

## Chapter 13

"The sk\*walker has obviously set up a home/base in those mountains, and it seems that Pitch has connected his lair to her home, and so they're working together. We need a stealthier way to break in, break Catori out of her state, get her out, and heal her if she needs it." I said. I drew out a map of the caves on the floor with frost and ice.

Eshe, Heath, and Akilina studied the map.

"Hmmm, well, what if two groups can come in from the sides, and one group can come in from above?" Eshe suggested. Heath and Akilina nodded in agreement.

"Lina, Jack, and Tooth can come in from above since they can fly, the rest of us can come in from the sides and push Pitch and the skinwalker into a corner," Heath said.

I nodded, that was a good plan actually, honestly, I could work with anything at this point, as long as it ended with Catori being rescued safely, I didn't care.

"Now, I don't want anyone making any stupid moves, that goes for you, Heath." North glared at Heath, who held his hands up in defense.

"It was onetime." Eshe smacked the autumn guardian upside the head.

"I'll keep him in check." Akilina rolled her eyes.

"Anyways, is everyone clear on the plan?" North asked. We all nodded, now we had to take action.

A couple of days later, we made our way back to the mountains, being sure we stuck to the plan, no backing out. To be completely honest, I was terribly anxious about the whole thing, I was so fixated on saving Catori, I couldn't remember the last time I felt this way about any girl before, even Tooth. But, Tooth was more like an older sister to me.

We arrived at the mountains and made our way inside the way we planned, I looked at Tooth and Akilina, the two of them looking just a tad nervous.

"We must be careful," Akilina mumbled, "in all my centuries, I've learned that the Apache and Navajo especially feared skinwalkers. They are powerful and exceptionally dangerous, I'm lucky to have avoided encounters with them." She made a quick sign of the cross and we made our way through the cliffsides.

Akilina walked ahead and Tooth hovered over us. The only sound was the occasional breeze, causing an eerie, howling sound to echo through the canyon, hearing that sound gave me the chills. No wonder nobody liked coming up here.

Tooth and Akilina got ahead of me, as we walked I began to think about what Pitch and the skinwalker wanted with Catori. Did it have something to do with her powers? Was it something she knew?

Making my way through the canyon, I heard the sound of wings, a heavier flapping, it wasn't Akilina. Maybe a hawk or something flying close by? I looked up to see a large owl watching me. An owl with bright red eyes. It glared at me before screeching and transforming into the skinwalker. I didn't have time to react as she slammed into me, 140 pounds of brute power right into my chest. I fell back, my stomach falling hundreds of feet below us.

"Ahhhh!" I yelled, attempting to loosen the grip of her hand around my throat. The look in her eyes was predatory, almost like she saw me like a piece of meat. It was terrifying. She spoke to me, or at me, in her native tongue, so I understood nothing that was said to me.

"Jack!" I heard Tooth and Akilina yell. The two attacked her right back. As Tooth pushed the skinwalker back, Akilina grabbed me forcefully, pointing to a small peak ahead of us. We could see wisps of black fire here and there. She was there.

The skinwalker cursed at us as we bolted out of there as fast as possible, and as expected she chased after us, shrieking like a madman.

The three of us crashed through the thin walls, sending rock and dust everywhere, startling everyone else who'd already gotten there.

"Какого чепта?!" I heard North exclaim. I brushed myself off, only to remember my stomach was lost in the canyon. As I was about to announce this, I felt something smack into the back of my head.

It didn't knock me out but it sent me forward. I rolled over to see the skinwalker standing above me, holding my stomach like a swung baseball bat. She twirled it in her hands, a devilish smirk crossing her angled features as she walked over me and handed my stomach to Pitch, looking pleased with herself.

"Noble all of you came back for one little spirit," Pitch remarked.

"You won't hold her under your control forever!" Heath yelled. Pitch chuckled.

"Oh, you have no idea the potential she has! I will use her for anything I desire." He turned to us, his eyes glowing with delight, "Anything"

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