Rising

by SpaceAceAmeko

Summary

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“Quite alright, Jack.” Pitch says as he puts a hand on Jack’s shoulder, calmly and as if they’ve been friends for years. “Seems like my presence had caused nothing but disturbances since I’ve woken up.” He makes eye contact with Tooth, and she nearly barrels into him again, only stopped by Jack in the way. He opens his mouth again, only to close it and use the hand that was on Jack to reach behind himself and catch the boomerang that was quickly aimed for him.

Jack’s eyes widen as the force of the stop caused some wind. And because, whoa, Pitch was very strong.

And all Jack could think was damn, that was hot.

Notes

Heyyoooo~
Thanks for reading this completely incomplete piece of work! Love you!
See the end of the work for more notes.
Chapter 1

Pitch doesn’t wake up like people in fairy tales do. His eyes don’t flutter open and he’s conscious for all the years he’s slept.

It takes a few minutes of Jack’s careful vigilance to watch his chest stutter with breath, like he’s just getting used to the concept. It gets deeper, minutely, before his face starts to show movement: a twitch of his lips, a tiny furrow in his brow.

And then Pitch’s eyes shut tighter, Jack finds he’s been holding his breath, and they open. They’re narrowed, like he’s glaring, but Jack is confident it’s only the light he needs to get used to, despite the drawn up curtains there was a small lamp in the corner of the room that was lit.

Once Pitch’s eyes acclimate, he blinks them a few more times and Jack felt the need to step closer to his bedside, unconsciously taking his lax hand for support (though for Pitch’s or his own, he’s unsure which).

“Pitch?” Jack was hopeful, but he wasn’t certain enough of what could happen. Hell— Pitch could up and attack him right now, and he was rather weak and pathetic sitting around for him to wake up.

Pitch doesn’t attack him. His golden eyes slide to lock onto Jack, the fingers in his hand twitch and he squeezes back just a little. Speech is lost for a moment as Pitch works his mouth, probably parched and in desperate need of water.

Jack watches with rapt attention as instead of Pitch answering, he takes the chance to move into a sitting position. Jack helps him, if only not to see him struggling.

Pitch’s eyes have black circles underneath despite his near two decade sleep, his face has all the same sharp ridges he’d had before: high cheekbones, angular cut jaw, prominent bones. His skin was no longer ashen from the nightmare sand, but it was still deathly looking in its own right, another condition Jack decides to blame on the sleep.

Once Pitch is sat up against the headboard, propped up on the pillows, Jack offers water when he tries to talk again. Pitch holds it up carefully enough, his grip weak even if there wasn’t a tremor in his hand.
Jack sat on the edge of his bed, setting the cup down on the nightstand, and watching Pitch’s movements carefully.

Pitch seemed to take account of himself; he looked down at his arms, laid precariously on his lap and covered with a red thick woven sweater (courtesy of North. They couldn’t just let him stay in that awful robe, now could they?) that was a few sizes too big. The sleeves were rolled up, exposing his long fingers that curved as if trying to remember how they worked. The sweater slid off, revealing sharp shoulders. He looked in between healthy and starved, though that was (maybe) to be expected. Even like that, he looked like he stood a whole head taller than Jack. And Jack had all the patience of a saint, for all the years he’s sat at his bedside waiting for this opportune moment.

Then, as if all his thoughts had finally got together, Pitch answers slowly, “yes,” in a low tenor voice, filled with power in its own right that seemed completely alien coming from the body of the Pitch they knew before. It was filled with confidence, at least, not riddled with fear or uncertainty or that bone-chilling apathy when he’d first resurfaced.

Pitch looks up at him, finally.

“I am Kozmotis Pitchiner, and you are?”

None of the usual recognition flitted anywhere in his eyes and Jack held his breath. A second later he responds, “Jack Frost.”

“Jack Frost,” Pitch parrots, like tasting fine, aged wine. “Thank you,” He says first, for the water he assumes, and Jack was floored he would even hear that word coming out from his mouth, but he managed to keep his jaw from dropping. “Where am I?”

“You don’t… remember?” Jack asks carefully. Pitch shakes his head.

“No. I’m afraid my memories are somewhat muddled.” His articulation clear and indicative of a scholar. “The last I remember…” he pauses, trying to think.

The door opens to see an elf opening the door while hanging off the handle. Another elf holding a plate of cookies and making a face at his companion before stalking inside and promptly freezing at seeing Pitch sitting up and staring at him unnervingly. Eyes wide, he drops the cookies and proceeds to grab his friend and pull him out, leaving the door to swing shut.
Pitch blinks, and they look at one another in slight confusion. Though Jack knows in a few seconds — there it was, the thundering pound of North running down the hall. He practically throws the door open and it bounces off the wall, his hand keeping it from slamming back in his face as he yells out, “Jack!”

Pitch seemed alarmed, his eyes widening but that was the only change. Jack looked at North, his face worried and wide eyed, jaw dropped when his eyes fall on Pitch, sitting calmly in bed. North seemed on the verge of collapsing in surprise or jumping to pummel him. He settled, though, in that he straightened his back to make himself taller, the act of enlarging himself to seem more intimidating lost on Pitch.

“Pitch, you’re awake.” North says after a moment of them scoping each other out. Pitch nods.

“Yes. And you are?”

“That’s North.” Jack answered for him, Pitch’s eyes going back to him. Since his awkwaneing he’d rather have Pitch’s eyes on him, if only to quench his anxiety that he really was awake. Pitch nods, looking back to North.

“Pleasure,” He says curtly but politely, the slowness of his speech lessening the longer he was awake. “I’m to assume this is your abode?” He pauses, looking down at his sweater. “And clothing?”

North seemed baffled, unsure what to do next. He had been ready for a fight, probably keep Jack from dying. But this… weird, polite, confident speech of his has him stalling.

“Yeah.” Jack answers for him yet again, catching Pitch’s attention while North got his bearings. “Want to walk around? I’m sure you’d want to stretch your muscles.” Pitch seems to think before he acquiesced.

“Yes, you’re right.” He says, taking a deep breath and stretching out his arms finally, hearing a lovely pop in his shoulders and joints that caused a pleasant, though small, smile to grace his lips. It was as if he was now finally starting to wake, pushing away the blankets to kick his legs out.

When he stands, Jack has to crane his head, as he’s taller than that whole head. Standing, he was only a few inches shorter than North, which surprised them both. Jack scrambles off the bed to stand near him, trying to catch his attention.
It works, Pitch looks down and smiles— smiles— and Jack can’t help but smile back, stepping up to North and raising a brow. “North.” He greets and North lets him move him to the side so that he and Pitch can walk past him.

Pitch curiously studies the carved walls they pass, Jack at his side, a bundle of nerves— anxious and excited. Jack unthinkingly links his arm with Pitch’s. Pitch flinches, but it was only because of the cold seeping through the sweater.

“Goodness, you’re freezing.” He says, startled by the stark contrast of his own heat under the sleeve. Jack’s lip curls in a smile.

“Comes with the territory.” He says, trying to go for funny.

“Territory?”

“Uhh, yeah. You know, Jack Frost.” He raises his free hand, letting cold accumulate in his palm until he’s got actual frost covering his hand.

“Ahh,” Pitch remarks. “Then I’m guessing North lives in the north?” His lips quirk into a smile. “Very… astute names you have.”

“I-I guess?” Jack shrugs a bit, dragging Pitch through the corridors and down the stairs to the workshop.

Pitch watched on in piqued curiosity, sometimes letting his fingers slide along the carved handrails, tap at a flying airplane. Jack could just watch him explode for hours, already enamoured at the miraculous differences.

The elves scattered from their path, the yetis freezing and only going back to what they were doing when Pitch told them, “don’t let me keep you from your duties.” His inoffensive comment and laid back attitude was not something they were used to.

When they finally reached the main floor, where the giant globe stood, Pitch stopped to inspect it.
“Miraculous..” he mumbles, tilting his head this way and that and taking a circle about the globe in interest. Jack let his arms slide out from his, letting him inspect and circle it in peace.

He had so many questions running through his head: who was he? Where did he come from?

Jack was broken from his thoughts when he heard the flutter of wings, seeing Tooth fly in with a handful of BabyTooth. She was preoccupied until she spotted Jack, who was finally out and about the workshop, and then to Pitch as he rounded back around the globe.

Her eyes widened, feathers standing on end, and then she was darting to him, hand drawn back in a punch before Jack could even tell her stop.

Luckily he didn’t need to. Pitch caught her fist easily, his hand dwarfing her own considerably and he looked at her like one would notice a detail not yet seen. He didn’t seemed particularly frightened or perturbed about her sudden attack.

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“Jack, get away from him!” Bunny growls, stepping up by Tooth. Jack wanted to groan in frustration. Pitch huffs a small laugh and Jack turned to him, brow raised.
“See? Disturbances.” He says, amused. Jack has to wonder about his nerves, how he could just handle knowing nothing but his past, even if it was shoddy at best.

“Enough!” North bellowed as he came around. He was the only one without raised weapons, the others wound as taut as a bow. “Sorry ‘bout this.” He says, lowering Bunny’s second boomerang. Pitch nods, throwing back the weapon he caught so easily.

“No harm, no foul.”

Tooth bristles and North coughs to gain their attention.

“We have much to discuss, Sandy will be here soon, but let’s start.” He coughs again, lips pursed as if he didn’t know where. “You know Jack.” Pitch nods, glancing at the boy who came to stand beside him. “I’m North, this is Tooth.” He gestures to the very angry looking lady. “And that’s Bunny.” Bunny glares outright, even as Pitch narrows his eyes back and brings a hand to his chin in thought.

“Pleasure.” Pitch says, probably not for the last time. Tooth and Bunny make a look of distaste.

“I wouldn’t count on it.” She grits out, staying afloat on his wings just in case.

“Right.” Pitch only nods. The others were at a standoff, waiting for the pin to drop. Pitch opened his mouth to speak, and promptly closed it when he saw the swirling golden sand. When Sandy jumped from his little airplane, Pitch smiled. “Now there’s a familiar face.”

Sandy jumped, eyes turning to Pitch and then paused. Jack raised a brow.

“You remember him?”

“How could I not?” Pitch hums. “His Nocturnal Magnificence, Sanderson Mansnoozie, Sandman the First, Lord High Protector of Sleep and Dreams.” And then, at the bafflement of everyone in eyesight, he puts a hand at his waist and bows, just enough of an incline to show respect to something with such an outrageous title. He could hear Bunny whisper loudly, “I think we broke him, mate.”
Sandy’s eyes widen and he has flashes of symbols pop above his head, ones Pitch was very interested in watching. And then he laughed. It was short, genuine, and amused. And Jack had never known anyone to really understand or speak to Sandy beyond a head shake or nod.

“Yes, quite.” Pitch responds with an amused look at his huge, rolled up sleeves. He did a twist of his wrist thrice before a wave like motion overcame the fabric as it shrunk to fit him, rolling over his shoulders and down his long body, up until those oversized trousers rested comfortably at his ankle to show his naked feet.

“How… did you do that?” Jack finds himself asking. Pitch smiles, looking more like a knowing smirk.

“Dear Jack, when you’ve been alive for as long as I have, harnessing magic is child’s play.” He says, giving himself a once over and decides he looks more presentable before looking back up. “Right, it may be time for a proper introduction. Though it seems I’ve gotten in a bit of trifle with you all without being conscious. I am,” He starts, standing back straight and tall with his hands behind his back at attention. “General Kozmotis Pitchiner, right hand of Tsar and Tsarina Lunanoff’s Golden Army.”
Chapter 2

The following sit-down was not something Jack really wanted to go through. Because it was obvious Pitch was not who he had been, when he had fought them. It was obvious he didn’t remember a single thing past a very important event that had taken the life he had away from him. And although he really didn’t want to watch Pitch going through that turmoil, he wouldn’t leave for the life of him. Jack sat on the arm rest not a foot away from Pitch, legs crossed at he watched closely.

“Pitch.” North speaks, carefully, like he was afraid the recap of their history will set Pitch off. Pitch was quiet, like the stillness before a storm.

Following Pitch’s introduction, North had ushered them to the sitting room where Pitch proceeded to explain who he was—

“In short, I was their general in charge of hunting nightmare men and creatures, and overseeing their capture and subsequent imprisonment.” Pitch took a breath. “The last thing I remember was—” Pitch touched his chest, over his heart and his eyes widened. Jack saw his jaw clench and his hand grips nothing hanging from around his neck. The locket—Jack realizes. The locket of his daughter, it was gone. Pitch let his hand drop s if he never did it in the first place. “The last thing I remember is watching them.”

Pitch didn’t let them know what Jack knew. What he saw in the swirling black sand when all the nightmares that had been expunged from his body—carrying the memory of how the Nightmare King came to be. Pitch didn’t let them know a crucial point in the story: that he’d been driven mad to loneliness and yearning so deep that he’d fallen for the Nightmare Men’s tricks.

And then Sandy dismantled everything with explanations of his dream sand. Jack watched Pitch’s face go from cautiously optimistic to weary and anxious in a matter of a few swishes of sand. Pitch has his fingers laced together, thumbs taking turns to push each other down. He’s slightly hunched over, slouching with his elbows on his knees and a purse to his lips. He’s quiet for all of three minutes when—

“What about—“ he cuts himself off, eyes flicking up to Sandy, who seemed to know the most, then back down as he takes a breath. “My daughter, what of her?” He asks like he already knows the answer to the question but dreading actually hearing it.

Jack thinks everybody has forgotten that Pitch is not the Nightmare King. Hasn’t been since Sandy struck him with his golden bow and fell into a decade or so long sleep. Jack wanted to comfort him, sit beside him, something, but he knew it would be inappropriate. He and Pitch weren’t that close,
Jack didn’t know if he would be crossing boundaries, no matter how much he desired to do it.

“Are we seriously listening to this guy?” Bunny scoffs, arms folded over, oozing aggression and disbelief. “You don’t actually believe him, do you?” He glares, mouth contorting into something Jack doesn’t think he’s seen on his face.

Or maybe all his hatred is making him ugly.

“He probably just murdered his own daughter and acting like this to get away with it!”

Pitch’s eyes change seconds into Bunny’s crude comment. They narrow and darken, the worry on his face morphing into righteous fury and it sent a shiver down Jack’s spine—Pitch had never looked more dangerous than he does now. Even when it seemed like he was going to win.

“You dare accuse me?” He says, voice low, the shadows seemed more drawn to him, the air in the room pulled taunt as if he still held control over the dark. “You best think about the next words that will come out of your mouth, they could very well be the last ones you ever say.” He added when Bunny opened his mouth to retort. The Pookah shut his jaw, probably sensing the very real threat from the pervious Nightmare King.

Pitch stands from his seat fluidly, hands splayed flat along the wood he gazed at, jaw set like he was grinding his teeth.

“I need some air.” He says, voice like a sigh. He straightens his back and turned, walking out with all the grace of a king. Or a general, if what he was saying was true.

“Pitch..” Jack calls weakly, eyes on that broad back as it faded out the corridor and to the open deck Jack knew was in that general area.

“Why would you say that?” Jack bounded on Bunny, turning sharply and narrowing his eyes. This wasn’t the first time they butted heads, and it wouldn’t be the last. Bunny glared back, standing straighter despite the already apparent height advantage he had on Jack.

The intimidation might have once worked on Jack, but now, seeing a real man walk with power, he was less inclined to be afraid.
“Why do you even believe him in the first place, eh?” Bunny glares back. “He’s probably making all this up, and Sandy is probably a Nightmare in disguise.” He argues, to which Sandy sounded off many signals above his head, of which no one but Pitch seemed to know how to decipher so they only glanced at him for a second. “You're too close, Jack! Can’t you see that? He’s just playing you!”

Jack grit his teeth, lips pursing. Jack knew he had messed up many times in the past because of indecision, amongst other things. Knew he'd made mistakes and bad decisions.

This, however, wasn’t one of them.

“You just keep telling yourself that.” Jack says, voice raspy from disuse and emotion. He pivots on his foot and stalks the hallway he saw Pitch go through. He hears his name be called, another small argument where Bunny says, “leave him. If he wants to die, let him.” To which Tooth gasped and whispered-yelled something, but by then Jack was already too far away to hear.

It took a little longer for Jack to find Pitch than he expected. Mostly because he had never really gone this way to get to the patio. But there, standing by the railings with his forearms resting on the rails, overlooking the tundra, was Pitch.

The cold doesn’t bother Jack, and he had thought that it didn’t bother Pitch, either. But that was before he knew this man as he stands here today.

Slowly, he makes his way across the snow-laden patio, bare feet crunching the fresh snow and making a similar line of footprints to the railing. He slides up to Pitch’s side, half a foot away. It was enough of a distance between them that said I don’t want to intrude on your solitude, but I’m here. Pitch’s gaze stayed on the frozen horizon, silent, but Jack was sure Pitch was aware of his presence, so he kept quiet.

The silence stretched between them, broken only by some howling wind. Another moment and Jack chances to take a step closer. And then another. Pitch still hasn’t looked to him, golden gaze unseeing what lies before him.

