

## Way Down to Hadestown

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/18536758) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/18536758>.

Rating:	<a href="#">Teen And Up Audiences</a>
Archive Warning:	<a href="#">Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings</a>
Category:	<a href="#">F/M</a>
Fandom:	<a href="#">How to Train Your Dragon (Movies)</a>
Relationship:	<a href="#">Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III/Astrid Hofferson</a>
Characters:	<a href="#">Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III</a> , <a href="#">Astrid Hofferson</a> , <a href="#">Eret (How to Train Your Dragon)</a> , <a href="#">Toothless (How to Train Your Dragon)</a> , <a href="#">Ruffnut Thorston</a>
Additional Tags:	<a href="#">Implied Sexual Content</a> , <a href="#">Greek god au</a> , <a href="#">but also kind of a modern au</a> , <a href="#">I've been listening to too much Hadestown</a> , <a href="#">Hiccup drinks his "I love my wife" juice every goddamn day</a>
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2019-04-20 Completed: 2019-11-01 Words: 16,073 Chapters: 7/7

# Way Down to Hadestown

by [schmulte](#)

## Summary

After being forced by his brothers into celebrating his birthday at a club, Hiccup gets more than he bargained for.

A modern retelling of the myth of Persephone and Hades, Hiccup style.

# Chapter 1

*But even the hardest of hearts unhardened*

*Suddenly, when he saw her there*

*Persephone in her mother's garden*

*Sun on her shoulders, wind in her hair*

*The smell of the flowers she held in her hand*

*And the pollen that fell from her fingertips*

*And suddenly Hades was only a man*

*With a taste of nectar upon his lips*

(...)

This was not what Hiccup wanted. Three thousand years old, and his brothers still didn't know him at all. For starters, he didn't like birthdays. Sure, maybe the first couple hundred were worth celebrating. But after 1,000? It was just getting old. *He* was getting old. (Well, not really. He was an immortal god, after all. But the feeling was still there). Second of all, he hated clubs. As someone who spent most of his time in the dark and cold of the underworld, a club, especially *this* club, was far from his comfort zone. The strobe lights were too bright, the music was too loud, the space was too cramped full of sweaty, gyrating gods and goddesses. He much preferred the company of the dead. They were quiet and peaceful, and knew to leave him be when he wanted to be alone. Which was most of the time.

And that's another thing. If this was a regular night at a club, Hiccup could at least have the chance to hide behind a stranger and slip away unnoticed. But no. His idiot brothers just had to rent out the entire club and make sure that everyone knew the birthday boy. There was no hope of escape now. No hope of slipping back underground, back to his own four walls and only his dog to keep him company. Alone. In solitude. With no annoying siblings disturbing him and cocktail Nymphs shoving drink after drink in his hands.

Hiccup jumped as a meaty hand landed on his shoulder, causing the god to jump and spill his whiskey on the floor. Great. Just great. Now someone could slip, and then he'd have an angry god on his hands, the perfect cherry on top of the ambrosia-

"Why so tense, brother?" Eret boomed next to him, squeezing the man's shoulder. "It's your birthday! Relax, have a drink, flirt with a Nymph."

Hiccup rolled his eyes and brushed his brother's hand off his shoulder.

"It's hard to relax with so much going on. I don't know why I let you drag me here."

Eret laughed beside him and waved a Nymph over to refill his brother's whiskey glass. Hiccup thanked her politely but curtly, and she swayed off with a disappointing look on her face. Eret replaced the hand on Hiccup's shoulder and steered him to look over at the dance floor.

"I couldn't let my little brother be alone on his birthday. You only turn 3,000 once, after all."

Hiccup sighed and sipped his whiskey, looking out over the dance floor. It was horrifying really, everyone mashed up against another, completely hammered and delirious. Nothing like the peace and quiet of the underworld.

"I just don't like all these people here, I don't want to be the center of attention. I would have been fine at home by myself."

Eret's features softened and he wrapped an arm around his brother's shoulders, squeezing him closer.

"I don't like the idea of you being all alone down there. None of us do. We worry about you, brother. You need to find yourself a wife, someone who can keep you company down there."

"Yeah, well-" Hiccup ducked out from under his brother's embrace, careful not to spill the newly poured whiskey. "I don't exactly have eligible goddesses lining up to be queen of the Underworld. It's not exactly the most romantic place."

"Hiccup-"

"Speaking of wives, shouldn't you be with yours?"

As if on command, the blonde shape of Ruffnut made her way through the crowd, pushing women out of her way as she went.

"Oh, Ereeet!"

"Ruffnut, my darling."

Eret placed a chaste kiss on his wife's cheek, the woman smiling and gripping his bicep. She turned to Hiccup, who was trying his best not to vomit at the sight, and flashed a mischievous smile.

"Hiccup."

"Hey, Ruff."

"I have a birthday surprise for you."

The goddess sent a wink over at her brother in law as he groaned in exasperation.

"Please, Ruff, no more surprises."

"Oh, I think you'll like this one."

"No, I can most definitely say I won't."

"Astrid's here."

Hiccup stood stock still, all color draining from his face except the bright scarlet blush that crept up his cheeks. Ruff and Eret smiled as he fumbled, trying to comprehend the situation. Everyone knew he had a hopeless crush on the radiant goddess of the Spring. He would always stutter and blush around her, too nervous to ever ask her out. How could the goddess of Springtime and sunshine want to be with the god of the dead anyway? It was impossible, and Hiccup was content to live with the unrequited love and avoid her at all costs. But here, at his birthday party, where he was the center of attention? Oh, that was just cruel.

"Astrid's here? Astrid's here. Astrid's here, in this building, right now. She's here."

"Calm down, brother."

"I've gotta get out of here. Yeah, I'm gonna go home. I'll just slip past the door, she'll never notice I'm gone. Okay guys, thanks for the party, I think it's time I head home, see you next year-"

A slender finger tapped him on the back of his shoulder, instantly shutting him up. He took a nervous gulp and slowly, agonizingly turned around.

Standing there, in all her glory, was the owner of the finger that had so gently tapped his back: the goddess of the Spring herself. Astrid. Beautiful, fierce Astrid, practically glowing under the suddenly dim lighting of the club. Her powder blue dress was almost criminal, held up by two thin straps that led down to a plunging neckline and a hem that was in no way legal, revealing creamy white thighs that made Hiccup dizzy trying not to look at. Long blonde hair laid in soft waves around her shoulders, framing those beautiful azure eyes and smiling pink lips. Astrid knew Hiccup liked it best when her hair was down, had kept it that way on purpose, knowing it would drive him crazy. She enjoyed seeing him flustered, smiling softly as he tried not to stare at her legs (oh yes, she noticed that alright). Hiccup seemed to find his tongue, jumping a little, auburn hair wild and eyes wide. Oh how Astrid wanted to run her fingers through that hair and *pull*, drag his lips to hers and claim him for herself. The god of the dead may have been oblivious, but Astrid hadn't missed the leering eyes of the women that followed wherever he went, the whispers of longing to get their hands on the unattainable god of death himself. It fueled Astrid's desire for him and she had been ecstatic at the invitation to his birthday, determined to claim him once and for all. The thought brought a little more mischief to her smirk as the god finally, finally managed to speak.

"Astrid! Hi, Astrid, hi. Um. You look. Y-you look great."

"What, in this old thing?" Astrid did a little spin, satisfaction in her eyes as she watched the god in front of her open his mouth and gape. "I just threw this on when I heard about your party. Happy birthday, by the way."

"You too! I-I mean. Not you too, your birthday was three months ago-"

"Do you want to dance?"

Hiccup's cheeks were as red as a tomato now, hand coming up to rub nervously at the back of his neck.

"Do I-do I want to what?"

Astrid smirked and crossed her arms, pushing up her breasts *just enough* to get that gaping fish-like look back on Hiccup's face.

"Dance. You do know how to dance, don't you?"

"Yes! Yes, of course I know how to dance."

"Well, c'mon then. Don't make me wait all night."

And then her hand was in his, soft slender fingers curling to intertwine with long calloused ones as she pulled him onto the dance floor. She winked at the women that stared at her in anger when she pulled him close, barely a breath's away as she danced against him. He was all awkward limbs and stiffness as he tried to dance, enraptured by the enchanting goddess in front of him. She walked her fingers up the front of his shirt, popping the top button as she went, and slung her arms loosely around his neck. She saw his Adam's apple bob as he swallowed, nervous hands resting gently on her waist. He leaned in to speak in her ear over the blaring music.

"Sorry, I'm not much of a dancer. I'm all right feet."

He nodded down at his left leg, the part below his knee long since missing, replaced by a slender golden prosthetic that was now hidden by his tight black slacks. Astrid shrugged, leaning forward to speak this time, breasts pressing up against his chest.

"You're doing fine. I don't understand why you don't just ask Eret to replace it for you. He is the king of the gods after all, I don't see why he can't help his brother."

Hiccup shook his head, hands tightening their grip on her waist as he grew more comfortable.

"He's offered before, but I never accepted. I just never felt the need. And it makes me less intimidating."

Astrid couldn't hold back the snort.

"You? Intimidating?"

"Hey, I'm the god of death!" Hiccup sputtered. "I can be very intimidating."

Astrid shook her head in disbelief, glossed lips pulling into a tantalizing smile.

"Uh huh, sure, Mr. Freckles."

The god of the dead placed his hand to his chest in mock offense, mouth hanging open in a shocked expression.

"Your words wound me, Milady!"

Astrid laughed- gods, that sound always did things to Hiccup, made his stomach churn with butterflies- and bowed her head.

"My apologies, oh great king of the dead."

Then, that mischievous glint returning to azure eyes, the goddess leaned up, lips at the shell of Hiccup's ear.

"How am I to ever earn your forgiveness?"

Hiccup blushed furiously, rough hands gripping the thin fabric of her dress as he tried to calm himself.

"That's um- it-it's not. You don't have to-"

Astrid cut him off with her fist in his shirt, pulling him down into a rough kiss. He froze for a moment before reciprocating, hands sliding down to her hips and long fingertips barely brushing the skin of her rear. The goddess moaned into his mouth and finally, *finally* tangled her fingers in that glorious unruly hair, pulling at the nape of his neck. She smiled against his lips as she heard the shocked and angered gasps of the women around them, biting his bottom lip as she claimed him in front of all the party-goers. Hiccup scrambled for purchase as he pulled her closer, hips flush against hers and blonde hair tickling his cheeks. He pulled away for a long breath, eyes dark with lust as he looked down into the goddess's half-lidded gaze.

