

Chapter 21

I woke up feeling quite rested. I sat up and stretched and noticed I was still wearing his sweatshirt, which remained surprisingly cool.

"I figured you'd probably need it more than me." I saw him sitting across from the bed, with a light blue short-sleeved shirt, "I'm always cold, and I know you're hot..." He snickered at his use of words and I threw his sweatshirt at his face for it.

"Grow up." I rolled my eyes and tried to hide my smile, but I was obviously failing horribly. I then noticed the cactus flower he had in his hands, he gestured for me to sit by him and so I did, he surprised me by pulling up my hair in an elegant fashion and pinning the flower, the edges of the petals decorated with frost, in my hair with frost to keep it up. I smiled and touched the flower delicately.

We smiled at each other, and he sat up to kiss my cheek, a move that made my cheeks flare-up. He laughed.

"You look cute when you blush."

"Stop it..."

There was a pregnant pause before Jack broke the silence with a question.

"Could I ask you something?" I glanced at him and nodded.

"Of course."

"I know we've only really started getting to know each other in the past year, but in the times we've met before Pitch came back... why'd you resent me so much? From the moment we first met I thought you would burn a hole into my body with those eyes of yours." I pursed my lips.

"I don't think resent is the right word, Jack." I began, "I just- at first y'know, I didn't really know how to function around others. It was mostly social awkwardness and I cope with it horribly." I frowned and shrugged a little. But I saw him nod as if he agreed with me. He laid on his back, crossing his arms behind his head, staring at the ceiling, and I joined him.

"I can relate to social awkwardness. Even though I'm friends with Akilina, Eshe, and Heath and other spirits, I was pretty much ignored for 300 years. Nobody likes the one in charge of winter. Cold, dreary, dark... lonely. That repels." He turned his head to face me.

"Considering that I'm surprised you were almost as lonely as I was, and you're a summer spirit." I shook my head.

"It's not that... it's because I have fire powers, and I come from the desert. The desert and fire aren't exactly what comes to mind when people think of summer. They think of a tropical island, somewhere in the Caribbean or somewhere in the Pacific, like Hawai'i. Vibrant colors, palm trees, beaches, sand, and the like."

As we talked, I understood that we were both broken, and lonely, and being able to look to each other was a great source of comfort. I never thought I'd confide in a winter spirit, but you know? I didn't mind.

Then I thought of a question I had for him.

"Are there more spirits like us?" He raised an eyebrow.

"What do you mean?"

"Like, more spirits connected to a specific season? Obviously, you're the figurehead of

winter, Heath is the figurehead of autumn, Eshe with spring, and me with summer. But are there other spirits connected to each season? If there are, I've never met them." Jack smiles a little and nods, chuckling a bit.

"Oh, there are, most aren't particularly friendly though. None of them can ever get along. Some have ganged up on me in the past." I give him an alarmed look, he gives an apologetic look in response, "It's nothing to be concerned about! By default, I'm far more powerful than they realize," he trails off explaining the whole situation to me, but all I can think of is that I don't think Jack really knows how powerful he is...

"... and that was that." He finished.

"In reality, the only seasonal spirits that won't bother you or me are Eshe and Heath." I nod and agree with him. Eshe was like a mother to me in a way, and Heath was like an older brother. And now that I had Jack... a romantic partner.

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