It was only when Jack saddles up to Pitch’s side, the outlines of their arms touching as they rest on the rail, that Pitch finally takes a breath, soaking in Jack’s cold presence much like Jack lingers on the heat Pith now seems to emit. Not that he was ever close enough to feel Pitch’s heat prior to this, or that he’d want to back then, but still… He wonders if the cold bothers him now.
“... Pitch?” Jack asks, turning his head to glance up at the former Nightmare King. Pitch closes his eyes against the gentle breeze, seemingly okay with all the cold seeping into his bare feet and body, his cheeks getting color from the cold. Jack takes this silence as an okay to continue, except that now that he was here, he didn’t know what to say. “... Are you okay?” He asks quietly, eyes locked on Pitch’s face, watching it relax with the next exhale.

Pitch finally opens his eyes, to the sky, the gentle pink and blue of the clouds from a near sunset.

“I’m not sure.” He says back, his own voice quiet. Jack just nods, taking liberty and cautiously leaning his head against Pitch’s shoulder. When Pitch doesn’t argue against it, he kept it there.

Jack really can’t explain where these feelings of attachment are coming from, just that they’re there and he can’t stop them. Didn’t know if he wanted to stop them. He finally feels like he belongs.

Pitch sighs again and leans his head to rest on Jack’s.

“... What were they like?” Jack asks quietly. “Your wife and daughter.”

Pitch stayed quiet for far longer than he expected that Jack almost broke the silence to say forget he asked.

“Maybe later,” Pitch murmurs, lifting his head and Jack looks up at him, sees the tiredness seeping into his bones. Sees the reality sink in. “I think I need to rest..” he starts, turning to leave. Jack watches him go with a heavy heart, knowing he needs time to come to terms.

Jack himself needs to come to grips with reality.

Needs to accept that his feelings— whatever they may be— are not going to be reciprocated. He needs to let go, but with a vice grip they hold him there, and idly he thinks as he watched Pitch’s back retreat, if this is what Pitch felt when Jack turned from him at Antarctica. The hope and the crushing of its existence.

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Jack doesn’t go to Pitch’s room that night. Contrary to popular belief, he was mature enough to understand when and when not to intrude on someone’s private time. However, the free time made him restless. He had never thought, though he had always hoped, that Pitch would awaken.

He hasn’t made any plans further than making sure Pitch stayed alive in comatose. But now, he is neither dead nor in comatose and all of Jack’s future plans have been obliterated. Despite having sat in one place for seventeen years, it was only now that his inactivity made him restless.

Any inactivity that was by himself, it made him restless. In his head he kept going over the things he saw in his head.

The room North had graciously let him stay in after Pitch retired to his own wasn’t lit with any light. Tonight, luckily, was a moonless sky and Jack had drawn the curtain to look at the aurora stretching across the sky, illuminating him and the room plenty for him to see.

The inactivity made him restless, the restlessness made him want to move; to fly, to clear his head until he physically couldn’t keep going. But wanting to move conflicted with him wanting to stay around in case— just in case Pitch decided to come out of his room to find good company. I.e. Jack.

So here he was, stuck in motionless turmoil of conflicted desires.

Jack felt senselessly worried— that somehow Pitch will fall back into comatose, suddenly, maybe from the overwhelming emotions he was feeling. That he’ll fall back into sleep’s cold clutches— not Jack’s, and Jack will once again sit motionless on the window sill of his bed, watching and counting and listening to the shallow rhythmical inhales and exhales.

Growing steadily weaker that Jack may even feel compelled to lay down with the general, maybe above the blankets, maybe beneath them, but as close as he could get to feel that comforting warmth of a body. And maybe, just maybe, he’ll fall into the same comatose and Sandy will bless him with sweet, sweet dreams.

Where he can pretend but for a moment before the disbelief of children runs its course and he disappears along with it, that he and Pitch were happy, together, taking strolls through the taigas of Russia or laying comfortably in the snow to watch the auroras dance above them in Norway.

Let him just believe for a moment that he didn’t make every wrong mistake to ever happen since he’s
become a spirit, since he was made a spirit and then left to his own devices.

That if only he wasn’t so caught up in himself, that he could have seen Pitch for who he was: a person, desperate for some company. The same as Jack. Desperate to be believed in, to be loved, to be considered worthy, to be considered enough.

Be the kind of person you needed when you were younger, said one of Jamie’s high school guest speakers one day that Jack decided to pop in. He didn’t understand it then, and neither did Jamie, but that’s neither here nor there.

But now?

Jack wishes he could go back in time— do something, anything, to resolve conflict without the fighting. The person that Jack needed when he was younger, or in his case, from the point of being made a spirit onward, was definitely not who Jack became for others. Certainly not for Pitch, either.

Do you know the root of illness? It’s I. The speaker said, a dainty little thing but has light in her eyes and a smile always on her lips. When you take your eyes off of yourself and put them on other people, I turns into we. Illness turns into wellness.

Jack can blame dying and being brought back at a crucial age the reason for his immaturity, but he’s past that now. Age is but a number, and maturity and age, most of the time, come separately. If only he had been that person to step back and stop thinking about himself, stop thinking I, I, I, he could have saved everyone the drama.

He could have made a friend, an unsavory character, but maybe all Pitch needed was a friend.

“I don’t know what it’s like to be cast out?” Pitch had screamed at him.

“To not be believed in?” The staccato in his voice.

“To long for— a family..”

Jack clutches at the sweater on his chest, pursing his lips.
Turns out Pitch understood all along.

“What goes together better than cold and dark?— we’ll give them a world where everything, everything is...”

“You shouldn’t have perished.” Jack says quietly, meeting his eye as Pitch looked at him again. *If you did, we wouldn’t have met. I wouldn’t have been chosen. Neither of us would be alive.* Pitch seems surprised but for a moment before getting this gentle smile about him like Jack had gifted him something precious. “I’m glad you’re alive.”

Jack was almost creepily listening to any sounds coming from the hallway. The yetis and elves kept away from this particular corridor, scared of Pitch. He stayed crouched on the sill, curtains closed against the timid rising sun and eyes glued to the closed door.

His room wasn’t right next door to Pitch’s, it was a few rooms down, for whatever reason. It was quiet, his ears straining to hear anything. Spirits didn’t really need actual sleep, but it did help, occasionally.

Jack’s eyes widen marginally as he hears movement. He has to strain his ears to identify the swish of a door opening; the silent click as it was brought to a careful close.

Then, footsteps. Nearly imperceptible had Jack allowed himself to breathe. Absentmindedly, Jack thought that if Pitch were a human teenager, he would be *the king* of sneaking out.

The footsteps stop by Jack’s door and Jack nearly flies to the door to rip it open on its hinges. However, he stays as still as a statue, waiting, hoping, that Pitch would knock on his door. He didn’t even dare to get up from his seat at the chance that if Pitch did knock, he’d be by the door already. He didn’t want to seem desperate.

Even if he is.

A moment passes. Then another, and Jack could picture Pitch standing on the other side of the door, debating on whether or not he should take a chance and wake Jack up from his sleep.

Then there was a hesitant step away from the door, away from *Jack*, and then another.
Jack sucks in a sharp inhale, already leaning forward to throw himself out the door.

And then he was as he heard another step away from him. Jack reached the door in record time, opening it with more force than necessary to stick his head out, trying his best to not look as panicked as he felt.

Pitch half turned, surprise flitting a second across his face before he gave a somber smile.

“Care to join me for a walk?”

Jack could only nod, stepping out and letting the door slide shut. Pitch turns and in the next step Jack was at his side, following in companionable silence through the barely lit corridor.

Jack felt the need to speak, say something—but he stopped himself. He didn’t want to ruin the fragile connection they had by saying something insensitive by accident. Or asking questions he had no business asking. And maybe that was why Pitch shut down on him before, because he’d asked too soon about his wife and daughter. Too soon because they barely knew each other despite Jack watching over his comatose body for the past two decades.

Jack was only certain of a handful of things: Pitch was a general, he had a wife and daughter, he was the Nightmare King, and he is not a spirit in the same sense Jack is. And Jack was certain that Pitch only knew two things about Jack: that Jack was the first person he met when he awoke and that Jack embodied the winter spirit.

That didn’t seem like a lot of information to be able to share something so personal with someone.

So, Jack kept stealing glances, walking just a half-step behind Pitch to be able to glance easier without being caught. Pitch moved like he knew the corridors. Or maybe that was just how he walked: on purpose, with a purpose. His easy gait, the way his back is straight but not stiff. The way his hand held his wrist behind himself, as if constantly at attention. Pitch seemed not to notice the way Jack’s eyes constantly flitted to his person, and if he did notice he didn’t say anything.

Pitch lead them out to the patio that they had been on the night before. The sun stilled low on the horizon, as if scared of Pitch’s arrival (although that was just Jack trying to be poetic—or whatever. He knows, scientifically, that the reason the sun doesn’t climb higher is because it can’t), blanketing the skies with pinks and oranges and vibrant reds. Jack was expecting Pitch to step up to the rail, keep his back straight and his hands held behind his back and stare out to the sun.
But Pitch doesn’t do that.

Instead, Pitch turns and leans back against the rails, elbows resting as he seems to relax, eyes locked on Jack as he regards him curiously. For a moment, Jack freezes, feeling as though he were caught doing something he shouldn’t—like study Pitch while he wasn’t looking. Or when Jack thought he wasn’t looking. Pitch’s eyes roam down his body and stop at his feet and Jack follows his line of sight to his feet—snow white with the barest hints of blue-green veins. Jack curls his toes a bit in the snow, feeling oddly self-conscious about his feet. He knows his feet were kind of disproportionate to his body. Smaller than the normal feet-to-height ratio.

“You said it comes with the territory; are you not cold at all, then?” Pitch asks and Jack’s eyes jump to his, seeing the amusement flicker across his face and Jack manages to reply, feeling oddly nervous. Which was ridiculous. Jack won a war. He had (nearly) single-handedly saved children and the other guardians from certain death. He sought Pitch out when he was a lot more scary and intimidating than this! Why in the world is he feeling this way now, of all times?

Oh, yeah.

Jack wasn’t nervous because of fear.

“Y-yeah. Cold doesn’t really bother me.” Jack replies, staying as close as he dares.

“Not even if you were dunked into ice water?”

“No. Well.. I haven’t really tried, but I doubt it.” Jack says, giving his shoulder a shrug. Butterflies fluttered around in his stomach and he finds himself smiling shyly, unsurely. Hope was a scary thing. Sometimes the worst thing you can do is hope for something. But hope doesn’t care if you want to stop hoping, even as you know there could be no reciprocation. Jack felt it just the same. “What about you?” He asks, giving a cursory glance down to see Pitch wearing slippers. Pitch’s chuckle brought his eyes back up in a snap.

“It doesn’t bother me, much.” Pitch replies and he regards Jack again and Jack couldn’t bring himself to continue speaking, hanging on Pitch’s tone that he had something more to say. “She was a lot like you.” Jack blinks, tilting his head. Who— “My daughter.” Pitch smiles, dropping his eyes to the footprints they’ve left in the snow. His shoulder sag just a bit, as if remembering. Then, his lips quirk up just a bit and he raises his eyes to catch Jack’s. “A troublemaker.”
It took Jack a moment to process what was said, too blinded by the smirk Pitch gave. And then his mouth promptly drops at the implication and— was Pitch joking with him?

“I—” Jack starts, stammering a moment before ducking his head, sheepish. “I can’t even deny that.” Pitch chuckles, his smirk falling back into something gentler.

“You give off the same feeling.” Pitch explains. “You radiate adventure and curiosity. I didn’t mean it as a bad quality. Pushing the boundaries and challenging authority are, at times, good qualities to have.”

“What was her name?” Jack asks, because he couldn’t keep it in anymore. This time, Pitch didn’t shut down and escape.

“Seraphina.”

Seraphina.

It was such a… normal name. It was kind of funny, Jack was here thinking it would be something as interesting as Kozmotis, and here he gets Seraphina.

“You’re thinking about how normal-sounding it is, aren’t you?” Jack flinches, stammering.

“Uhh— h-how..? Did you just—”

“No, I didn’t read your mind.” Pitch responds, amusement clear in his voice. “You are surprisingly easy to read, Jack Frost.” He says, but Jack didn’t hear anything demeaning in his tone. But then again, this Pitch seemed to be the epitome of patience.

“Am I really..?” Jack gives a nervous grin, feeling so out-of-character in his responses that he hoped it wasn’t off putting.

“Would you consider that a bad thing?”
“Uhm, well—” Jack pursed his lips, letting his eyes slide back to his shoeless feet. On one hand, it could be a good thing. On the other hand… It means his feelings are pretty clear. “I guess it could be.” He shrugs, raising his gaze back up and taking a miniscule step forward, feeling just a bit braver. “Do you consider it a bad thing?”

Pitch paused, giving a thoughtful hum. “I suppose it could be.” He nearly parrots, a small smile on his lips.

“She was like that, too.” Pitch said, closing his eyes against the gentle breeze. “She had a yearning for adventure, my Seraphina. Always sailing on her schooner around the asteroids by our home. My wife, Katherine, she was always against such wayward afflictions. Not ladylike, she would say.” Pitch sighs a bit, moving his fingers along the trail of snow on the rail and brushing it off. “Always worried she would get hurt, or lost, or something else…” He trails off.

“But I think it’s important to let children have their fun; keep their sense of adventure. It’s a bit of a droll life, isn’t it? When adults lose their faith and wonder.”

“Yeah. It was kinda like the guardians before I joined. They pretty much forgot how to have fun and be around children.” Jack chuckles, remembering how none of them knew how to handle Sophie. Pitch chuckles with him.

“Really?”

“Oh, big time. You’d have thought they’ve never been around children for how awkward and stiff they were.” Jack grins, stepping up to the rail and hops up, facing Pitch. One leg folded, the other hanging on the other side. His staff was left in his lap, easily able to balance. Pitch turns to him, a mischievous gleam in his voice as he leans forward, leaning an elbow on the rail that propped up his chin in a regal slouch. How anyone can be regal slouching was beyond him.

“And he tells.”

Jack going into some theatrics, making Pitch laugh at the absurdity and how the guardians stood around, clueless, about a five-year-old child running around in the magical place.
“We are too busy bringing joy to children! We do not have time... for children.” Jack laughs, shaking his head, getting a kick out of mimicking North.

“What happened next?”

Jack’s jovial laughter trails off at that question. He purses his lips, looking down at his lap and fiddling with the wood of his staff. How can he possibly say, oh, well. After that you baited me with the promise of showing my past, destroyed Easter, caused kids to give up in their hope in the Easter Bunny and subsequently got me alienated by my peers, now could he?

Jack stumbled in his speech, unsure.

“Ah,” Pitch hums, giving a nod of his head as he leaned on the rail, arm perched across it now. “It has something to do with me.” It wasn’t a question; Jack nods. “Sounds like I was a tosser.” Jack blinks, glancing up to see an amused grin on his face, mind stalled in the way that it did when Pitch attempts at humor and he holds in the snicker that tried to get out when the insult finally registered in his mind.

“Yeah. Like you would not believe.” Pitch chuckles, shaking his head.

“That bad, hmm?”

“Well. I mean, yeah...” Jack trails off again, having a hard time compensating this Pitch from the Nightmare King.

“You can tell me.” Pitch says, meeting Jack’s eye as he looks back up. “It’s high time I know the damage I’ve caused.”

Wow. He was just so mature. It kind of boggled his mind. Kozmotis Pitchiner and the Nightmare King were as different as night and day and briefly he was glad that the Pitch before was as immature as himself because if the Pitch now would attempt to rid the world of hope and dreams, then he would certainly succeed. Kozmotis Pitchiner seemed smarter, more level-headed; he was a general, for fuck’s sake. He could pick his battles.
So when Pitch says he could tell him, he believes it.

“You started the Dark Age.” Jack says quietly, eyes back to the staff in his hand, fiddling with it. “Or so they tell me.” A little shrug of the shoulder. “I didn’t actually meet you until I was chosen to be a guardian, but we.. knew of each other. After the Man in the Moon chose the guardians, it kinda forced you underground for a few centuries; what they call the Golden Age.” Jack explains, looking back up at him.

Pitch doesn’t look upset. At least not at him. There was a slight downturn on his lips, eyes downcast to where Jack’s fingers were playing with the wood of his staff.

“I see.” He says, quietly. “It seems the elders were right: you either die a hero or live long enough to see yourself become a villain.” He says somberly. Jack’s jaw dropped.

What?

“Did you just..” Pitch looks up, raising a brow, face neutral. “Did you just.. quote Batman to me?”

“Quote ‘Batman?’” Pitch asks, his expression turning clueless. “What is a.. ‘Batman?’”

“Are you serious? It’s like one of the most famous human movies.” Jack was flabbergasted, there was no way.

“I assure you, I am not.” Pitch says, chuckling in musement.

“No way.”