"Come home with me," he panted. "Please."

Astrid smirked with kiss-swollen lips, hands finding purchase on his shoulders.

"Won't your brothers miss you? It is your birthday party, after all."

Hiccup claimed another kiss from her, green eyes wide and wild.

"Don't care. Eret's with Ruff, Snot's probably off chasing some poor Nymph around. And I only have eyes for you."

He placed another kiss to her lips, gentler this time, more tender. He looked at her with pleading eyes, running a hand through blonde locks.

"Please. I think I might die if I can't have you."

Astrid played with the buttons of his dress shirt and looked up through her bangs.

"Well, we can't have that, can we?"

(...)

Astrid woke the next morning surrounded by darkness. The only light came from the dim red flames of the torches that were mounted on the walls. The air surrounding her was cold on her naked skin, but the body next to her radiated warmth as he slept. Hiccup. Her Hiccup, auburn hair sticking out in all directions and long skinny arm draped around Astrid's bare waist as he dozed. He was beautiful even in sleep, freckles reflecting the dim light of the room. Pale bruises littered his neck and chest and long scratches were dragging down his back, and Astrid smiled at the sight. Oh yes, she had claimed him alright, there was no doubt about that. He had claimed her too, she realized, as the memory of last night came flooding back to her. He had tasted like whiskey and smelled of leather and smoke, gentle touches roaming all over her and leaving the skin burning. He had whispered praises in her ear and left bruises on her body with his fingertips, claiming her against the wall, on his desk, in his bed...

The sleeping god whined in protest as Astrid slipped from his grasp, reaching out in his sleep to regain contact. She pressed a soft kiss to his hair and whispered a small assurance that she would return and he drifted back into peace. She quietly opened the drawers of his dresser, pulling on a worn tee shirt and a clean pair of his boxers. She had to hold back a chuckle at the little ghost pattern that dotted the boxers. It was cute, almost as cute as the man they belonged to. Bare feet tiptoed out of the room, giving Toothless (his three headed dog) an affectionate scratch behind the ears before making her way around the house. After a quick gargle of mouthwash in the bathroom and a splash of water to the face, she made her way to the kitchen. The god of the dead would be waking soon, and the goddess thought he would appreciate a strong cup of coffee after a rather vigorous night.

(...)

Hiccup woke alone in his bed. He felt the emptiness immediately, all peaceful feelings from sleep gone, heart crashing to the floor. Of course Astrid hadn't stayed, why would she? The goddess of the Spring didn't belong in such a cold and dark place where she couldn't see the sky and flowers wouldn't grow. She must have collected her things and left as soon as Hiccup had fallen asleep. The god of the dead didn't blame her, of course. He felt like a fool. He had let his guard down last night, had allowed himself to dare to dream that someone like Astrid would even consider staying with him. It was stupid, really. He was just a naive boy, doomed to spend eternity in solitude. And that was fine. Completely fine.

He got dressed in a daze, pajama bottoms hanging loosely around his hips as he padded out of the room. He had forgone a shirt, it wasn't like anyone was going to see him right now anyway. He yawned and scratched at his head as he got ready in the bathroom. He frowned at the open bottle of mouthwash on the counter- he had put the lid on last night hadn't he? He shook his head, ignoring the thought as he made his way to the kitchen. The enticing smell of coffee filled his senses as he rubbed the sleep from his eyes and blinked. Then blinked again. And again.

The sight brought him to a stop. Astrid was dancing around the kitchen in a shirt and boxers- *his* shirt and boxers- pouring coffee into mugs and humming to herself. Her blonde locks were piled on top of her head, stray strands coming down to frame her serene face. A smile graced her lips as she turned to face him, handing him a mug of coffee and reaching up to place a kiss on his cheek.



"Morning sleepyhead."

Hiccup could only stare, hand gripping the cup like an anchor to reality.

"Am I dead? I must be dead. There's no way this is happening."

Astrid raised a perfectly plucked eyebrow.

"No way what's happening?"

"You're still here..." Hiccup breathed. Astrid laughed that melodic, tinkling laugh and wrapped her arms around his neck.

"Of course I'm still here. You're not getting rid of me that easily."

"But- but-you shouldn't. You shouldn't be here, you shouldn't *want* to be here."

"Hiccup," Astrid scolded. Her face was stern with determination, nimble fingers tangling in auburn hair. "I've wanted this- wanted *you* for so long."

The god still didn't seem to process, mouth opening and closing with no coherent thoughts coming out.

"But, but you. How?"

Astrid smiled and trailed kisses along his jaw. He seemed to relax a little, hands coming to rest on her hips.

"I've liked you for a long time, Hiccup. You've just been too oblivious to notice."

Hiccup shook his head and pulled away, hands slipping from her hips like he had been burned. He wheeled back, running his hands through his hair and pulling on the braided strands Astrid had left while he was asleep.

"You can't stay here."

Astrid frowned and took a step towards him. He greeted it with a step backwards, keeping himself at a safe distance.

"Why not?"

"Because!" Hiccup snapped. "Because you're the goddess of Spring and sunshine and flowers and everything that's beautiful, up there, above the ground. I'm the god of death, I live six feet underground in the cold and the dark, surrounded by the souls of the dead. You should be up there, enjoying your life. And I...I have to stay here. Alone. I deserve it, I deserve spend eternity in solitude. I don't deserve you."

Astrid's gaze softened and she sighed, reaching out for Hiccup's hands. He let her take them, let her press gentle kisses to his palm while he calmed.

"No one deserves to be alone, Hiccup." she murmured. "I want to stay here, with you. I don't care if I never see the sky again. I have all I need, in here."

She placed her palm against Hiccup's chest, over his heart. He melted into her touch and allowed her to pull him in for a warm embrace, calloused hands tangling in blonde hair. He breathed a sigh against her, placed a kiss to the crown of her forehead.

"Do you really mean it?" he whispered. "Could you spend the rest of your life down here? Could you...could you fall in love with someone like me?"

Astrid pulled back to lean her forehead against his, hands coming up to rest on either side of his face. Tears were prickling in green eyes, threatening to spill over any second. His hands found purchase on her back, fisting the fabric of her shirt without the intention of ever letting go. Astrid rubbed her thumbs across freckled cheeks, leaning in to place the ghost of a kiss on his chapped lips as she whispered.

"I already have."

## Chapter 2

### Chapter Notes

Okay okay, I know I said this was just going to be a oneshot but obviously you guys wanted more! So here's the second chapter of Way Down to Hadestown, enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

*I wasn't afraid, mama;  
I wasn't taken. I left  
if only you knew  
how his hair is the softest  
when he's on his knees,  
coaxing spring  
from inside of me  
(...)*

They spent six months together in bliss. Astrid had taken her role as Queen with pleasure and poise, seeming to luxuriate on her throne. Other gods had visited, hearing the tale of the Goddess of the Spring held captive by the lonely God of Death, and each time they were disappointed. Where they expected to see a cowering victim, they were instead met with the fierce Queen of the Underworld. She always waited for visitors upon her throne, crafted from twisting black branches and thorns. Hiccup had made it himself for her, along with a matching crown that Astrid wore when she was feeling especially benevolent. These two pieces were often enough to scare her visitors away, and Astrid watched their jaws drop in horror with a smile.

The goddess had added her own personal touch to the Underworld, of course. Not that her husband minded- he was content to fill her every desire. Since flowers did not grow, she created a garden of gemstones, reds and blues and greens serving as a shimmering light from the black dirt. Hiccup made her beautiful things from these stones, delicate jewelry and baubles that reinforced her declaration of royalty. She seemed to bring sunshine every where she went, and everyone was grateful for it. She calmed the King's temper and used her own when needed. She was a fierce protector of her husband, and may the gods look down kindly on anyone who questioned his judgement.

Hiccup had never stopped thanking the Fates for the gift that was his wife. He showered her in gifts and tender kisses, sweet wines and fine clothes. He never felt like it was enough. There would never be a way to repay his goddess for taking pity on his heart, for choosing the dark and cold of the Underworld over the bright sunshine up above. He had given her everything he could, even the sky. It had been a surprise for her when Hiccup finally allowed her to enter their chambers after a week of waiting- bright blue sky and fluffy white clouds covered the ceiling above their bed, torches burning bright along the walls. The paint was not yet dry and Hiccup was covered in blue and white, but Astrid had kissed him anyway and showed him her...*full* gratitude.

Eret came at the beginning of the fifth month. The King of the Gods didn't often visit his brother down below, and the visit took Hiccup by surprise. Still, he was welcomed with open arms and ushered into the kitchen for coffee. Hints of Astrid were dotted all around, from the mugs decorated with flowers to the small red gemstones erupting from the floor. The brothers laughed and drank their coffee while they made small talk, Eret's hand resting on his brother's shoulder and giving a light squeeze.

"You look happy, brother." he commented. Hiccup blushed slightly and rubbed the back of his neck.

"I am. I'm happier than I've been in a long time."

Eret nodded, but there was a flicker behind his eyes, something he wanted to say but couldn't.

"Where's Astrid?"

"Oh, she's probably out tending to the garden."

"She's certainly left her mark on the place." He nodded around the kitchen for emphasis and Hiccup smiled. Gods, Eret hadn't seen him smile like that in thousands of years. He bit his lip and cleared his throat, wanting desperately to keep his brother happy.

"Where's Snot?" Hiccup asked. It pulled Eret from his thoughts and he shrugged nonchalantly.

"Oh, probably pursuing some maiden, you know how he is." His gaze darkened and he shifted to pull his brother in closer, voice dropping low.

"Listen, Hiccup. Ingrid isn't happy. She thinks you kidnapped her daughter. She'll be here soon enough to take her back."

"But I didn't-"

"I know. But she'll come anyway. And she's not the only problem."

An auburn eyebrow raised as Hiccup watched Eret try to find the right words to convey his message.

"What is it, Eret?"

The King of the Gods glanced around the room and kept his voice at no more than a whisper, grip tight on his brother's shoulder.

"I'm sure you've noticed a slight boom in business, brother."

