and knocks me to the ground, me and the stranger rolling over each other in a tangled heap. A knife is pressed to my throat hard. Why do I even bother to look for trouble when I could let it find me?

Chapter 16: Deserted Faith

Chapter Sixteen- Deserted Faith

"Ok now girlie, you better tell me exactly who you are. And be quick about it, my knife's impatient," a male voice whispers in my ear as I feel the knife pressed harder to my throat.

"Leave me alone," I sob up at the hard faced man like the child I am.

The guy sighs, "Pathetic."

"Grey!" I scream before I can stop myself. Crap. Why did I do that? Now I've put Grey in danger. The man reacts to my cry.

"Grey? As in Grey FAITH? Ho you must be kidding me! I've been looking for him for ages!" the man snarls. I sob harder at my stupidity.

"Now who are you girl? I wonder if I could get as pretty a price for you."

"Gilia," I sob.

"Gilia who?"

"I don't know!" I shout out. The man then grabs both sides of my face, tilting it to the side as he surveys me.

"Oh no way!" he says to himself, "You're the little brat Salvation want! Between you and your friend, I'm set. Where's the Faith boy?" I press my lips together tight, no way I'm telling him that, "Where is he?" The man shouts at me angrily.

"I-I k-killed him!" I invent on the spot. The man smiles wickedly.

"Nice try. Where is he?" the man repeats irritably. I move my mouth uselessly trying to think of a better lie.

"He's....he's...."

"Here," I hear Greys voice call out. I turn my head to the side and see Grey standing there, his hands balled up in fists at his side. Oh no, he isn't even armed, his sword's probably still in the hut. The man sweeps me up as he stands up and still holds the knife to my throat as he looks at Grey.

"Quite a large bounty for such a small boy," the man says mockingly to Grey.

"How much?" Grey asks.

"I'm not accepting any offer you may make," the man says.

"I didn't make an offer. I asked how much the bounty is," Grey says.

"A thousand gold pieces for you dead, three-thousand alive," the man replies. I am struggling furiously, my hands clawing at his arms.

"And for her?" Grey asks indicating me.

"A hundred-thousand, alive only." Grey nods as if considering this. "Now you better come over here boy or I'll cut her pretty little neck."

"Maybe I don't want to come over there," Grey says much to my relief.

"What?" the man questions. Grey makes a face.

"That little creep has been following me for ages. Annoying the hell out of me. Maybe I would be grateful if you killed her."

The man hesitates, confused. Then he spins me around to face him, "Is that boy lying?" he asks. Damn this guy is stupid.

"I-I don't know. He's right, I've been following him but-" I look over the mans shoulder at Grey, "Was I annoying you?"

"You're lucky I didn't kill you in your sleep, stupid girl. No wonder you're out on your own if that's how you are with people.I bet your Tribe kicked you out," Grey says with venom in his tone. I put a heartbroken look on my face as I look at the man again, then I start crying again.

"What the hell is going on?" the man asks.

"I thought he liked me, I thought we were friends! I thought we'd be together forever..." I ramble a bit to fakely, but the guy doesn't seem to notice. He looks from me to Grey, confused. I know what he's thinking. He thinks he can't have me and Grey because if he lets go of me, I'll bolt and if he tries to threaten Grey with me, it'll be useless. I can practically see the gears moving in this guys head. I'm the higher bounty, he can"t kill me. He has no way to kill or capture Grey and still have me. I hear the guy growl in annoyance.

"Fine!" he snaps, "You're lucky she's worth so much boy!"

"So what they pay high prices for trash now?" Grey says. I see an oppurtunity. I slowly slide my hand down to my belt and pull out a knife.

"You jerk!" I scream as I throw the knife over the mans shoulder at Grey. Greys reflexes are amazing as he simply catches it as it is about to hit his face. The man holding me is going crazy and he spins me around again and ties some rope tight around my wrists. I don't even put up a fight with him as he empties my belt of knives and checks me for other weapons.

"How could I have been so stupid, I should've known you'd be armed!" the man says to himself as he drops the knives onto the sand. This guys lack of common sense is unbelievable. Then he starts to walk, his back to Grey, towing me along with him. I look over my shoulder at Grey. I mouthe good job at him and he gives me a thumbs up as he begins to collect the knives. Grey mouthes now? at me but I shake my head. The man is practically dragging me through the sand as he's moving so quickly. I keep sobbing to keep up the charade of me being a scared little girl.

"Shut up!" the guy says. I continue to cry loudly, "I said shut up!" I feel the knife pressed at my throat again, then the guy falls to the ground, clutching his leg, and I fall as well. Grey rushes over and cuts at the bindings at my wrists and pulls me to my feet. Grey points the knife uncertainatly at the man. I lean down, pull a sword from a sheath at the mans waist, and give it to Grey. Grey hands the knife to me as he takes the sword off me

and I stand with it poised over my head. Grey points the sword an inch from the mans face.

"What Tribe?" Grey asks.

"Faith," the man replies. Grey looks slightly surprised.

"Deserter?" Grey questions.

"Bounty hunter," the guy says. Once again, Grey looks surprised.

"How do you know about Gilia?"

"Some Salvation guy came in being preachy about her only a week ago. He was able to say how much the bounty was before the Tribehead killed him. People were sent out immediatly after to look for her."

"Many?"

"Six including me."

"Do you have a family?" I ask.

The man looks at me as if only noticing me now, "A wife and a daughter," he replies looking confused. I give Grey a look. I don't think I can kill him anyway, but this guy has a family who will miss him. Grey sighs.

"We can't just let him go!" Grey says to me.

"We can't just kill him either!" I reply.

"I can!" Grey says.

"Can you?" I ask. Grey looks uncertain.

"Well what do you think we should do with him then?" Grey asks. A horrid thought crosses my mind and right now it seems to be the only option. I lightly pull the backpack I left behind off of Greys shoulders and rummage around in it for some rope and come up lucky. I walk over to the man and tie his wrists together and then do the same to his ankles.

"What are you doing?" He asks me sounding nervous.

"If your Tribe cares about their bounty hunters so much, they'll find you. If not, that's not my problem." I say coldly as I get up from my crouch. I grab Grey by the arm and have to drag him away back the way we came.

"You can't just leave me here!" the man yells.

"Really? I thought that was what I was doing," I call over my shoulder. The man yells more things at me, but I tune him out. Grey leans down and kisses me.

"What's that for?" I ask as he pulls away.

"That was amazing," Grey replies.

I make a weird noise, "That's two anyway."

"Two what?"

"Tribes after me. But Faith are also not over you dumping them."

"You have some high bounty. Salvation must really want you. Do they even have that much gold?"

"Probably not," I reply. I'm not sure on the value of gold so I don't know if my bounty is indeed a lot.

"At least no one will immediatly kill you."

"Yeah great."

"Surely that gives you a small bit of hope," Grey says. I stop in my tracks.

"Grey, they want me alive for a reason. If they get their hands on me they won't let me die a simple death!" I exclaim. Grey is about to protest but then he seems to rethinnk and stop. The revelation of what I said seems to hit Grey slowly and he begins to look more scared by the second. I try to take his mind off that.

"That was some performance back there. For a minute, I thought you actually hate me." Grey laughs lightly when I say this. I grab his top and pull him close to me, "You don't hate me, do you?" I ask jokingly. Grey runs a hand through my hair.

"Couldn't if I tried," he says with a smirk.

"Well that's good because I certainatly don't hate you," I say. I only think now that I may be a bad flirter. Grey grabs my waist and pulls me in close to him and I throw my arms around his neck resting my head on his hard chest. Grey lets his hand slide down my waist and he kisses the top of my head and I quickly turn my head up so my lips meet his as he does.

"I love you so much, you know that right?"

"As long as you know I love you more."

"Ha, no way. I love you more!" Grey says. We're actually those kind of people that do this sort of thing. But we're doing it now and I want the last word.

"Come on, you know I love you more. I saved you from dying twice!"

"Yes but I said it first."

"I flirted first."

"Guess you did."

"Well then," I say triumphuintly as I grab the back of Greys head and pull him to me. Our lips have not even touched when we hear the explosion.

Chapter 17: A New Guardian

Chapter Seventeen- A New Guardian

Me and Grey are frozen as we stare at each other, our faces only inches apart.

"What was that?" I ask.

"I don't know. It sounded kind of close. Back where we left that guy just further on."

"Is that where Salvation are?" I ask Grey.

"I actually think it is," he says.

"Anyone back the other way?"

"Yeah, Faith."

"So we're practically penned in?"

"Seems so."

"This is going to end soon somehow," I murmur.

"How do you mean?" Grey asks.

"I mean that I'm probably going to die soon!" I snap at him annoyed. Then I burst out crying before I even know why. Grey holds me in close to him.

"That's not going to happen, I promise. We'll find a way out of this."

"How Grey?" I ask desperatly. Grey can't seem to find an answer.

"Come on, we're going to have to hunt, and I'm not just going to leave you here," Grey says instead. I follow him as he guides me through the desert quietly, towards the way we think Faith are. I follow him feeling terrible. Yes, this is going to end soon, I just have to do my best to make sure it's only for me. I try to think what my life would be like without Grey and I just feel hollow when I try to imagine it. I hate to admit it, even to myself, but I am scared stiff. It sounds stupid but I don't want to die, not now. The thought of death scares me so much, the finallity of it makes me shake. If you make a mistake in life you dust yourself off as best you can, but if you die that's it. You're gone. Finished. Even I have no control over my death and I have a thousand people out to kill me. I look around me at the trees that appear to have sprung up out of nowhere all of a sudden.

"Woah," Grey says suddenly and he crouches down and pulls me down with him.

"What?" I ask. Grey points at something just ahead of us. It's some kind of animal which is quite big, brown colured, has long legs and has antlers protuding from from its head.

"What's that?" I whisper to Grey.

"A buck. They're not meant to be out here. They live in the woods."

"So what's one doing in the middle of the desert?"

"No idea," Grey replies as he stares at the buck in wonder. I look at it to. It's quite a handsome animal. It looks so majestic and superior and graceful in the way it slowly places each hoof carefully in front of the other. It lowers its head to eat at the patch of grass before it, its big antlers hitting the ground before its mouth reaches the grass. I laugh lightly and the buck looks up and then runs off away from us. I look at Grey in confusion and find that he's returning the very same look. We silently move over the sand as we try and find something to hunt. No more bucks are around, nothing else out of the ordinary for that matter. We do come across a lone coyote which we take down in seconds, Grey corraling it into the line of my knifes fire. We make a fire right where we are and me and Grey make a deal that I prepare the kill and Grey will attempt to cook it. I've cut the thing up into uneven lumps and shoved it onto sticks which I hand to Grey. Grey then holds these over the fire, which he burns. He actually dropped a stick into the fire.