“Yes. I honestly have no idea what this ‘Batman’ is.” He says, and though he’s smiling in amusement Jack could tell he wasn’t lying or trying to trick him. Although Jack is sure Pitch could easily do that, but he’s too integrous for that. “But they were right.” He says, amusement falling back to sobriety at his actions. “Is it too morbid to think I should have perished?” He chuckles a bit and shook his head from the dark humor.

“You shouldn’t have perished.” Jack says quietly, meeting his eye as Pitch looked at him again. If you did, we wouldn't have met. I wouldn’t have been chosen. Neither of us would be alive. Pitch
seems surprised but for a moment before getting this gentle smile about him like Jack had gifted him something precious. “I’m glad you’re alive.”
Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

Omg! Thank you guys so much! I'm glad ya'll are enjoying it.<3 This is like my first-ish time writing a multi-chapter fic in a while so sometimes I feel like the chapters are too short. But anyway, enjoy!<33

“I am too, Jack.”

They stayed out there god only knows how long. Jack telling stories of his past, prompted by Pitch and his questions and Jack was more than happy to fill the silence. Himself a bit on edge when thinking about asking questions that could lead to Pitch shutting down again. It wasn’t something he thought was worth asking, not yet at least.

So he told him about that blizzard that ruined Easter. He told him about Jamie and how he got him into an accident that broke his tooth loose. He tries to keep away from the hurt he felt during the in-between times. Stayed away from things like Jack Frost nipping at your nose is just an expression.

It was only when Phil had come, stepping out into the tundra, that they paused in their conversation to look at him. Phil looked between them, then away, and then to them again almost as if saying, I have no clue what’s going on anymore, and grumbled something that Jack was amazed to understand before going back inside.

Not long after, they too went back inside. The sun was still timidly breaching the horizon despite the late night and Jack was glad for it; the moon was barely seeable. And if it’s hard to see, it’s easy to block from his sight.

They came inside, had some cookies and milk, dispersed with conversation; hushed and quiet like they were sharing a secret (Jack had taken it upon himself to tell stories of the guardians that would embarrass them). And then Jack walked Pitch to his room. Like a gentleman, Pitch had wanted to let Jack retire to his room first, but Jack just walked past it with no intention of leaving first. After all, what if Pitch decided to continue being out and about?

Or something. Whatever.
Jack knows his infatuation is bordering the lines of obsession.

“Good night, Jack.” Pitch had said, a pleasant smile on his lips that Jack is quickly becoming accustomed too.

“G’night, Pitch.” Jack had replied. They stared for maybe a second too long to be normal before Pitch stepped inside the closed the door softly. Jack stood there, staring at the closed carved door for longer than necessary, ear out for the bed depress and the deep breaths of sleep before he finally went to his own room.

It was… odd, to be awake while Pitch was. It felt almost like a dream and he briefly entertains the idea that Pitch never woke up and Jack slid in next to him on the bed, closing his eyes and falling into the same sleep. Maybe Sandy was even giving him these dreams. He couldn’t find it in himself to be worried about that, though, existential-reality crisis trying to break through to the front of his mind be damned.

Jack stood there a while, leaning back against the closed door while staring at nothing in particular. Everything was quiet. Still. Even the yetis and elves had retired for the day. He debated with himself whether this is the good kind of quiet. Even his mind was quiet, though he thinks it should be going a mile a minute. It should be more worried, or something, that this was really a dream and he’s in a coma or equally something absurd.

He pushed himself off from the door and walks over to the bed, suddenly exhausted as he flops back onto it after setting his staff within arms reach. He lays on his side, eyes to the door and felt his lids grow heavier until he was pulled down into the dark abyss of sleep.
Chapter 5

The edges of his consciousness came back slowly. Something he was sure he didn’t feel since he became a spirit; like his soul was being pulled back into his body after spending the night on an astral-projection trip around the town.

Eyes blink open, first unseeable, unfocused before realization comes upon him and he jerks up to sitting position. The blinds were still closed and even if they weren’t, the position of the sun wouldn’t give any hint away at what time it was when they were so far north. Jack glances around wildly, his heart hammering against his chest anxiously before he grabs his staff and hops out of bed and was out the door before his first coherent thought could be formed.

The few steps from his room to Pitch’s were spent in the same breath. He came to a skidding halt in front of the open door— the empty room.

Time froze— or his perception of time.

The bed was neatly made, the curtains were tied to the sides to let in the light of the day or night. There was no trace in which would point to Pitch being there and for a wild moment Jack asked himself, did I imagine everything? There was once a time, between them defeating Pitch and his slumber, in which he would take refuge in North’s residence and sometimes even slumber. Now he begins to wonder if everything had been a dream; from killing Pitch to his slumber to his awakening, and it was Jack who was in a long-time slumber..

In any case, it means he still needs to find him. Jack pivots quickly from the empty room and practically flies down the hallway, spinning around some yetis who he had nearly crashed into. They dropped some of the materials or toys and grumbled at him; he didn’t pay attention.

Where would he be? Jack asked himself. The globe! He flew down another hallway and burst through the open double doors to the globe room, only to find no one there.

Well, no one of importance.

The globe sat innocently where it always had by the control desk. The lights flickered gentle, like millions of fireflies across the continents. He comes closer, maybe praying it’ll give him an answer. Like Pitch— whichever one, would suddenly show up next to him; would swirl black sand across the globe and declare war on the guardians. But nothing happens and Jack clutches his staff tighter
before turning and running down the next hallway.

“Whoa! Jack, where is fire?” North barely grunts as Jack crashed into him, steadied by North’s giant hand on his shoulder before he goes tumbling back. Jack stares up at him, eyes wide but mind stalled. His mouth works like he wants to talk, but nothing comes out. North doesn’t pick up on his unasked question, raising a brow and Jack forces his voice to work.

“Pitch—“ It’s a little bit rough, no doubt from however long he slept. “Where’s Pitch?”

Both of North’s eyebrows rise in understanding.

“Ahh, yes. He is in library.”

Library? Jack’s brain stalled again. Since when did the shop have a library?

“Where—“

“Three stories down; left side of mountain.”

Jack nods, a quick jerk of his head and a hurried thanks before he runs. He glides down through the workshop, down a flight of stairs at the center and comes three stories down just like North had said, leaving only one lone hallway to get off at. The doors to the library were ajar and Jack flew in, stopping short just a foot in.

Pitch stood with his back nearly completely to the door, a tomb in his hands and he calmly flips through the pages methodically. The only thing missing was the glasses, he thinks. Pitch would look nice in glasses. Slim, black metal frames to sit perched on his nose as he read. And fitted with something more suited to Pitch, something like a black turtleneck instead of the goofy, still slightly oversized sweater of North’s he’s borrowing.

It was a moment later that Pitch looks over his shoulder, catching Jack staring at him at the doorway. He smiles, amusement filling his gaze.

“Why, good morning Jack. Or should I say, good evening?” Pitch’s gaze go back to his book.
This place was massive. How had he never been here? Endless tombs line the shelves, leading to a second floor. There was a row of windows, all glazed over with the outside ice and frost, creating a mosaic of colors within the library when the sun’s rays shone through. All in between, there was sparse furniture. Close by Pitch, there was a couple of armchairs and a table with a tray; an elegant teapot with one cup stood there, accompanied by a matching sauces and jar of sugar, a tiny pitcher of milk.

Wait— he’s slept for how long?

Now at least he had an accurate estimate of how much time has past. For all he knows, they had went to bed in the afternoon. But he does remember Phil coming to check on them, and he was sure that was a good marker for the time. Phil always comes to check on them before he goes to bed. It was kind of his thing. Jack had the decency to be embarrassed about it, scratching at his cheek as he traipsed inside.

“Sorry..”

“No need to apologize. There’s tea, if you’d like. That one yeti, Phil, I believe his name was, had made it not long ago. Please, help yourself.” Pitch had not yet glanced at him since the first time and Jack saunter over to the seat that gives him he best and easiest look at Pitch. It wasn’t a dream, he thought.

Jack glances to the tea set as he settles into the plush chair. Pitch had said help yourself, and he wonders if he knows or remembers if there was only one cup. If Pitch had drank out of that cup and if it means anything else than what Jack could possibly be trying to make it into. Like, perhaps Pitch is aware that there is only one cup, and had already drank from it, and it’ll somehow be like an indirect kiss. Or maybe it’s just as simple as Pitch had forgotten there was only one cup, too engrossed with his book, and offered him some tea because that was the nice, polite thing to do. But Jack’s too far gone in his affections to think of the normal side of things, his spirit elated about a trivial matter that could more or less be of a false conclusion.

So Jack does the only thing he thinks he can. He grabs the handle of the teapot and pours himself a cup, adding some milk and sugar to sweeten the Russian spiced tea; North nearly always smells like it. Cinnamon. He brings his legs up, resting the cup on his knees before taking a sip— still rather hot despite how long it’s been standing there and Jack suspects it might have been charmed to keep its temperature.

“Thanks.” Jack smiles a bit, the heat spreading through him like cold might through to someone else. It warmed him for a second before it flitted away. Jack glanced up to Pitch after the second sip.
“What made you come here?”

Pitch is quiet for a moment, longer than usual and Jack was just about to ask again.

“I wanted to catch up on my history.” Pitch replies, closing the book that he was holding and sliding it back into place with such care. “I didn’t want to wake you, since it seemed you needed the rest.” Pitch pulls out another tomb from the shelf and starts to flip through that. “I must admit, North didn’t seem like the one to keep a library so I was rather surprised. He has quite the collection of the ages.” Pitch looks back and smiles, bringing that book with him and settles into the chair next to Jack’s.

Even the space across the little table seemed too much to stand. In the name of curiosity, Jack set down the cup and allowed himself to fluidly moved to perch himself on Pitch’s armrest like it was the most natural thing to do. He was certainly small enough to fit on the armrest, and it didn’t seem like Pitch minded, giving him a curious cursory glance when he moved and let him read the front cover of the book.

*Samsara*

*From Coal to Gold; Light to Black; Dark Age to the Golden Age: Rise and Fall*

“Is this…?” Jack trails off, hands skimming the gold raised edges on the top page. The groves under his fingers hard and unyielding.

“A complete history of time.” Pitch says, watching Jack’s fingers follow the outline of the title. Jack lifts his hands off the cover and Pitch turns it over, the paper smooth and thin under his fingers as he gently turns page by page. “I figured books would give me a… less biased turn of events.” Jack hums, nodding idly as he settled in, brought his legs up closer to his chest, leaning into the armchair, arm across the back of it. Pitch turns the next page and begins to read, as if having an audience automatically made him read out loud.

*“Samsara: the cycle of death and rebirth to which life in the material world is bound.”*
“Don’t worry yourself over me, Jack. I knew what I would find in these books.” Pitch traces the outlines of the front page again. “Books are written by the victors,” He says as he sets the book on the petite table by them.

Jack frowns lightly, reaching to pour and make Pitch a cup of tea, adding sugar and milk. It was the only thing he could think of to do. Pitch takes it with a grateful smile, and takes a sip. His lip curls in amusement.

“It’s sweet.”

Jack paused— is it not supposed to be? He opened his mouth to apologize, he hadn’t even asked Pitch what he’d prefer.

“I like it.”

Pitch smiles, catching Jack’s eyes as he takes another drink from it. Jack’s heart skips a beat.

An indirect kiss.

Jack was so out of his element; so lost as to what to do next. What was their objective with this book, even? To get a history of who Pitch was before he woke up? All it did was paint him the villain—which, you know, he was. Past tense. But it still felt too harsh to hear Pitch being referred to as a fallen hero, with no chance of redemption. They might have been referring to the fact that Pitch, at that time, had no way of being brought back. But he did.

Pitch wasn’t overly upset; his spirit dampened and Jack felt personally responsible, as he usually
does when things happen to Pitch since he first won. Pitch losing his memory the first time was his fault; Pitch losing his memories the second time was his fault; Pitch experiencing this trauma was his fault; basically everything that Pitch is going through, was in some way, shape, or form, was his fault.

And he doesn’t know how to make it better.

Jack’s the guardian of fun, and yet he can’t even find a way to lift his spirits. Christ, he was so out of sorts. They walked down the hallway, Pitch having his hands at his back, as always, with Jack following a step behind so he could keep glancing at him without being too obvious (which Pitch probably knew he was doing, anyway, but he wanted a semblance of secrecy).

They climbed the stairs, so lost in his own mind he didn’t see the grin Pitch gave, mischievous and playful. And the next time Jack looked up, Pitch was gone. It startled Jack, and he looked around wildly around the workshop. He only found Pitch because he peeked around a pillar, a light smirk on his lips.

*Catch me if you can,* his grin whispered and Jack’s heart skipped a beat.

And then Pitch was gone again.

Jack bolted to the pillar, blinking his eyes when Pitch just… disappeared. There was nowhere behind the pillar to actually hide, so he looked around. *Not under the table; not in this corner at all!* Jack paused as he heard whistling, one done while waiting and he bolts back from the pillar’s area, seeing Pitch walking toward the open double doors of the workshop like he hadn’t just disappeared. *Twice.*

Pitch glanced over his shoulder, smirked, and disappears behind the door.

Jack bolted to the workshop after him.

Instead of dread filling him at Pitch’s unnerving ability to disappear, however, he felt only the sure tale signs of adventure stirring in his chest. It was something that had been missing since Pitch was killed; his spirit for fun damped by the responsibility he felt. It felt like a spark of that, ready to turn into a burning wildfire, fueled by Pitch’s own mischievous nature.
With a grin, Jack bolted around pillars and tables and yetis who grumbled at him. Pitch was always just so tantalizingly out of reach, so close yet too far with his ability to blend into the shadows (something Jack hadn’t known he had the ability to do before becoming the Nightmare King). Jack would need to outsmart him, somehow. He tried to form a coherent pattern Pitch was using; left, left, right— right, left, left; roundabout.

It didn’t seem like Pitch was using any kind of pattern as to where he would show up. Not in any coherent pattern Jack could fathom, anyway; the pattern was too dispersed, if there was one. He wonders how well Pitch could see, if he could see from all shadows or not, or if he would automatically see Jack coming should Jack backtrack and go around the toys on the left.

So the next time he spots Pitch show up, leaning against the railing by side of the workshop, he moves as if he makes to follow and he sees Pitch smirk before he disappears in dispersed shadows. Jack jerked back on his heel, rounding the pillar next to him and flying along the rafters, circling along the tops in the shadows.

Pitch shows up again, same spot. He looked puzzled, staring at the spot Jack would have been had he continued with this chase. Jack grins to himself as he moves into position, managing to get behind the globe— behind Pitch, without his noticing.

Then Jack pounced, kicking off the globe and heading straight for Pitch. Pitch barely turns his face to look at Jack, but Jack can see the grin he had on before he turned, met Jack’s eyes, smirked, and fell to the floor in a wisp of black.

And only seconds after that does he see something tear through the smoke— too quick for Jack to dodge; eyes wide as the corner of a boomerang hit him straight in the stomach and the tail end of the boomerang sent him flying to the side with the power it was flung.

Jack had never felt anything like it— the pain, the intensity, not even when Pitch had broken his staff.

Nausea rolled through him like waves in the undertow that he had barely registered smacking against the side of the wall, despite hitting his head hard enough to crack and plummeting to the ground. He might’ve heard his name called but all his attention was on trying to focus through the debilitating pain coursing through him; his stomach cramped like it was caving in on itself. Jack clutched at his stomach like a lifeline, curled into the smallest ball he could possibly fit into.

What the fuck was Bunny’s boomerangs made with? Steel?? Magic??? Because this pain wasn’t from a regular boomerang.
Jack grit his teeth against another roll of nausea, sick enough to throw up despite having nothing in his stomach. He hadn’t had to feel nausea since he was still a human. His entire body started to tingle, feeling too hot too hot too hot—

“Jack!”

Cool hands touched his face and he blinks his eyes open, but his vision was blurry and fuzzy, no doubt teary from the pain. Above him were just blobs of colors; voices arguing and he couldn’t find it in him to care. Jack shook his head weakly as the hands tried to raise his head from where he had it tucked close to his body, whimpering at the spasm that passed through his body at the action.

The same hands moved him, though with Jack so tightly curled up he couldn’t fathom how or where or why the fuck does he feel like this? A hand moved to press at his forehead, the other somehow managed to squeeze between his curled body to rest flat along his stomach. Jack must have crushed it, or something, because he was sure his muscles were so strained they could literally crush something with the intensity.

But as moments pass, the shaking in his limbs started to decline. He hadn’t even noticed how badly he was shaking— shivering?— trembling, until the blood pounding in his ears subsided. Until the pain slowly leaked away just like the heat burning his insides.

The hands, which were once so cool and lovely against him began to heat, like they were siphoning the heat from Jack and he was grateful because the pain drained out of him with the heat; steadily, slowly.

Jack could hear himself pant, feeling zings of aftershock from his stomach and to the tips of his fingers and toes; the exploding pressure in his head deflating. His eyes were still unfocused and he could only make out blobs of colors of whoever was around him, but he still felt lifetimes better than when the pain started.