Hiccup frowned and pulled away. There had been an increase in souls lately, but he figured that Snotlout must have stubbed his toe and accidentally caused a tsunami again. He never dreamed it could be because of Astrid.

"What are you saying?"

Eret tried to place his hand back on Hiccup's shoulder for reassurance, but he was brushed aside. Frowning, he straightened up and collected his coat.

"The mortals are dying, Hiccup. Without her, Spring can't come. Ingrid is trying to manage it by herself, but there's only so much she can do. I love seeing you so happy, brother, I really do. But...there are consequences to your actions."

"You know it's not my decision to make, Astrid is her own person-"

"All I'm saying is be ready, brother. Ingrid won't go down without a fight, and she *will* use this against you. Just be ready for whatever comes."

With a snap, he vanished, leaving Hiccup alone in the kitchen with his guilt.

(...)

Astrid noticed a change in Hiccup when she came back from the garden. He was quiet and uninterested, nothing like his usual talkative self. He only half listened as she spoke, green eyes dull and staring off into the distance. He barely touched his dinner and ignored Toothless's relentless begging for belly rubs. His movements were mechanical as he got ready for bed, slowly putting on his cotton bottoms as if they would rip if he went too fast. Astrid had had enough, reaching out to still his hands as he went to remove his leg.

"Hiccup." she commanded, big blue eyes widened in worry. He didn't respond, turning his head to avoid her gaze. His shoulders were slumped pathetically and Astrid caught him swallowing thickly. The goddess was not having it, bringing her free hand up to cup his cheek and turn his head to face her. There were the beginnings of tears in green eyes, a look of shame across his features. Astrid wanted to kiss that melancholy look off his face, would give anything to see that crooked smile. But he was stubborn as she traced her thumb along freckled cheeks, silently pleading with him.

"Please, babe. Tell me what's wrong, let me help."

It was a long moment before he finally spoke. His voice was thick and unfamiliar and it frightened Astrid to see her husband so distraught. It was barely above a whisper and laced with guilt and pain, the same words she had heard almost every day different now, changed.

"Are you happy here?"

The Queen sighed and sat closer to her husband, free hand now brought up to his other cheek so she could hold his face close to her. They had had this conversation so many times, but this time...this was more than just her husband's insecurity. Hiccup was hiding something from her and it was eating him alive.

"Of course I'm happy. I'm with you." She placed a gentle kiss to his lips that he did not reciprocate. She tried to keep the frown from her face; this was not the Hiccup she knew. She had never seen him so distraught. She moved her hands to twist a braid into his hair, knowing he found the action soothing. He leaned into her touch ever so slightly, features relaxing microscopically.

"Eret came to visit today." he murmured. Astrid sighed, moving on to the next strand of hair. She knew Hiccup's brothers could be pushy, especially the King of the Gods himself. They only wanted what was best for their brother, but sometimes it was just too much for the god to handle.

"What did he say?" She prodded, careful not to sound demanding. Hiccup sighed and placed a gentle hand on Astrid's knee. It was progress, slow progress, but progress.

"Your mother isn't happy with me. She'll be coming down here soon to come get you."

Astrid cringed. Her mother was even more stubborn than Hiccup, and she wouldn't take no for an answer under any circumstances. It would be a long fight, one the mortals would have to hide in their homes during. When the gods are having a fight, everybody else better hold on tight.

"I can handle my mother. What else is bothering you?"

His grip on her knee tightened just slightly and he set his jaw, looking out across the room with dim eyes. Astrid placed feather-light kisses across tense shoulders, fingers dancing through his hair to calm him.

"The mortals...they're dying without you, Astrid. Their crops won't grow, the water's frozen over, there's sickness everywhere. It's...it's selfish of me. To make you stay."

Astrid turned her husband around to face her, hands coming out to grip his tightly. The torches burned brighter over the mantle as she narrowed her eyes in determination, a fierce look in her eye.

"You listen to me, Hiccup Haddock." she spoke. "It was my choice to come here, not yours. I made the choice to stay, not you. And if I leave, it will be no one's decision but mine. Understood?"

Hiccup seemed to get the message and he nodded ever so slightly.

"I just don't want to lose you, Milady. I keep waiting for you to wake up one day and realize this was all a mistake. And now, with everything that's happening...I'm scared that you'll leave."

"Oh, Hiccup..." Astrid brought her husband into her embrace, arms wrapped around his waist while his buried themselves in golden hair. She placed a gentle kiss to his cheek as she held him, feeling him tremble underneath her.

"We'll figure this out together. I promise. I'm not going anywhere, babe."

Hiccup nodded against her skin and inhaled the scent of flowers in her hair, capturing the tender moment with his wife to keep in his memory for all eternity.

(...)

It was another month before Ingrid arrived. Astrid had been making coffee in the kitchen when Toothless had barked to signal the visitor, careful not to wake his master. Hiccup had a previously rough night- an orphanage had collapsed in an earthquake, and the God of the Dead wanted to personally usher each frightened child down to their new home. There were hundreds of them, all dressed in rags and shaking, not knowing what was going on. It had taken hours to sort them and get them all settled in. Most of them were sent to Asphodel Meadows to be reunited with their parents, while the children with parents in Tartarus were sent to Elysium to be reborn. He had returned in the small hours of the morning, utterly exhausted and emotionally drained. Astrid had held him and soothed him off to sleep, deciding to let him sleep in the next morning.

The stern shape of her mother appeared before her, glancing around the room in disgust and arms folded across her chest. Astrid poured herself a cup of coffee and sat at the table, coolly returning her mother's gaze as she sipped.

"Mother." she addressed nonchalantly. Ingrid gave her daughter a once over, stock still in the middle of the kitchen.

"Astrid. I've come to bring you home."

"I am home."

Her mother's glare turned icy, any hint of calm demeanor gone.

"This is not your home. You are the Goddess of the Spring, not the whore of the King of Death-"

"You're right, mother, I'm not his whore. I'm his Queen."

Blue eyes narrowed and the ceiling shook ever so slightly, a small tremor that rippled through the ground.

"You're *what*?"

Astrid set the mug down and turned to face her mother, a silent challenge in her eyes.

"The Queen, mother. Didn't you hear? We married some time ago; it was a beautiful ceremony, a shame you couldn't make it."

Ingrid's fists balled at her side as the twisted crown appeared on her daughter's head, face twisted in anger.

"You will come home now, young lady. I don't care who your husband is, you don't belong here."

"It's you who doesn't belong here, mother. And I believe you've overstayed your welcome."

Ingrid glared daggers at her daughter, watching as she casually filled Toothless's bowl and refilled her cup.

"He told you what's happening to the mortals, didn't he?" her mother sneered. Astrid froze for millisecond before resuming her idle tasks.

"He did." she answered.

"Then you know that you can't stay here. Not forever. You need to leave this place and never come back."

Astrid set her cup down a little too hard on the counter, causing the granite underneath to crack. She turned to face her mother, expression neutral, calm.

"I can't."

"Astrid, I know you think you love this man, but-"

"No. I really can't."

She stuck her hand into the fridge and brought out an opened Pomegranate, holding the fruit out to her mother. Ingrid's eyes widened as she counted the empty holes that once held seeds, jaw dropping in horror.

"Why?" was all she could ask. Astrid shrugged, a smirk playing at her lips.

"Consider it an insurance policy. I knew you'd come to get me eventually. I needed to make sure you couldn't make me stay away."

"How many?"

Astrid smiled in earnest now, carefully placing the fruit back in the fridge.

"Six."

"*Six*? That's half the year!"

"Exactly. This way everyone gets what they want. The mortals have six months of Spring to collect their harvests and fatten up their livestock to prepare for the next season. If they use their time wisely, they'll have enough stored to last them the six months. When their time to harvest is up, I return to the Underworld to be with my husband and take my place as Queen. And the cycle continues."



"This was his idea, wasn't it? Did he force you to do this?"

For the first time since her mother arrived, Astrid's cool demeanor faltered. She looked down at the floor, shame taking over previously cocky features.

"No. He doesn't know."

Ingrid smirked in satisfaction as she adjusted her coat to leave.

"Well, when this plan blows up in your face, I will be waiting. And I wouldn't stall if I were you. Your time is almost up."

With that, the goddess vanished, leaving chaos in her wake and a pounding in Astrid's heart.

(...)

Hiccup awoke some odd hours later and padded out to the kitchen. Astrid was at the table, nursing a cup of coffee as she absentmindedly scratched behind Toothless's ears. Hiccup leaned down to press a kiss to her cheek before going to pour his own cup. He seemed to be in a better mood this morning, the sleep being just what he needed after such a long night of work.

"You should have woken me up, Milady, I could have made you breakfast."

Astrid hummed in response, not really paying attention. Now it was Hiccup's turn to be worried, forehead creasing as he sat down at the table next to her.

"Astrid? What's wrong?"

She kept looking straight ahead, raising the mug to her lips.

"My mother came while you were asleep."

Hiccup froze, pupils blowing wide. Astrid must have won the fight, seeing that she was still here, but at what cost?

"What happened?"

She shrugged and drained her cup.

"We fought. She thinks I'm a foolish little girl, I think she's a crazy old bat. Typical mother-daughter argument."

"Did she ask you to come home?"

Astrid worried her bottom lip.

"She did. I said no, she said yes...we made a deal."

Hiccup raised an eyebrow and gripped her hand, prompting her to turn and face him.

"What kind of deal, Astrid?" he breathed. Her gaze flitted away to the fridge before turning back to her husband.

"Do you remember the pomegranate in the fridge? The one you told me not to touch?" she asked. He nodded wordlessly.

"Well...I ate some of it."

"Ast, why would you do that? I told you what would happen-"

"That's exactly why I did it." She pressed a soothing hand to his cheek. "I needed a way to make sure she couldn't take me. Not forever, at least."

Hiccup nodded just barely and leaned into her touch.

"How long?"

"Six months."

The god closed his eyes, savoring the feel of his wife's hand on his cheek. Six months was a long time...would she even want him after? After being in the sun for all that time, would she be happy confined underground for half a year?

"Please say something, Hiccup."

There were tears on her cheeks, he knew it even before he opened his eyes. Her face was wet as he held her and placed a kiss to her forehead, fingers running through her golden locks.