"I'm going to tell you this now," I say to Grey as I finally manage to swallow a bit of the burnt meat, "I think we are the greatest cooks in the world."

"Yeah. Burnt meat for breakfast, lunch and dinner. I knew I should have looked around for some fruit or something. It would have improved the flavour."

"Grey I don't think it would be hard to improve the flavour, but still no one would willingly eat it," I say and we both start laughing madly at this. I think both of our emotions are running sky-high at the moment. Our moods are changing so fast. I'm trying to cram in all the moods of a lifetime so I can make sure I lived them all and I think that Greys just coming along with me for the ride. I get up to get us both some water and when I return from the cactus that was only a few steps away I notice Greys in a dreamland. I lean down really close to him and still Grey doesn't notice me. I put my mouth right at his ear.

"What you doing?" I ask suddenly which causes Grey to jump and turn to me. Grey tries to smile at me but his face is still sad.

"What's wrong?" I ask as I sit down next to him. Grey just looks at me and then pulls me onto his lap and holds me tight. I'm not really complaining about this but I do find it slightly depressing when Grey buries his face in my hair and starts crying.

"Ok what's wrong?" I ask Grey again.

Grey doesn't seem to be able to talk for a moment and then he splutters out, "I-I just can't stand the thought of l-losing you!"

Somehow I feel as if Greys sudden concern for losing me is my fault so I feel extremely guilty, "Grey you're not going to lose me! I will always love you!" I say beginning to cry myself.

"I know but...y-you're going to die. And I won't be able to help you, no matter what I do."

"I didn't say I wouldn't die I just said I will always love you. I'm not going to make promises I can't keep," I say deciding to just lay it all on the table.

"Isn't there anything I can do?" Grey asks me. I pull my head away from his so I can look him in the eye. Grey looks at me sadly, his big gorgeous brown eyes sparkling from his tears.

"Be with me?" I suggest. Grey seems to sigh.

"I guess that's all I can do."

"Grey there is nothing else for you or anybody else TO do."

"Yes there is," Grey says and he cradles my face in his hands and looks me right in the eye, "Gilia, I swear that I will protect you. For whatever it is worth, my life is now dedicated to protecting yours. And I will not let anyone take you from me!" Grey says looking and sounding determined. For some reason this all feels very familiar to me, just not with Grey. No, it was with someone else, it was with him...

"My guardian..." I say dreamily.

"What are you saying?" Grey asks me. I realise now that I'm looking into Greys deep brown eyes and yet what I said wasn't about him.

"I-I was just saying that your like my guardian now or something," I stammer.

Grey seems to smile at this, "Yeah, I guess I am. And I will protect you!" Grey says. There it is again, he's saying more words that are making me think of someone else. My head seems to start aching.

"Gilia are you ok?"

"I'm fine. But where is he?" I ask adressing the question at Grey but not meaning for him to answer it.

Grey looks confused, "Where's who?" he asks me.

I think for a moment then laugh weakly, "You know what? I really don't know!"

"Damn it Gilia!" Grey says, not sounding particularly angry, "There's someone else isn't there? Or was anyway."

"I think that there was." "I knew it," Grey says as if he's tired.

I look at him questioningly, "When I'm with you Ifeel as if I'm...trespassing. That someone else has rights to you. It's not your fault at all but...it's just so weird. And I feel so guilty," Grey explains.

"Why?"

"Because the poor guy isn't going to get you back. See I'm selfish, and you're mine now. I feel a bit bad because now whoever you were with has lost such a wonderful person as you."

I feel touched to my core,"Grey if there was someone, they're in the past now. You and me are what's happening now and I'm yours."

"You're mine?

" "All yours," I say as I rest my head at Greys neck and catch up on some serious sleep.

I run through the darkness towards something. I don't know what, but the me in my dream does, and I don't need sight to find my way there. I've reached the familiar wood door of the hut at the Tribes gate. As soon as I

have opened the door I am in his arms. I can't call up a name or even s face for the person but dream-me seems content with the faceless boy. The hut is illuminated by loads of candles which sit on a dresser in the corner of the hut.

"Finally," the boy says.

"I'm right on time!" I exclaim in mock annoyance.

"Still to long," he whispers in my ear.

I laugh, "So patient," I say.

"And don't you forget it!" he jokes as he pulls me onto the bed.

"We can't keep doing this," I say.

"Why can't we? It's not like we're doing anything!"

"I guess not." I reply as I distractedly look at the soft glow of the candles. He follows my gaze.

"Those things look so pitiful don't they?" he asks me.

I shrug, "Could be better."

"Want to make it better?" he asks holding his hand in mid-air. I press my palm against his and let my energy flow and feel him do the same. Together we create a small sphere of energy that encases our hands. I feel slightly annoyed when I see the energy is black, which still glows bright, with small flickerings of gold in it and let more energy flow to my hand. After a few seconds the sphere is gold with black cutting through it like lightning. I laugh as I see a concentrated look cross his face and the sphere is once again black with small lines of gold. I groan in frustration and send more energy to my hand again but this time the sphere looks like a golden sun on a half-eclipse. I'm distracted by the beauty of what we have created and my concentration slips and the ball of energy completely disappears.

"That was beautiful," I say dreamily.

"That's because we made it together," he says simply.

I'm awoken by more, smaller versions of the explosions I heard yesterday. I open my eyes and see the sun is high in the sky. I'm still lying in Greys arms, who is awake and unmoving so as not to disturb me.

"There's more," I manage to get out before I yawn widely.

"It's Faith this time. It's been going on since a bit before dawn. This isn't good at all," Grey says.

"Why isn't it good?" I ask, unsure of what is even happening. I turn my face to the side so I can see Grey.

His face looks so emotionless as he says, "A war is starting."

Chapter 18: Hanging Knife

Chapter Eighteen- Hanging Knife

I can see it all from my perch high in a tall tree. Well, no I can't see it all, but I can see enough. If we weren't on a hill, I would only be able to see the high wooden barrier surrounding the Tribe but due to the hill that the tree stands on, I can see ant sized figures attacking each other viciously.

"How many are in the Tribe?" I ask Grey who has one arm securly wrapped around me, the other wrapped around the centre of the tree.

"A few hundred," Grey replies sadly. We don't talk as we observe the fighting. Already you can see many people have been killed as they lie unmoving.

"Do you think we should join in?" I ask. Grey doesn't even answer my question. The slow spiralling of black smoke from just outside the Tribes walls catches my eye.

"Is that a person?" I ask Grey, shakily unwinding an arm from around his body to point down at the fire. Grey and me look at a small figure that appears to be pacing around the fire.

"Yeah, they seemed to have escaped the fighting."

"Can we go see if they're friendly?" I ask. Grey huffs.

"If need be it's two against one?" I press hopefully.

Grey's silent for a moment, "All right, but if they try to kill us then I'm not going to let them live."

"Ok," I agree. Grey scales down the boughs of the tree and helps me down with him.

"Are you okay with this?" Grey asks as we are on the lowest thick branch. This branch is actually so close to the ground that I take Greys question as an insult. Grey sees the look I'm giving him and he lightly jumps down to the sand. I'm preparing to leap very gracefully off the branch when I feel myself lose my footing and I fall off the branch sideways. I land in the sand quite softly in the sand and Grey rushes over to help me.

"I'm fine!" I snap irritably as I pick myself up. I'm annoyed further when I see that Greys face is red from the laughter he's containing. I push at him playfully, causing him to actually stumble. Grey grabs my arm and pulls me with him as he falls and we fall to the ground, me on top of him, laughing hysterically. I get up off Grey and help him up.

"Sorry," I say.

"I shouldn't have laughed," Grey replies. We go down the side of the steep hill, running so we don't fall, and head towards the fire.

"Grey?" I begin about as soon as we have got to the bottom of the hill.

"Yes?" he replies.

"Do you have any family left?" I ask carefully.

"Yes, my mother and my little sister. My mother hated me and my little sister was to young for me to be partcularly close to. Oh and my dads brother lived with us but I didn't like him. He kept trying to teach me how to fight when I obviously couldn't."

"How do you know how to fight then?" I ask.

Grey takes a minute to reply, "Finch," he says his tone downcast.

"Oh, sorry."

"You didn't know," Grey says sounding upset, and I actually didn't. I thought Grey knew how to fight because during our first week together he had begun trying to train me. First with a sword, then with the bow and arrows, then finally with the knives. I wasn't particularly great at knife-throwing either but under Greys guidance I quickly mastered it.

"What happened to your father?" I ask trying to take mine and Greys minds off Finch.

"He deserted, but he came back about a month later. The Tribehead ordered for him to be killed."

"What's your little sister called?" I ask to, once again, take Greys mind off sad thoughts.

"Jewel," he replies.

"Pretty."

"Yeah, pretty weird! Honestly my parents couldn't pick names to save their lives. My dad named Jewel, I don't know what he was thinking. My mother named me, coincidently she is the most pessimistic woman you will ever meet. As I got older, I asked my mother why she called me Grey and she said that she thinks my life will be bleak!"

I actually laugh at this. She sounds like a terrible mother, "I don't believe that."

"Honest, she did. When I left to go out foraging each day she told me she wouldn't let me in the house if I didn't have a good dinner for her!"

I laugh again, "Ah Grey, you have to stop!"

"I swear, I'm not lying."

"Of course you are! No mother can possibly treat their children like that."

"Ssh," Grey says to me.

"No I have a good point," I say indignantly.

"Ssh!" Grey repeats tapping my arm and pointing ahead of us. I look ahead and see the black smoke rising from over a small hill. I didn't realise we got here so fast. We pass under the shade of a tall tree that has branches that don't start until quite high up, it would be impossible to climb. I sigh slightly from the relief that the heavily leaved tree gives me from the sun. I hear a srange swooshing noise as I step out of the trees shadow and can no longer feel Grey at my side.

"Grey?" I whisper.