Jack didn’t know if he blanked out, or passed out, because when his eyes finally focused, he was amazingly upright. He didn’t really register how he was held, or by whom, or even where he was for what felt like the longest time. He blinks slowly, seeing but not really understanding who the shapes in front of him belonged to. His body felt like it’s been scorched, left with freezer burn from the inside out. The hands stayed on his forehead and stomach, which he had belatedly noticed that he had relaxed enough for a hand to fit comfortably through his curled body.
They were warm, though.

The hands left and he whimpered, unable to form much coherent thought or words, but knowing if the hands disappear that the pain would come back. His vision doubled when they left and he whines unintelligibly.

“Nice magic, Pookah. Just wish you had enough thought not to use it on your comrade.”

Who?

“I was aiming for you! You did this on purpose!” Another voice growls, but it all sounded underwater.

“I’ve no time to waste on imbeciles like you.” That voice sounded familiar, actually, but he couldn’t quite place it.

Jack felt himself let out a breath as the hands slipped back to the place they were at before; one at his forehead, and then one on his stomach, attached to an arm that was wrapped around him. It finally occurred to him that those hands were also attached to a body, which was attached to a person.

The hands began to warm, soothing the hurt from his frayed nerves in such a gentle way he was wondering how two different currents of water could feel so different? A gentler undertow, one where the sands are white and the shore is shallow and the water is crystal clear, rolling over his body but not pulling him under and suffocating him in the process.

Jack took a steadying breath. He could focus his eyes if he wanted to, but he didn’t. If he did then he would have to face whatever is waiting and he would much rather stay here, in his nice cocoon of safety and warmth. He’d never felt actual warmth since he became Jack Frost; was nearly impossible with his stature.

“Jack?”

That voice again. He knows it. He likes it, too. Smooth like black opal, deep like the black seas, as vast as the galaxy.
“How do you feel, Jack?” The voice asks again, and Jack debated between responding or not. Would the hands leave if he said he was well? Or if he was unwell? It was very unnerving, to not know what answer to give so the hands could stay there, working over and easing, settling the nausea until not a drop remained, spreading lovely little tingles through his body like flakes of frost swirling in the air.

But even as the feeling of the gentle waves left, the hands stayed.

“... Jack?” He asks again and Jack blinks, finally focusing on what was right in front of him. Half the workshop was in front of him, half the works in his line of sight in a half circle around him, grumbling and whispering; elves’ bells ringing loud in his ears as one strayed toward him. The hand at his forehead left to shoo him gently away. Jack couldn’t rectify keeping silent after he finally came back to earth and he grunted in response. There was sighs of relief all around him, and he was glad the arm around him stayed stilled.

It was Pitch, he slowly realized.

Pitch was holding him. Jack sat perched sideways in his lap, leaned against his broad chest, legs now loose and akimbo in front of him. His body was pretty limp, exhausted from the seizing.

“Are you alright?” Pitch asked again, everyone around them quieting as they see Jack come back. Jack works his tongue in his mouth; it felt heavy and too big.

“Ahh..” He mumbles. “Yeah…” His throat felt sore, like he’d screamed it raw. And maybe he did. “M’okay..” Jack held one arm around his middle, inadvertently keeping a hand over Pitch’s to keep it there. His heat was welcoming, soothing. But now that he was back, he felt completely drained. Like it took the last of his energy to focus in on his surroundings and mumble the few words as a reply. He didn’t even know if anyone even understood what he said.

How could having a bit of fun playing tag ended so wrongly?

“How’s sleepy…” Jack mumbles, his eyes drifting shut once more, eyelids heavy, unnaturally so, and he wonders if that was Pitch, too, urging him to sleep with magic so he’d wake up refreshed and not feeling like a rag doll. Jack tried desperately to hold onto the edges of his consciousness, if only to remember the moments he was held in Pitch’s arms.

It felt warm, safe. Just as he teetered off the edge he swore he heard someone speak to him. He fell
into the black abyss, the edges spun with gold sand, intricate patterns dancing behind his eyes.

“Sweet dreams, dear Jack.”
Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

*The song theme for this fic is Young, by Vallis Alps.*

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

The edges of Jack’s consciousness came back piece by piece. His mind slotting together the here and now. It started to bleed into him; the sound of a crackling fire, the smell of spiced tea, the warmth of fingers in his hair.

Jack begrudgingly opens his eyes, blinking against the soft light of the fireplace.

Since when did North have a fireplace?

The fingers running through his hair paused and then pressed gently into his scalp. Jack hums, relaxing further as he closes his eyes again. He was on a couch, he was sure, lying on his side with his head on Pitch’s lap. It didn’t make any sense but it also made perfect sense, you know? Pitch was quiet for a few minutes, continuing to massage through his scalp before he spoke.

“How do you feel, Jack?”

Jack sighed, giving another hum before deciding it was time to get up. He winced, his stomach sore as he carefully sits. A blanket falls to his lap and he tenderly raises his sweater, seeing the giant blossoming bruise on his stomach and side.

“I’ve done all I can, but the bruise will have to heal on its own.” Jack lets the sweater fall down and he scoots back to be leaning back against Pitch’s side.

“Didn’t even know spirits *could* bruise.” He grumbles, holding onto his stomach. Pitch moves, just slightly, turning so Jack could more comfortably rest against him, now leaned back partly on his chest while Pitch laid his arm across the back of the couch. “How long have I been out?” He asks, carefully taking the teacup Pitch held out for him. It was warm and he would have thought warmth would have scarred him for life with the heat that tore through him before but evidently, Jack was okay with Pitch’s heat and the heat of the things he provided him.
“A few hours.”

Jack hums, relaxing back, wiggling until he fit just right in the little crook Pitch made for him. He’ll gladly stay here forever, cloaked in nothing but darkness and light from a fireplace with the smell of sweet tea and Pitch’s deep scent of pine and white fir.

When Jack finishes his tea, Pitch takes the cup and sets it down without so much as jarring Jack from his little nook. Jack only moves to sit better enough to lay his head on Pitch’s shoulder. Moments later he felt Pitch’s fingers in his hair, massaging into his scalp and he hums in contentment.

“Ah hem,” A voice cleared their throat and Jack looked over the back of the couch to the open archway. Bunny stood there, looking properly sorry and contrite, rubbing the back of his neck and ears pulled back. “Jack…? Can I, uh, talk to you a minute?” He asks, hunched over compunctiously.

Jack twisted to the right, glancing at Pitch. He meets his eye and gives a shrug of his shoulder.

Your choice.

Jack didn’t really wanna leave the spot he was sitting at, though. He probably already knew the talk about to happen, anyway. Something about how he was sorry, he thought they were fighting, and that Pitch purposefully disappeared and hit Jack. Heaving a great mental sigh, Jack extracted himself from Pitch’s side and winced only slightly when he twisted his torso to slip off the couch and onto his shoeless feet. He meets Bunny just outside the arch and he found it funny how they were pretty much cloaked in darkness while where Pitch was, was bathed in the light of the glow of the fireplace. It reached where they were too, but it was so much dimmer.

“Hey, mate…” Bunny scratches the back of his head and Jack folds his arms over his stomach for a lack of better things to do with them. “I’m, er, sorry about that…” Jack nods, not in much of a mood to relive what he knows would happen.

Also, where the hell was his staff? He thinks idly. It was surely nearby. Probably somewhere near Pitch. He felt oddly naked and unarmed without it. In front of Bunny, of all people.

“Really sorry..” Bunny repeats, not seeming to know how to handle the situation. Jack nods again, feeling drained from the conversation already. “Jack…” He starts. There it is. Took a moment, Jack thought. The guilt left his face as he readied to blame it on something else.
“Save it.” Jack says curtly. Bunny narrows his eyes at him.

“How can you not see that he did that on purpose?” Bunny hissed. And it was kinda funny, how Bunny thought that if Jack didn’t think Pitch did it on purpose, he would think Bunny did and that definitely wasn’t what he had thought.

It was just a freak accident and he knew Pitch wouldn’t have moved if he had seen it coming. If he didn’t that first time, why would he now? Pitch was strong enough to stop the incoming boomerang with one hand. And if he could do that, and not get crippled like Jack, why would he choose to have Jack get hit?

Pitch wouldn’t. Not this Pitch. It was too bad Bunny didn’t see it like that.

“He didn’t.” Jack said. He was frustrated, but he felt oddly calm about it. Like he’d somehow matured through osmosis just by being near Pitch. He could slightly understand what it might have looked like to the outside world. Jack was bolting to Pitch, Pitch was smirking, they might have looked like they were attacking each other, having some altercation. Barely. “Pitch wouldn’t do that.” He says with conviction; steady, sure.

“Of course he bloody would!” Bunny hisses. For all his supposed years of wisdom, he has not matured. Jack sighs out loud this time, rubbing his face. “Do you really believe he’s changed? How naïve are you?” Jack shook his head, feeling a headache coming on. Could spirits even get headaches? It could be the lack of belief… But Jack didn’t have a large belief-base to begin with, so losing half his belief base doesn’t affect him as any of the guardians losing half of their belief-base.

Bunny just… couldn’t stop living in the past, could he?

But Bunny also didn’t know Pitch like he did. Couldn’t even fathom how he would feel; to fall from grace, lose his memory, again and again, and then regain it at the cost of losing another. To find out how far from grace he’d fallen after millennia have passed. That you’ve lost your family; wife and daughter, friends, and were alone in every sense of the word.

Jack could.

He might not have fallen from grace; he wasn’t some big-shot general whose duty was the reason he fell from grace, but Jack knows the feeling of being alone for centuries. Of being snubbed and
ignored. *He* didn’t have memories either, when he was brought to life as a spirit. The guardians didn’t care about him until the Man in the Moon choose *him* to be a guardian. Why? Because one day Man in the Moon decided to bring him into this world because he would one day be useful in the grand scheme of things?

*That’s not for me!* He had said to being a guardian. He’d lost his family, or his family had lost him. He’d lost his memory, his sister. Jack knows how it feels, so fresh in his mind.

Jack sighs, shaking his head as he rubs his face.

“Get out of here!” Bunny growls and it startles Jack until he follows the line of his sight to Pitch, leaning casually against the other pillar. Pitch looked unimpressed and completely unafraid.

“I think you’ve outstayed your welcome.” Pitch says levelly as he pushes off the arch and steps closer to them. Bunny raised on his hind legs, but it did little to intimidate, even as he slightly towered over Pitch.

“Jack.” Bunny says, more like *commands*, like Jack would somehow move behind and appease him and it rubs him the wrong way. He and Bunny had never been close. When they had finally gotten amicable, Jack had screwed up Easter and the rest was history. He might’ve made Jaime believe in Easter again, but how much did that mean, really, against centuries of antagonism and provocation?

“Jack?” Pitch asks, giving a little lilt in his voice that sounded more like a suggestion. Jack was once again faced with how much he related to Pitch more than he did to Bunny. Taking a breath, Jack steps closer, putting a hand on each of their chests and pushing them apart. Or rather, pushing Bunny back.

“Don’t worry about it.” He says, dropping his hands, staying by Pitch’s side and Bunny actually looked affronted. It would have been funny, if this were a funny situation.

“What? Jack—“

“I’m fine.” Jack says again, turning to leave. He glances at Pitch’s face from the corner of his eye as he passed. He looked to see if Pitch would be smirking, or smug, because if he was then Bunny would be right and he was playing right into Pitch’s hands. But he wasn’t. Pitch looked at Bunny with pity in his features, like he felt sorry for the rabbit that he couldn’t get over his own ineptitude in order to keep Jack within his orbit.
Pitch turns away from the rabbit after Jack passes, like he was creating a physical barrier between him and Bunny and Jack breathed a little easier as he came back to the couch.

“Have you seen my staff?”

Pitch comes around to the side he was on, picking it up from where it lay, in plain sight, against the opposite wall and hands it over, seeming to watch him carefully. It made his skin crawl; not Pitch, but this place. With Bunny everywhere, waiting for Pitch to screw up at every turn even though there was nothing to screw up. Pitch seemed on the verge of asking if he was okay so Jack spoke first.

“Wanna get out of here?”

Jack takes a deep breath, feeling his lungs fill with fresh, icy air as he stands on the rooftop of North’s workshop. There was a breeze, barely there but he felt it tickle his neck and ruffle his clothes. He hung onto the pole at the center, relishing in the sunlight with a moonless sky and closed his eyes. Another moment of stillness and he hums to himself, spinning in a circle around the Kievan Rus top as he waits for Pitch.

With little persuasion, Pitch had agreed to help him with a diversion to get a little something that was instrumental to their escape.

Well, not escape, but whatever. Felt like a prison with Pitch under such careful scrutiny.

Jack smiles to himself; this was the most fun he’s had in ages. He laughs to himself as he thinks back to just a few minutes before. He and Pitch make quite a mischievous team, didn’t they?

“Wanna help me steal something?”

Jack pulls out the item from his jacket pocket, holding it up to the sun as if to say, look at my treasure, the key to our freedom. He admires how the glass of the globe shines, twinkles like sprinkles of glitter were imbedded in the thick of it. North’s workshop stares back at him from inside the snow globe.
“What do you want to steal?” Pitch asks, interest piqued, eyes narrowed in mirth and the urge for shenanigans and it sparked a new sense of adventure in Jack.

So into admiring the globe that he did not notice another body sliding up to the dome top. Pitch held on with his opposite arm facing Jack. Jack glances at Pitch and grins brightly as Pitch pulled a snowglobe from the sleeve of his shirt like a magician and holds it up by Jack’s. Jack leans a little closer to Pitch and when he looks up, he’s barely half a foot away, face-to-face. Pitch looks back at him, his smirk softening.

“So ready to get out of here?” Jack asks, letting go the pole. Jack shoves his snow globe back into his pocket. He still wore one of North’s giant sweaters, magicked to fit him comfortably. Jack smiles, hand perched gingerly over Pitch’s, brining the globe closer to him. He glances at Pitch again, catching his eye, and smirks. “The Tooth Palace.” He whispers into the glass and watches as the workshop turns to Tooth’s towers in the Himalayas. Jack shakes the snowglobe, the flurry overtaking the scene and he throws it in front of them. He catches Pitch look on in wonder and boldly threads his fingers through Pitch’s and tugs on his arm, flying them through the portal.

Chapter End Notes

Pitch is really an overgrown kid and no one can tell me otherwise.

In the coming chapters: more bonding, adventure, mischief, and some backstories.
Chapter 8

Going to Tooth’s palace was a whole lot different this time around, especially by North’s snowglobes. There weren’t Nightmares fleeing the scene with Baby Tooth trapped inside their ribs and he was glad the globe decided to spit them out closer to the pillar so they didn’t have to fly so far.

Jack perches them on the platform, one of the higher ones, and watches as Pitch takes in the scene. His eyes were wide with wonder, admiring the architecture, hands tracing patterns on the wall and he is startled when his touch opens a compartment for the teeth.

Jack saunters closer, watching Pitch trace the colorful diamonds on the top before it opens and he looks closer.

“Fascinating.” He whispers in wonder and gingerly closest the top, pushing it back into the wall and then looking around. More spires stuck out from the ceiling, more platforms to hop to; Baby Tooth milling all over the place and it’s truly a wonder that no one has noticed them yet so Jack stays close by. “What is this place?”

“The Tooth Palace. They keep children’s teeth here, all of them.”

“Yours too?” Pitch asked curiously and for a second Jack paused— how did he know? “I assumed you were once a child.” Pitch said, amusement in his voice and Jack smiled sheepishly, remembering how Pitch told him he was easy to read.

“Yeah. Mine too.”

“Why collect teeth?” Pitch asked curiously, following the pillar in a circular motion before looking out to the rest of the scenery. The giant center pillar where Baby Tooths picked up a quarter before flying off to retreat more teeth.

“They hold the most important memories of childhood.” Jack says quietly, leaning on his staff. “When a child needs to remember something important…” he trails off and Pitch hums, giving a nod.

“Touching them activates it?” He asks, standing straighter as he had been leaning over to take a gander underneath. Then he looks at Jack, a bit worried. “I do hope I didn’t activate an important
memory at an inopportune time.” They look at each other, Jack’s eyes widening a bit. He hadn’t known when the faeries knew when to activate the memories, but, oh well…

They laugh after a moment, shaking their heads.

“I’m sure it’ll be okay.” Jack grins, taking his weight off the staff and startles back as Baby Tooth flies in front of his face, squeaking and darting back and forth. He blinks rapidly. “Hey— Baby Tooth! Wha— hey! Calm down.” He tries to follow her flight patterns but gives up, looking to Pitch just in time to see Baby Tooth dart to Pitch, squeaking at him angrily. “Hey!” Jack huffs, lessening the distance between them.