"I will do whatever it takes to make you happy, Milady." he promised. "Please don't worry about me. I'll be okay while you're gone, knowing you're safe up there."

Astrid sniffed, burying her face in her husband's shoulder. He pressed kisses to her hair, inhaling her scent.

"I love you, Hiccup." she sniffled. Hiccup held her tight as she shook beneath him, slender fingers scrambling for purchase in his sleep shirt. He covered her in kisses, more than enough to last him six months. Still, he doubted it would ever be enough.

"I love you too, Milady."

(...)

It was a long six months. Hiccup was rarely seen by his brothers, shut away in his kingdom of bones. He threw himself into his work to dull the pain, hardly sleeping or stopping to rest. He knew Astrid would be disappointed if she saw him now, and he longed to hear her scold him and order him to bed. He couldn't help it, the work tore his thoughts away from soft smiles and blonde hair running through his fingers, wandering souls a distraction from the pain that consumed his own. Toothless helped when he could, offering his owner affectionate licks and keeping an eye on him for Astrid. The underworld was darker without her. The torches didn't burn as bright, the gemstones didn't shine like they used to. Everything around

him was a painful reminder of his love- he couldn't even sleep in his own bed anymore, taunted by the sky he had created for her.

Astrid wasn't faring much better up above. The mortals were happy, basking in the warm sun and sweet fruits she provided, but the work did nothing to keep her from her longing. Every gust of sweet Spring wind reminded her of the arms that once held her, every drop of rain a kiss upon her skin. She had heard whisperings from the messengers that guided the souls down to the Underworld, rumors of the King of Death busy at work and refusing to see visitors. He was just as miserable as she was, both working themselves to the bone. Ingrid tried to keep her daughter happy- tried gifting her with new plants to grow and cool breezes, but it was not enough. Nothing could replace the way she felt before, safe in her husband's arms six feet under the ground.

The first day of Winter approached after eons of waiting, Astrid's bags already packed and ready to go. She didn't stop to say goodbye to her mother, to give the mortals one last day of sunshine. She went straight to the entrance, down the familiar path, unlocked the door to her- to *their*- house. It was dark and quiet, far too quiet. Toothless came bounding over to her, placing generous licks all over her face and she laughed, dropping the bags to pet him.

"I missed you too, Toothless! Where's your daddy, huh? Where's Hiccup?"

The big dog barked and ran off towards Hiccup's study, Astrid still laughing as she followed. Hiccup was asleep at his desk, papers scattered underneath him, a light snore following the steady rise and fall of his chest. Toothless yipped and lapped at his face, pulling him from his sleep with a groan.

"Toothless! You know that doesn't wash out!"

The dog ignored him, teeth clamping around his owner's shirt and trying to pull. Hiccup batted him away, brow furrowed in frustration.

"What has gotten into you, bud?"

The dog growled and nudged him forward, not stopping until Hiccup standing and turned towards the door.

"Okay, okay-"

All the breath escaped Hiccup's lungs when his eyes landed on Astrid. She was as beautiful as the day she left, smiling softly at him with those perfect pink lips, blonde hair loose and dotted with flowers.

"Astrid..." he croaked. Tears came to both of their eyes as he pulled her into a tight embrace, hands gripping her waist as hers wrapped around his neck. She breathed in the familiar scent of smoke and leather as she tangled her fingers in unruly auburn hair. He drew her in for an intense kiss, cheeks wet and mouth hungry. She reciprocated in kind, keeping his lips captured for a long moment before pulling away to breathe. He rested his hands on either side of her face and pressed their foreheads together. The taste of nectar and a smile was on his lips as the God of Death took in the goddess before him, a goofy smile on his face. Astrid

reached up to brush stray strands of auburn from his face, slender fingers gentle against the skin of his forehead.

"You haven't been sleeping." she whispered. Hiccup shrugged unabashedly.

"Neither have you."

She laughed then, bright and melodic, tears spilling from her eyes. A smile widened on Hiccup's face and he brought his wife closer, swallowing her beautiful laugh in a searing kiss. And there they stood in their embrace, the King and Queen of the Underworld, and there they would stay for all eternity.

(...)

*You are the kindest thing  
that ever happened to me,  
even if that is not how our tale is told.  
When everyone else told me I was  
destined to be a forgotten nymph  
that nurtured flowers and turn meadows gold,  
you saw that the ichor that resides in me  
demanded its own throne.  
You showed me  
how a love like ours can turn  
even the darkest, coldest realm  
into the happiest of homes.*

## Chapter End Notes

Asphodel Meadows- a place for ordinary/indifferent souls who did not commit significant crimes but also didn't achieve any greatness were sent- most mortals are sent here.

Tartarus- Underworld equivalent of Hell, area where punishments and imprisonments took place.

Elysium- paradise, Underworld equivalent of Heaven, Usually reserved for demigods and heroes. Souls sent to Elysium have the option to stay in paradise for eternity or be

reborn into the mortal world.

Significance of the Pomegranate- in the original myth Persephone (either tricked by Hades or by accident, depending on the source) eats 6 seeds from a Pomegranate down in the Underworld, which magically binds her to stay for 6 months, one month for each seed.

The poems used are "Persephone to Hades" by Nikita Gill and "Letters from Persephone" by Natalie Wee

# Chapter 3

## Chapter Summary

Thank you all so much for the kudos! I never expected such a response to this fic, so as a thank you, here's a special bonus chapter! We finally get to see how Hiccup interacts with his mother-in-law.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

*Mother you don't understand*

*I made Hades run to me.*

*He saw my bones beneath*

*And offered me half his kingdom.*

*Do you really think I ate the fruit unwillingly?*

(...)

The dinner was Astrid's idea. An opportunity to make peace his mother-in-law, that's how she had phrased it. A chance for the two most important people in her life to come together. An opportunity to end the feud between the Goddess of the Harvest and the God of Death. They were natural enemies, two forces at odds with each other. Ingrid brought new life and Hiccup just as easily took it away. It was only natural that they fought- and with the added bonus of the marriage of her daughter, well. Let's just say things were a bit tense between the two.

Astrid, of course, did not accept this as an excuse. Two things at odds can eventually make peace, she had said. And it was important to her that this happen. And her husband could never refuse such a request. He was helpless at his wife's mercy, eager to please. Even if it meant he had to go to a dinner with a woman that hated him, in the stifling heat of the world above, in a small enclosed space with no escape. It was not an ideal way to spend his evening meal. And, to be honest, the idea of spending more than five minutes with that woman...well, it scared Hiccup to death.

Just the thought of seeing Ingrid made Hiccup gulp, Astrid shaking her head beneath him as she adjusted his tie. She had picked out the outfit- all black, like usual. Black suit, black shirt, black tie, black shoes...it suited him. She complimented him well, Spring replaced with Winter, light greens and blues now exchanged for ebony silk and blood red gems, the dark crown of thorns resting delicately atop a golden head. She tightened the tie just right, soft hands coming to smooth out the freshly ironed dress shirt.

"I don't think I can do this." the god stated. He was stiff as a board, eyes widened, and it made Astrid smirk as she fixed his buttons.

"You're not really scared of my mother, are you?"

"Are you saying you aren't?"

"Isn't the God of Death supposed to fear nothing? Y'know, punishing souls, living with the dead..."

Hiccup squeaked out a protest, jaw dropping.

"Excuse you, I happen to be the god of many things! Riches, metals, night...and I'd take the souls of the damned over your mother any day!"

Astrid nodded sympathetically, bottom lip out in a pout, and patted his chest.

"Aw, poor baby. Don't worry, babe. I'll protect you."

When she saw her husband open his mouth to protest, the goddess rolled her eyes and draped her arms across his neck, coming up to whisper in his ear.

"If you can get through this, we can do that thing you like."

Hiccup gulped, and Astrid knew he was caught. He could never resist her when she used that pleading voice, especially with the added promise for later. He placed hesitant to her hips as she reveled in her victory. His voice was low and rasping in her ear.

"Oh that is evil, Milady. Using your feminine wiles against your poor, defenseless husband."

"Mmm, I know, it's so unfair." she purred, coming up to place a kiss to his neck. He simpered under her touch, large hands gripping her hips roughly.

"Honestly-oh- it's just cruel- mm..."

Astrid grinned and nipped at the tender skin of his throat before pulling from his grasp and turning away, hips swaying.

"C'mon lover boy," she sang. "Don't wanna be late."

Hiccup, of course, was content to follow, still caught up in his love-struck daze. He didn't snap out of it until they were at the restaurant, mind still on Astrid's hand drifting over to his lap as he drove, pink lips pouting as she applied her gloss in the rear-view mirror. He knew what she was doing- it was the same method they used when they needed to take Toothless to the vet, keeping him distracted with treats so he wouldn't think about where they were headed. It should have felt demeaning, really, but Hiccup wasn't about to protest. And it did help calm him a little as they entered the restaurant, Astrid's hand in his and squeezing ever so slightly.

Ingrid was already sat at the table, scowling down at the menu. After a gentle nudge to the ribs from Astrid, the couple sat, the trio sharing fake smiles and nervous glances.

"Astrid, dear," Ingrid cooed. "How wonderful to see you, you look so beautiful darling."

Her cold gaze shifted to her son-in-law, struggling to keep up the pleasant demeanor. Her voice was strained as she spoke.

"Hiccup. You're looking...the same."

"Oh stop, Ingrid, you're making me blush."

It was the best they could do. No more words were exchanged beyond these pleasantries from either party involved. Hiccup seemed to wither under Ingrid's stare, burying his face in the menu to avoid her gaze. Astrid gave his hand a reassuring squeeze, which only seemed to annoy her mother more.

"Astrid, you really should have worn one of the dresses I sent you," her mother scolded. "They suit you much better than all..this."

She gestured to Astrid's general appearance. The goddess took in a deep breath, eyes narrowed. Her husband did not appreciate the look in her eye and braced himself for an inevitable showdown.

"I actually think this suits me perfectly. Right, Hiccup?"

Mercifully, the waiter came before Hiccup could formulate an answer. He poured them all sweet wine, stopping when Astrid placed a hand over her glass.

"None for me, thank you." she said with a smile. She reveled a bit in her mother's suspicious expression, eyebrow raised and arms folded.

"So," the goddess stated. "You're not drinking?"

