

PRESENT DAY

IRAQ

AURORA

I watch from beside him as his eyes flash bright gold.

On the outside of the car I can see the geologists drop their tools, all of them possessed by Druig. They stand up from their crouching positions, making beelines for their own cars and leaving the compound in a trance.

We exit the car silently, with me pulling out my sunglasses and putting my hair into a high ponytail to avoid getting it tangled in the desert wind.

Druig stands beside me, waiting for me to close the car door. He'd put on his leather jacket, though why don't know, because it was boiling hot out here.

While he was wearing all black, I was sporting mostly beige and lighter colors. It amazed me how even though we seemed to be polar opposites, we still fit almost perfectly.

I had beige belled jeans, paired with a loose white t-shirt. I didn't really care if it got dirty at some point, I liked it and so that was that.

"Don't you want to take o your jacket?" I voice my confusion as I look at him up and down.

He smiles, shaking his head. "I'm good, Rory"

We follow Phastos, sticking to the back of the group as he finally comes to a stop and pulls out his device. He turns it on and then finally looks in front of him.

For a moment, nothing happens.

And then the ground shakes, and the dirt a couple of meters in front of us sinks, shaking and disappearing to reveal a slick black surface engraved with golden spirals.

I can't hold o a smile as I see the Domo rise so majestically into the sky.

The air ru les my ponytail, and I'm grateful I tied it up.

From beside me, Karun stares at the Domo in awe, looking up at it with his video camera as if it were a phenomenon.

"The Domo" He whispers in amazement.

I chuckle, digging my hands into the back of my jeans.

"Wait until you see it from the inside, Karun. It's even better" I answer, turning to him.

His eyes go wide, and he smiles giddily, the camera still high in the air.

"Come on, Karun!" Kingo yells, making a motion for him to follow. Karun springs into action, jogging to catch up to Kingo as all of us file into the entrance of the ship.

I take a final look, Druig waiting beside me. Then I turn, ru ling his hair out of habit and laughing.

"it's good to be home, isn't it?" I ask. The Domo brought thousands of memories. Memories with all the team. Of the first time Druig and I had met. Of us hating each other through the years.

He smiles back, chuckling faintly. It makes my heart do summersaults.

"It sure is" He takes a few steps forward before stopping, hesitating for a moment before going in, looking back at me.

Then he holds out his hand, waiting for me to take it.

I stand still for a moment, not really sure as to what to do.

Sure, I'd forgiven him, and he'd been there all the time for me since I'd gone back to the Amazon, but that didn't mean we were back together. We hadn't even talked about what was going to happen. About where we stood.

Still, everything in me that had missed him so much all those years pushed me to take his hand.

And so I took it.

I see his face break into relief as I take it, his big hand enveloping my smaller one.

"For a moment there I thought you weren't going to take it and that I was going to look like an idiot" He admits, accent thick on his words as he takes the lead.

I chuckle, following the entire team as we enter the dark hallway.

"I wasn't going to" I shrug. "But I felt back for you so I took it" I joke.

He looks back at me, not processing whether I'm joking or not. When he realizes I am, he rolls his eyes.

"You really are a mean person, Aurora" He mumbles, but still holds my hand.

I chuckle, squeezing his hand for a moment.

"I try, D. I try"

I look around the ship, my face breaking out into a bigger smile as we near into the main room.

Classical music blares through the ship, echoing through the empty hallways.

Mozart.

She'd been listening to my recommendations, then.

I let go of Druig's hand, walking faster until I can see Makkari.

Waving so that she knows I'm here, she looks up from her book, her smile widening at my sight.

"My girl!" I exclaim happily, running over and giving her a tight hug.

She smiles, hugging me back just as tight.

I pull back, grabbing her face with both of my hands and kissing her on both her cheeks.

" I've missed you MaK I sign, giving her another hug before pulling back .

" I've missed you too, A she signs back. She points to the book she was reading. "I was reading Pride and Prejudice. It's a really good book"

" I know right I sign back. " Janie was an incredible author"

I finally catch on that the rest of the team is standing there, all of us looking at our interaction with curiosity.

