

Chapter 7

I didn't give the paper to the Guardians, obviously.

I was smart enough to know that I could never trust Nascha with anything she gave me. And there were just scribbles on the paper, there was nothing to share or decipher.

As I walked around the dark streets of the Navajo reservation this night, I saw signs pointing east, back to the Hopi reservation. With a sigh, I made my way down the dirt road, not caring how many miles it was. Walking in the dark... I couldn't explain why but I kinda liked the feeling it gave me, heightened awareness, instincts. I liked that feeling.

I made my way into the Hopi reservation close to dawn. Even having been here the other night, it was so foreign compared to the world I once knew. I could hear roosters beginning to crow as the sun rose, and I heard people getting up to start their day.

I wandered around the properties, seeing children running outside to assist their parents with various chores. I began to wonder if they still did anything similar to what I used to do when human. Ground corn with my mother, help weave baskets and blankets. One part of me said that was a little ridiculous, since we were in the 21st century and everything was made with machines, but the reasonable and logical half of me said that all the Native Americans were the poorest group of people in the United States. There was no way they had sophisticated machines and technology in their homes like the wealthier white colonizers.

As much as they might wish...

I couldn't resist my temptation and entered one home, just to get a peek of what was going on. And just as the logical half of me predicted, there were no sleek, stainless steel or sophisticated pieces of technology. There was a nice flat screen television, though it looked like one of the smaller ones. There were electric fans. Some slightly nice pieces of furniture and the like, but nothing like the homes of California or New York City.

It was heartbreaking to see the descendants of my people living like this.

The mother was cooking breakfast for her family. She called out their names, which I failed to hear as I just absorbed my surroundings. A little girl and boy ran out of their bedrooms to the kitchen. The little girl offered to help her mother, to which the mother demonstrated how to cook the meal.

The father came out of the bedroom looking scraggly, he appeared to not have shaved in days, he had bags under his eyes, and getting a look around again, there were beer bottles and cans everywhere. He was an alcoholic...

I had seen many suffer from poverty, but getting a peek of it up close broke my heart, and the worst part was that there was nothing I could physically do.

"Who're you?" I heard someone say, I just about jumped out of my skin from the suddenness. I turned around to see the girl looking up at me with an inquisitive look on her face. She asked me the same question in Hopi. I couldn't help but smile hearing that they still knew how to speak my language.

I kneeled down to her level and replied, "I'm Catori, I'm a spirit." It wasn't until I responded that my consciousness realized that this child could see me. I was quite baffled at this.

"W-wait... how can you see me?" I asked her. The girl shrugged.

"I dunno."

"Kimberly! Please hurry! You need to go!" Her mother called. Kimberly? That wasn't a traditional Hopi name. Ahhhh no... colonization had done terrible things to my people...

I was surprised to see the Guardians having caught up with me. I found them in my tribes old adobe.

They were all mesmerized with the building. I appreciated their appreciation for a piece of history. Tooth and Bunny in particular were familiar.

"I've come here before, throughout the centuries..." Tooth said, running her hand over the painted walls. Bunny nodded.

"I've bounded past here. It was always full of life." Jack and North weren't as familiar, they'd only come by here a few times in the past hundred years or so.

I myself hadn't actually wandered the halls of the other buildings in so long, I only stuck to one part that I knew my family used to reside. I missed the feeling. As I wandered past open doors, feeling the residual energy. I was a spiritual person, I believed deeply in that kind of stuff.

That evening, we sat around a fire I created. But in the middle of the night, I felt restless, I got up and went to a site I purposefully didn't show the Guardians. It was my family's gravesite. I found my mother's marker and brushed the dust away.

The cool nighttime breeze pushed my hair from my face. In the breeze I heard a voice, a feminine voice, it was speaking in a language that wasn't familiar to me but, I followed it, my vision grew hazy, and suddenly I didn't have control over myself.

When I came back to my senses, I was in a dark cave with almost no light dripping in. It was stale and unpleasant.

There was dark laughter from behind me. I whipped around with my instincts at the ready but I couldn't see anything.

"See, I told you it would work."

"I'm glad to have been proven wrong." It was Pitch, and Nascha, but I couldn't see them. I produced a flame in my hand and held it out like a torch, but their shadows hid them from view.

"Show yourselves!" I shouted, only to hear it bounce back with an echo. Angered, I formed a circle of fire around me, but the shadows defeated me.

I heard the rustling of sand surround me, and suddenly felt my feet glue to the rock floor. I heard a dark giggle and before I could do anything more, everything went dark and I felt excruciating pain ripple through my body, and I fell into an abyss...

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