

## Chapter 10

We still didn't know what Pitch and the sk\*walker wanted with Catori, but one thing was for sure, we needed to get her back to safety.

Heath, Eshe, Akilina, and I went back to the Hopi reservation to check things out and see if we could find any clues, whatever could lead us to Pitch.

As we made our way through the reservation, Eshe's face fell, there was so little plant life. There were weeds growing from impossible crevices, and maybe some flowers and cacti. She had to stop a few times to help some plants grow and blossom. Bless her heart, she saw potential in every plant she saw, she and Heath worked together regularly, especially in the fall, during the harvest season.

While they went about helping around, Akilina and I continued with the mission.

"When did you start crushing on a summer spirit?" Akilina's voice broke the silence. I gave her a perplexed look.

"Wh-what?" She shook her head.

"I know you, Jack, you have feelings for her." She stated, spreading her wings, giving them a stretch. I rolled my eyes.

"I don't know what you're talking about." Akilina laughed.

"Oh please Jack, come on, you have feelings for her." I ignored her goading for me to confess, I wasn't telling anyone, I was keeping it to myself.

As we walked, I noticed how quiet it was. I barely heard any cars, or kids laughing and screaming, nothing. It was eerie, and I didn't like it, and I don't think Catori did either, based on her expression the first time we entered here. I knew she hated how things turned out for her people, and I felt terrible. It definitely wasn't Burgess, and I couldn't help but wonder what Jamie was up to. A er all of this, I'd go and visit him.

I heard a hissing behind me, and Akilina was gone, probably flew o to go look at something. But there was the skinwalker in her place, looking smug, proud of herself. I jumped a little at her presence.

"Frost?" She asked, her voice was heavy but feminine. Her eyes glinted, they didn't seem evil to me, just... lost, I suppose. I held out my sta in a defensive position, but she barely reacted to it.

"What do you want?" She gave me a knowing smile.

"You're looking for your girlfriend, huh?" I made a face.

"W-what? Girlfriend? She's- not my girlfriend." She chuckled.

"Oh please. The way she talks about you, even when possessed she talks about you like you're an old married couple." I wasn't sure if she was trying to play with my emotions or if she was telling the truth.

"I don't believe you. Now, what did you do with my friend?" I asked firmly.

"Pitch wants her for her powers. She's got a lot of anger inside. It's funny, it always seems like 15-year-olds are always angry." She laughed to herself as if she'd made a joke, "Ah, I remember those days."

I made another face, she talked about Catori like they were old friends or frenemies, I don't know, it was weird.

"Why are you working with Pitch? What's your reason?" Our first encounter with her had been weird, and this wasn't any better.

"Why does that matter to you?" She began to circle me, like a vulture circling prey. She was vicious...

"Because I want to know what kind of "good" Pitch could possibly o er you. He's the King of Nightmares, he can't o er anyone any good."

"Maybe you just haven't gone through the kind of pain I have." She replied, suddenly angry.

"You're not making any sense," I replied.

"I didn't wish to become a skinwalker!" She snapped, getting right in my face, "and for sure Catori didn't ask to become a spirit wandering the earth forever. Our people have a place to go when we die, and it's certainly not your "heaven" that you white people preach about."

"W-whuh?"

"Since the day Columbus landed, the native people have su ered under the plight of the white people. I hate them, I hate you, and maybe Pitch o ered me a way to destroy every single one of you." I was shocked. I knew Catori was angry about what had happened to her family, and her people, but she wasn't destructive...

I backed away from her, but she began to follow me. As I took o , she transformed into an owl and followed me, there was no way for me to lose her!

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