"Gilia don't move!" I hear Greys voice shout from up and behind me. Greys warning came to late as I feel myself walk into a strange metal line that was parallel to the bottom of my rib cage. The line breaks from the tree and the cactus it was attached to and crazily wraps around my body. Because the line was positioned where the middle of my body was, half the line wraps up my body, as far as my neck, and the other half downward, as far as my ankles. At both ends of the line are small hooks, which dig into the back of my neck and at my left heel, not hurting me but only causing a pulling feeling on my flesh which it has caught, as it holds the rest of the wire in place. I am unable to move, my arms are caught at my sides and my legs are as close together as possible. My face is in the sand and I painfully pull it up to see where Grey is, but I can't seem to find him. Then I spot him. He's almost completely hidden by a canopy of leaves. Grey is hanging upside-down by the ankles from high up in the tree and he is leaning up, trying to cut the rope that holds him there with his knife. His sword is on the ground at the foot of the tree. I see the knife fall to the earth and join the sword as Grey loses his hold on it, and Grey relaxes his body in defeat, his arms hanging down towards the ground. I think we've both accepted fate as neither of us makes a fight as we wait for death. The only noise I can hear are the miniture explosions coming from the Tribe. After a few minutes I feel the wire begin to dig into my skin and Grey looks like he'll be sick. I begin to wonder if this just some abandoned trap someone created which has been long forgotten. For some reason, that scares me more then the thought of being killed. I don't want to be left like this until I die from thirst, and I don't even know how Grey must be feeling. He's definatly got the worse end of the stick. I feel terrible. It was my idea to come down here and now me and Grey are, one way or another, going to die here. Just as I'm beginning to truly believe these traps have been abandoned, I hear a thud to my left. I turn my head to the left and see a spear in the sand about an inch from my face.

Chapter 19: Replaced

Chapter Nineteen- Replaced

I feel someone grab my shoulder and flip me onto my back, quite gently actually. I didn't even hear them approach. I see a woman looking down at me as if confused. Her dark skin is almost covered in scars, which makes her automatically seem formidable. Scars scare me, they mean someone fights a lot and wins. The womans brown eyes scan over my face.

"Why are you raiding my camp?" she asks in a soft voice.

"I'm not raiding your camp!" I reply desperatly.

"Well then what were you doing?" she inquires.

"I wanted to see if you're ok. I don't see many people out here."

The woman frowns at me almost sadly, "I'm sorry honey I can't take the chance," she says and she gets up and looks down at me rather then leaning over me. She reaches into her belt and pulls out a small, dark metal thing which easily fits in her hand. The word gun rings through my head. She points the gun at me.

"I'm truly sorry," she says. I have been frozen with fear since I first saw the gun. The woman has her finger on the trigger when I hear a load of rustling from the tree Greys a hostage in. The woman looks behind her to see what caused the noise. She doesn't seem to find anything as she turns back to me pointing the gun in my face. Then there's more rustling, which sounds more furious now. The woman actually walks under the tree and looks up to see what ir is. After a second, her mouth falls open.

"Grey?!" she exclaims still looking up.

"Leave him alone!" I shout at her. The woman gets a knife and cuts at the rope that holds Grey up there, some of the mechanism runs down the tree trunk. As soon as she cuts this Grey falls to the ground where he lands in a heap. The woman cuts the rope around his ankles and helps him up.

"You ok?" she asks Grey. Grey nods in reply, I think if he opens his mouth he'll be sick. Grey is as white as a ghost and he is shaking furiously. He comes over to me and falls down next to where I am as his legs give way. Despite his shaking, Grey carefully pulls the annoying little hooks out of me which causes the wire to practically sping off me. I take the backpack off my back, this thing has been surviving a lot, and hand Grey a canteen. Grey drinks from it almost cautiously for a second then hands it back to me.

"Thanks," he says weakly.

"No problem," I reply. Grey grabs one of my arms firmly.

"I am NEVER letting you out of my sight again," he says and I know he means it.

"Who's she?" I ask Grey who still looks pale.

"That's Star," Grey replies slowly. I get up and walk over to the woman.

"How do you know Grey?" I demand.

She holds her hands up, "Calm down honey, I'm not a bounty hunter. Me and Grey were in the same foraging group back in Faith. That is before he decided to disappear"

"If you're from Faith why are you out here?" I ask, my voice still guarded.

"Looking for deserters," Star says almost cheerily.

"Then you are a bounty hunter!" I hiss at her as I put my hand on my knife. I don't care if she's a friend of Greys, if she's a bounty hunter I will kill her.

"No it's not like that. I want to find more people who are willing to join the opposing side of the war going on in Faith."

"Opposing side?"

"The side that wants liberation from the unfair treatment of Tribes."

"Who could possibly be leading that side?"

"Some boy who wandered into the Tribe one day. Hmm...What was his name? I think he said Flynn...or maybe Finn..."

"Finch?!" Grey yells out in almost excitment.

"That's it, Finch!" Star confirms.

"How is he even alive?" Grey asks.

"Beats me," Star says. And then she walks over the small hill to the fire. That was odd. I exchange a look with Grey, who now looks like he's going to start dancing. He gets up and bounds over to me happily, all the shaking has gone and his face has colour in it once more. Grey picks me up and spins me around.

"Easy!" I say laughing madly as he puts me back down.

"I can't believe it, Finch is alive!" Grey exclaims.

"Does that mean the explosion we heard near Salvation yesterday, was that Finch?"

"I don't know but he's alive!"

"What do we do about Star?"

"I think we should stick with her. She knows her stuff. She's a brilliant trapmaster!"

"Really? I never would have guessed!" I snap at Grey. Grey looks slightly hurt.

"Gilia she's ok, really. Well, once you get to know her."

"Once she's stopped hanging her friends from trees?"

"Gilia how was she meant to know I'd come along?" Grey asks me. I don't actually think that there was anyway for her to know but I don't really like her. I didn't like her since she pulled out that gun. I don't like guns... Grey grabs my arm and tows me over the hill after Star. As soon as we have got over the small rise of the hill I see Star crouching down in front of a fire and stirring something in a pot. Star turns when she hears us approach her.

"So are you two staying with me?" Star asks Grey.

"Yeah we thought we might annoy you for a while," Grey jokes. I just stand where I am looking miserable.

"Lucky I planned for guests," says Star as she spoons something that looks like soup into a few bowls. She hands one to Grey and holds another out to me. I stare at the bowl as if it's going to fly.

"Ah come on now honey, I'm not going to poison you or anything," Star says. I wish she'd stop calling me honey. I pull my arm out of Greys hold and walk off further towards where the Tribe would be. From Stars camp, you can just about make out the wooden wall surrounding the Tribe. I sit down in the sand and listen to the never-ending fighting coming from the Tribe, feeling anxious to join in now that I know Finch is in there fighting. After a minute I hear Grey approach me and sit down next to me.

"I know it's hard for you to like Star but a bit of common courtesy wouldn't kill you," he says almost disapprovingly.

"Common courtesy!" I exclaim, "To the woman who had us in a trap and just coincidently knows you?"

"Please don't tell me you're jealous," Grey says.

"I don't know. Some guys like older women..." I say.

"I'm into blondes myself," Says Grey, his mouth tugging into a half-smile.

I smile at Grey, "I'm into the tall and dark kinds. You know, dark hair, dark eyes, extremely handsome. A shame I don't know anyone like that," I joke.

"It's lucky you don't know anyone like that, I'd say that guy would be hard to contend with," Grey says quite seriously. I grab Greys neck and pull him in close to me.

"You're really stupid sometimes," I say before I kiss him.

"I've heard girls find it cute. Apparantly that's true," Grey says as he weaves his fingers through my hair and lightly pulls me to the ground. Grey kisses me and I feel his fire rage through my body. I love him so much, I love every bit of him. I don't know how long we've been like this, about a minute, when I hear someone stop near us.

"Oh, sorry I didn't realise that you two would be...busy," Star says. I yelp as I hear her voice but Grey doesn't seem to care as he keeps on kissing my neck. I push him off me.

"Grey!" I exclaim as he leans down to kiss me again as soon as I have pushed him off.

"What?" he asks in a faint whisper and looks up to see Star, "Hey!" he says acknowledging Star before his lips are at mine again.

"Should I come back again soon....like in an hour?" Star asks uncertainatly.

"That'd be great," Grey says thankfully as he plays with my top. I just stare at Grey for a moment then look over at Star, who's containing laughter. She lets out a weird spluttering noise as she can't seem to hold back her laugh anymore and me and her go into fits of giggles. Grey looks down at me as if confused.

"What's so funny?" he asks.

"You!" me and Star say at the same time. Grey gets up off me and helps me up as well.

"And what is so funny about me?" Grey asks, directing his question at Star.

"You seem to have no restraint," Star says seriously.

Grey frowns at her, "Of course I have restraint! I stopped didn't I?"

"Well most people wouldn't try and carry on in front of company," Star says.

"I didn't ask you to watch."

"I didn't think I'd find you doing that. Would you two like to eat?"

Grey opens his mouth, "N-" he begins.

"Yeah, please." I say over Grey. Grey looks at me, "Have you never heard of common courtesy?" I manage to say before laughing at the look on Greys face. We all head beck to the fire and Star hands us our bowls. I sit down and cautiously sip at a spoonful of the soup. It has a nice warming, tangy taste. Well, at least Star can cook.

Chapter 20: Liberater

Chapter Twenty- Liberater

After our first night with Star I had come to accept her as a reliable ally when I woke up in the morning and was still alive. Star's ok. I don't know if she particularly likes me but she is kind. Last night she offered to keep watch while me and Grey slept, not that I think either of us got any sleep. All night I was listening to the ensuing war taking place in Faith. I know that sleep won't come easy for me and Grey as long as we know that Finch is fighting night and day inside the Tribes walls. I am actually astonished that Finch has convinced people to fight with him and find myself wondering if the amount of people helping him is large. I know what Finch would say if he was around for me to ask that question to. He'd say it's not the number, but the support of the people that is important. That's true, but before you get to the stage of a war. It's all well and good that people will join in protests, but when it comes to fighting I'd say a vast majority would turn their backs. People are quite cowardice when their lives are threatened, like me for example. Now me, Star and Grey are sitting around Stars small fire eating a stew. It has the same sweet tangy flavor as the soup we had yesterday, it must be the same meat. For some reason, I wonder where the buck that me and Grey saw went. I put my bowl down in the sand and lean forward, my arms on my legs, as I notice Star staring at me. I see Grey look over at me, but then he returns his attention to his stew, sipping at it slowly and carefully. He knows that I plan to have a conversation that will not play in Stars favor and he's deciding to back out of it before it starts.

"So Star what exactly happened with Finch?" I ask leaning forward more as if intently.

"Ok, so he shows up in the Tribe early one evening. The guy looks a state. Seeing as people were out and about, a few of them grab him and start to take him to the Tribeheadshouse. All the while the boy, Finch, is yelling about how Tribes should be and what he aims to do to change their current state. Some people, of course, laughed at him and mocked him, saying that his life will end before the day is out. But most other people, including me, heard and agreed with what Finch was saying and followed him to the Tribeheads house, many people joining as we went. By the time we reached the Tribeheads house, more then half the Tribe were behind Finch, already demanding he be let go,"Star says, her eyes obtaining a certain twinkle as she tells the story. I can tell she loves telling tales, but she doesn't seem to be particularly good at it.

