

## Chapter 17

Months passed without hearing from the Guardians. I didn't mind though, as Bluebird remarked I was back to my normal self.

During a few months, I got to know Kim and Jacob. They were absolutely darling and getting to know them, they told me all about their family and they could apparently trace their family back to one man. They said they couldn't remember his name, it had gotten lost in the family record. I assured them it was okay.

They even asked if it was likely I knew their ancestor, "I would have to see a picture of them to be sure. I won't know them unless I have a name or a picture." I had told them.

It'd been a few weeks since I asked them to find a picture of their supposed ancestor. It was alright though, they were Hopi regardless. Though it was odd, I saw a lot of my youngest brother, Hania, in them both. Both in personality and appearance, especially in Jacob. I didn't want to raise any suspicion yet without having proof.

I lost track of Hania by around 1899. I le for a week to join Heath on some trip he wanted to take me on, and by the time I got home, he was gone. The struggle was even worse because there was no physical way for me to ask anybody if they'd seen him. And even if I was alive by then, nobody would listen to a Native girl. Still, nobody does in this day and age.

Despite spending time with the kids, I found myself thinking about Jack more and more, wondering if he was alright, where he was, what he was up to... and if he missed me.

I missed him. More than I thought I did. I knew that he didn't hate me and he forgave me, but it'd been so so long since I'd seen him, and I knew he was the kind of spirit to follow, see how things were, make sure everything was okay.

I certainly didn't think he'd give that up because of me, right?

I didn't know. I didn't even think I wanted to go looking for him. If he wanted to see me, if he cared about me, he would've done it by now. A er all, it'd been 7 months since I saw him. 7 months. Winter doesn't last that long.

A er spending another day with them, and introducing them to a couple of Mark Twain books I'd loved when they were first published, I made my way back home, being sure to take the long way back and appreciate the peaceful quietness out here. Little to no light or sound pollution. Heaven on earth for me.

However, as I got closer and closer to home, I felt the ground become cold beneath my feet. I saw ice trails leading up to my adobe.

No. Absolutely not. No.

I ignited my hand, ready for a fight, knowing an intruder was here, I didn't want to believe it was Jack. I blocked the thought out of my head as I made my way up the ladder and through a porthole into one of the main rooms, following the trail of ice.

"Show yourself!" I shouted, "I won't hesitate-" My fire was blown out by a gust of wind, but I quickly reignited my hand again.

"Who's there!" I shouted once more. I saw a figure leap above the porthole and I heard the clatter of wood on stone and someone cursing in response.

What the hell?

I climbed out and caught the figure right before they took o . The moment I saw the sta , I relaxed just a little, but not enough that I wasn't prepared for anything.

"Jack. I'm not blind. Turn around." I said to him in a stern voice. He hesitated before doing so. But, when he looked up, they were not the crystal blue eyes he had. No, no they were blood red. And blood dripped from his mouth, his teeth were pointy and a hiss emitted from him.

My jaw dropped and I lost my footing as Jack transformed into Nascha, her owl wings spread wide, mouth open and ready to attack, screeching bloody murder. And right before I hit the ground, it all went black.

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