Astrid shrugged, smirking coyly.

"Just haven't had the taste for it lately."

She heard Hiccup gulp behind her and ignored it, instead focused on her mother, who was now looking more relaxed.

"Oh, good. You had me worried for a moment."

Oh gods, here we go. Astrid's voice lowered and blue eyes flashed with anger. Hiccup could have sworn he heard his bones creak as she gripped his hands.

"And what is that supposed to mean?"

Ingrid didn't seem to notice her daughter's anger, waving her hand in the air nonchalantly.



"Oh, Astrid dear, you know exactly what I mean. Marriages can be reversed, but children well...I wouldn't want you being tied to him forever, that's all."

Astrid stood now, palms flat on the table. One of the lamps overhead swayed just slightly and the lights flickered for a moment.

"We *are* tied together forever. I made a vow."

"Vows can be broken, Astrid." Her mother stood now, leaving Hiccup to sit and watch in fear.

"I just don't want you to throw your life away on this...man."

The Goddess of Spring was shaking now and the ceiling shuddered with a small crack. Hiccup laid a worried hand on his wife's arm.

"Astrid..." he warned. She brushed him off, staring dead ahead as her mother smiled.

"Now dear, don't be so distraught. I only want what's best for you."

"Hiccup is what's best for me."

"There's no need to use that tone. I'm just giving you motherly advice. Be sensible, darling, a baby would shackle you this man. Is that really what you want?"

Hiccup could see the cogs turning in his wife's mind, the way her nostrils flared and fingernails dug into the wood of the table. He tried to calm her again, to get her attention somehow, but the goddess would not listen to him as he pleaded with her.

"Astrid please, we talked about this-"

He was ignored as Astrid's unrelenting gaze stayed locked on her mother, uttering the words he was begging not to hear:

"Consider me shackled, then."

The rest of the evening did not go well after that. Ingrid, who seemed to be going through the seven stages of grief all at once, shouted a nonsense curse at her daughter before storming off. The lamp that hung from the ceiling had now fallen and broke the table in two. The crack in the ceiling did not spread, thank the gods, but was still enough to cause the very concerned manager to almost have a heart attack. Hiccup paid for the damage and offered his sincerest apologies while Astrid stayed standing in her spot, still in shock. They had agreed to tell Ingrid when she and Hiccup were on better terms, but the way she was talking...oh, it made a fire burn in Astrid's bones, and the words escaped her lips like she was spitting out a bitter wine. And now that the deed was done, there was no hope of saving what little relationship they still had.

Somehow Hiccup managed to get her into the car and take her home. Toothless sniffed at her feet and whined as Hiccup helped her out of her dress and removed the crown from her hair. He got her into one of his old tee shirts- Hiccup knew she liked to sleep in them, especially when she was upset. He pressed sweet kisses to her cheeks and got her to lie down, her head

on his chest and his arm around her waist. His hand rested on the small swell of her stomach, a small smile playing at his lips as he pressed a kiss to her hair.

"I'm so sorry, my love." he whispered to her. Astrid shook her head then, craning her neck to look up at her husband and cup his cheek.

"I'm not." she answered. "I'm glad she knows. And I'm glad our child won't have to grow up with her around."

Hiccup nodded and calmed her with more kisses. He gently caressed her stomach as she snuggled into him, closing her eyes.

"Have you thought of a name yet, Milady?"

Astrid smiled against his skin, her hand coming to cover the one that he had rested on her stomach.

"Mmm. Melinoe."

"Melinoe," Hiccup echoed, voice just above a whisper. He gave his wife one last kiss before letting her drift off, hand still cradled protectively around her stomach as he smiled, tears in his eyes, holding his little family in his arms.

"It's perfect."

## Chapter End Notes

And there you have it! That is the END of this story, I hope you enjoyed.  
For all you Greek mythology buffs out there, Persephone did indeed have a daughter named Melinoe, however, her father was actually Zeus disguised as Hades. Since that's disgusting and creepy, I put a happier twist on the name!

# Chapter 4

## Chapter Summary

It's Hiccup's birthday again! I wonder what surprises he's in for this time.

## Chapter Notes

Oops, I lied! I just couldn't help myself, I love this story so much! But I SWEAR this is the last chapter...maybe. If I end up having more ideas this may turn into a series of one shots...but for now, this is the LAST chapter. Probably.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

"Dada. Can you say dada?"

"Mama!"

Hiccup let out an exasperated groan. He had been trying for *weeks* to get his daughter to say those two little syllables. But Melinoe was stubborn like her mother, and seemed to take joy in her father's frustrations. So far, she had managed mama and toofie. But not dada. Oh no, that would make Hiccup's life too easy. Logically, it made sense; "m" sounds are one of the easiest to make, it was only natural that her first words were mama. But it didn't do anything to make Hiccup feel better.

Melinoe had luckily been born during the Winter without a moment to spare. It was a rough birth for Astrid that wreaked havoc on the mortal world- a sudden snowstorm caused power outages and hypothermia and caused a lot of work to be done on the father's part. It had been hard on both father and daughter, having only each other during the Spring. It was harder on Astrid. Every night she dreamed of seeing her daughter's face, those bright blue eyes and shock of fiery red hair. She dreamed of her husband too, who looked even more handsome when he played with their little girl. Hiccup had gotten her some mortal technology Snotlout was obsessed with. If she pressed a button, Hiccup and Melinoe would appear on the little screen and they could talk. She had broke down in tears when her daughter pressed her face up to the screen and called her mama. Hiccup had cried too, but he wouldn't admit to it just yet.

Now, a year had passed since the season of Melinoe's birth, and Winter had come again to the mortal world. She was walking now, clumsy steps reminding her so much of her father. ("Hey, I have one leg, you try walking gracefully like that!") Hiccup was currently struggling to get his daughter into her dress- the baby was being fussy, giggling as she squirmed *just* out

of reach every time. And all the while, Hiccup remained in his futile attempt to get her to say that magic word.

"Melinoe, sweetheart, look at this pretty dress daddy got you! Now that looks much warmer than just your diaper, doesn't it?"

"No!" his daughter giggled. Her father groaned again. Great, another word. A word that was going to drive Hiccup crazy soon enough. Honestly, taming a Minotaur would be easier than this.

Astrid peeked her head in the door and watched with a smile as her husband struggled to wrangle their child. The poor man had all the best intentions, but he was hopeless. That girl had him wrapped around her little finger and they both knew it.

"Need some help, babe?" she called. Hiccup had his hands full- Melinoe had somehow managed to steal her father's tie, and now he had to deal with *two* clothing issues.

"No, no, I've got it- I've just gotta...a-ha!"

He managed to finally, finally get Melinoe's head through the hole of the dress. She admitted defeat quite quickly over that, begrudgingly allowing her father to get her arms through the holes and slip on her shoes. Honestly, it was adorable the way he doted on her, and that dress he had picked out was almost too cute. The little girl entertained herself by tugging on her father's beard, something he had grown after Astrid left, when shaving became a non-priority. It made him look like such a *dad* and did things to Astrid that she would never admit to him. It would go straight to his head if he ever found out.

Hiccup set his daughter down by Toothless and made to fix the tie she had previously stolen. It was completely unraveled now, and it amused Astrid greatly to watch her husband struggle with the knot. He could judge a soul with one look and could condemn you to eternal damnation with a single word, but the gods forbid the man learn to tie a tie. Astrid finally gave in to his struggling and wordlessly took the offending fabric from him. He smiled at her gratefully as nimble hands crafted the knot. It was her new favorite tie, the bright flower pattern standing out against the monochrome black of his suit. It had started as a joke gift, but it had actually grown on the God of Death. He liked the little pop of color, and he would say so with absolute authority. His wife would always call him a dork. They both knew that already.

"Do we have to go to this thing?" The god asked. "I'd much rather stay here with you two."

"Your brothers hardly ever see you, just let them do something nice for you." She stated as she finished the knot and pressed a quick kiss to his lips. "Besides, I heard they got you a cake this time. Marble, your favorite."

Hiccup flashed a sly grin and leaned down to his wife's ear, an arm coming to snake around her waist.

"I'd much rather have you for dessert."

That went about as well as he expected, earning himself a playful slap on the shoulder.

"Hiccup Haddock, get your mind out of the gutter."

"Aw, you love it."

He wrapped both his arms around her and attacked her neck with tickling kisses. She retaliated by grabbing one of his hands and bending it back.

"Ow, ow, ow, okay you win! You always win, I surrender!"

She let him go with a smile and scooped up their giggling daughter. Hiccup rubbed his tender wrist and rolled his eyes.

"Yeah, yeah, laugh it up."

That made the two girls laugh harder, Toothless joined in with a noise that could have been laughing if he weren't a dog. Hiccup widened his eyes in mock betrayal.

"Oh what, you too? Useless canine."

Melinoe placed chubby hands on her father's cheeks and lifted them up from a painful smile. Hiccup sighed and blew a raspberry on his daughter's stomach, making the little girl squeal and drop her hands. Astrid bounced her and gave her husband a peck on his now-sore cheek.

"C'mon babe, we don't want to be late."

Hiccup's shoulders slumped just slightly.

"Yeah, yeah, I know. Let's just get this over with."

"You never know, babe. They might surprise you."

(...)

The party was...not what Hiccup had expected. To be honest, even though it was unrealistic with the baby, he expected a repeat of every party his brothers had ever thrown him. Bright lights, blaring music, cocktail nymphs shoving drinks in his face. Although maybe not that last part- it was pretty widely known that Astrid was the fiercest goddess of them all. All the girls who had given her the hairy eye ball when her and Hiccup had danced before were now offering fake smiles and general ass-kissing.

It was the same venue as last year, but more dressed up, classier. All the overhead lights were on and the music played softly. Smartly-dressed waiters floated around carrying glasses of champagne (and one sippy cup of apple juice for Melinoe). Eret and Snotlout enveloped their brother in a bone-crushing hug, offering sturdy pats on the back.

"It's so good to see you, brother."

"Yeah, you need to talk to us more often. You don't have an excuse, I know you have a phone!"

Hiccup smiled bashfully and rubbed the back of his neck.

"I know, I know. It's good to see you guys too. How did you pull all this off? I expected scantily-clad nymphs and cheap whiskey, not...all this."