Pitch, for being barraged by angry squeaking and buzzing, was actually taking it quite well. Besides being surprised, he didn’t get angry or upset at having a feary so close to his face he went cross eyed. And then—

“I understand your concern,” Pitch raises his hands in a mock-surrender. “But I assure you, I don’t mean any harm.” Baby Tooth pauses, tiny mouth dropped in surprise before the squeaking began again. Pitch catching his eye and gives a helpless smile as if saying, well, what else can I do? Jack smiles back, chuckling and shaking his head.

It was amazing that he saw the glimmer of Tooth’s blades as the sailed through the air.  

“No!” Jack lunged, getting between the oncoming blades and Pitch, only to then realize— well fuck, here we go again. Tooth’s weapons are no doubt infused with the same magic Bunny’s boomerangs were. Jack shuts his eyes, preparing for the oncoming pain.

Except it never came.

Instead, he felt Pitch’s body cover his and then they were falling— but they never fell to the floor. It felt like an odd sensation of vertigo, of weightlessness, before he blinks his eyes open and— he’d never really paid attention to the underside of the spires before, but they were as immaculate at the rest of the palace.

“Are you alright, Jack?” Pitch’s voice asked and he blinks to center his vision before looking to Pitch who wasn’t even half a foot away and whoa they were pretty close. A few seconds later he realizes why they seemed to close, and that was because Pitch was holding him, bridal style, of all things, and somehow gravity was not at all plummeting them to the mountain range. Gravity did, however,
still have a hold of his hair and he was sure he looked like a right silly picture with his hair looking like it’s spiked.

“Ahh— I’m— I’m okay.” Jack smiles shakily. See? Pitch wouldn’t let him get hurt if he knew, if he saw it coming. Above they can hear the chirping of the Baby Tooth who were alarmed at their disappearance. Pitch glances outward in thought.

“Do you think they’d attack us if we went out there?” Pitch asked curiously and Jack, being who he is, couldn’t help but put his two cents in.

“They might. I wouldn’t argue about staying here a while longer.” Because, in all honesty, who wouldn’t want to be held bridal style by their crush? He was sure that was easy to see, as well. Why try and be sly when it’s written all over your face, am I right? Pitch chuckles, deep and amused.

“Yes. I do believe you’re right.” Jack hums, nodding in approval, his outside hand loosely holding his staff.

“How do you have us like this? Magic?” Jack asked curiously. “If you let go, am I gonna fall?”

“Yes, magic, and—“ Pitch thought for a moment. “Not especially. But I’d rather not test it. The gravity I have on is for my persons.” Jack hums, the I'd rather you not test it either went uncommented and Jack relaxed.

“I think this is gonna become our new welcome.” Jack said conversationally, causing Pitch to chuckle.

“You don’t say.” Jack hums.

“I do. Could do without the magic weapons hurled at me, but, ya know, otherwise it ain’t so bad.” He grins and Pitch rolls his eyes good naturedly. Jack blinks as he looks out, hearing a tiny squeak of surprise. “Busted.” Baby Tooth flies over to them, squeaking in frustration and Jack grins sheepishly, scratching his cheek. “Sorry, sorry.”

“Should we make a run for it?” Pitch whispered in his ear and though the idea of a chase sounded spectacular, he didn’t think it would go over well. Especially when Tooth didn’t trust him yet. It’ll be a North Pole fiasco all over again and Jack has yet to decide if being hit by a magic weapon
would be worth being comforted by Pitch when hiding like they are now would suit him just fine. The lag in response must’ve given Pitch the answer he was looking for. “Stay it is, then.”

Jack’s heart lurched as shadows swallowed them up and he clung his arms around Pitch’s neck as he felt that weird vertigo and the next thing he knew they were right side up again on a spire, Tooth on an adjacent one, spinning round and spotting them.

“Jack!”

Jack raised a hand at her, the one holding the staff, and noticed Pitch had yet to set him down as Tooth flew over, careful like Pitch could attack at any moment. Regrettably, he wiggled some in Pitch’s grasp and Pitch let him slide down to his feet. Pitch’s hand resting at his hip did not go unnoticed by him, and he was sure his hand on Pitch’s shoulder did not go unnoticed by him, either.

“Hey, Tooth.” He greets, hoping it doesn’t sound as awkward as it sounds to his ears.

“Jack,” She smiles, softer at him and a little tight at Pitch as her eyes flit between them. “What brings you here?” She asks, though Jack could hear the implication of why is Pitch there. With another regrettable choice, Jack drops his hand from Pitch’s shoulder and Pitch’s hand slides off his hip as he steps forward.

“Snuck out.” He shrugged his shoulders. “Bunny was being a killjoy, so I thought I’d bring Pitch to see how you do things.” She looked at him like she wanted to ask why in the world he thought that was a good idea and smiled tightly.

“I hope we’re not in the way.” Pitch gingerly butts into their conversations. Tooth’s bright eyes lock onto him and Jack swore the only reason she hadn’t attacked yet was because Jack stood between them, too close to Pitch that if she attacked, she’d hit Jack. Pitch gives her a disarming smile, pulling out the stops of his gentleman-y charms. “I’ve been reading up on the history of this planet, and I’ve got to say, they don’t do you or your domain justice in the beauty and wonder it holds.”

Tooth was stunned, as was Jack, but she shook her head and narrowed her eyes.

“Don’t think for a second I trust you just because you talk different.”

“I wouldn’t dream of it.” Pitch says calmly, taking no offense whatsoever and it seems to throw her
off just a bit more. “I’ve no doubt earned your ill intent throughout the years of my previous reign as
the Nightmare King. I have no excuses for doing what I did; no rationalizations or justifications. But
as I stand now, I have no will to fight you, or cause your downfall, and can only ask you give me
grace to prove to you I bear no animosity toward you.”

Tooth was speechless, glancing between Jack and Pitch as if asking, *are you hearing what I’m
hearing?* She was quiet for so long Jack decided to step in, giving her the best puppy dog eyes he
thought he could muster.

“So, can we stay?”

Tooth looked between them again before she caved, Jack mentally fistpumping in victory.

“Oh, alright.” Jack smiles brightly at her, teeth and all, and that seemed to help as she helplessly
smiles back at him.

“Thanks, Tooth.” Jack gives her a quick hug.

Tooth had left them alone for a while, if only because Jack seemed to trust Pitch explicitly. But came
a time where Jack could no longer answer Pitch’s curious questions about the palace.

“What happens to the teeth once the child becomes an adult?”

“Does this place *ever* run out of space?”

“Do the memories work when the child is an adult?”

All rather good questions that had Jack wondering too, and was just about to suggest they bug Tooth
about it when they hear the rumbling of the sleigh. Jack looks up to the sky, clicking his tongue. If
the sleigh was there, then that means Bunny must be popping out from the ground on one of these
spires any time soon, no doubt parading that Jack’s been kidnapped by a lunatic.
Jack looks back and shares a look with Pitch. He grins, grabbing Pitch’s hand again while pulling out the second snow globe he’d stolen.

“The Warren.” Jack whispers into it with a grin and throws it off the spire, following after it and Pitch allowed himself to be pulled in his wake. For a second, it felt like he was pulled in different directions before the portal spit him out on the other side.

Pitch steadied him as he stumbled, awkwardly trying to compensate landing on his feet with flying downwards and not crashing them. Jack’s laugh trails off, heart thudding in his chest with the image of the chase. Too bad they didn’t steal more snow globes.

“What is this place?” Pitch asks, looking around curiously.

“This is…” Well fuck. Jack didn’t actually think of where they should go next. He supposed being at Bunny’s warren wasn’t the smartest thing to do, but he doubts Bunny would ever think to look for them here. “Well…” Jack rubs the back of his neck. “It’s Bunny’s warren.” Pitch looked to him, giving a grin.

“Ballsy, aren’t you?” Jack chuckles, shrugging.

“Who knows? This might just be the last place he’ll look.” Jack smiles, pulling Pitch toward the tunnel to the main area with the hand he had yet to let go of.

“And what does he do here?” Pitch asks curiously, letting Jack pull him along.

“He gets eggs ready for Easter.” Pitch hums.

“And what does this ‘Easter’ entail?” Jack paused, looking back at Pitch curiously.

“You don’t know what Easter is?” Pitch shrugs.

“Never had such a thing on or around our home constellation.” Jack starts to lead him again to where they had little naked, white eggs running around on little feet. “Extraordinary.” Pitch says, carefully stepping around them as they crowded them curiously, tilting this way and that as if wondering who
“Tell me about it?” Jack asks, catching Pitch’s attention before hopping up onto a boulder near the paint. “Your home constellation.” Your life, really. Anything. Pitch hops up next to him, watching a little egg somehow maneuver itself up Pitch’s clothed leg and into their laps, practically jumping with joy at the prospect of being painted.

“I lived on the constellation Orion, right on the belt.” Pitch starts, chuckling at the little egg. Jack picks it up, taking a brush and swathing blue color across its shell like war paint. “There’s not much to tell really.” Pitch shrugs. “I wasn’t born to wealth, I was mediocre at my schooling, I constantly got into fights.” Pitch picks up another egg that was hopping just by the boulder, valiantly trying to get up to where his friend was. Jack passed him the brushes, the paint set behind them in cups made of flowers.


“Really. It wasn’t until I was drafted into the army did I shape up. They had… a particular use for my craft.” Jack looked up at him from smearing red, not at all an artist. Craft? He asked with a curious look. Pitch looked down behind them, where the sun was casting—

*Shadows.*

“One thing led to another,” Pitch says, drawing swirls of green, and it shocked Jack to know he was left handed. “And before I knew it decades had gone by and I’ve become a general.” The two eggs they had hopped from their grasp and traded painters. Pitch took Jack’s with amusement, adding more colors. “There, one of the court’s Vestarches had taken an interest in me, for the fact that I was still unwed and unbound, and that he had a daughter whom was of age.”

“You were betrothed?” Jack asked curiously, turning back to paint random patterns on the egg when it wiggled to get his attention. Jack didn’t bother asking about what Vestarches were. For all he knew, they spoke a completely different language than he knew and he’d rather not distract himself from what he wanted to hear.

“Betroth is a strong word.” Pitch said carefully. “It was highly implied that I would receive more honor being married to a daughter of high position, especially when I come from none. I didn’t find her distasteful, per se, but we didn’t have much in common.” Pitch let the little egg go when it wanted free. “It took a lot of counseling to get in the same book, let alone the same page.” He chuckles.
Huh. Go figure, Jack thought. Katherine was a lucky gal, though, to have been married to someone like Pitch. He wasn’t feeling bitter about it, at least not as much as he thought he would have. Jack was probably not even born as a human, he wasn’t in Pitch’s life, then.

“What about you, Frost?” Pitch asks and Jack blinks, looking to him curiously.

“Well—“ He didn’t really know what to say. It could be summed up in a handful of sentences, each heavily emphasizing his need to be acknowledged. I died trying to save my sister, the Man in the Moon brought me back as Jack Frost but I had no memory of who I was before, then I proceeded to try and get attention, to be noticed, and then the whole thing with past-you happened. Then we defeated you, and then you came back but you weren’t you so I kept bugging you and then we killed you and then you slept for twenty years and I didn’t leave your side once. But he couldn’t really say all that, right? It sounds kinda boring. Jack jumps when he feels something wet slide across his cheek and he looked surprised at Pitch, who was grinning.

Jack’s mouth dropped.

“Oh no you didn’t—“ Jack narrows his eyes playfully, picking up one of the brushes with a fuschia pink, managing to swipe Pitch across the face and over his nose with it before he leaned too far back. He was sure Pitch allowed him to get him. Pitch moved too fast for him to comprehend, there was no conceivable way for Jack to get Pitch without him allowing to.

And so the fight began.

Bunny was gonna be sooo mad when he sees the mess they’ve made. But he was gonna have to catch them first! Jack laughs, leaning heavily on the rock he hid behind for support. Glitter fell from his hair in copious amounts, smears and paint splotches marred his pants and sweater.
“Time out! T-time out!” He breathes, feeling a crick in his side, not entirely from all the laughing. Pitch comes over in a few seconds, his own laughter dying out.

“Are you alright?” He asks, worried once again. Jack took a breath and nods. “Mind if I…?” He motions to Jack’s sweater and Jack nods, sitting back against the boulder. Pitch lifts his sweater, checking on the bruise before setting his hand on it.

And leaving a giant orange-red palm print in his wake. Jack couldn’t help but laugh at the absurdity of it all. Pitch grins.

“It’s healing faster than expected, that’s good.” Jack grins back, reaching out his own paint-smeared hand to leave a mark on his neck, feeling the heat seep into him under his palm.

They were all-together too close, Jack thinks. Their hands lingering where their hands touched, and he couldn’t feel upset by that because when their laughter died out and Pitch was still leaning over him and looking at him, Jack wonders how Pitch looks at him; if there was any chance Pitch looked at him like Jack looked at Pitch; with endless possibilities in their future, where they could be Jack Frost and Pitch Black without fear or consequences.

Jack’s eyes widen as he feels the suretale rumble of a tunnel opening and he looks out, and then back to Pitch with wide eyes.

_Oh crap, they were sooo gonna get it_, he thought, especially with the mess of paint and glitter they’ve made. None of the eggs were harmed, though. In fact, most of them had happily joined the impromptu war, happy to be painted, even if the paint made no sense.

Pitch looked back at him and grins, like he had a plan. He places a finger on his lips, _shhshh_, and wraps an arm around Jack’s waist, hauling him up like he weighed nothing at all and this time it was Pitch pulling Jack through the tunnels.

Jack happily held onto his neck, snickering into his ridiculous, ruined sweater, and didn’t even mind that the second they stepped into the shadowed tunnel, they fell.
The chapter where Bunny finally gets it. Kinda.

Omg. Ya’ll so sweet! I live off your comments. Hope you enjoy this next chapter! This story is coming to a close rather quickly. When I posted the first chapter I honestly didn’t know if it was gonna continue or turn into something so long.

So, thanks for sticking with me! There might be another two chapters left, maybe a third one I can squeeze out because I have an aversion to even numbers...

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Jack’s laugh continued through the black, feeling it echo and muffle all at once until they were pulled out from the other side. His eyes adjust to the change in light; a pretty dusk setting across the horizon, sun just peeking its last rays, drowning them in an orange color. Jack’s naked feet felt the branch before he even realized they were in a tree, high enough to be able to watch the sunset. Jack kept his hand on Pitch’s shoulder, Pitch kept one on his hip though Jack had zero possibility of falling. He’d been alive long enough to be able to balance on a tree branch that really shouldn’t be able to hold their combined weight. But who was he to argue with physics?

Jack took another moment to breathe in the crisp air of fresh winter, feel the cold seep into him through the air in his lungs before he looked around. The familiar sight caught his eye— the frozen lake, the town in the short distance ahead.

Deja Vu.

It was probably coincidental that Pitch had brought them here, where it all started. Where Jack started and where the conflict ended. So lost in his revere of the beauty of the town that he scarcely noticed the moon peeking over the horizon on the opposite side. It wasn’t full, no, just barely a sliver in the sky so when he noticed it he was not automatically appalled by its presence.

“Nice choice.” Jack smiles, turning to look at Pitch, who was admiring the scenery just as he. Pitch looked down at him, returning the smile. Carefully, he raised a hand to Jack’s hair and ruffled the white strands. Glitter sprinkled down like snow around his face and Jack closed his eyes, shaking his head of the glitter, no doubt still having some stuck to his lashes and cheeks. He hears Pitch chuckle and he meets his eye once he was done.

Time stood still. Something was rising, he was sure of it; it might’ve been Jack’s normal clumsiness
with these situations, or the awkwardness with which he typically didn’t know how to answer, but this time Jack was prepared.

With a grin, Jack picks up the hand on Pitch’s shoulder and touches his chest, innocuous and small, giving the barest hints of a push.

“Tag. You’re it.”

And then Jack was gone, taking to the east, swirling along through the trees without looking back. Pitch was behind him, giving chase and more than likely allowing him some leeway before catching him. Jack squeaks as Pitch shows up from his left, banking back before he was tagged.

It was so surreal, playing tag with his ex-nemesis, covered in paint.

Jack gasps as Pitch jumps out in front of him, grinning with an I got you now look on his face. Jack’s body jerks back as the wind pushes him back away from Pitch’s grasp, the former looking surprised at the turn of events as the wind sent Jack hurling up backwards into the sky with a laugh.

Pitch doesn’t let that deter him, though. Surprise wiped off his face, he crouches before starting to follow, oddly nimble for how big he actually was, pushing himself up and up and up and up along the branches with speeds no ordinary human can manage. Before long he got to the last of the treetops and Jack watched in astonishment as he pushed off the last branch like it was a trampoline instead of a twig.

Jack stared as Pitch came closer, taunting him with his playful grin. But he came just barely out of reach with his strong push, fingers barely grazing Jack’s cheek; a ghost of his heat runs across his skin, causing him to shiver. For that, he would gladly be it, if he could actually feel those fingers on his face.

And then Pitch was falling, plummeting to the earth with such speeds Jack wonders why now, of all times, gravity decided to wake up. Pitch didn’t look quite fazed by it, though, even when he fell into the shadows of the trees and nighttime as the sun finally set.

