

Chapter 14

I looked at my fellow nature guardians, knowing we had more of an advantage since we actually had magic flowing through our veins.

Eshe struck first, sending growth winding around Pitch and the sk*nwalker's legs. Out of nowhere, fire blast from behind them, burning it o , singeing a bit of Eshe's hair. Catori promptly tackled her and Heath at the same time. Bunny leaped forward in an attempt to save them, but I watched in horror as Catori slammed her hands onto Bunny's shoulders, and burned o his fur, leaving bright red handprints burned onto his skin.

He cried out in pain and fell backward. I rushed over to help him, using some ice to help cool the burns, though I had barely any basic knowledge of burn aid, I just did the best I could.

As they battled Pitch, avoiding being touched by his sand, I scanned everywhere for Catori. I needed to keep my eyes open for her, so I wouldn't get caught o guard. Everything was just bad now, I wasn't sure what I could do, only follow the leads of my fellow guardians.

I looked over at Sandy, and I told him to go look for Catori. He was probably the only one who wouldn't be physically affected by her fire as much as the rest of us, he could do something, hopefully. I watched him float away into the darkness of the caves.

I needed to get my sta back, sure, I had my powers, but they were weakened without my sta , and if I had any hope of helping the others and defeating Pitch and the skinwalker I needed to get it back, safely. I helped up Bunny, "I need you to watch my back, I'm gonna get my sta back." Bunny looked at me incredulously.

"From tha' sk*nwalker? Frost, you're crazy!" I just smirked.

"My best asset." We snuck away from the group and tiptoed our way to find the sta . As we made our way through the darkening tunnels, we felt the ground increase in temperature.

"Ya!" Bunny yelped, clutching a paw, "bloody hell it's like tha' floor is on fire!" He exclaimed. I looked around.

"She's got to be nearby."

"Frost! Look out!" Bunny yelled.

"Wha-?" Suddenly a force slammed into me, a hot one. I twisted my head around to see Catori, eyes aflame, "Aughhhhh!!!" I cried out. She shot forward, pinning me to the ground, one hand holding my arm to the ground. She looked at my sta and then back at me. She paused for a brief second as if she was thinking before she wrestled the sta out of my hands.

"Hey! No! Catori! Stop that!" I yelled chasing a er her. Having Pitch break my sta the first time was painful enough, I couldn't let her do it too, especially with such destructive fire powers.

I cornered her into a dead-end cave, she was backed into a wall, I could see black sand circling her feet. I cautiously approached her, holding my hands out, showing I wasn't a threat. She clutched my sta like a lifeline, and there was a crooked smirk on her face, two tears fell from her eye, and I saw her hands beginning to glow. Now I had to act before she did it.

I leaped forward, grabbing the sta , facing her. And I got to look into her eyes. They were the same eyes, just... angrier. It was like Pitch struck the right match, he fueled the anger she'd tried to suppress, I could see it, and I could feel it. I gripped my sta harder, allowing my icy magic to flow through my veins into the sta , and immediately I felt the results of doing so.

Her fire powers had soaked into the sta for long enough time for the ice to cause a reaction, it sizzled, and it was practically cooking the wood. She knitted her eyebrows together as if something clicked inside her head. I didn't know what she was thinking, and I was afraid if I knew.

Out of nowhere, I heard cracks and pops and I felt the wood beginning to break. This caught her o guard, and while she had loosened her grip, I pushed forward, yelling and yanking it out of her hands, and in doing so, both ends of our powers exploded-

BANG

Followed by sizzles and pops.

I found myself flung back about sixty feet down the tunnel I chased her through, and she'd been slammed into the wall behind her.

I heard the clamoring of footsteps behind me as I sat up and shook myself o . I looked down and saw I was covered with scorch marks, luckily none of my clothes were seriously burnt. My hands had charcoal streaks all over it, and red spots from minor burns.

"Jack!" Someone yelled. It was Tooth. She appeared, followed by the others, "Oh my goodness are you alright?!"

"What was that?" Heath exclaimed, "that was one hell of a bang!" I grunted and stood, suddenly realizing my sta was nowhere in sight.

"I- my powers, they collided with Catori's... it-" We all knew what had happened, the evidence was everywhere. North inspected the ash and black smudges on the walls.

"This is nothing like I've seen before," he remarked.

"Catori!" The girls exclaimed, rushing over to the figure slumped over on the floor a ways away. I limped over to them, kneeling down next to her. Her face was covered with black scorch marks, and burn marks. I whispered her name, but she didn't respond.

"Is she alright?" Bunny asked, kneeling down as well.

"She's unresponsive," Akilina said, "but she has a pulse. Ve should get her out of here before Pitch and the skinwalker come back for vengeance. I have a feeling vhey'll be looking for her." We all agreed, and North searched his coat for a snowglobe.

As he did that, I reached my arms under to carry Catori, but I felt something wet. I yanked my hand back and fell backward seeing it smeared in blood. Everyone else jumped a bit in response. Heath and I rolled her over to see her back scar, which I knew from Catori telling me before had never truly healed, was broken open and was bleeding heavily. Her dress was stained. She needed serious help.

I took o my sweatshirt, tucking it under her back to cover it until we got her in a safe room.

Once we were back in the Pole, I rushed her to the medical wing, removing my sweatshirt, which one of the yeti's o ered to clean, and I gladly handed it to him. My t-shirt didn't need any cleaning so I kept it on.

I didn't see Catori for a few hours a er getting her into the medical room. But it was okay. It gave us all some time to clean up and calm down. Adrenaline began to cool down and hearts slowed.

I joined Akilina, Eshe, and Heath in a separate room. Eshe was horrible with blood so Akilina was trying to calm her down, and Heath just stared out a window, though he turned to face me when I entered the room.

"Any news on her?" I shook my head.

"No, none yet. I don't think we'll hear anything until she's out." He turned his head and exhaled heavily out of his nose, fogging up the glass.

"I'll never forgive myself if she isn't healed." I sat on the window ledge next to him.

"It wasn't your fault, you know that." He grunted and shrugged his shoulders.

"Look, I know you and Catori are close-" He turned to face me again, eyes narrow.

"She's been like a sister to me. I knew the pain she felt watching her people su er, just like I watched my family grow old and die. I knew what that pain felt like. I haven't had a little sister in forever, and I can't bear the thought of watching her su er." I nodded.

All of us had lost something to becoming immortal. Akilina, as a human, had a newborn son once. The winters of Russia were brutal, and she came from a poor family. She had become pregnant unexpectedly, and without a husband, she was kicked out of her home, forced to live out the rest of her pregnancy, and care for a baby alone. She knew she couldn't raise him, so she le him on the doorstep of a home, and le him, only to succumb to the cold and the wind.

Eshe's life was more complicated than she let others believe, she didn't like talking about what'd happened 400 years ago to her, all we knew is that it contributed to her fear and distaste of the sight of blood.

Heath had a pretty great life in Colonial Massachusetts. He didn't serve in the Revolutionary war, as he was too young, but years following, a bout of yellow fever struck his town, and he was the only one in his family to die because of it.

All three of them remembered their families upon becoming immortal, save for me, and watched their families grow old and die.

But, in the end, all of us found each other and made our own weird little misfit family.

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