The two brothers shared a look, both looking quite bashful themselves now.

"We...may have had some help." Snotlout supplied.

Hiccup turned to Astrid and raised an eyebrow, but she shook her head. He frowned and turned back to his brothers, who were sharing nervous glances.

"Guys...? What aren't you telling me?"

Eret opened his mouth to speak, but a distant yell of "Hiccup!" cut him off. The four of them turned to see a tall woman with unruly auburn hair and unmistakable green eyes making her way towards them.

"Mom?"

Hiccup was suddenly swept up in a tight hug from Valka, her hands coming up to her son's face to inspect him.

"Hiccup, my dear boy! Look how much you've grown!"

"Mom, you did all this?"

Valka smiled at her son's shocked expression and turned to wink at the other two boys.

"I wouldn't say that. I merely just...supervised."

Hiccup's face broke into a wide grin as his glance darted back and forth between his brothers and his mother.

"But-how-"

"We wanted to make up for last year." Eret explained.

"And the year before that, and the year before that..." Snotlout elaborated. Hiccup's gaze finally settled back on his mother and he frowned ever so slightly.

"Is dad here?"

Valka's smile dropped just a bit as she shook her head. Hiccup only nodded in response. He knew his parents were busy- even though they mostly had retired to let the gods take over, they still had their responsibilities. It was understandable that Stoick had missed the party, he was a busy man. But still, Hiccup might have hoped that his father would make it. Having his

mother there was the best part about the whole party, though. She took instantly to Astrid, and was having a wonderful time spoiling her granddaughter. The couple made the mutual decision to invite her over to watch Melinore any time she wanted. The souls of the damned weren't exactly babysitting material.

The rest of the party went by without a hitch. Valka and Melinore sat and played to their heart's content. Hiccup was in a great mood, seeing his mother interact with their daughter. Astrid even managed to get him out on the dance floor once or twice, despite his protests of having "all right feet." Cake was served, toasts were made, Snotlout completely embarrassed himself by slipping on some spilled champagne and landing not-so-gracefully on an innocent waiter. Hiccup made a reminder to tip her extra after the party.

The final hour was winding down. People were full of cake and alcohol. Some small talked, others dragged unwilling partners on to the dance floor. Melinore was asleep in her grandmother's arms. Hiccup had already packed up her diaper bag and draped his coat over Astrid, bidding a final goodbye to his mother. But then the room became quiet. Too quiet. And then the whispers started, gasps were heard. Hiccup handed Melinore over to his wife and turned towards the commotion-

And standing there, his hulking form stuffed into a suit, large hands dwarfing the small box he held- was Stoick the Vast. He purposefully made his way over to Hiccup, steps thundering on the marble floor. The party guests parted out of his way, making a direct path that lead straight to his son. Stoick stopped right in front of Hiccup, looming down at him. His gaze shifted as he held the box tightly in his hands. He almost looked...nervous?

"Son," he managed to blurt out. "You look well."

Hiccup could only stare, completely dumbfounded.

"Uh...thanks, dad."

Stoick cleared his throat and thrust the box into Hiccup's hands. It was bigger now that he was up close, and it weighed down on Hiccup's arms. Stoick cleared his throat again and nodded towards the gift.

"Um. Happy birthday."

Hiccup looked down at the box in his hands, wrapping paper mismatched with a bow sloppily tied at the top. It was definitely Stoick's handiwork, and the thought of his father hand wrapping a gift made his heart a little warm.

"Oh, uh. Thanks."

"Well, go on. Open it."

Hiccup didn't need to be told twice. He carefully unwrapped the bow and opened the lid, eyes widening. Inside was a helmet- polished black metal reflecting his shocked gaze, the symbol of the God of Death- Toothless, of course- etched into the sides. Hiccup was afraid to touch it, fingertips barely sliding over the helm.

"It's...it's..."

"Every god needs an artifact." his father stated. "And this one is yours. A helmet of invisibility, for guiding souls down to the Underworld."

"Thank you, I. I don't know what to say."

Stoick rested a paternal hand on his son's shoulder.

"I know I haven't been around much. And I know this won't make up for all I've missed. But I want you to know that I'm proud of you, son. You've made the most of the cards you were dealt. You've made the Underworld a better place for mortals. And you've found happiness in your new family. That's all I could ask for."

Hiccup nodded a little and let Valka take the gift from him, placing it wordlessly in the diaper bag. The God of Death found himself unable to speak, stuck to his spot. His father had never been around and had always been emotionally distant. Especially since Hiccup had been assigned to the Underworld. And now, after all this time, to see his father, hear the words he had wanted to hear for so long spoken...it was all too much.

Astrid was his saving grace, sidling up to his side with Melinoe on her hip. Stoick blinked down at the little girl in his daughter-in-law's arms, the bright curls of red hair striking a cord in him. The big man cleared his throat once more.

"And um...who is this young lady?"

Astrid smiled and bounce Melinoe in her arms.

"This is Melinoe. Mel, this is your grandpa Stoick."

"Sto!"

Oh that was it. That little girl repeating his name broke everything that contributed to his usual stoick (haha, get it) demeanor, and the god of all gods cracked a smile and reached out with meaty hands.

"May I...?"

Astrid handed the little girl over with a cheerful "of course." Melinoe took to the big man immediately and amused herself with tugging on his long beard. Stoick didn't seem to mind, he was too busy laughing and bouncing the little girl. Hiccup seemed to snap from his trance when Astrid looped an arm through his and rested her head on his shoulder.

"I can't believe it." Hiccup whispered. "He actually came. And he's...smiling. And laughing."

"Our little girl sure is a charmer." Astrid teased, placing a kiss to her husband's bearded cheek. "Just like her daddy."

"Have I told you how much I love you today?"



"You have. But I won't mind hearing it again."

Hiccup placed a grateful kiss to her hair and removed his arm from her grasp to wrap around her waist.

"I love you. So so much."

"I love you too babe."

She kissed his shoulder and watched Stoick play with their daughter. It really was an amusing sight, a hulk of a man holding a tiny baby in his arms. And it was sweet. And what made it sweeter was that perfect moment when Melinoe turned to see her parents and pointed a finger at Hiccup to squeal out "dada!".

(...)

*He would lay his kingdom at her feet,*

*Drop to his knees where the stars and mountains lingered,*

*And offer himself up to her-*

*Unworthy, death incarnate-*

*He'd pluck every star from the sky,*

*Break down every wall,*

*To tell her that he could hardly breathe when she moved*

*And he would rather die than be without her.*

*He spent all his time dreaming, dreaming, dreaming.*

*That when she told him that she loved him, all he could say was,*

*I am unworthy but I will build and break and destroy and create for you*

*For you, I kneel.*

*For you, anything.*

*Everything.*

*Always.*

PSA: I did the math on Astrid's pregnancy: assuming she was 2 months pregnant when she found out, during the 5th month of Winter, then she would be *just* at 9 months by the next Winter. I cut it very close, I know.

Also yes, technically Hades' father ate him and his siblings and was chopped up to bits and cast into Tartarus...but we're just gonna ignore that.

# Chapter 5

## Chapter Summary

Hiccup and Melinoe are both missing Astrid.

## Chapter Notes

You didn't think that was the last chapter, did you? I'm not sure how many chapters this will be, but I may be slowing down with finals week coming up (Pre-Med is not a joke people) so I'm just going to play it by ear. If you have any prompts or suggestions please leave them in the comments and I'll try to make them happen!

*Promises you made to me*

*You said that you would stay with me*

*Whatever weather came our way*

*Promises you made to me*

*That we would walk, side by side*

*Through all the seasons of our lives*

*And face God, down any road*

*Any way the wind blows*

(...)

It was a difficult Spring. It had taken everything out of Astrid to leave her husband and little girl behind. Melinoe was almost two now, and the responsibility of caring for his daughter by himself was starting to weigh down on the King of the Underworld's shoulders. He loved Melinoe with all his heart, but they were called the terrible twos for a reason, and the child had the unfortunate combination of her mother's temper and her father's stubbornness. A late Spring flu had spread through the mortal world, and the work was long and tiring. Hiccup's parents tried to help, taking shifts in babysitting so Hiccup could work, but they were busy themselves. Valka had suggested Hiccup take his daughter to work with him, but he didn't want her exposed to all the death and sadness. He could wait a little longer to tell her what his job meant.

Toothless was a loyal guardian and a fierce protector of the little girl, but he couldn't cook her dinner or get her in the bath. Snotlout and Eret had tried their hand at watching her once. They all agreed it should never happen again. So the father was left to his own devices, now chasing the toddler around to try to get her in to bed. She had been fussy all day, and Hiccup was too exhausted to fight. He just kneeled on the floor and watched her run around, letting the girl tire herself out. It had been rough since Astrid had left, and the little girl was growing more restless by the day. Not that Hiccup could blame her. He felt the same way.

"Mel, sweetheart, do you think you could just put on your jammies for daddy?"

The girl giggled and sprinted over to her father and allowed him to pick her up, tugging on the braids at the nape of his neck.

"Don't wanna sleep!" she giggled. Hiccup sighed and tried to squeeze her into her pajamas.

"Why don't you want to sleep, baby? I know you're tired, you can't hide that from me."

The girl contemplated for a moment and pouted.

"Wanna sleep with you."

Hiccup was unable to resist his daughter's wishes and tucked himself and Melinoe into bed, the little girl snuggling into his chest. It was comforting, to have his daughter with him. Nights without Astrid were cold and lonely, and his cold heart warmed at the embrace of his daughter.

"Daddy?"

Hiccup was pulled from his thoughts and brushed some unruly red hair from his daughter's face. Those bright blue eyes were wide and it *hurt*, seeing the exact copy of Astrid stare up at him. He shook off his grief and kissed his daughter's forehead. She needed him, he couldn't let her see his sadness.

"Yes, flower?"

"When is mommy coming home?"

Oh, that. That just shattered his heart right there. Seeing his daughter look so hopeful, knowing Astrid wouldn't be home for another two months at least. He steeled his resolve and twisted a small braid into his daughter's hair, the same thing that Astrid had done to calm him.

"Soon."

Melinoe snuggled deeper into her father's hair, his thick beard tickling her cheek.

"I miss her."

She felt her father's arm around her and a kiss placed to her hair.

