

## AMAZON RAINFOREST, 1800

a<sup>3</sup>

## AURORA

He covers my eyes, his hands warm against the cold around us.

"Druig, I can't see anything" I laugh out between stumbles, holding out my arms to steady myself.

From behind me, he laughs. I can almost see him shaking his head like he always does.

"That is kind of the point, isn't it?" He points out as he leads me through the Forest. I can hear the crunching of our feet on the ground as we continue forward, through god knows where.

"Where are you taking me?" I ask, my hands going to cover his own. a<sup>4</sup>

"Just wait a few moments and you'll see" He motions me to move slightly to the right, and I can feel as we round a small curve before we finally come to a stop.

"Alright. We're here. Keep your eyes closed, I'm taking away my hands" I nod, shutting my eyes as he takes his hands away.

"Keep them closed, Aurora!" He warns. He knows I'm capable of sneaking a peek.

"I will, I will!" I laugh out, shaking my head.

He moves around, the leaves rustling and crunching as he steps on them. He stops moving. I can feel his arm energy a few steps away.

"Alright. You can open them now"

I breathe in slowly, opening my eyes slowly.

He stands in front of me, staring right into me. He moves back and forth on the balls of his feet, clearly nervous.

I smile at the sight of him, still completely in love. a<sup>5</sup>

I take a moment to look around me, noticing that we're a little away from the village, surrounded by only trees and a small trail on the ground leading us back to the town.

"You know what today is, right, Aurora?" Druig's voice makes me look back at him.

My eyebrows rise with amusement.

Of course I know.

"Hmmm" I frown, feigning being confused. "It's Wednesday?" I ask, pursing my lips.

His smile fades, his eyebrows falling.

I chuckle, shaking my head and reaching out to him.

"I'm kidding, I'm kidding. I know what today is" I laugh out as I grab his face in my hands. He grumbles under his breath, a frown on his face as I lean in to kiss him.

"It's not funny, you know," He says, accent thick, but I can see the hint of a smile returning on his face. a<sup>6</sup>

I roll my eyes, laughing.

"Well," He continues. "I was wondering what was something you'd like, and then I figured it out" He moves to the side, revealing a big tree behind him.

I look at him, smiling before I turn back to the tree, actually realizing what it is.

I still entirely, my heart swelling. I look up slowly, following the ladder that leads up the tree and into the top. From here, I can see a small wooden platform resting on one of the thick branches.

My hand goes to my mouth, eyes widening.

"Is it...?" I whisper, my voice filled with emotion.

He breaks out into a smile, his eyes scrunching up.

"It is"

"Oh, Druig" I turn to look back up to the tree and then back down to him.

"I saw that you'd been climbing up trees, so I thought why not just make it easier. That way we can go up together" He explains, motioning up to the tree. a<sup>7</sup>

I laugh, unable to contain my tears. Before I know it I'm lunging at him, colliding with him with a force that sends up stumbling back a few steps. He chuckles, his arms going around my waist as I hug him around his neck.

"I love you so much, Druig" I tilt my head back to kiss his cheek over and over. "This is the best gift I've ever been given in my entire life."

And it was. It really was. No one had ever put this much thought into giving me something.

He kisses my forehead, smiling down at me.

"Happy anniversary, my love" a<sup>8</sup>

I smile at his words, grabbing the side of his face and standing on my tiptoes to give him a slow kiss.

"Happy anniversary, D" I whisper, staring into his eyes. a<sup>9</sup>

For a moment it's like nothing else exists. I take this small moment, suspended in time, to think about the past hundred years we'd spent together. We'd been through so much. We'd grown and laughed and made wonderful memories here in the village.

I thought about how long we'd come. From detecting each other to not being able to be apart. I laughed to myself at the thought of the rest of the team finding out that we'd been together.

Hell, if Druig and Aurora from three thousand years ago would have seen us now.

He pulls away from the hug, holding my hand in his as he leads us to the base of the tree. He motions at me to go first.

"Ladies first" I roll my eyes. He'd always made sure I was in front of him. Even after 100 years he never stopped taking care of me. a<sup>10</sup>

I let go of his hand, hoisting myself up into the ladder. Below me, I hear as Druig grabs onto the ladder as well, climbing up below me.

I pause, an annoyed smile overcoming my face.

"You're staring at my ass, aren't you?" I ask, a knowing tone in my voice. a<sup>11</sup>

Silence.

"You know I am" He finally says, smugness radiating off him in waves. a<sup>12</sup>

I roll my eyes before finally hoisting myself up into the small platform. It's small but big enough for the both of us to move around if we wanted to.

My smile widens as I see a blanket, two mugs filled with what I assume is hot chocolate steaming in the cold November air.

I turn around, watching as Druig climbs the rest of the way and meets me at the top.

"Do you like it?" He asks, digging his hands into his pant pockets.

"Like it?" I turn from the view to him, smiling. "I love it." I walk to him, running a hand through his hair.

"And I love you," Druig responds, leaning down to kiss me. a<sup>13</sup>

We stay there for god knows how long; talking about ever-changing topics and watching as the sun went down.

We sat there together, with me between his arms. It seemed amazing to me how even though we'd been together for 100 years, I still discovered that with every day that passed, I loved him more.

I'd been alive for thousands of years, but sitting here, in his presence, I realized I hadn't been living at all until now.

"Don't you think it's funny—" I start once the conversation had died down. He hums, letting me know he's listening. "—That we really did end up finding our way back to each other."

He looks down at me then, his eyes filled with the love and warmth of a hundred years.

"You know Aurora, whether it's one year or a thousand, I'll always find my way back to you" a<sup>14</sup>

It's all I need to hear to know that I made the right choice coming with him all those years ago.

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