

Chapter 20

By the time I got home, the sun was setting. I took a few moments to admire the vibrant colors cast onto the bright red and orange rocks of the canyon. It was gorgeous.

After dinner, Nascha said she was going to go on a short flight; she'd be back in a couple of hours, I said okay and just relaxed on my own for a little while. Bouncing between reading and practicing on seeing what I could do with my magic. I wanted to focus on the beauty of fire rather than the destructiveness of it, after what I did... ugh, too haunting for me.

It must've been like 10:30, and Nascha still wasn't back, I wasn't too concerned as I knew she was more than capable of taking care of herself, but I decided I ought to go to bed. So, I curled up in my blankets and closed my eyes.

I was almost about to doze off when I awoke to the sound of something hitting the wall outside with a soft thud. I jolted up and rushed to the window to see if something was injured.

No, when I looked out, I nearly fell out of the window when I saw Jack looking up at me. He waved awkwardly and tried to smile. I narrowed my eyebrows, went inside, grabbed a large bowl full of water I'd collected a day prior, and promptly threw it out the window, and it splashed all over him.

He sputtered and coughed.

"HEY! What was that for?" He demanded.

"You're an idiot," I replied, disappearing into my room and blowing out my candles. How dare he show up at my home in the middle of the night like this?! What did he think he was going to accomplish?

I heard a gust of icy wind outside, but I ignored him. I was not prepared to deal with him right now and I wasn't in the mood. But, thinking about him being outside, waiting for something, it made my heart race a little. Did I dare?

With an annoyed sigh, I made my way back to my window, he was still standing there. He gave me a little hopeful smile when I reappeared, holding his stance close.

"Why are you here?" I asked calmly.

"I-I wanted to see you." He confessed. This surprised me, even after the damage I did.

"What?" He nodded.

"I know you still feel... guilty after what happened, but it was months ago. Look at me, not a scratch!" I sighed, he didn't get it.

"Jack... it's not totally about me hurting you, it's that our opposite powers don't mix. Fire and ice? It's not a good match... I can still be your friend, but... a relationship would never work." That was partially a lie. I was well aware that the dance of fire and ice could be a beautiful thing, but I didn't want to take my chances. I knew how powerful I was, but I didn't think Jack knew how powerful he was.

I thought he'd leave, but instead, I heard the crackling sound of frost forming, and an eagle formed of ice flew through the window, circling me. A trail of glowing snow followed it. I couldn't hide my smile.

Jack's magic... was enchanting. I had to admit it. I sighed, holding up my hands, letting the flames swirl around in my hands, casting a golden glow against the clay walls. The light reflected off the frost eagle, creating a beautiful play of light. I turned and saw Jack sitting in the window. He gave me a playful smile, and I couldn't help but return it.

We watched as our magic interacted with each other. Nothing was extinguished, in fact, the light play became more ethereal. A rainbow of color splashed around us, casting a stunning glow on the both of us. Jack stood behind me, gently holding my hands in his. I marveled in the difference, not just in hand size, but the contrast of my tanned skin against his snow-white hands. I took in every detail, crease, vein, nick, and callous of our hands. I felt him gently kiss the top of my head, and pull me closer. I didn't protest, letting him pull me tighter to him. Feeling my back against his chest felt... comforting.

And at that moment, I felt it. I finally felt what had been there. I felt every tight point in my body relax. Relief. Acceptance. I felt it rush through me, true happiness... was the best thing I'd felt in forever.

I turned to face him, looking up at his face.

Jack knew. He just waited for me to realize it myself. After all that self-denial, I finally realized how strongly I felt for him, and for the first time, I noticed the true beauty of his blue eyes. I wordlessly led him into my bedroom; he propped his stance against a wall, and he offered me his sweatshirt, and I took it.

We sat down together, reeling in the aftermath of our feelings... He silently encouraged me to lay down and sleep, and so I did, enjoying the feeling of his company, for once.

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