"Me too, sweetheart."

(...)

*Don't promise me fair sky above*

*Don't promise me kind road below*

*Just walk with me, my love*

*Any way the wind blows*

*I don't know where this road will end*

*But I'll walk with you into the wind*

(...)

Astrid's Spring was, at most, awkward. Her relationship with her mother had been strained since the announcement of her pregnancy with Melonie all that time ago. She kept her daughter under a curfew and demanded she stay in her mother's house. She had confiscated the phone and cut off all communication with her daughter. The only news she got were from the messengers that came to transport the souls to the Underworld. From what she gathered, Hiccup wasn't doing much better than her. She wasn't surprised- two year olds were notoriously difficult to deal with, especially the children of the gods. The mortals were grateful for the warm and fruitful spring, offering worship and gifts. She saved some for Melinoe, knowing the little goddess would appreciate presents.

She had retreated back to her room, purposefully avoiding her mother as she went. It had been a long day, and all she wanted to do was lie in bed and read a book and try to ignore the aching in her heart. When she heard the door creak, she didn't bother looking up, turning the page with too much force and sighing.

"Don't even bother, I don't want to talk to you."

"Now, is that any way to greet your husband after so many months?"

Astrid looked up in shock at the sound of the voice and bolted off the bed, throwing herself into her Husband's arms. He stumbled back and adjusted himself, bringing one arm to wrap around his wife's waist while he held a bundle against his chest with the other.

"Hiccup! What are you doing here, if she catches you-"

"I know, I know."

He pressed soothing kisses to her forehead and rubbed circles into her hip with his thumb.

"I couldn't wait any longer. And someone else wanted to see you too."

He pulled back to reveal the bundle in his arms, and Astrid felt tears prickle at her eyes. Melinoe was asleep, snuggled up to her father's chest and wrapped in a blanket. Astrid gasped and ran a hand through her daughter's fiery red hair.

"Oh my baby girl...I missed you so much. Both of you."

Hiccup held her close and pressed a kiss to the top of her head. Melinoe stirred in his arms and blinked the sleep from her eyes, glancing around blearily.

"Mommy...?"

"I'm here, sweetheart."

She took the little girl into her arms and pressed kisses all over her face, Melinoe clutching to her tightly. Hiccup wrapped the two girls in his arms as they sat on the edge of the bed. Astrid's smile faded just slightly and she glanced up at her husband with a worried expression.

"Hiccup...it's dangerous for you to be here. If my mother-"

"I'm not scared of your mother." Hiccup reassured her. Astrid raised an eyebrow.

"That's new."

Hiccup smiled sadly and idly ran his fingers through his wife's hair.

"You are the most important person to me, Astrid. I'd face any danger to get to you." He peppered a kiss to her cheek. "Even your mother."

Astrid smiled and rested her head on his shoulder, his arms securely around her and the toddler in her arms. Melinoe peeked up at them curiously.

"Mommy? Does this mean you're coming home?"

The couple exchanged nervous glances at the question. But before they could open their mouths to speak, there was the noise of someone clearing their throat at the door. Ingrid stood against the door frame, arms crossed as she stared at the couple. Astrid hugged Melinoe tighter to her chest as she met Ingrid's icy gaze.

"Mother-"

Ingrid held up a hand and stopped her speaking, Hiccup's arms tightening possessively around the girls.

"Save it. Mr. Haddock, if you would join me in the hall."

Hiccup gave Astrid's concerned gaze a reassuring smile and a peck on the lips, ruffling his daughter's hair as he stood.

"It's gonna be okay. I'll be back in a minute."

The God of Death followed his mother in law into the hall where she stood, tapping her foot impatiently. He took a deep breath before speaking, green eyes meeting her chilling stare.

"Look, Ingrid I know that you don't like me here, but I had to do what's best for my daughter. Believe me, I had no intention of-"

"Take her home."

"And y'know, I really didn't have a choice- wait. What?"

"Take Astrid home, Mr. Haddock."

Hiccup was baffled by her words, eyes blowing wide in shock.

"But- how-why-"

"You knew what would happen if you came here, you knew I could have done horrible things to you. And yet you came anyway. And I heard every word of your conversation, Mr. Haddock. I may not like you very much, but my daughter loves you. And that little girl needs to be with her mother."

"Thank you, Ingrid. I. I don't know what to say."

"I will only allow it this one time, Mr. Haddock. And if I catch you here again, I will not hesitate to turn you into a field of wheat. Are we understood?"

Hiccup nodded, mouth dry.

"Yes, ma'am."

"Good. Now get out of my house."

"Ingrid, what about the mortals?"

The goddess shrugged and waved her hand in the air.

"Men are fools. I'll tell them that since a groundhog saw it's shadow, Winter will come early."

"And they'll believe that...?"

"Mortals will believe anything. Now go, before I make good on my promise."

Hiccup didn't need to be told twice, rushing back to the room. Astrid looked up with that same worried gaze, holding Melinoe close.

"Well?"

Hiccup smiled and pressed a swift, lingering kiss to her lips.

"Pack your things, Milady."

"Are you serious?"

"She promised to turn me into a field of wheat if I show up here again. But she's letting you go early, just this once."

Astrid's face broke into a wide grin and she rushed to pack her things. She placed sweet kisses all over her husband and bounced and tickled their daughter, following in his stride back home. And when the mortals up above noticed the early end to Spring, those that believed in the true gods looked on and smiled, knowing Astrid had found her way home once more.

(...)

*I can't promise you fair sky above*

*Can't promise you kind road below*

*But I'll walk with you, my love*

*Any way the wind blows*

*Do you let me walk with you?*

*And keep on walking, come what will?*

*I will*

*I will*

*We will*



# Chapter 6

## Chapter Summary

Melinoe wants a specific bedtime story.

## Chapter Notes

Edit: I moved the lyrics from Chapter 3 to the end of this chapter, it fit better with the prompt. I did put a different poem in the end of that chapter, so if you want to check it out, head on over to Ch.3

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

*Cause here's the thing:*

*To know how it ends*

*And still begin to sing it again*

*As if it might turn out this time*

*I learned that from a friend of mine*

*Can you see it?*

*Can you hear it?*

*Can you feel it like a train?*

*Is it coming?*

*Is it coming this a-way?*

(...)

It started as a simple request. A bed time story, one to fuel childish wonder and send the little girl off to the land of dreams. But not just any story. The little girl knew what she wanted this time, not just a generic "tell me a story, daddy," this was a specific request, spoken with purpose and determination.

"Tell me the story of Fishlegs and Heather, daddy."

That made the god freeze. He didn't know his child even knew who they were, let alone would want to hear the story behind the names. He planned on waiting to tell her until she was older. Maybe never at all. He hesitated for a long while rubbed a hand on his beard.

"How...how do you know about that?"

Melinoe shrugged from under her blankets, blue eyes curious and twinkling.

"I met her in Aphodel. She was really nice. And really pretty."

"When- when did you go there?"

His daughter flashed a toothy grin.

"Aunt Ruff took me the last time she came over. She's really cool, daddy."

Hiccup stifled a groan. Ruffnut was not exactly an ideal babysitter, but desperate times call for desperate measures. He made a mental note to have a talk with her later. For right now, he knew he couldn't say no when his daughter looked at him like that.

"It's not a happy story." the god sighed. Again, his daughter just shrugged. Gods, just like her father.

"Please, daddy?"

The god let out another sigh and tucked his daughter in a bit more snug.

"Okay. Okay. Once upon a time, there was a mortal man named Fishlegs..."

(...)

It had started like any other day. It was during the Winter, some time after Astrid had become his wife. Melinoe was just an idea at this point, no larger. It was hard to pinpoint the exact time- the gods weren't the best at keeping track of the calendar. Everything tends to become lumped together after a few millennia. It was a slow day for business, just a few souls, mostly older mortals who hadn't made it through the chill of the winter, and one girl, maybe in her mid twenties. She was pretty, by mortal standards- black hair standing out against pale skin and green eyes, not as green as Hiccup's, a bit darker and more dull. She had gone to Asphodel like most of them, and Hiccup let the thought from her slip from his mind.

Hiccup had settled in his office for the day, drawing up new designs and signing paperwork. Even the God of Death had a mountain of it, and it wasn't going to sign itself. Astrid had left him to his work and was probably playing with Toothless or tending to her gem garden. Hiccup had smiled at the thought of at least one of them having a nice day off. But just as he got into the swing of things, a knock came at his door. The god groaned and muttered a gruff "come in," turning around in his chair and putting down his pen. His main messenger, a portly god named Gobber burst through the door, face red and panting.

"Hiccup- you'd better come quick." the big man blurted. Hiccup stood and pulled on his jacket- he'd never seen Gobber this distraught. The men talked as they walked, Gobber going

faster than he'd ever done.

"Gobber, what happened? Is Astrid alright?"

"She's fine, lad. But there's something you need teh see."

The god let the muscles his relax just slightly. If this was just a matter of business, he could handle it. Gobber led him to a small enclosure, where a spirit was sitting on the bench and fidgeting nervously. He was huskier and blonde, and...normal. He didn't have the same pale translucence that spirits had, nor the subtle glow of a god. This was...a man. A human. A mortal. The man seemed frightened when he caught Hiccup's eye, giving out a little squeak.

"We found 'im sneaking in through the back gate." Gobber reported.

Hiccup peered at the mortal below him, green gaze seeming to bore into his soul.

"What's your name?"

"Fishlegs." the boy squeaked out. Hiccup sighed and knelt in front of the bench.

"And what are you doing down here, Fishlegs?"

The man seemed to find his resolve, pulling a brave face and sitting up straighter.

"I came to retrieve my lost love. Heather. She. She died, not long ago."

The God of Death sighed. He was afraid of hearing that. It was impossible to come back to the mortal world unless the spirit was sent to Elysium, and the girl had already been sorted to Asphodel. There was no hope of return unless Hiccup broke some serious codes. Of course, he was the King of the Underworld, so it could be done. But there could be serious consequences, for both the mortal and the god. And he couldn't give in to the request.

"Fishlegs...I can't bring her back. I'm sorry."

"No! You took her from me, you can give her back!"

The god was taken aback by the sudden exclamation from the otherwise quiet man. Fishlegs stood, fists balled at his side, and stared down the King before him. Hiccup stood and brought a hand out to Gobber's chest, stopping the portly god from stepping forward. No mortal dared to raise their voice against a god- especially the God of Death.