"More then half?" I ask, nearly falling over myself as I am now genuinely leaning forward in earnest.

"Only Finch..." Mutters Grey, turning his focus back to the stew as soon as he has said this.

"So anyway, the Tribehead had decided to make a holy show of Finch and pulled him up to the wooden stage outside his house. He'd tied the boys wrists-" Star says before I interrupt her.

"Finch," I say, loving the moment I get to correct Star.

"Finch," she says, putting emphasis on his name, "And had put a gun at his head when Finch had started shouting out battle plans, and how he would lead whoever was willing to join him to victory and freedom from the injustice Tribe. He then said he would create a new Tribe, ruled by a group of people, called Liberation. The Tribehead had got sick of listening to him and was about to pull the trigger when some women had climbed up the stage and threw herself at him. She'd knocked the Tribehead to the ground and they struggled on the floor until he managed to shoot her. As soon as that woman drew her last breath, all hell broke loose. The Spokesmans son had climbed onto the stage and cut Finch free and then the two of them called for the people willing to fight against the Tribes to join them. Nearly everyone who had followed Finch there rallied with him. I decided to leave the Tribe to look for more willing fighters, I camp out here for a day, set some traps, then find you two caught in them," Star finishes and gasps as if out of breath. I can tell that I

must look so confused.

"Liberation..." Grey breaths out.

Star turns to him before he can tune out of the conversation again, "Are you willing to fight for it?"

"Yes!" I say, and Star turns to me and smiles even though it wasn't me she had asked.

"No!" Grey says indignantly, "Gilia you're not running into a war. We'd both be killed for sure."

"Of course we would but our sacrifice would be to free an entire Tribe!" I say firmly but I nearly cry when I think that Grey could easily die in that war if we joined it. I'm going to die anyway, with two (Well one if Finch succeeds) Tribes after me. But sending Grey into a war, I may as well ask Star to shoot him now.

"Grey it's for Finch!"

"He wouldn't be too happy if you died either."

"He wouldn't care as long as you're alive," I say sadly, my tone holding a slight edge of jealousy.

Grey opens his mouth, about to protest, but thinks better of it. Then he tries another angle, "And since when do you think I'll let you simply walk into deaths arms?" Grey asks me.

"And since when did you think I'd sit back and let people suffer?"

"I swore to be your guardian," he says. I can't believe he took a promise made through tears to heart so much.

"Which would involve you protecting me through whatever I do. That would not give you rights to stop me."

"I could always make you stay," Grey says as he gets up and crosses the short distance between us.

"How?" I ask.

"I don't know. Hold you down," He says as he catches both my wrists gently in one of his hands. Then Grey leans in so his lips are at mine, "Distract you," he says, my lips moving with his as he talks then he starts kissing me, which does indeed distract me as it causes me to feel lightheaded. Greys lips move with and around mine as if they are some weird, attachable part of my body. I'm still sitting up as Grey'skissing me and he pulls me sideways to the sand, his lips not leaving mine. I think we are starting to take this a bit to far as I feel Grey attempt to pull my shirt off me.

"Seriously!" Star exclaims from behind us, "You actually don't care who's watching, do you Grey?"

"Shut up Star, you've seen worse," Grey says making my mouth move with his again as he seems unwilling to draw away from me.

"Yeah, but not from two teenagers. I should really be making you stop."

"Like the responsible adult you think you are," Grey chuckles. Could he just stop kissing me and talk to Star normally? It feels weird, my mouth moving with the words he says, making me feel as if I'm saying them.

"When did you get into girls so quick?"

"I didn't know a girl like this before."

"You had enough girls after you," Star says, but now Grey ignores her. I'm not at all surprised that other girls wanted him, but it is weird to think of now. He's mines and only mine. Greys hands travel down from my neck, resting on my upper chest. I am unsure what to do as I just lay here and continue to kiss him. Am i meant to say something or do something? Grey being...with me like this feels right but it also feels strange, and I don't like the unfamiliarity of it.

Then Star saves me from my confusion, "Grey either stop assaulting that poor girl or go do it elsewhere. Like I said before, no restraint."

Grey finally pulls away from me, "This is restraint! What am I doing that makes this not restrained?"

"I love your idea of restraint boy. If everyone felt the same we'd have no problem with repopulation."

Grey goes red, "I wasn't going to DO that! Give me some credit, she's like fourteen!"

"Fifteen!" I say, though sometimes I doubt it, that is if I was right about my age in the first place. I want to get as close to Greys age as I'll pass for though, so I jumped it up to fifteen. Well I may be right. What does the age gap matter? Anyway I know that what Star is accusing Grey of is what he was probably going to do. Sometimes I wish Star would go away...

"Honey your age doesn't matter to him, he just wants YOU!" Star says, flicking her dark plaited hair behind her back.

"Yeah and I want him! I don't care what age HE is. Well, to an extent."

"What is it, no administration to over-seventeens?" Grey jokes.

"Basically," I reply.

"Imagine you two in a war..." Star says to herself, "Just start doing all that and people for miles around will be running."

"Then you stop watching!" Grey tells her.

"This is MY camp. And I can't just let you two ruin it with your messed up teenage minds."

"What exactly is your idea of what teenagers think?" I ask her.

"Trust me, I thought I knew before I came across you two. You seem to be the low expectations that used to be held of teenagers, before they became polite and helpful and orderly. But then you two decide to resurrect the old ways..."

Now I decide to have a bit of fun and annoy her. I don't think I would do anything that's not age appropriate but Star is really annoying me. I give Grey a look which he returns to me. He is so thinking the same thing. It's taking us both all we've got not to laugh as we see the idea forming in each others eyes like a small twinkle. Grey leans down to whisper in my ear.

"Are you thinking what I'm thinking?"

"Most likely," I breath out.

"Well then you'll know what to do."

"I definitelyknow what to do," I say, hoping me and Grey do indeed have the same idea. I pull Greys top off him just as he starts kissing me again and I can feel more passion put behind it. I rest my hands on Greys chest. Ok, whoa. Is everyone generally this fit nowadays or is that only Grey? I feel Grey roll me over so I am underneath him and then he starts slowly pulling off my top.

"Ok, you are going to do it. I tried, I can't stop you. Just let me know when you're done!" I hear Star say before she flees. Grey and me get up and start laughing madly.

"Too easy!" I say.

"A bit sorry it didn't go further..." Grey says wistfully. I pull down at the bottom of my shirt as if that will make it harder to get off me.

"You're not going to get my shirt off me! Speaking of which, not to sure if I want to give back yours," I say as I pluck it up and just look at Grey.

"I might need that though," He says reaching for it, but I just pull it back before he can grab it.

"Hardly! It's so hot out here! Besides, I like the view."

"People aren't really going to drop dead from amazement if I enter a war shirtless."

"Girls certainly will, if they're in their right mind anyway. Wait...we're going to join the war?!"

"I guess we are, don't know why I'm letting you though. If things get to bad, maybe we could try Stars suggestion, in that case you would certainly get the shirt off me again."

I flick the shirt over to Grey and watch him put it on, feeling a bit sad as he does. Oh well. Run into war first, get the shirt again after. I make a mental note to destroy the shirt and smile to myself. Maybe my thoughts aren't right for a girl my age, but I don't care.

"Should we tell Star?" Grey asks me. I make a face.

"Just wait a few minutes, she's not going anywhere."

"I'm not sure, you may have traumatized her," Grey says smirking.

"Wasn't just me..." I mumble.

"Our mess we made together."

"A nice mess," I say. Grey is reminding me of someone else lately. My dream from the other night comes into my head again. That boy is annoying me. Maybe he's just something I conjured up that seems to be identical to Grey. But a voice in my head says he's not Grey...

"Gilia,look," Grey says in amazement.

"What?" I ask, my head turning madly. Grey stoops down and plucks something out of a patch of grass. Then he straightens up and holds a single red rose out to me.

"That is strange. It's beautiful, " I murmur as I lean in to inspect it. Grey weaves it through my hair while my head is bent.

"Looks pretty bland when it's on you. You make beautiful things look pathetic in your presence," Grey says as he fixes the rest of my hair.

"I love you so much and you are so perfect, you just don't realize it," I say as I get in close to Grey.

"I'm nothing without you."

"I'd be worth nothing if you weren't with me."

"Well I guess that's a sure sign of how right this is."

"Yeah," I say putting my hand in Greys.

"Come on, we have to tell Star. We will go into that war, side by side-"

My voice is determined as I finish Greys thoughts for him, "And leave it together."

Chapter 21: Preperation

Chapter Twenty-One- Preparation

"You're dead," Grey whispers as he has his sword pointing at my throat.

"Not if I do this," I say as I spin from the sword and behind Grey, the point of my knife resting lightly at his back, "Now you're dead."

"You're good," Grey says, turning to face me so he can kiss me.

"Now I'm stunned. Do that to any female and you'll gain the upper hand. I'll probably kill you after for doing it though."

"When are we going in?" I ask impatiently.

"Gilia it's the middle of the night and Star needs her sleep," Grey says before looking over his shoulder and saying loudly, "Not that she's getting it!"

"I'm not leaving you two unattended," Star says, her voice faint.

"Star, what we did was just a joke!" I call over.

"Wasn't a particularly funny one."

"Yes it was," Grey mumbles. We are standing a short distance from the camp fire, having to navigate around it precariously as we practice fighting techniques.

"Should we go somewhere else?" I ask Grey.

"Wherever you want," Grey replies. I walk ahead to the small hilltop and stop at its top and turn to Grey.

"There. This could be romantic, fighting on a hilltop."

"I wouldn't call it that." I roll my eyes at him, he's to serious. We don't need a torch up her as Stars fire illuminates the hilltop. Grey seems to be distracted as he looks into the distance. I follow his gaze and can't find anything.

"What's wrong?" I ask nervously.

"Look down there," Grey says, lightly turning my head in the direction he's looking

"No I don't see anything. What was it?"

"They must have put their torch out." Out of the corner of my eye I see a flash of silver then I feel some ones hand on my arm. I turn and see a familiar face.

"Rhythian?" I ask.

"Gilia you have to run! They know you're not dead and they're coming!"Rhythian says quickly. I see Grey pull out his sword and point it at Rhythian but then I feel myself knocked to the sand as someone dives at me. I get punched around the jaw as the guy on me attempts to tie my flailing arms together. I see Greys sword descend onto the guy on top of me and it catches him hard and deep in the back. Grey throws the guy off me and leaves him on the ground to die. Grey holds me close to him before he runs off back to the camp, pulling me with him. I look behind us and see more people approaching, but even more then there was the night we got attacked in the cave. I can't see Rhythian there, I hope he teleported somewhere, or however that works.