Jack belatedly fell with him, at first startled the wind no longer held him up before taking it upon himself to nose dive after him. He pulled up hard when he got close to the ground, landing on the cold floor of the forest and looking around. But everywhere he looked was only trees, nothingness and—
He played *right* into Pitch’s trap.

*Shadows.*

Jack sprung to running, though he was sure it was futile. It sent his blood pumping in excitement, it had him twitching at every move of a shadow nearby. Jack neared the park, panting for breath and slowing down once he came to the fringes of the pretty well-lit area. He looked around cautiously. Pitch was sure to pop out from somewhere, and soon. He’d let Jack have a false sense of security running through that dark forest, and Jack was sure, here, in this well-lit park, was where Pitch would most definitely think it best to attack.

He proved himself right when he took a deep breath, intending to relax, and got tackled to the ground. The air was knocked out of him, but he barely felt the descent onto the ground, because they rolled, Pitch taking the impact. By the time they settled, Pitch was above him, an arm under Jack’s neck for support, the other keeping him up as he grins at Jack salaciously.

“Caught you.”

Okay, it probably wasn’t salaciously, but Jack was gonna call it that anyway. Because look, Pitch was on top of him, boxing him in, and he was grinning, and Jack’s breath was coming in harshly from the chase and oooookay, that’s enough of that thought now. He means, he did *not* need to find out that he liked being chased and man handled at a time like this, alright?

Good.

“Caught me,” Jack parrots, catching his breath and laughing. Because *man*, this was the most fun he’d had in *decades*. Yeah, playing with kids was fun, but playing with someone who could match his playfulness and even outwit him? *Now that* was a match made in heaven. Jack’s heaven.

“Whoaaaa…”

The two startle, looking up to the right as a child stares at them, doe-y eyes wide and amazed, jaw dropped. Regrettably (ya know, for *Jack*) Pitch lifts off up his body and Jack feels oddly robbed of the warmth, but, he gets it, keep it PG in front of the kiddos. Which, by the way, how the fuck did that kid see him?
Jack sits up, half turning to the child. “Uhh, hi.” Jack says, a bit awkwardly, and he knows he was a bit out of sorts. The gal’s eyes were bright and practically sparkling. She seemed very familiar, actually…

“That was so totally wicked!!” She squeals, her thin blonde hair bouncing all over the place as she does. She couldn’t have been more than six years old. Jack shares a look with Pitch, can she see him? Both of them? “You just swoosh and pssssshoooow!” She vocalizes the story, moving her arms around in a raise and dive and then a collision.

“Mariselle?” A lady called from across the playground. She comes closer and a second later Jack had thought she had seen them too, because she looked straight at them. “Who are you talking to, sweetie?” The gal had the same thin blond hair, and there was just something so familiar about the two of them.

“Jack Frost!” The little girl, Mariselle, turns from them to stare at her mother and retell the epic chase with even more enthusiasm as the mother calmly listens, giving a patient smile. “It was so totally wicked! And then— and then, and then! He just came outta nowheres! From the shadow!” Jack glances at Pitch. So she did see both of them.

“That’s an amazing story Mariselle. C’mon, Daddy’s waiting for us.” Mariselle whines.

“But Mommy.” Mariselle’s eyes tear up with such crocodile tears.

“No buts, Mariselle. Say goodbye to Jack,” She says conversationally as if that was normal to say to a child who has imaginary friends. Mariselle pouts and looks to Jack, still teary and upset.

“Bye, Jack.”

Jack had nearly chalked up the entire thing to random chance as they walked away, except he heard a man’s voice call, “Sofie!”

Sofie?

Jack’s eyes widened. No way. He gets up, taking a few steps to them. No wonder they seemed so
familiar. The blond hair, the air-headed personality. He hadn’t thought about Sofie for a long time, to
tell the truth. He had just assumed, like older brother like younger sister. He hadn’t thought that it
was gonna be Sofie who keeps the faith. She was so young when the conflict happened, probably
didn’t even remember.

“Someone you know?” Pitch asked curiously, standing by his side. Jack nods slowly.

“Yeah.. She was one of the few original kids to believe in me, to be able to see me.” He says softly,
watching Sofie and her husband swing Mariselle between them by her arms as they walk down the
street. “She’s all grown up now.” He says, mostly to himself. Jack had been.. aware that humans age
quickly relative to himself, who aged not at all, but time went by so quickly.

Pitch’s hand met his shoulder, sliding to rest just at the back of his neck in comfort. The warmth
seeped into him, and he hums, remembering as he turns to look at Pitch.

“She could see you, too.” Jack says in wonder. Pitch just shrugs, like it wasn’t that big a deal. The
hand at his neck hasn’t left yet, and he would rather stay here a while, in the moment. He did want to
explore the park, eventually, but the circumstance has him feeling somewhat somber. Would it be too
daring to lean into Pitch and wrap arms around him? Quite possibly.

Jack stays there few moments more, inch by inch leaning closer to Pitch, to the warmth he emanates
and then a moment longer; closing his eyes to sink a little deeper.

When Jack opens them again, he smiles at Pitch before stepping away. Not away from him, really,
but closer to the playground, spreading frost on the passing structures.

“Ever have one of these back home?” He asks curiously, Pitch following.

“And what is ‘this’?” He asks curiously, watching Jack walk the balance beam before getting to the
monkey bars.

“A playground.” Jack hops up onto the top, spreading more frost.

“A ground for playing?” Pitch asked, amused. “Never dreamed of confining fun to a singular
location.” Jack narrows his eyes at Pitch playfully. Smart ass. Pitch follows him along on the ground,
Jack hopping from one pole top to another until he got to the pull-up bars.
“Additional ground for playing.” Jack corrects, sitting down, waiting just enough for Pitch to be close but not close enough that he’d crash into him as he scoots back, the backs of his knees catching the bar and he falls back. The swing had him bending back, catching hold of Pitch’s shirt before he fell back with the gravity. Pitch holds onto his elbows, keeping him aloft.

“Now that sounds a lot better.” He teases, letting Jack fall and he squeaks as he swings down. Jack pouts, hanging there, staring out to the street. He heard Pitch move, and next thing he knows is Pitch is hanging upside down on a taller bar, keeping them level next to each other. “But what is the point of hanging upside down?” He asks, though he himself is upside down.

“Well, when I was human the point was to get blood rushing to my head and make me light headed.” He replied frankly. “Everything looks a lot cooler upside down, though.” Jack grinned, remembering when he made his sister laugh with his silliness of hanging upside down from a tree branch. “But the most important point is pretending you’re a bat.”

They spent he doesn’t even know how many hours at the playground, Jack teaching Pitch how to use all the mortal toys. The monkey bars (“I know I’m rather tall, but this is ridiculous.” Pitch told him, hanging on the bars and being able to stand on the ground), the tunnel (Jack giggled incessantly as Pitch’s body pokes out from both sides of the tunnel, too tall to fit with proper coverage), teeter-totter (that one was actually fun), the slides, the swings (“A contest to see who can swing higher?” Jack grins), and last but not least, the merry-go-round.

“And this does, what?” Pitch asked curiously as he followed Jack to the object. Jack hops onto it, holding onto the bar as it propelled him forward in a circle.

“Goes round and round in circles.”

“Another contraption to get you dizzy and light headed?” Pitch asks curiously, watching Jack pass once, twice as he pushed to go further.

“Yeeeuup.”

“My stars, these mortals really have a penchant for brain damage, don’t they?” Jack laughs, shaking his head.
“Hey, don’t knock it ‘till you try it.” Jack reasoned, looking over his shoulder as he passed a third time. Pitch raised a brow, hopping up on the other side opposite Jack as it passed and pushed them forward. Jack holds on tighter, grinning. The colors around them swirled together, blending into each other as they started to go faster than what is probably intended on the merry-go-round. Jack cheers, hearing Pitch laugh in the background.

Chancing a glance, he met Pitch’s eye, the only clear object in the blur around them. They come to a stop not long after and when Jack steps off he wobbles, seeing the space tilt that way and back.

“You alright?” Pitch was at his side instantly, holding him up by his elbow. Jack smiles and nods.

“Yeah. Been a while since I’ve gotten dizzy.” He grins, catching a stroke of light in the sky.

Sand swirled above head in the town. Had it really been that long that they’d stayed there? Jack momentarily paused. Sandy seemed to be the only person out of the four guardians who didn’t have a complete disdain for this Pitch, so why not say hi? Jack grins, it was a splendid idea. Sandy was also the one who was the most chill of all of them. He was like the stoner of the group, minus all the drugs.

*Right on time, Sandman.*

Jack takes Pitch’s hand, leading them closer to the streaks of golden sand and running a hand through it. Golden birds jumped out, spreading to the sky. Jack settles them on top of the utility pole. Pitch raised his hand in wonder, letting the Golden sand dance over his fingers and palm. A steed burst forth, majestic and strong and not completely unlike the mares of black sand. It whinnied silently, as all the sand creations do, and galloped off.

Jack waves his hand, catching Sandy’s attention when his flock of doves flew across his field of vision. Some sand gestures went above his head and he brought down his cloud of gold to their level. Pitch chuckles at the signs and Jack had to wait for Sandy to motion quite obviously at their paint-splattered bodies for him to get his obvious amusement.

“Well…” Pitch starts, as if about to tell him that they suck out of North’s workshop and just been realm-hopping, glancing to Jack.

“We kinda…” Jack paused, quickly weighing the pros and cons of telling the truth and decided that
no matter what, even if it was Sandy and it would give him a good laugh, it would be best to be safe than sorry. “We got caught in a paint-storm.”

Sandy laughed anyway, more than likely at the absurdity of his lie. He wipes off some tears at his eyes, signing off more figures when they hear the rumble of a portal opening. North’s sleigh shoots from the colorful portal, Tooth in the passenger seat. Bunny was not there, which means…

Jack looked around wildly, seeing him coming down the street, in plain view, might he add. He gasps, eyes widening and looking to Pitch.

“Busted!”

And then they run for it.

Then, it was just a daring chase around the city.

Jack bolts to one side, but he knows if they are together it would be easier to catch them. “Scatter!” He yells to Pitch, veering to the left while Pitch falls down the next shadow he comes across like it was some magic portal. Jack laughs, blood pounding in his ears again from the excitement. He was sure Bunny was chasing him, and even more sure that Bunny was only humoring him. He had seen Bunny run at his fastest back when they raced to pick up teeth across Japan, seeing him run lightening quick along the rooftops. Bunny would be able to catch up to him in seconds if he really wanted to.

Jack caught sight of Bunny coming up just on his left and he lunged and before Jack knew it, he was tackled.

But not by Bunny.

From the shadows Pitch appeared, snatching him out from the air and diving into the next shadow. Half seconds later, Jack felt himself being thrown up into the air out of the shadow and he lands on his feet, grateful he wasn’t handled roughly and run into the wall or something. He takes a second to look around; no Bunny in his sight, except he did catch Tooth’s eye across the rooftop and he bolted.

On it went, whenever someone would be this close to catching him, Pitch would snatch him out of the sky and spit him out away from the taggers. Is that cheating? Well, fuck yes. But Jack would just
consider it as.. helpful competition. The others were centuries older, they have speed and teleportation and Jack has Pitch. It pretty much levels the playing field, don't you think?

It was only a matter of time before they caught on and Jack’s stamina ran out.

They were smart about it though, Jack thinks in retrospect. They stayed far enough away that it didn’t trigger Pitch coming to his rescue, and corralled him around a corner of a building where Bunny snatched the back of his sweater and pulled him up. Jack yelped as he was picked up, the sweater briefly digging into his neck with how quickly his momentum was killed.

Bunny held him up like that, by the back of his sweater like he was a scolded kitten all the while Jack was holding a *I regret nothing* look on his face as Bunny refused to set him down on his feet, looking *exactly* like the cat who swiped the pancake, minus the pancake part.

Pitch shows up from the shadows, hand to his mouth in amusement but looking apologetic that he had not caught on to their plan; Jack shares in his amusement. Jack turns his head to catch Bunny’s attention.

“You can let me go now.” Jack says through his giggles. Bunny narrows his eyes.

“Not on your nelly.” He didn’t sound as pissed as Jack thought he would be, all things considered. Jack holds his in his giggles. North and Tooth join them, looking a lot more amicable than Bunny does. Tooth just looked entirely *delighted*, though what had transpired for her to change her tune was beyond him. Even North looked entertained compared to Bunny’s exasperated expression.

Sandy pushed Pitch out from his hiding place, acting as if he’d caught the robber, Pitch’s hands raised up in mock-surrender, offering no struggle.

“I’ll take him from here, thank you.” Pitch said as he got near, arm going around Jack’s waist harmlessly between the space Bunny left as he held him aloft by the back of his sweater. His hot skin touched his side, pulling Jack closer. Bunny let go somewhat reluctantly, as if Pitch would take him and run as Jack landed on his feet, stumbling a step closer to Pitch.

It was a tempting thought, actually.

But Pitch’s hand doesn’t leave his side, his hip, *his skin*. It settled there even as Jack’s sweater fell
back down, trapping the warmth between his chilled skin and his sweater and Jack felt loath to leave it.

“Have your fun, Jack?” North asked, raising a thick brow. Jack couldn’t keep his grin down, sidelongling to Pitch who stood so close Jack could feel the heat radiating from his body.

“Yeah.” He says, happily, helplessly, like he no longer kept the weight of the world on his shoulders. The most fun he’d had in ages, it felt like. With or without the guardians. North hummed, giving a nod of his head.

“Good, then. Why not we head back to North Pole and get clean?” He gestured to their clothes and Jack chuckled, nodding. Imperceptibly, he leaned back into Pitch until North started to lead them back to the sleigh that was parked near the lake. Bunny trudged along, sulking.

“But did you have to create such a mess?” Bunny gripes, not actually as upset as he pretended he was. “The eggs were all wound up!” Jack puts on his best clueless face.

“I honestly have no idea what you’re talking about.” Bunny stutters, utterly flabbergasted by Jack’s ability to lie in the face of the evidence splattered all across his face and clothes and still falling off his hair.

“You’re covered in paint!”

Jack pauses, looking down at his clothes. “Huh.” He says, like that was the first time he realized he was covered in paint. Pitch’s fingers on his hip shook with the laughter he was holding back. “We must’ve flown right through a paint-storm.” Bunny’s jaw dropped, like he didn’t know Jack could go to such extremes of ridiculousness.

“We’re hearing this?” Bunny’s voices rose an octave, leaving everyone laughing loudly, Sandy holding onto North’s arm as to not fall over in his own silent laughter.

So lost in the moment, he didn’t see Pitch pause in his merriment, glancing questioningly at the moon before joining in the laugh.

Chapter End Notes
Also the chapter where Pitch, whether he or Jack notice it or not, finally starts reciprocating the attraction.
Chapter 10

It was with mental acuity that Jack woke up.

The low simmer of the fireplace came into view, kept low enough to keep it aflame but not strong enough to overheat him. Yawning, he sits up and the blanket on him fell to his hip. Jack looks around; he was alone.

Yet this time it didn’t bring anxiety to the forefront of his mind when he didn’t immediately see Pitch.

After they had gotten back to the North Pole, they separated for quick baths, a change of clothes, and met back in the sitting room for milk and cookies. It was a nice way to end the night, with everyone there, talking, laughing; even Bunny and Pitched seemed amicable enough that they could speak to one another without it breaking into a fight.

So can you blame Jack when he, like a child, falls asleep leaning against Pitch’s side after an exciting day that ended with sweets?

Jack stretches out, hearing pops in his joints before he gets off the couch. He was still dressed in the utterly ridiculous ugly Christmas sweater North had leant to him while his outfit was washed, paired by some loose shorts magicked by Pitch so they can fit without falling to the floor. He grabs his staff on the way out, leaned innocently on the wall.

Jack nods to passing yetis, giving a quick good morning before twisting through them. He hadn’t seen Pitch around on his walk, and if anyone would know where he is without Jack needing to fly through the whole workshop, it would be North. And North is only ever in a couple of places here: the globe, or his personal workshop.

However, and just as well, Jack has a pretty good idea about where Pitch might be hiding. His room; a possibility, though he doubts Pitch would retire to his room and leave Jack alone on the couch. He just had this feeling. The library; also plausible, however it didn’t seem like Pitch had a penchant for scanning through through more history books which paint him as the villain after last time. The sitting room; of course, he wasn’t there now. And finally, the patio.

Jack frosts over passing banisters and toys, pretending like he didn’t hear some of the yetis grumble. He could already see Pitch’s body through the floor-to-ceiling windows on the double doors, leaning against the rail and looking oddly pensive. The moon was unabashedly out in plain sight and it gave
Jack a sense of foreboding; a heavy blanket of tension upon his shoulders.

“Pitch?” Jack called, startling Pitch out of his thoughts. He turns to Jack, surprised.

“Jack,” Pitch says, his surprise leaking out. “What are you doing out here?” He asks, taking a look at his outfit, momentarily forgetting that Jack’s element was snow. Jack walks out barefooted onto the snowy patio.