"Fishlegs..."

"Do you have any idea how hard it was to get down here, to find you? I'm a librarian, I'm not an adventurer! I walked through snow, almost got eaten by your dog, and had to fight for attention just to talk to you! I went through all of that for her, you owe me."

Hiccup let out a heavy sigh and made a small nod.

"Okay. Okay, just. Wait here, okay? Let me talk to some people first. I'll see what I can do. Gobber, stay with him."

The messenger god nodded and clapped an arm on the mortal's shoulder, muttering something in his ear as Hiccup walked away. He went to find his brother first, knowing Astrid would be upset that he didn't come to her right away. But this was a complicated question, and he needed a subjective answer. The King of the Gods would know best. He got a message to Eret and soon found himself back at his kitchen table, staring at his brother as the god contemplated the story.

"It's...a difficult decision." he concluded. Hiccup couldn't help but roll his eyes.

"Gee, I hadn't noticed."

Eret sighed at his brother's sarcasm and scratched his head.

"Here's the problem, brother: if you tell him no, you'd be crushing the poor boy's heart. I wouldn't mind doing it of course, death is death. But I know you don't want him to go through any more pain. And on top of that, you'd be creating a martyr. The mortals won't be pleased."

"So you're saying I should let them go."

"You can't do that either. Then your authority would be brought into question, you'll have mortals at your door every day, asking for their loved ones that."

"So I'm stuck then."

"I'm afraid so. Have you asked Astrid?"

The God of Death faltered and shook his head. His brother squeezed his shoulder in that familiar way.

"Ask her. Find out what she thinks. Gods know, she's smarter than both of us combined."

Hiccup nodded and left to find his wife when his brother vanished. She was in his study, helping to finish the paperwork. He smiled then, seeing her there, face scrunched up in concentration. He placed a kiss to her temple and sat in the chair next to her.

"Afternoon, Milady."

Astrid turned to him and smiled that dazzling smile, and it made his heart flutter in his chest.

"Hey, babe. Where'd you run off to?"

"Oh, Eret and I had to talk about some work stuff. He just left."

"So soon? That couldn't have been a long visit."

Hiccup grinned and pulled his wife into his lap, silencing her with kisses as she laughed.

"I needed a minute alone to speak with my most trusted adviser."

Astrid quirked a blonde eyebrow as she wrapped her arms around her husband's neck, his arms coming around to her waist.

"Oh? You don't usually talk about work with me."

Hiccup sighed, and Astrid saw the worry in his eyes and brought up a hand to brush the stray hairs from his face.

"What's wrong, babe?"

The god focused his gaze down to the floor, thumbs rubbing absent-minded circles into her hips as she twisted braids into his hair.

"A mortal man found his way down here. He came in through the back gate. He wants me to let him leave with his dead love."

The goddess hummed and focused on the braids.

"What did Eret say about this?"

"He says I'm stuck. If I say no, I'll break his heart and make the mortals angry. If I say yes, I lose my authority."

"Hmm. And what do *you* think you should do?"

She brought her gaze up to meet his again and he faltered.

"I...I don't know. He looked so heartbroken, Astrid. I can't just do nothing."

She thought for a moment, finishing up the braids and returning her hands to her husband's face, methodically trying to keep his unruly hair out of his eyes.

"You're a good man, Hiccup. I know you want to give them a chance, but sometimes...sometimes there's nothing we can do but let them try on their own."

"What do you mean?"

"Let him decide his own fate. Give him a chance to at least try. Make a deal: if he can walk out of here with her behind him, they can leave together. But if he turns around at any point, she stays."

"Astrid, that's...I don't know. It seems risky."

She cupped his cheek and placed a sweet kiss to his forehead.

"It's the only way, my love. Just give him the chance."

(...)

"He didn't make it, did he?"

The little voice pulled Hiccup from his thoughts, and the father shook his head with a small smile.

"No, he didn't."

Blue eyes peered up at him with curiosity, a little dim as sleep made its way over the little girl.

"What happened?"

Hiccup sighed and brushed the hair from her forehead.

"He...he got scared, I think. He almost made it out, but at the last second, he turned around. She was there the whole time, right behind him. He was just too worried not to look."

"That's sad."

"It is. But he understood the rules."

The little girl nodded, finally letting her eyes close.

"At least he tried."

The god nodded and gave his daughter a goodnight kiss.

"Yes, he did, and that's what's important."

"Goodnight, daddy."

"Goodnight, sweetheart."

(...)

*On a sunny day there was a railroad car*

*And a lady stepping stepping off a train*

*Everybody looked and everybody saw*

*That spring had come again*

*With a love song*

*With a tale of a love that never dies*

*With a love song*

*For anyone who tries*

## Chapter End Notes

I couldn't resist putting in the tale of Orpheous and Eurydice, I need to stop listening to so much Hadestown. Also I really hope you guys liked this chapter, it took a decent 4 hours to write (I kept getting distracted by Tik Toks). Don't forget to comment any prompts you would like me to make happen!

# And That is How it Ends

## Chapter Summary

It's an old song. It's an old tale from way back when. It's a sad song. And this is how it ends.

## Chapter Notes

Sorry for the hiatus! I had a serious case of writer's block and have been super busy with school, but I thought you all deserved a happy ending. Enjoy the last chapter!

It's a well known fact that gods can't die. They're immortal, that's the whole point. But they can step down. Retire. Take on a mortal form and move to an island on the edge of the world for the rest of eternity. And most gods do, unless you're the type that prefers to eat his own children in order to stay in power. But that's only a select few. Most just stick to the island thing, or join the Peace Corps or take up figure skating.

It took Hiccup and Astrid a while to finally make the decision to retire. They had agreed previously to wait for Melinoe to turn at least 100, and they almost made it. But it became obvious that she was ready. And let's be honest, being a god is exhausting. It seemed like now, Hiccup couldn't go a single day without saying

"I am so *tired*."

And he was. It seemed like every day had a hundred new souls he had to take care of, and there was always some problem he needed to fix. Melinoe had taken on some responsibility, and the help was appreciated, but let's face it, Hiccup was getting old. 6,000 years is a long time to be King of the Underworld. Especially when half of all those years are away from Astrid. So the time came to have "the talk." Hiccup had sat down with his daughter in his office and watched her nervously fidget like she thought she was in trouble. It just made him smile, to see that her nervous tendencies so perfectly reflected her mother's. Gods he missed her. <

"Sweetheart," said Hiccup. "You're not in trouble. I just want to talk."

Melinoe managed to contain a sigh of relief and visibly relaxed.

"Oh. What do you want to talk about? If this is about the birds and the bees-"



"No, no, no, no. Gods no."

Hiccup ran a hand through his hair and sighed. There wasn't really an easy way to say it. So he just blurted it out.

"I'm retiring."

It would be an under-exaggeration to say that Melinoe was shocked. It was as if someone had struck her with a lightning bolt, and maybe some did, because she stood right up and could do nothing but stare as she processed her father's words. And once she had...well, let's just say she took after her father in some aspects.

"You what? You, you can't retire, I'm not ready! Can't you just take a vacation, or appoint someone else to be in charge for a while, I'm not responsible enough-"

"You are," Hiccup assured her as he stood up and took his daughter's hands. "You're ready. I trust you."

*"But why now? When we're so busy-"*

"That's exactly why I need to leave. I believe that you can handle this by yourself. You don't need me anymore."

"But-"

"Melinoe." The god of the dead let out a sigh and squeezed his daughter's hands. "I'm tired. I miss your mother. But most importantly, I know that you are ready for this. You were born to do this. This is who you're meant to be."

The goddess's eyes began to water and she turned her gaze to the ground.

"What if I'm not good enough?"

"You are. I promise."

Melinoe let out a small nod before wrapping her arms around her father's neck and pulling him into an embrace. Hiccup placed a light kiss to the top of her head and held his daughter close.

"Promise you'll come back to visit." she whispered. Hiccup sniffed and tried and failed to suppress the proud tears welling in his eyes.

"I promise. You're going to be great."

"I love you. Say hi to mom for me."

"I love you too. And I will."

That was the last interaction Hiccup had with his daughter before he left. The process was fairly quick- a small coronation ceremony, some bestowing of gifts from relatives. Then

Hiccup was on a train with a full heart and Toothless at his side. And for the first time in years, the god of the dead stepped foot onto living soil. It was there that he saw her, harvesting fruit from a tree and placing them in a basket. She was as beautiful as she was all those years ago when they had met, on the night of his most treasured birthday in all 6,000 years. All Hiccup could do was stand and stare. The thought of spending the rest of eternity with the woman he loved, above ground where she belonged, was too much for him.

Of course, like all peaceful moments in his life, it was quickly interrupted by the barking of a certain three-headed-dog. There was no hope to reign Toothless in as he bounded towards Astrid, demanding to be pet. Hiccup was helpless in watching his queen laugh and give in to the dog's demands, bending down to pet him with her free hand. The god could not respond as he heard her melodic voice speaking.

"What are you doing up here, huh? Where's your owner?"

Toothless could only respond with a bark and turned his three heads towards the stricken Hiccup. Astrid followed his gaze and gasped as she saw her husband, above ground, standing like a statue. The basket of fruit slipped from her hand, which led Toothless into a frenzy as he scurried to collect the fruit. Neither Astrid nor Hiccup seemed to realize, and could only stare at each other.

"It's you." Astrid whispered.

"It's me." Hiccup hoarsely replied. His spell seemed to have worn off a bit, and he was able to once again think and speak coherently. He watched as Astrid slowly stood, neither of them daring to believe their eyes.

"Hiccup."

"Astrid."

Both of the gods seemed to melt, and the two of them made their way over to each other until they were again face to face. Astrid held her husband's face in her hands and examined him, as if he were just some figment of her imagination.

"You're early."

Hiccup's face melted into a soft smile as he regained control of his hands, placing them over his wife's. Whatever happened from now on, they would be together, with nothing and no one there to separate them. Their love would bring the world back into tune and bring back an endless spring. The mortals would go on to tell stories of their gods of the underworld and springtime, of death and life. The gods would sing a song of love. And the world would sing it with them.

"I missed you."

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!