"Star we have to go!" Grey shouts to a still-awake Star who jumps up off the sand and starts madly gathering up her spears, which are strewn across the sand, "Star forget them, you have a gun!" Grey says angrily.

"I only have so much ammo!" Star snaps in reply. I feel an almost unbearable amount of pain in my left shoulder as something from behind lodges in my arm. I fall to the ground and reach behind me desperately to try and pull whatever it is out of my back. Then I feel myself being dragged back by whatever is in my shoulder and I scream from the pain of this thing pulling at my flesh. I see Grey pull the gun out of Stars belt and aim and shoot. I hear someone let out a cry and the pulling stops. I reach behind my back and pull a long and thick arrow out of my back, gritting my teeth as I do. Grey rushes over to me and actually picks me up and runs back to Star.

"Where are we going?" Grey demands.

"Just follow me!" Star says as she begins running towards the walls of Faith. Grey follows her still holding me close to him. I CAN walk... We reach what seems to be a towering wooden gate which I guess is the entrance to the Tribe. It's shut tight.

Grey makes a strange noise, "That's it?"

"Did you think it'd just be left wide op-" Star begins but is cut off by the noise of a gunshot. I see Greys eyes wide with fear as the bullet has buried itself in the wood of the gate only an inch above his head.

Star looks around desperately, "Over here!" Star exclaims and begins to circle around the right side of the Tribes walls, Grey setting off after her again. Seeing as Grey is carrying me and I have nothing better to do I attempt to use my powers to heal my wound, but whenever I try channeling them I feel lightheaded and my wound stabs with pain other then feeling better. What is the use of this stupid power? Star suddenly stops in front of a big rock.

"Ta-dah!" she says. How is she so happy?

Grey throws her the most filthy look, "Star what use is that? What are we meant to do, hide behind the rock? We can't just stand out here or else-" but Grey stops as he watches Star heave up the rock, which falls back against the sand to expose a hole. Looking down the hole, it appears to be a drop which doesn't go on for to long before you can see light of an illuminated tunnel. Grey smiles at her.

"I'll go down first, if you don't want to follow then hide behind the rock," Star tells Grey as her legs hang over the edge of the hole. Then she disappears as she simply slides down. Grey looks down uncertainly at me. I look behind us. Salvation haven't arrived yet, but I can hear them approaching fast. I throw myself out of Greys arms and go to the edge of the hole, sit at its edge, and then slide down it. For about two seconds I am nearly falling down the tunnels steep decline, feeling myself sliding down moist mud. As soon as I land on the mud ground of the tunnel, I fall forward over myself, my shoulder feeling as if it is being stabbed ad it hits the ground. Star crouches down in front of me,

"You ok honey?" she asks me.

I nod weakly before Star steps over me to call up the hole, "Ok, Grey?" she begins. Grey appears at the edge, "There should be some rope sticking out as you come down the hole, do you see it?" Grey reaches down and grabs a bit of rope sticking out from the wall of the hole,

"I've got it!" he shouts down.

"Ok keep a hold on that as you come down," Star instructs.

"But it's short," Grey complains.

"Just hurry up and do it!" Star barks up at him. Grey lowers himself down a bit before he begins to slide for about a millisecond before his hold on the rope causes him to hang in the air.

"Can I let go now?" Grey asks in a strained voice.

"Bear with me. Look up, there should be a wooden panel with a handle. Slide that across," Star says quickly. Grey reaches up and grabs at a handle of a wooden panel that slightly hangs over the whole. He slides this across, covering the hole and trapping us in here. Grey then lets go of the rope and falls to the ground in a heap.

"You ok?" I ask Grey, still on the ground myself.

"I'm fine. Are you able to walk?" Grey asks, concerned.

"Yeah," I say, my voice quivering.

"Are you ok?" Grey asks, looking around at the tunnel as he says this.

"No."

I feel as if the walls are closing in on me and the ceiling is dropping down to crush me. The width of the tunnel would be about the same as two people standing side by side. I slowly get to my feet and discover I can touch the ceiling. I shudder.

Star looks at me a bit concerned, "Surprising that you have a whole Tribe after you. Is that the one you deserted from?" Star asks. I know she's trying to distract me to calm me. I feel so grateful towards her right now.

"I'm not sure if I deserted from there, I can't remember," I reply as Star steps in front of me and leads the way. I follow her and hear Grey get up and trail behind us.

"The first thing I thought when I saw you is that your face looks familiar."

I shrug, "All I know is that Salvation are after me."

"Salvation huh? Hmm...I know they're looking for a deserter but they're looking for a boy," silence follows for a moment then Star laughs, "So you're their 'Worlds Cure' then? For some reason I was expecting someone more formidable, seeing as the bounty's so high and all of Salvation are after you. Sorry to have to tell you honey, but Salvation are dangerous. Sure they're a Tribe full of nutters, but still very dangerous. You'd have

more chance winning against the entire Faith Tribe then them in a fight."

I'm walking along behind Star, wondering if it would be a good idea for me and Grey to look for this boy who deserted Salvation, he sounds like he'd be against them, that'd be useful,"How long have they been looking for the boy?"

"Five years.""

"Do you know how long they've been looking for me?"

"Nearly fifteen," Star informs me. I hear Grey gasp behind me. This all seems to scare him more then it scares me. Silence follows and we walk along passing under the glowing torches and then being plunged into darkness for a second before another torch appears mounted on the wall. I breath in the damp, earth smelling air as we walk, taking a strange pleasure out of its smell. But still, I want to get out of here. After about five minutes of walking Star stops and begins to climb up a ladder, but then halts midway.

"Are you two ready for this? There's no turning back after this," Star asks me and Grey. Her mentioning the "No turning back" thing has made me uncertain if I am ready. I turn to look at Grey.

"Ready when you are," Grey says, his voice wavering.

I look uncertainly at the ladder, "Umm..."

"Do you want me to go up first?" Grey asks.

"No, I will," I say determinedly.

"Why?" Grey asks. Strangely enough, I have a reason.

"Haven't you ever heard of the saying "The first into battle are the last to leave"?"

As soon as I say that Grey pushes past me and flies up the ladder, forcing Star to quicken her pace as he hurtles up. In less then a second, both of them are out of sight. I mount the ladder and begin to climb it, the rungs shaking under my feet. As I ascend the ladder, darkness begins to engulf me. I climb up the ladder blindly but can begin to see a soft glow from above me. I reach the top of the ladder and pull myself up onto hard stone ground.

"Taylor! What do we do with this boy? He's the deserter!" I hear a male voice call out as I am pulling myself into the room. I see Star standing in the corner looking slightly baffled as she looks over to the left. I look that way to and see a man with blonde hair pointing a gun uncertainly at Grey, who is pressed against the wall. A woman with chestnut brown hair bounds into the small room from a doorway just in front of me.

"If he's a deserter then surely he'd be the best person to fight for us," the woman says.

"Why would he fight for us if he's a deserter?"

"To get back at Faith maybe?"

"Oh. Maybe..."

"Tyler put the gun down," the woman, Taylor, says to the man. Taylor and Tyler. Even now I have to laugh at that. They both turn to me.

"What about her?" Tyler asks, waving the gun at me.

Taylor comes over to me, "Maybe we should keep her here and collect the little bounty after all this is done."

"No!" Grey shouts out.

Tyler points his gun at Grey again, "Why not boy?"

"Guys, come on, those two are in young love. Trust me, you don't want to see it," Star says, causing both Taylor and Tyler to jump.

"Star!" Taylor exclaims, "I didn't see you there. Are they your friends?"

"You could say that," Star replies.

"We're not harboring guests!" Tyler says in annoyance.

"No, they're here to fight."

"Them?" Tyler asks, looking over me and Grey uncertainly, his eyes lingering on me.

"Oh, who cares. More people to help," Taylor says cheerily, "Have you got weapons?"

I draw a knife to show her, Taylor seems to laugh when she sees it, "Ok, you can go out there and throw your knives around. Better then nothing I suppose..."

"They haven't even got Armour," Tyler pipes in.

"Is there anything left?" Taylor asks.

"A shield," Tyler replies.

"Ok, who wants it?" Taylor asks all three of us.

"I don't want it. It's harder to throw if I'm holding one of those things," Star dismisses.

"Give it to Gilia," Grey says immediately.

"Why? I can only work one arm!" I say.

"Exactly, hold it in the hand of your injured arm!" Grey says. Makes sense I guess. I let Taylor get it and attach some leather straps around my wrist to hold the shield in place. The shield is a small, circular metal thing that has been dented from misuse. Makes sense that this is all that's left, it's clearly a cast-off.

"How's that?" Taylor asks me.

"Fine," I reply.

"Are you all set then?" Taylor asks us.

"I guess," Star replies to her.

"Ok, I'll show you out. Tyler put the gun DOWN," Taylor says to Tyler, who once again has the gun pointed at Grey. Tyler lowers the gun and gives Grey a glowering look. Taylor leads us out the doorway and into what looks like a long, wide corridor. Lying against the walls are injured people who are being treated by people with a red plus painted on their clothes. There must be nearly sixty people in here and seven medics. Looking at their injuries shows me the war is brutal. One man has lost his arm, a woman has been shot in the stomach, and one man has an arrow protruding from his leg. You can tell many of the people in here won't be coming out again, at least not walking. We reach the end of a long corridor and we are in front of a wooden door.

"Good luck out there. I'll see you soon!" Taylor says cheerily. I notice a red plus painted on her top. Yeah, she probably will.

"See you soon?!" Grey says from next to me.

"Not the most encouraging words..." Star mutters.

I step forward and open the thick wood door slowly. I slowly inch out into the dark night and find myself standing in the middle of chaos.

Chapter 22: Fight and Flight

Chapter Twenty-Two- Fight and Flight

All around me are dead bodies. Lying on the ground as if thrown there whilst people battle each other around them. A person is on the ground at my feet, dead, and I step back a bit, sickened. I look around me. For every living person I see I'd say there's six dead people around them. I see a young girl run past, she must be younger then me. She stops in front of me for a second, her brown eyes wide with fear, before running off again, drawing a sword as she goes. I hear something pass through the air and jump to the side just in time as a sword barely misses me. The person who tried to hit me, an ageing man, turns to me again. He is about to swing the sword through the air once more when I hear and gunshot and see him crumple to the ground. A man from behind him shot him down and the man with the gun is now aiming it at me, reloading it as he points it at me. I feel Grey grab my arm and he runs along, pulling me with him. The man fires, misses us, and aims for me and Grey again. We try to find a refuge in the huts around us but they are all on fire, lighting up the night like torches.