"I wasn't aware you two guys got along this much" Phastos notes, looking from Makkari to me and then back.

I smile, nudging Makkari with my hips. She chuckles silently, shaking her head in amusement.

"It's been a while, but she visits Africa o en" I explain. I can see Druig's questioning glance, and I roll my eyes playfully.

"This is Makkari" Kingo introduces to the camera as Karun records. "None of us have seen her for centuries"

"Hey!" I call out, throwing him a stu ed pillow. "I have"

She smiles happily, looking at all of us.

"Is it time to go home no?" She signs.

I purse my lips at her signs, my smile dwindling.

She pauses for a few moments, scanning all of our expressions. Her big smile fades slightly, and she tilts her head back in frustration as she realizes we're not going home.

I walk around the lab with laziness, scanning everything that Makkari has filled it with over the years.

Trailing my hand through relics and books and strange figurines, I shake my head at how Makkari has managed to steal all of this.

All the things in here seemed to be connected to places we'd been together in the past.

I gasp as I remember something that might be found here, smiling and looking around to find Druig.

He's looking around the room as well, gazing at the big towers of books and structures in amazement.

"D!" I call out to him, catching up.

He turns, eyebrows creasing.

"Do you remember, Germany 1432." We stand face to face, with him catching on to my every word intently. "When you put me to sleep" I explain, not really fond of that memroy.

He laughs, laughter making his eyes scrunch up.

"Of course I do. How could I forget that" He notes.

I roll my eyes. I decide to ignore his comment.

I motion around us. "Do you think it's still here?" I wonder.

His eyes meet mine in realization. We stand still for a moment, both of us considering it.

His eyes meet mine in excitement, and I bite the inside of my cheek to keep myself from breaking out into a stupid grin.

Without a word, the both of us break into a walk, heading towards di erent directions in search of the spinning wheel.

I laugh when I recognize it.

"Druig, I found it!" I yell, stepping closer to the machine.

It's displayed before us on a wooden treasure chest. Piles of books surround it, but it's clear as day that it's the same spinning wheel from 600 years ago

I can feel as he walks towards me, slowing to a stop when he sees me. His gaze flickers to the sight in front of me. He laughs deeply when he sees the machine.

The spinning wheel looks back at us, still in shape like it had been all of those years ago.

"I still can't believe humans made a whole story out of it" He motions to the wheel before turning to me. "How does it feel to know that you're a children's fairytale because of our mutual hatred"

"It happened oncē I retort, still watching the spinning wheel. "And if I'm correct, then in the fairytale?" I note, smiling sarcastically. one

"Well, the witch could turn into a dragon, so I'll take that over falling asleep because of a needle" He fires back.

I can't hold back a laugh. I shake my head, pushing him playfully in the arm.

He pushes his lips, sco ing and shaking his head at my action. Then he licks me back playfully, just enough to catch me o guard and send me o balance.

Before I trip over myself though, he grabs me by my waist, turning me around so that I'm pressed against him.

I gasp in surprise, my hands going to rest on his chest to balance myself.

"You didn't think I'd let you fall did you?" He asks, smugly. His gaze flickers to my lips and then back to my eyes.

We're so close I can feel his chest as it moves up and down with every breath. So close I can see how the color of his eyes changes from a darker blue in the outside to an ice cold color.

So close that if I lean in, I know my lips will touch his.

I resist the urge to kiss him right then and there.

Thankfully, I don't have to resist for long, because Phastos calls out from the center of the room.

"Can you guys stop the eye fucking and come over here?" He calls out.

I snicker, shaking my head. Druig's hand falls from my waist, replaced by a cold outline of where his hand used to be.

"Phastos!" Druig calls out, patting his shoulder as he walks to the center of the room. His accent is thick and stronger,

I walk behind him, joining the entire team in a circle around Phastos' design. My arms cross over my chest, and I turn to face Phastos, curiosity lining my features.

"Where does someone start if they want to control the mind of the Celestial?"

A/n sorry i was gone so long!!! Final exams are killing me