“You weren’t there when I woke up.” And wow, did that sound needy? “So I was wondering where you went.” Not that much better. “What’re you doing out here?” He asks, careful not to peek at the moon as the uneasy feeling settles in his stomach about seeing it in the sky, with Pitch in plain sight of it, no less. Pitch does, however, look back. Not specifically at the moon, but at the wild expense of snow. But the moon must’ve been in his line of sight, somehow, even though his face is not tilted up at the moon and it just filled Jack with even more dread.

*Does he talk to you?*

“I was just.. thinking.” Pitch finishes, looking at him and giving a light smile though Jack could see the worry in his gaze.

“‘Bout what?” Because Jack was nosy and he couldn’t shake off this damn feeling. Pitch looks away this time, going to lean back onto the railing with his hands clasped together in thought, eyes downward to the gorge. Jack steps up next to him, giving a side-glance to the moon.

*Can you hear him?*

“About what I’m going to do, after.” After this settles and Pitch will eventually need to do something. He couldn’t just stay around North’s workshop and be a freeloader, now could he? Well, he means, not anymore, not since he’s woken up and he finally understands what he’s doing and has a conscience. Jack wouldn’t really mind that though, not sure if North would… *Anyway.*

*Are you really thinking about going back?*

Jack’s didn’t have much trust in his gut instinct, typically, but what else could Pitch be thinking about? The army life is probably all he’s known, and yet…
“Why don’t you come inside? We can make some breakfast.” Deflect: brilliant idea. Pitch doesn’t seem like he wants to talk about it and Jack would rather not even think about the possibility. Pitch seems to hesitate, as if weighing the benefits of ignoring this for another day or being a grown-up and facing up to it.

“Yes, that sounds perfect.” Pitch says at last, standing up straighter to turn his back on the moon and Jack could’ve leapt for joy. Except he didn’t, but he did privately gloat, giving the moon a look over his shoulder that may or may not have been triumphant as he follows Pitch inside.

Don’t go back.

Don’t leave me.
It was a stay-at-home kind of day. Jack’s adventuring having settled to something calmer and homey. Which was the need and desire to turn North’s kitchen into a whirlwind disaster, obviously.

Jack didn’t know how to cook. Who the hell’s idea was that? Jack hadn’t needed to eat actual food since he’d died and he became Jack Frost. The only good thing to get out of it was Pitch’s laughter, unrestrained and in complete bafflement as how Jack managed to get eggs struck to the ceiling.

Of course, when Phil came in to see what the commotion was and Jack unabashedly pointed to Pitch and said, “It was him,” Pitch doubled over laughing again even as Phil’s mouth dropped and his eyes widened and he brought his hands up in a “how the hell did this even happen?!?” Kind of gesture.

“Sorry, sorry.” Pitch caught his breath, looking to Phil who looked about ready to just rage quit. “I’ll clean it up.”

You see, why would Pitch need to leave and do something? Who needs that? At least, that was Jack thought. More or less, Jack had absolutely no shame being a freeloader at North’s workshop. He means, he was the reason the guardians were still around and another Dark Age hadn’t come about, why couldn’t he take advantage of that?

They could stay in this plane of existence together.

Jack Frost and Pitch Black, cold and dark; the dynamic duo. Creating fun and mischief wherever they went.

That sounded like heaven on earth.
That was why.. Jack just didn’t understand why, come the following morning when he sought Pitch out a second time only to find him on the patio, again, only this time he was wearing armor. Regal, black and fitted, easily moveable. (Honestly, if Jack’s worst nightmare wasn’t coming true then he would very much admire Pitch in this outfit. Just put a bow and arrow in his hands and a quiver on his shoulder and yeah, Jack would’ve definitely admired that picture.)

“You’re going?” Jack asks, completely baffled. Context wasn’t needed for his outburst. There was no conceivable reason for Pitch to be wearing that unless he was thinking about doing what Jack had been dreading since the day before. He didn’t think Pitch would decide so soon; too soon for Jack to be able to convince him otherwise. “What— why?” He honestly couldn’t fathom why Pitch going to ask to be reinstated as general for the Lunanoff army again, not after everything that happened— not because he thinks Pitch would be rejected, but because why would Pitch subject himself to such a lonely path again when the first time, the royal family did nothing to help him?

Pitch looked at him, eyebrows raised a second before his face relaxes and he gives a small smile, cupping Jack’s face, thumb brushing against his cheek as the other fingers tangle lightly in his hair. He was all grace and gentleness and just— ugh. How can he look on bittersweetly while Jack felt his hope crumbling?

“Jack,” he says sweetly, and Jack thinks he might have been touch-starved all his life, especially when he was made a spirit, because he wanted Pitch to touch him more. He wanted everything Pitch could give him. But the way he said it, it was as if Jack were a child.

Jack steeled his resolve but he didn’t rip away from the gentle touch, even as Pitch leaned forward to place a kiss on his forehead, truly meant for a child.

Don’t leave.

“I’m serious.” Jack said, head tilted back with how tall Pitch was. He felt turmoil rolling like thunderous waves during a storm, but he settled it, driving it toward his resolve. He takes hold of Pitch’s hand, keeping it there. “Why would you go back to them? They were the cause of your misery, indirectly or not.”

“Jack..”

“I saw.”
“I saw what happened.” Jack reiterated, clenching his jaw for a moment. “It was negligence. They were negligent.” Pitch looked ready to argue that point but Jack cut him off, raising his hand to mimic Pitch’s hold on his face. “They were.” He says softly and he sees Pitch’s resolve breaking. Good. “You should never have been going at it alone. You should never have been made to choose between duty and your daughter.”

Pitch drops his head with a sigh, forehead resting against Jack’s and the contrast between their body heat almost made him shiver. Pitch lifts his head and still, the resolve to go is on his face and Jack can’t stand it.

“I’m going with you.” He says, as stubbornheaded as he was about watching over Pitch all those years. Because if Pitch won’t stay, then neither will Jack.

“Jack,” Pitch’s eyes widen in disbelief and Jack knew he was going to try and rebut.

“No, I’m not going to let you go through that again.” He says, feeling his frustration make his way into his voice. “If you’re so set on going, then I am too.”

“You can’t,” Pitch says quietly, voice gentle as if to settle Jack, pushing some bangs from his face, but it only made to rattle Jack’s nerves. He wasn’t a child, especially not after all these years. “You need to uphold the children’s belief in you.”

So, Jack thought, they went and told him, huh? Jack clicks his tongue, narrowing his eyes as his hand falls from Pitch’s face to ball up at the front of his uniform.

“I don’t care.” Pitch breathes through his nose, pinching the bridge of it as his patience slowly ran out.

“You’ll die without it, Jack. Has that ever crossed your mind?” He asks, exasperated, and this was the first time since Pitch woke up that he was something other than put together, regal, and filled with understanding.

“Of course it did.” Jack kept his gaze, serious. “Everything was a mistake, I never should’ve—” Jack cut himself off, gritting his teeth as he finally drops his gaze.
Never should have.

“Jack?” Pitch asks, voice calmer once more. “What was a mistake?”

Jack refused to look up, eyes starting to well up with tears and past emotions and unresolved failures; being alone in every sense of the word for three hundred years, not a real friend for centuries, even the guardians wouldn’t give him the time of day; silence from the moon who put him there without so much as a hint, a clue, anything, as to his purpose here on earth. Becoming guardians, destroying Pitch and his chance at absolution, for forgiveness. Seeking and failing to be what Pitch needed that second time; Sandy’s golden arrow; swirl of black sand and shadows, shadows, shadows filling his eyes, filling his lungs; screams, high pitched and cries like nails on a chalkboard. Pitch’s body lying prone and motionless but unimaginably alive after all. Pitch made him anyway, taking his jaw in his hand and forcing him, gently, to look up.

“I should never have become a guardian. It was all a mistake.” He nearly whispers, dropping his head again when Pitch’s hand went lax with surprise. “I should have realized sooner. I shouldn’t have fought you.

“I didn’t want to be believed in by every child— all I really needed was one person… all I really needed was you.” Jack hiccups, wiping away tears that started to fall, unaware of what he truly said.

It was too much too much too much— years being spent pulled part like taffy when he wasn’t made to stretch. Emotionally stunted and crushed and too hopeful that maybe Pitch would notice him, remember him, and Jack and he could create a fragile friendship.

Moments passed where it was just Jack crying, wiping away tears, and Pitch standing stockstill in front of him.

Jack gasped when arms wrapped around him, pulling him flush with a warm body, one arm around his back and the other cradling his head and Jack let himself fall into the embrace, holding onto Pitch like a lifeline.

In retrospect, speaking openly had a lot of merit, Jack thinks. Of course, he certainly had no intentions on telling Pitch his feelings, much less in a way that made him seem lovestruck and desperate, but he supposed the effect of it was in his favor.
Pitch had taken him inside, no longer set on leaving for the moon to request an audience with the king. And because Jack was emotionally and physically exhausted, Pitch had carried him, bridal style no less, back inside when it became obvious Jack couldn’t get his legs to work.

Jack might’ve been the tiniest bit glad all the Guardians were out doing something or another, because at least the yetis and elves don’t give comments to them about how wrong this was, Pitch carrying him to the sitting area by the fireplace.

Pitch sat by the plush armchair on the floor, Jack in his lap and leaned against Pitch’s broad chest. Pitch pulled the throw blanket from the armchair and laid it across them, pulling it up to Jack’s shoulders. He magicked them into comfier clothes, and Jack was just a bit grateful because he wouldn’t have to put up with the press of his armor against his cheek.

Pitch wore a thin, black, long-sleeved sweater and some comfy pants. Jack himself, from what he could just feel, was dressed in a shirt and shorts, no doubt blue or something. He was glad for the thin clothes, because he could feel Pitch’s heat sink into his bones and relax him. One of Pitch’s arms around his waist and the other petting and massaging his head.

Jack’s feet stuck out from under the blanket, a few feet away from the fire. He snuggles closer to Pitch’s body, sniffing the last tears away. He nudged his way closer (somehow) every once in a while that it made Pitch chuckle on occasion until he settled, laying his head comfortably against Pitch’s collarbone.

Pitch hugs him tighter when he hears footsteps, a yeti grumbling at finding them. A moment of silence before he hears Pitch say, “yes, please.” Jack lets out a soft breath, still clutching to Pitch with a tight grip and closes his no-doubt red eyes.

This is where they were meant to be. And if Jack had anything to do with it, this is where he was going to stay.

Being woken up by being petted was actually very pleasant, Jack thinks. As he comes to, he realizes he wasn’t being woken up by the petting, but that Pitch was still petting him, and he had fallen asleep by accident. There was a low rumble in his chest, probably speaking to someone in hushed tones and for a second, Jack wondered who.
It definitely wasn’t Bunny, that was for sure. Bunny would have flipped the second he saw them in this position.

The rumbling stopped and Jack hears heavy footsteps leave, a yeti, maybe. He yawns, stretching out just barely so he doesn’t dislodge himself from his seat.

“Feel better?” Pitch asks once Jack has made himself comfortable again. He nods, finally lifting his head to look at Pitch.

Pitch smiles at him, even though Jack could tell the worry in the slight lines of his face. Worry about leaving, or not, or taking Jack with him and it might cost him his life.

Jack stares into his eyes, still a smoldering, liquid gold; solar eclipses. Jack wants to be bold, he wants to be fearless, wants to be brave; wants to close the gap between them, and yet his insecurities get in the way.

“I don’t want you to go alone.” Jack says quietly into the space between them. When Pitch sighs, his breath fans across Jack’s face. Pitch leans his forehead on Jack’s, eyes closed in thought.

“Jack,” Pitch whispers when he opens them again, nuzzling his nose against Jack’s and Jack sucks in a small breath, moving himself a hair’s breadth closer, heart thumping in his chest.

When their lips meet, it was nothing but a gentle brush of lips against lips. It was chaste and sweet and everything and not enough all at once. They barely pull back before Pitch presses for another kiss, still as chaste as the first but with a little pressure, pressure that Jack sighs and relaxes into.

Jack moves, kissing back, his arms sliding up Pitch’s body to wrap around his neck, fingers threading through thick hair just because he could. He was practically breathless from it, dizzy with the feeling, despite not a lot happening, despite how chaste and sweet it was.

They were just moving in for another kiss, Pitch’s hands at his waist, when he heard steps come and a voice rang out, rudely and loudly, “blimey! What the hell are you doing, mate?!” Jack nearly groaned in annoyance and he looked over his shoulder briefly, before deciding not to twist his middle too much and he looks to Pitch, who also seemed peeved to be interrupted. Jack gives another chaste kiss to Pitch’s lips just because he can, before settling back against his chest, ignoring the Pookah in exchange for letting Pitch’s heat soak into him.
“Was there something you needed, Bunnymund?” Pitch asked with barely contained annoyance. Bunny sputters to life and Jack rolls his eyes, nuzzling into Pitch’s neck just to piss him off more.

“This is wrong!” Bunny decides on and Jack grit his teeth, his confession to Pitch fresh in his mind. Pitch hugs Jack a little tighter and it calms him down minisculely.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.” Pitch responds, hand back in Jack’s hair. Some more footsteps are heard, a flutter of hummingbird wings, a swish of sand.

“Are we seriously going to just stand here and do nothing?” Bunny asks and Jack has no doubt he’s looking to the other Guardians like they’d back him up— like Jack wasn’t able to make his own decisions.

“Bunny…” North said with a cautious sigh. “We should talk, elsewhere.” They all scuffle out, Jack not once turning to greet them. Pitch’s chest rises and falls with a sigh and Jack finally looks up.

“It seems they aren’t too keen on you and I.” He says, and Jack has to grin because there was a mischievous spark in Pitch’s eyes. Jack turns, wrapping his arms around Pitch’s neck again, speaking against his lips,

“Frankly, don’t really give a damn.”
Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

*Here’s your nsfw. Please enjoy nearly 5k words of it.*

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

If Jack could just be by Pitch’s side and travel the known universe, he would probably be content with that. If they could just find a place to stow away together without anyone finding them, he would be ecstatic. He was as giddy as he’d ever been, quieting his giggling by covering his mouth, sneaking around North’s workshop like a couple of teenagers just wanting to get in trouble.

Honestly, they were just doing it for fun, with no real objective other than evading the elves and yetis after playing petty tricks on them. That was actually how they had found the attic, old and abandoned as it was, dust lining everything including what was an old bed.

It was no match for Pitch’s magic, even as Jack crowded up against him and kissed him, laughter still bubbling up in his chest at just how much fun he was actually having. He had forgotten what it was like, why he was made guardian. With a flick of his wrist, all dust was gone, the blankets replaced with freshly laundered sheets, not that Jack realized, preoccupied with kissing Pitch as he was.

Then it was Pitch who was ushering him backwards, surprising Jack when his tongue swiped across his lips and taking advantage of the gasp he made to lick inside his mouth, making Jack shiver.

Jack felt it couldn’t be fast or slow enough, felt like he should rip off his own clothes and Pitch’s or take time to admire that which his hands touch. It wasn’t impatience, really. It was more… Passion taking ahold? Jack moans into the kiss, pulling at the front of Pitch’s thin sweater, trying to keep him closer, closer still.

But Pitch set the pace, slowing them down and Jack wrapped his arms around Pitch’s neck, jumping to hook his legs around his waist because why the hell should they have to lean and break their necks because of their height differences? (Not that Jack disliked the height difference. But it was more comfortable being level, ya know? Also, it gave him an excuse to have his legs around Pitch, but hey, who’s even paying attention to that, amiright?)

Pitch goes with it, automatically bringing his hands to rest under Jack’s thighs, keeping him up with little difficulty. For being slim-looking, Pitch was very strong. Didn’t they have a word for that, somewhere in the northern European countries? Smygfit? Something along the lines of sneaky-buff.
Yeeah. Sounds about right, Jack thinks, pressing his fingers into the muscles of Pitch’s back he could reach.

It took Jack a moment to realize why he wasn’t feeling warmth under both hands and it was because he still held his staff in one hand. He drops it in the next second, hearing the wood clatter on the floor as it was lost to the warmth beneath his palms. Jack gave a noise of confusion as Pitch broke the kiss, only for Jack’s back to meet the bed in answer, which was rather smart of him; no painful clattering of teeth in the process.

Jack grins, sliding his hand up the nape of Pitch’s neck, threading his fingers through the short hair and pulling him down for another kiss just because he could. Pitch went willingly, of course, as his hands left trails of fire along Jack’s sides, burning like an inferno but a far more pleasant burn than what he felt being hit by Bunny’s magical boomerang. Jack just moaned into the kiss, letting Pitch handle him as he pleases, because it was rather obvious Jack didn’t know the first fucking thing about sex.

He means, he could, hypothetically, know some things. He still didn’t remember his entire life before becoming Jack Frost; the teeth had only shown the most important memories of childhood, not his entire childhood. Who was he to say he wasn’t a promiscuous boy like all the other teenagers? It makes sense, kind of. He was seventeen-ish when he died. There was five-ish years of promiscuity that could have been going on that he had zero recollection about.