"You two, get down!" I hear Star command and feel Grey push me to the ground and throw an arm over me. I turn my head to see Star run out of the building we emerged from and throw a spear at the man with the gun. It catches the guy in the chest right near his heart.

As he falls to the ground he pulls the trigger. I hear the gun shot. I see Star fall to the ground. I'm lying where I am frozen. That didn't happen. That didn't happen.

That. Did not. Just. Happen!

I feel Grey pull me up and run with me down the lane that runs through the Tribe. I am panting heavily as Grey pulls me along, waiting for the tears to come. They don't. I feel despicable. We weave in and out between the fighting people, somehow avoiding from getting hit ourselves. Me and Grey run up an incline to a huge square which has a huge building set off a little away from the square. In the Centre of the square are things that appall me and, no matter how low I set my expectations of a Tribe, I wouldn't have expected to see. Sitting in the Centre of the Tribe like demonic specter, alight with flames as a sign of protest, are wooden stocks alongside some strange post. The ground around them is bloody from the fresh and old blood spilt.

Grey tows me through the Tribe Centre, people falling left right and Centre, and feel myself bump into someone. Grey curses and runs faster. What's wrong? Actually I'd say running into someone in the middle of a battle means more then it would any other time. I feel someone lightly pull me away from Grey and I stumble and fall from the shock of someone touching me so gently, especially NOW of all times. I hear the noise of metal hitting off metal and look up to a sight that makes my heart feel as if it will explode.

I see Grey standing solidly planted to the ground as his sword is up in the air pushing against another persons black sword, blocking their attack. I look at the other person and gasp in shock. It's HIM! The black haired boy who attacked Grey before! I'm getting sick of him! He seems to be every other place I look. Greys face is contorted as he pushes his sword against his attackers, trying to break the block, sweat beading at his brow. Greys attacker pushes against his own sword, forcing Greys sword back. He appears to be winning and it is easy to see he's not even putting his full effort behind his push. The guy pushes his sword harder against Greys and Grey falls over backwards into the sand. I see the guy raise his sword above his head...

I feel someone pull me roughly to my feet and I allow them, bewildered. I feel them press a gun to my head and I let out a long, high-pitched scream.

Get that thing away from me! I can't stand guns! Is all I can think.

Grey looks up at me as he heard me scream and his attacker looks over at me to, his blue eyes filled with desperation. The guy that was attacking Grey rushes over to me and grabs the person that is holding me by their arm and chucks them to the ground. I discover the person holding the gun to my head was a bewildered looking woman. I am frozen where I am as I see the guy who was attacking Grey look down on the woman, then he turns to me, his face shocked.

"Run!" he commands me in a smooth voice laced with anger as he lightly but firmly pushes me. I run to where Grey is and pull him up and look around like a scared hare. All around us are people fighting, but up at the big house is NO ONE. I pull Grey towards it, feeling the useless shield slap at my side as I go. I let go of Grey and yank the shield off my arm and cast it to the side. USELESS thing. I hear a woman scream behind me and run faster, thinking of how that strange boy saved me.

Again, says a voice in my head and I remember the night that the wolves attacked me and someone had saved me. Was that him

He'll always be there to save you, the strange voice tells me. Will he be? I don't even know him! He doesn't HAVE to save me! Besides, I don't want him to. He seems intent on killing Grey....

Greys still beside me, running fast, "Gilia what are you doing? Where are you going?"

I point up to the deserted big house in answer. I hear Grey make a whimper.

"What?" I ask him as we are on a straight path leading to the house. It is totally clear of people.

"That's the Tribeheads house," Grey says. Is he SERIOUSLY that scared of it?

"So?" I ask.

"Doesn't matter, let's go," Grey says as he quickens his pace. I can swear that he says, and hope we come back, under his breath.

Chapter 23: Annihilation

Chapter Twenty-Three- Annihilation

Me and Grey run up the deserted path to the Tribeheads house which towers above us like a stone giant. How can the Tribehead live in a huge house-mansion-and leave his Tribe members living in run-down huts that appear to be made out of mud, and are only slightly taller then a person? We are walking through a strange alley, walls on both mine and Greys sides. Torches are mounted on the walls and in front of us I can see the familiar gritty sand make way for a field of fresh green grass, upon which the Tribeheads domain sits. I gasp as I step through golden gates and out onto the field. Even in the dark, it is truly beautiful. In front of us is an n shaped bridge that curves up over a small river that runs underneath it. The river is shimmering silver and it looks breathtaking in the moonlight.

"How? How is this possible?" I ask Grey in a faint breath.

"I don't know. I've never been up here before. I hadn't a clue it was like this..." Grey says trailing off, his voice has hidden venom running ever so faintly in it. The sun is rising in an orange sky behind the house making this place look even more fairytale. The only thing that spoils this are the screams coming from behind us and the occasional firing of a gun. I shudder as I hear peoples tortured moans of death and I'm standing here admiring the river.

"D'you think the Tribehead's here?" I ask Grey cautiously.

I hear him draw breath, as if to prepare himself for something, "Yes."

"Ok," I say faintly, "Could we kill him?"

"No, not if you want to walk out alive."

I don't care about me walking out alive.

Me and Grey cross over the stone bridge and I catch his hand in mine.

"Together," Grey says to himself.

"What?" I ask.

"Oh...nothing. We're just going into this together."

"Well, what is it that we're going into together?"

"No clue."

Great. I look up at the Tribeheads house and see a wooden stage outside of the great manor.

"You sure you've never seen this place before?" I ask Grey.

"Well I have but I've never SEEN it. If the Tribehead made a speech I was never able to see over the crowds of people and there was always a feeling of...dread in the air. I'd say even if I could have seen it, I wouldn't have enjoyed it."

Something on the stage catches my eye. A man standing on the stage. Holding a long gun. I hear creaking as the gates leading back down the alley behind us are drawn shut. Someone grabs Grey, causing him to go mad and he pulls out his sword and swings it through the air in a mad flurry. Grey and the man who grabbed him fall to the ground, the man on top of Grey being armed with only a small knife.

"Who are you girl and what makes you think you can just walk onto my land?" the guy on the stage shouts down at me, demanding answers.

"I-I-" I'm stammering like an idiot, frozen where I am shaking wildly.

"Are you from a Tribe?" the man shouts down at me. I'm guessing he is the Tribehead. A torch behind him illuminates him to me and he looks quite young, about late twenties, early thirties.

I hear the struggle with Grey and the man stop. I risk a look and see Grey has a sword at the mans throat. I look away as Grey slices it across the mans throat.

"I'm a deserter," I say, trying to keep the Tribeheads (or whoever he is) attention away from Grey.

"From where?" he asks.

What do I do? What do I say? Do I lie? How can I give Grey time to get out of this.

Tell him you're a Faith. My head tells me.

Do I go with that? I'll be killed! But will Grey... No, he could escape or kill the Tribehead while he is distracted. Either or.

But then I think of something just that bit better then me being a Faith.

"I'm a Salvation," I say, standing solidly where I am, knowing what's to come.

"No..." I hear Grey whisper faintly from off to my right a bit. I can tell that one's hit home.

The man makes a disgusted sound, "How dare you set foot on my land you Salvation swine!"

"I was sent here to kill you after my Tribe heard about you killing one of our members," I say, remembering the bounty hunters story, "I called myself a deserter to get in. And I've killed those still loyal to you and I ENJOYED it," I spit up at the man vehemently. That was all it took to get him mad.

I see him position his gun, I can tell he has it pointing at my neck. Kill shot.

Every atom in my body screams at me to run, but even if I did, he'd kill me eventually. The gates are locked...

"Gilia, move! Stop being stupid!" I hear Grey cry out. Even if I wanted to, I don't think I could.

"Run!" I hiss at Grey. I hear him get up and he does indeed run.

The Tribehead-random guy, whoever he is-pulls the trigger.

I hear the shot. I'm getting sick of that noise.

I feel myself pushed to the ground as Grey shoves me out of the way.

Yes, he did run. Straight to me.

Grey's still standing right in the line of the Tribeheads fire and I can almost see the bullet head for his heart.

"No!" I scream, the word is just a weird noise from my mouth. A cry of death from an animal. This is what it sounds like when your heart is torn apart.

I watch Grey fall to the ground and feel as if I'm dying with him. In the distance-which sounds like a world away-I hear the Tribehead shout in annoyance as he had used his last bullet. He'd used it, but I was right about it being a kill shot.

I fall to the ground beside Grey, my eyes heavy with tears. He's not dead yet, but it's not going to be like that for long. Grey tries to say something to me.

"Shut up!" I tell him through my tears as I try to make my stupid powers work. I'm not letting him waste what's left of his life on him saying he loves me! I know that! I don't want to hear it again, I want him. I see my body glow a weird gold but feel excruciating pain accompany it. I quickly put my hand at Greys wound, hoping against hope it will work. What had Rhythian said to me? Something about powers not being strong enough to save someone from dying? Well I don't care, it won't stop me from trying.

I feel my energy drain from me and let out a silent moan of pain as I feel a stab at my heart. I see my hand glow gold with my power and moan again as the stabbing inside me is worse. Grey notices it and tries to push my hand off him.

"Don't you DARE!" I say to him angrily, "I'm selfish Grey! You know what that means? It means I'm not letting you go! I don't care if the world is trying to tear you away from me, it can't have you. You're MINE and I'm not letting you go! I'll follow you to the earths ends, I'd find a way to walk over oceans for you but I won't follow you into death. You know why? Because I don't want you to go there! I'll drag you back from it, I don't care. Go anywhere else just don't go there!" I plead Grey uselessly, my tears dripping down onto his face. Why won't my powers DO something? Grey is still bleeding from his wound and I feel as if someone is twisting a knife in my heart.

"That's why I love you," Grey says, "Your determination! You could move mountains with it! Once you want something, you get it Gilia. But not this. You're killing yourself."

Grey reaches up to my face and his hand brushes under my lower lip and when Grey pulls it away, I can see his hand is covered in my blood. What...

"I don't care!" I say, forcing my powers to go harder, work faster. My head feels like it will explode and my mouth is filled with the taste of blood.

"Gilia stop. For me?"

"I'm doing this for you!" I tell Grey.

"But I don't want this for you. If I have to die here, I want you to carry on my life for me, and more importantly be happy yourself. Find someone who will take care of you, who will love you. They can't be far."

"He's not. He's right here telling me a load of crap I don't want to listen to!"

"Please stop?" Grey asks again.

"No!" I reply. I feel so dizzy and I can swear blood's running from my nose now.

Grey sighs, "You will walk-no run-out of here as fast as you can. You will go find Finch and you will forget everything that happened here. But you can remember the happy memories of us, but not the bad ones. You have to remember them. No matter who you find, I will always love you. Remember that day after the days and days of rain? The first time we kissed?" Grey asks me. My focus wavers as I remember it. Greys lips on mine...the feel of it is so right, "That was the second best day of my life."

"Second?" I ask. I can feel my powers stopping as if it is a reservoir I have used up. As if it's my Oasis that I drank from to quickly, not saving it well enough..

"The first was the day in the cave when you found me. When YOU saved me."

"Why can't I save you again?" I say, my voice slurred slightly.

State of powers-gone.

State of Grey-more or less gone.

State of me-Annihilated from the inside.

"Gilia you can't save everyone. Save yourself. Please?" Grey begs and then he shoves me off him with all the force left in his body. I fly off to the side and land on my back. No. This isn't happening.

Not to Grey.

I get up again and rush over to where he is. He isn't moving. No.

Not to Grey.

I put my hand close to his mouth. Not a wisp of a breath.

Not to Grey. Why can't it be ME?

I put my head at Greys chest where I used to hear the familiar, strong beat of his heart and am greeted with the worst kind of noise. Silence.

Not Grey. Anyone else in the world but Grey.

I get up as if in slow motion and pull a knife from my belt. I hadn't touched them as I didn't want to kill anyone but now I am running on an everlasting fuel.

Revenge.

And it is all directed at the man on the stage.

He see's me and reloads his gun. I toss my knife up in the air and catch it by the blade, the sharp edge digging into my hand. I don't feel a thing.

The man on the stage aims his gun at me, right at my heart. I don't care, it's not there anymore. He destroyed it with a bullet already.

I throw my knife at the same time as the man pulls the trigger. I see my knife catch him in the neck and he falls to the ground. Then I feel his bullet hit me, just above where my heart should be.

I fall to the ground, landing next to Greys body.

It wasn't meant to be like this.

I close my eyes, letting death have me before it even comes looking for me.

Chapter 24: Why Can't It End?

Chapter Twenty-Four- Why Can't It End?

I'm lying facedown in the grass. Not dead. I feel the pain of where I was shot just above my heart. Why aren't I dead?

Everything sounds as if I am underwater when I hear talking only a few metres away.

"How many survivors?" a ragged voice asks. Finchs voice...

"Seventy-two," a new voice replies. It's a guys voice, but it sounds like it never quite broke.

"Out of the five-hundred?" Finch asks, his voice has been raised to a shout.

"Yes, and I believe outsiders joined the battle as well."

"Outsiders?" Finch says, his voice has climbed to a very high-pitch. But then he settles it, "Is the Tribehead still alive?"

"No sir."

"Chase, my name is Finch and I will be addressed as only that."

"Yes s- Finch."

"Who killed the Tribehead?"

"That's what we're trying to find out!" says the high-pitched guy in exassperation.

I hear footfalls approach me and then stop.

Please don't be Finch. Please be someone who will put a bullet through my head or stick me with a sword. Don't. Let it. Be. Finch.

My worst fears are confirmed when I hear an animal like shriek that is definetly coming from Finch. I hear the sound of a blow.

"Finch, calm down!" I hear the high pitched guy, Chase say. I'm guessing he hit Finch as I can hear Finchs angry panting behind me.

Then Finch explodes, "Calm down? You want me to calm down?! My best friends have been killed! Actually, they were more then that, they were the only family I knew!"

I am kind of touched by what Finch is saying. I still wish I could die, right here, right now.

"Finch!" Chase says. Silence follows. What has happened? All I can hear is Finchs heacy breathing which seems to be turning into a growling in his throat. This suddenly reminds me of the night I was surrounded by wolves. The night Finch and Grey found me.

Grey...I wish they never found me.

Then, without any warning, I feel a hand on my shoulder and am flipped roughly onto my back. I still have my eyes shut tight, wishing for death to come, when I feel the sharp point of a sword pressed against my throat. At last, someone has decided to kill me. There is nothing left for me on this world. Finch would quickly get over me dying. Just as I have thought of Finch I hear more movement and feel the sword pressed harder against my neck.

"Gilia!" I hear Finch spit out my name as if it is dirt. This shocks me enough to make me open my eyes. When my eyes open, I see Finch in front of me who has got his sword against my throat.

Why does it have to be Finch? I want to die, but for some reason I don't want Finch to be the one to kill me. I don't want to lose anyone else today...

"You killed Grey," Finch whispers in a menacing voice. He's not even questioning this, he's just stating it. And his statement is true. No form of injury could make anyone feel the pain I'm in now. My heart has been ripped apart into a million pieces, my mind has been shattered leaving me an empty shell, the ghost of a human. I don't know why I feel so scared right now...

"Answer me!" Finch shrieks and I feel the sword pushed hard against my throat, the trickle of blood run down my neck...

"Yes," I say in a broken whisper, "Grey's d-dead because of me."

Finch is practically radiating fire when he hears me say this, "You should be dead!" he spits out at me, "And even that would be to easy..."

I nod, driving the sword deeper into my throat. Good. Finchs jaw seems to tighten as he pushes me to the ground and draws back his sword, ready to kill me. I shut my eyes tight and the only thought I allow my head is soon I'll be back with Grey...

"Gilia!" I hear a deep, desperate voice cry, which sounds as if it is fast approaching. What now? Just let Finch kill me already.

"What are you doing here?" Finch hisses at the newcomer.

"What are you doing?" demands the recent addition to our little party. His voice sounds familiar.

"Just stay out of this!" Finch says.

"Are you going to kill her?" the person says, his voice sounding tortured.

Yes. I think.

"Yes!" Finch says, mirroring my thoughts.

"Get out of here!" I hear Chase growl.

"I won't let you!" I hear the newcomer, he sounds like a boy, say. There is movement towards me which is followed by a thump and the sound of someone hitting the ground.

"Quick Finch!" I hear Chase say. In the seconds that follow, nothing happens. Then I hear the whistle of a sword breaking the wind and brace myself for the blow that is sure to follow. I hear Finch cry out in pain and hear him fall to the ground. Chase is shouting out foul words that have all jumbled into each other. I open my eyes and see someone in front of me, although he is not facing me. In front of me and to my right is a guy with light brown hair and almost orange coloured eyes. Judging by the curses that are still tumbling from his mouth, I guess that's Chase. And, in the very corner of my vision, I see Finch who is on his knees clutching at his side, his sword lies on the ground beside him.

"Leave," says the boy in front of me in a barely audible whisper. There are a few seconds of silence and stillness before I see Finch get up painfully.

"Chase, go tell the survivors to follow us out," Finch says as he hobbles off away from me, but not before he gives me a look that shows me all the suffering and I have brought upon him. A look that promises his revenge

I prop myself up on my arms and find the grass is slick and red with Greys blood. I feel my stomach lurch. I look at the left side of my top and notice it is saturated in blood, but my blood loss looks like more then it is. I slowly look up at who I should be calling my savior, but I feel myself resenting him for interfering in my murder. As soon as my eyes travel upward, I see his deep blue eyes staring deeply into mine, in the same way Grey used to look at me, the way he conveyed his burning passion of love to me. I then feel a maddening panic as I fully take this person in. There is no mistaking it, this is the same guy who attacked Grey. The one I tried to kill. The one who saved me from getting shot. The one who has been stalking me...

He looks not much older then me, judging on the boyish look he still has about him. Maybe it helps that he is grinning at me wildly, as if nothing else in the world could make him happier. Although he is creeping me out, I cannot take my eyes off of him. I am frozen, my eyes wide in what I guess is fear, and my breathing comes out in heavy pants.

Suddenly, he clears his throat, "It's a good thing I found you. At last I might add." he says cheerily. I am still frozen and the only change that takes place in the minutes that follow is that I notice the smile on the boys face quickly evaporate, "You do remember me, right Gilia?" he questions. What does he mean, remember him? All I remember him as is the guy that tried to kill Grey. When I don't answer, I see anger begin to slowly creep over the boys face, although his eyes are filled with a maddening sadness. The sadness in his eyes suggests that the feeling is leading him to the point of pain. This sadens me. No. I don't want him to be in any kind of pain. This thought confuses me. Surely I should wish all kinds of pain upon him. His eyes seem to be catching the fire of the anger on his face as they are becoming hard and set looking. My breath is taken away as I remember something. The memory crashes over me like a wave

In my memory, I am running towards the ibexes pen. I remember a love for these simple animals. Just when I get to the wooden fence of the pen, I see there, standing on the fence, waiting for me.

"Hi!" I say as I pull myself onto the fence next to him. He turns to me and smiles before putting a finger to his lips and pointing towards a newborn baby ibex. The ibex is still shakily trying to stand up on all fours. It is so adorable. I turn and smile at him but feel it leave my face quickly when I see the bandage on his arm, going from his elbow to just before his wrist.

"What happened to you?" I ask, my voice full of concern. He looks down at his arm and shrugs.

"Blood oath," he says brusquely, brushing my question off.

"And just how much blood do they need?" I ask, the pitch of my voice climbing higher. He looks at me as if shocked.

"Gilia, trust me, that is nothing! Just a small part of what I'd do for you,"

"I thought that there wasn't going to be a blood oath. Because of our circumstances. Is it bad?"

"I asked if I could take it. Makes this all feel more real and sealed. I've been told there'll be a scar but..."

"A scar?" I cut across him.

"Yeah but it's meant to be a mark," he says quickly in a reassuring tone.

"Why do you need a mark? It's not like I'm going to lose you."

"I guess not," he says, "And I won't leave you. Even if you send me away," he promises

I laugh, "I know. It's hard enough to get rid of you already but now you're sealed to me by an oath!"

"Well that's good because you know I will always protect you."

I smile at him and he gives me a quick, soft kiss. This kind of thing isn't weird between us, not anymore. I rest my head on his shoulder and we watch as the baby ibex takes its first steps.

I gasp as I am returned to the present. To the reality of Grey being gone and Finch wanting to kill me. But now I feel as if I am not alone. I look up at the strange boy. He is looking at me, his eyes filled with anger, sadness and loss, that seems to be because of me but not directed at me. After a minute or so, he slowly holds his hand out to me. I look at his arm and feel a jolt as I see a long scar running from his elbow to just before his wrist.

"I'm Shayne," he says when he sees me staring at his scar. He says this stiffly, as if he's not meant to be saying that to me...

"I'm Gilia," I reply. Shayne nods. He already knew that. I take his hand and as he pulls me up I hear a loud explosion and the sound of something heavy hitting the ground in the distance.

"Come on," he says, holding my hand stiffly in his, "Salvation are coming, Salvation are coming," he chants to himself.

Chapter 25: The Happy Memories

Epilouge

The Happy Memories

I am running fast from our house. No not our house, just my house. Their is no one else there to greet me as I walk through the door anymore. Just two empty chairs. I run up to the big house at the far end of the Tribe and jerk of around the side of it into the garden behind it. I look around desperatly and see a small patch of bushes. Perfect! I duck down behind those, the bush hiding me from sight if anyone from the house looked out, and put my head in my hands and cry. I've been holding my tears in for so long. I didn't want to cry in front of my neighbours, the people who loath me, because I didn't want the forced pitying glances they would be sure that they would give me as they feel obliged to. The sorry for your lose's that would be mumbled when, in fact, they are happy my parents are dead. The parents pulling their children inside their houses, telling them I'm a freak that should be killed when they think I can't hear. But, worst of all, the whispering buzz of people talking about me, the strange boy who has lost his demons of parents. On the way up here I'd heard people mumble, good riddance.

Why?

Why did they hate my parents so much, why do they hate me? Just last week I was passing by someones hut when cold, dirty water had been thrown out the window and onto me and a woman had said, "You shouldn't be here then, should you?" I knew she meant more then outside her house, she meant in the Tribe.

I don't know where I'm from originally, but my parents had deserted a Tribe when I was young and Guardian had been the only Tribe to let us in. The Tribehead was kind to us, but the people weren't. We were called swine and diseases and demons. Why?

I hate this stupid Tribe! Why do they hate us?

Then they talk about Salvation as if they are dirt, but I don't think they're much better! They say Salvation is after this whole Tribe, well I don't blame them. In fact, I want to JOIN them!

I am raking my fingers through my hair and hear someone skipping through the garden, singing under their breath.

Why is everyone so freaking happy today? Even the weather is mocking me as the sun seems to shine brighter in the cloudless blue sky.

I have closed my eyes and entered my own little world when I feel a hand on my arm. I look up, daggers in my eyes ready to shoot a horrible look at this person when I see her. It's the Tribeheads daughter. I"ve only seen her on occasion by her fathers side. I guess she is kept inside the whole time. She has long, golden coloured hair which runs almost perfectly straight down her back, and dark green eyes that have not changed from their dreamy look, even with the glares I am throwing her way.

"You know you're in my garden, right?" she says in a sing-song voice.

"I don't care who's garden I'm in," I say and, for once, I feel a stab as the words leave my mouth and I realise I feel BAD for being rude to her. Her eyes widen annd she looks upset about something.

"You're crying?" she asks.

"Obviously," I retort. Liquid running from my eyes, no I'm laughing. Idiot.

"Why?" her voice is full of genuine concern, a thing I've never heard a person put in their voice when talking to me. Something about the tone of her voice makes me want to tell her.

"My parents just died," I reply grimmly. When I say this she makes a huge gasp and I can swear I can see tears coming from her eyes.

"Are you making fun of me?" I demand.

"No! It's just that it's so sad. How are you going to be able to get by without your parents?"

"I can take care of myself," that's the only thing this stupid Tribe has taught me. No matter how much you are pushed down you have to get up and dust yourself off and put on a brave face, "How old are you?" I ask suddenly. Even I know this is a strange question to ask right now.

"Nine," she replies, looking a bit confused, "How old are you?"

"Still ten," I sigh. I hate this age. I don't want to be a child anymore.

"You're Shayne, aren't you?" she asks, wiping the tears from her eyes. Huh, she knows me. But it's probably expected for her to know everyone anyway, her being the Tribeheads daughter.

"Yeah and you're...?" I question. I've no idea what her name is. Never quite caught it. Myria or something...

"Gilia," she tells me. I nod.

"I knew that," I lie. I was close. Gilia, Myria, same ah sound at the end.

"So who are you going to live with?" she asks me. Of course, Myri-Gilia must know I'm the son of deserters.

"I dunno. By myself probably,"

If I even stay in this hell-hole. I'm getting a desire to join Salvation. They let anyone in as long as you hate Guardian. Sign me up. Well...no I don't hate ALL of Guardian anymore...

"Oh no, you can't live by yourself! I know, I'll go ask my dad if you can live with us!" she exclaims and without waiting for my reply, she skips off back to her house. As I watch her, I let out a small laugh. It feels like I'm not meant to laugh at a time like this, but already this strange girl has made me feel much happier. I'll stay in Guardian if it means I can talk to her one more time.

The End

Until Book two, New Terrain

A quick shout out to all my fantastic readers who have stuck with me till the end! I'm so glad you could join me on this journey that is Arid Land and hope you have enjoyed it and loved the characters as much as I do! When I started, I didn't FEEL anything for any of them, but now I know them better then I know myself, especially Gilia. For anyone who's wondering, my favourite character was, by far, Grey and when the end

came it tore me apart, like I didn't see it coming.

I hope all my lovely readers will be back soon for New Terrain! Thanks so much to the people who I could always count on to comment on each chapter and endure my mistakes in my writing

See you soon

Kate

Chapter 26: The Hunt Is On

Hey! I wanted to leave all fans of Arid Land with a teaser for book two, I keep you wanting more! Don't ever deny it. Anywasy, hope you enjoy. Bya!

The Arid Land Pentalogy

New Terrain

Chapter One- On The Hunt

Adrian

Stupid girl. She's gone. Slipped through our fingers again!

Oh well, all the worse for her.

I've found something anyway, an instrument of torture if you will. And she led us right to it.

Oh I will get her and her stupid guardian, but I'll make them pay first. This involves taming my new pet.

I can't believe how stupid people are. Do they ever realise they are playing right into your hands or that they have left the key to their destruction at your feet? Do they do it on purpose for the thrill?

I'd thought raiding Faith was pointless, everyone was dead. We'd been searching the Tribe, looking under every rock, from dusk till dawn. But I KNEW something worthwhile was there.

We'd even went up to the Tribeheads house, although I didn't think anyone would be stupid enough to go up there, and had found a whole load of nothing.

Everyone had left but I kept searching. I knew we had missed SOMETHING. And I was right. Why won't everyone learn I'm always right, that's why I should be Salvations Tribehead.

This is BRILLIANT! I actually can't believe it! Searching for a needle in a haystack has its perks. I hadn't found a needle, but I had found a gold string. Well, a metaphorical gold string.

No, they're more then a gold string, they're a MAGNET!

That girl has no one left. She has no memory of the guardian, I saw to that.

I HATE her guardian! He's the biggest traitor imaginable! And we nearly had him! If I was in charge, him and the girl would be dead already, but I'm not. My blood feels as if it is boiling.

Now I'm outside the Tribe that me and some other idiot, Kyle, have burnt to the ground. I lay back against the sand watching the Tribe burn and a smile plays on my face. Night has fallen but the flaming Tribe lights the night.

"Burn baby, burn!" I mutter to myself.

"Adrian," I hear Kyle begin.

I turn on my side to look at him, "What?" I ask.

"What do we do with him?" Kyle asks nervously, pointing to the idiot we caught in the Tribe.

I smirk. He should've expected to be caught. Runnning around all angry and waving his little sword. To easy to find and catch. Idiot. Everyone's an idiot. Sometimes I feel like the only sane person.

The boy looks at me, hate burning in his eyes, looking at me like he knows me all to well. I don't know him but I class someone looking at me as someone knowing me to well. He stopped fighting hours ago. Like training a dog. You "discipline" them and they learn, slowly.

"I'll sort it out in the morning Kyle, he's had enough for today, haven't you boy?" I taunt him as if he is a dog. He actually growls at me and I burst out laughing.

I'm surprised he still has the strength to do anything. I beat him bloody and there doesn't seem to be a single part of his body where he doesn't have a bruise. He's been injured by the war, but not enough to die. Unfortunatly for him.

"Yeah but what do we DO with him? Should I feed him?" Kyle asks.

"Don't!" I hiss at him angrily.

"Well why did you bother keeping him alive if you're just going to starve him?"

"I know what I'm doing and I'm not going to starve him! You don't die from not eating for a day."

"No but you get weak."

"So? That's kinda the point."

"He won't be able to walk."

"Walk, dragged, doesn't make a difference to me," I say looking directly at the boy, trying to scare him. His eyes hold no fear as he continues to stare at me. I stare back at him. That boy's freaky, most people would try to run when I look at them, but not him. He just holds and returns my stare. We stare at each other a while longer. He's annoying me. I use my powers to try to get into his thoughts, he somehow blocks me out. As soon as I feel myself hit a wall when I try to look into his mind I'm shocked. How's he still strong enough to do that?

This annoys me enough to make me get up, cross over to him and pull him up by his shirt.

"Why are you doing that you idiot?" I demand.

"For the simple reason that I hate you," he replies bravely. I throw him to the ground and kick him hard. He moans and holds his stomach.

"You stupid little boy!" I hiss.

"I'm not a boy!"

He may not be, but I don't care. No one talks back to me! Why isn't that little freak SCARED of me? I draw back my leg and kick him hard around the face. He doesn't even allow himself moans of pain as he spits out blood. He's defiant anyway.

I go sit back down and try to relax, but that boy's staring at me again. His eyes are narrowed and he looks at me like a rat, something not dangerous but annoying. He's driving me crazy! Why can't I break him? He's supposed to be huddled up in a corner as far away from me as possible. What is he trying to acheive?

Why did I bother taking him prisoner? He's useless and annoying!

He keeps staring at me, his eyes pushing all the hatred he feels towards me into my own. Dammit I've had enough!

"Fine! Fine, Kyle give him some food. And boy if you keep staring at me, wolves are going to be well fed!" I seem to have a thing for using wolves as a threat. I love wolves, I'd happily feed them. The boys eyes grow wide, but not in fear. More so in curiosity. Kyle gives him some of OUR stew and also gives him a look. I don't like that look. He's looking at the boy sadly and in a reassuring way.

Despite all the fuss, the boy doesn't touch the food and eventually he falls asleep. Kyle keeps looking at him.

I don't like Kyle. He has no powers and all he can do is cook.

I wait until Kyle's asleep then I very silently get up and stand over Kyle, drawing my gun. I aim the gun at his head.

"Traitor," I mutter as I pull the trigger. The bang is loud and wakes up the boy who looks at me fearfully.

I smile at him, "You're in my hospitality now. Play by my rules, and you'll be fine. Understood?"

The boy nods madly. I've finally scared him. I wait till the boy seems to be drifting off again before I shoot at Kyles body again.

The boy sits bolt up and looks around as if scared. Then he sees me and his face tells me he's woken from a dream into a nightmare.

Just to tell everyone in advance, chapter one MAY change. Anyway, it won't be up for a while so I felt as if I should leave you all with this!

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