But what does he need to worry about, when he’s got Pitch, who’s obviously pretty experienced?

It doesn’t make him jealous, though, or worried, that he neither knows Pitch’s love-interest history or who he’s ever done the deed with. He means, of all those people, he’s Jack’s now; the other people in the past can’t hold a candle to a living, breathing person (relatively, of course). For the moment, he’s just glad for this experience because otherwise this would be a very interesting and goofy moment instead of something intense and heated, which would’ve been just as well.

They break the kiss as Pitch pulls off Jack’s sweater and it gets tossed somewhere off the bed. Jack takes glee in pulling off that ridiculous Christmas sweater Pitch wore, chucking it to the floor. He didn’t think twice before splaying his hands on Pitch’s chest, marveling at the difference between Jack’s snow-white skin and Pitch’s (remarkably) sun-kissed color, the silver lines of scars he’s never noticed before (of course, he’s also never had a chance to notice them before. Pitch’s old robes didn’t show off that much skin, and he’s never been in close proximity then to notice them anyway).

Jack smiles, feeling light gooseflesh prickle under his hands from the juxtaposing temperatures of their bodies. Jack’s eyes followed the easy slide against that warm skin up and up and up, the pecs, shoulders, neck, until they tangled themselves back in Pitch’s hair, eyes meeting like Pitch was waiting for him to continue and Jack smiles brightly, pulling him for another kiss all the while.
arching his back as if to say *yes, let me feel you.* Pitch didn’t disappoint, laying carefully on top and as there was a shift in temperature, Jack gasped into the kiss. All at once, it was like something inside his soul was slotting into place and he blinks, unaware he’d paused as he worked through the feeling.

“Allright?” Pitch asked, nuzzling their noses together while Jack grounded himself again. Jack shivers when Pitch’s hot breath ghosted over his ear, pressing little kisses to just under his ear and down his neck.

“Y-yeah. ‘M good.”

Is this what a fever feels like? He has to wonder. Overheated, dizzy, but without the fever-aches. Although his desire could just as well be substituted for those fever-aches, singing in his bones and undenyng.

Pitch’s hands were at his waist, sliding into the dip and to his hips. Jack’s legs press together, stopped by Pitch’s body, and he found he rather liked it that way. But given the circumstances of Pitch’s hot fingers slipping under the hem of his pants, he finally unhooks his legs around around Pitch’s waist and lets them fall to either side. Sure, Pitch could have definitely magicked away his pants, but where’s the fun in that?

Jack couldn’t stop himself from moaning even if he wanted to as Pitch’s hand slips underneath the hem, spreading more fire along his skin. Pitch had big hands, or maybe Jack was just relatively small, but either way Jack liked it. Made him feel safe. Taken care of.

Pitch’s lips kissed down his neck. Jack leans his chin back, allowing him all the access he wanted. Jack’s hands twitched tangled in Pitch’s hair as his hot breath ghosted lower and lower, over his chest. Jack finally peeks down as his lips brush over his nipple, pressing a tiny, open-mouthed kiss. The look in Pitch’s eye was absolutely _devious_ and it sent a warm flush through his body pooling just under his belly.

Pitch’s nose trails down the middle of his stomach, nuzzling along the way and Jack squirms at the ticklish sensation. Pitch’s blunt fingernails pressing deftly into his skin as they slide down at the same pace as his kisses. Jack’s breath labored and barely anything was happening and yet he could scarcely pull up any embarrassment at his unbridled and blatant need.

“Pitch—“ Jack moans, squirming as his lips skimmed across his lower belly, just above the hem line of his pants. Jack watched him with rapt attention, wondering how he could possibly be any harder than he was seconds prior when Pitch kissed at his nape.
Slowly, reverently, and teasingly, Pitch starts to pull his pants downward. He gives it a rather abrupt tug when the pants themselves refused to budge because of his hardness. Jack sighs at the freedom it provided, letting go of Pitch’s hair so he could sit back and pull the fabric off his legs in the same slow and torturous fashion. Once completely bereft of his clothing, Jack let his legs fall open once more. He watched Pitch watch him, saw the pupils of his eyes pulse in want until only a ring of shining gold was left.

Pitch touched his hands to his ankles reverently, finger-light touches that made Jack’s blood boil hotter, made him more desperate for his touch but unwilling to actually voice it. If he were patient, Pitch will provide. He will. The hands at his ankles wrapped around them easily, palms traveling up with spread fingers over his knees and becoming torturously slow once they touched his thighs.

Jack daren’t break his gaze. It was as much a challenge as it was a command: patience.

Jack swallows the next breath as those fingers reach his hips, the thumbs close to his need and yet still he waits; his blood boils, his head is fogged with mindless pleasure just from this little thing that the only thing that keeps Jack from whining for him to get on with it is the look of satisfaction on Pitch’s face at how well Jack can wait. That, and, well, the very obvious bulge in Pitch’s trousers. If Jack was this desperate, then how the hell could Pitch be so composed? Jack saw this as somewhat like an initiation: I want to see how far I can take you.

Gods above take him everywhere.

Finally something besides Pitch’s hands move. Pitch leans forward and Jack’s next breath gets caught in his throat as Pitch kisses his hip, sensuous and slow and damning as all fucking hell. Those kisses came closer to his cock and Jack instinctually thread his fingers back into his hair, the other hand grasping at the sheets. Pitch pauses and Jack hopes within his little test (it wasn’t really a test, but Jack wants to pass anyway) that he could touch right now, thread his fingers into his thick hair but only that. It grounds him. The only repercussion Pitch gave is the turn of his head, kissing his wrist.

Pitch catches his eye and Jack was helpless as he watched Pitch kiss the base of his cock, open-mouthed. Jack held his breath as his hot breath ghosted over his flesh, pressing more open-mouthed kisses up his cock and to the head. He sensation of Pitch taking him in his mouth was shocking—but good, so good. He gasped and his back arched and if Pitch went fast he definitely wouldn’t have lasted five seconds.

But Pitch took his time, bobbing his head steadily, playing these fantastic tricks with his tongue that had Jack breathless and his toes tingling. Even if Pitch knew how to drag out his pleasure to the
edges of his sanity, Jack didn’t last very long anyway.

So when he came, Jack’s world exploded. Not literally. But he swore he could see stars, his toes curled and body shuddered at the intensity. Even as he came down, his body wouldn’t still from the aftershock as he tried to breathe while his heart pounded against his chest.

Jack hasn’t ever felt so alive.

When he finally comes to, Pitch was peppering kisses to his chest, his shoulders, his neck. His thumbs rubbed circles into his hips, sending pleasant tingles up his thighs that just seemed to prolong his high. Pitch didn’t seem to be in any hurry to get Jack to return the favor, his own erection still straining against his pants that Jack could feel press against him incidentally as he kissed at the juncture of Jack’s neck and jaw.

Idly, Jack realized he still had a hand in Pitch’s hair, tangled within his strands. He really tried to come back to Earth quickly, but Pitch’s ministrations kept prolonging his post-orgasmic bliss. If he could, he’d stay like this forever but Jack knew they didn’t have forever. Not tonight. Against Pitch’s attempts to keep him floaty, Jack pulled himself together and tugged on his hair, urging him weakly to lift his head.

Pitch went without complaint, a satisfied (possibly smug) look on his face, and Jack had no intention of stopping the urge to pull him into a kiss. Pitch’s lips parted without any resistance and it was the oddest thing to be able to taste himself on Pitch’s tongue. But more than the urge to kiss was the urge to reciprocate.

Jack tugged just enough for Pitch to pull away before commanding, “Up,” while he wrapped his other arm around his neck. Pitch raised a brow but lifts himself, Jack going with with him until Pitch was kneeling between Jack’s spread legs. Jack still felt tingles down to his toes and wonders how to speak what he wants. “Sit on the edge of the bed,” he orders breathlessly. Jack still clung as Pitch moved them, curious but allowing Jack to direct him.

Pitch scoots to the edge of the bed, holding Jack under his thighs while he moves them. Perfect, Jack thinks and he kisses Pitch again while he stands up on his knees that were on either side of Pitch’s hips, causing him to crane his neck back. It made Jack feel powerful. Drunk. When he felt ready enough, he moved his legs, first one, then the other, to stand between Pitch’s open legs. Jack breaks the kiss only to sit down on the floor, legs folded under him as he looks up at the general.

The way Pitch was looking at him set Jack’s nerves on fire, from the inside to the roots of his hair. Jack licks his lips as he settled between Pitch’s spread legs on the floor, fingers spread on his thighs,
caressing the muscle beneath the still there pants. Jack will have to remedy that. Jack’s hand travels further upward, pressing down just the barest amounts. He wasn’t trying to tease, it just so happened that way. He’s pretty green, so better safe than sorry, right?

Pitch’s breath hitches when his touch skimmed over the bulge at his groin, kneading with the heel of his palm experimentally. Jack didn’t really know what’s come over him with the fierce determination to taste Pitch on his tongue, when you factor in the fact he knows absolutely zilch about sucking dick. But his desire overweighs his embarrassment. He was already naked, on his knees; what’s another reveal about his deepest darkest desires when he knew Pitch was more than willing to devour him whole?

Jack pulls on the slacks, pulling them down enough for Pitch’s cock to spring free. It was rather intimidating up close and personal, he had to admit, but he wasn’t going to let that stop him. Leaning in he closes his eyes as he peppers kisses on the hot flesh, feeling it twitch against his lips. Briefly he wonders if his breath is as chilled as the rest of his body. He hears Pitch suck in a breath above him and then his hands were met with flesh instead of cloth and Jack was glad for it. Jack opens his eyes, meeting Pitch’s eye as he pressed open-mouthed kisses up the column of hot flesh. Pitch’s pupils were blown, spread to the furthest corners of his iris until only a slim ring of burning gold was present.

Jack graced the other side with the same treatment before flattening out his tongue on the underside, licking a stripe directly up. Of course, he had absolutely zero idea at what he was doing, and he was either doing it pretty alright or Pitch had the patience of a saint (which he’s seen time and time again since he’s first woken). Jack’s tongue reached the crown and he slips it past his lips, closing his eyes again as he hums at the first true taste. Pitch’s hand graces his face, sliding further to thread his fingers into Jack’s hair, needing something to ground himself.

Heat on his tongue, heat in his hair, boxing him on either side of him, spreading fire in his veins that lick at the edges of his sanity. Jack sinks a little further, the tip hitting the roof of his mouth, sliding along to the back of his throat. Pitch makes a noise and Jack hums inquisitively as Pitch’s free hand spread along his jaw, thumb swiping across his cheek. Jack’s eyes fluttered open. Pitch’s fingers pulled his jaw just a tiny bit and Jack dropped it further.

“Teeth,” Pitch warns gently and Jack hums in understanding. See? Patience of a saint. Jack pulls back only to draw forward again, feeling the crown slide along the roof of his mouth and down his throat the barest amounts as he experiments with the depth of what he could take. Jack may be green, but he’s not stupid. He doesn’t wanna bite off more than he can chew. Metaphorically. He hums when it hits the back of his throat and his throat doesn’t automatically constrict on a gag.

Jack’s hands slide further up Pitch’s thigh, coming to rest at the case of his cock and gripping what he couldn’t fit in his mouth. Yet. Jack bobs his head, getting a steady rhythm going. He hears Pitch suck in a breath above him and he open his eyes to watch Pitch watch him and if that wasn’t the
hottest thing he’d ever seen on planet earth (except maybe the look of Pitch worshiping his body).

Jack, on his knees, by his king’s feet.

Glorious.

It didn’t really take long for Jack’s jaw to start hurting but he really couldn’t care less as he got into it; probably sloppy and uncoordinated and unskilled, but at least he was able to take him deeper. He hears Pitch groan above him, his hot hand found the back of Jack’s head and Jack followed the direction, humming as Pitch took control of the pace. Jack felt Pitch push him forward just barely, felt when he tugged on his hair to pull him back. Jack could scarcely breathe but it didn’t really matter when he heard Pitch moan.

It didn’t matter when Pitch quickened the push of his cock down his throat because Jack was more than happy to oblige, only grateful that his gag reflex seemed to have disappeared with his human body. He closed his eyes, listening intently to the sounds Pitch made. His hands roamed, massaging his strong thighs. A hand touched his face and it made his eyes flutter open, glancing up as best he could as Pitch’s thumb swiped under his eye. Jack moaned around his cock and he got to see Pitch’s face contort into pleasure.

Pitch spoke a word Jack didn’t understand, a curse, probably in his native tongue, before he felt heat trickling down his throat. Jack tries his best to swallow, even as Pitch pulls him off his cock, his release painting Jack’s face.

Jack clears his throat lightly, tongue coming to wipe off the bit of come off his lip. His throat felt pretty raw, but he didn’t particularly mind, not when Pitch was panting harshly from his orgasm and the evidence was still a lovely mess along his face, down his chin, probably in his hair, from what Pitch wouldn’t let Jack swallow. Jack presses another kitten lick to the crown of his still hard cock, feeling much hotter than he had been now that he’d gotten a true taste.

It wasn’t long after that, that Jack rose to his knees, hand sliding up Pitch’s thighs, to his hips, fingers roaming the expanse of muscle while Pitch enjoys the the final aftershocks of his release. Jack nuzzles at the bottom of his stomach, kissing upwards through his navel and the softening hair. When he reached the furthest he could go without getting up, Pitch’s hands picked him up under his arms, hoisting him up like he weighed nothing at all. To someone as strong as Pitch, he probably weighed nothing more than a feather.

Pitch sets Jack in his lap, either leg on either sides of his hips and Jack happily plasters himself closer. That is, until the feeling in his legs started to come back and he grimaces, rubbing at his calves.
“What’s wrong?” Pitch asks, alarmed and Jack smiles sheepishly.

“Legs went numb.” Pitch caught himself before he laughed, mirth twinkling in those eclipsed eyes. Big hands cupped his face, pulling into a fierce kiss and Jack amateurly kissed back. He’d been holding off on it, cuz he’d just, yeah. But if Pitch was okay with it, he’ll take what he can get. Especially with how thoroughly Pitch kissed him, distracting him from the pins and needles in his legs while blood rushed back to his toes. Jack moans into the kiss as he rolls his hips, sighing thankfully at the friction that greeted his cock, ready to go again.

“I adore you ardently, Jack.” Pitch says as he breaks the kiss Jack’s forehead resting against his, breathing each other’s air. Jack could only smile and if this were at a different time, he would have teased Pitch about his English and how Elizabethan it is. As it were, he only smiles and kisses him again and again, enjoying the heat overtaking his body.

Pitch murmurs something against his lips and he wonders what before he feels fingers covered with heated oil prod into him. He gasps in surprise but quickly recovers, kissing Pitch back more reverently as his need to be consumed by Pitch grew. But Pitch didn’t seem to be as impatient, even though his kisses were fierce and his hips ground up in time with Jack grinding his down. His fingers still kept a modest pace, opening him up with such gentleness Jack thought he’d go crazy by the time Pitch deemed him ready and loose enough to take his cock.

Jack rolls his hips back onto his fingers impatiently and Pitch chuckles lightly and Jack couldn’t care less about his impatient behavior. He’d wanted this since forever ago. Pitch grabbed his hips, giving another hushed spell to coat his dick. Jack held his breath in anticipation, letting out a drawn out moan as Pitch slowly breached him. Always so careful.

Jack waited just long enough to be sure Pitch wouldn’t slip out before he drops down, crying out in surprise at the feeling as his hips met Pitch’s. Pitch groans, arms wrapping around him and tugging him close, as if he’s afraid Jack would’ve just started to ride with abandon.

Because that’s exactly what Jack would’ve done had he not been taken by surprise at the intensity of the feeling. It hurt— not by much, Pitch had prepped him well, after all. Jack just felt so god-damn full. Full and stretched and just so fucking warm. Jack hugs Pitch tighter, panting for breath.

“Are you alright?” Pitch asked, slowly leaning back to look at Jack with worry. But at least Jack’s ill-advised move didn’t ruin the mood, since he could feel Pitch twitch inside him. Jack nods fervently, letting out another breath as he got used to the feeling.
“I’m alright— sooo alright.” Jack smiles goofily, kissing him deeply and rocking his hips experimentally. Jack gasps into the kiss as he feels Pitch’s cock slide inside him, hearing Pitch groan under him. “Pitch—“ Pitch slides out from Jack’s arms, leaning back against the wall, eyes roaming Jack’s body unabashedly. It was so interesting, to be the one who was in control but not really. Just now— he’s setting the pace, just as it was obvious Pitch was in charge.

Pitch’s hands found his hips, holding them loosely in his big hands. “Do you like being in control?” He asks, voice deep and it sent shivers down Jack’s spine. Jack braces his palms on his chest as he rises on his knees, only to drop back down more slowly than the first time, taking everything in.

“Maybe I just like being in control of you,” Jack quips back with the limited sanity he could hold while the fever burns through his body.

“Maybe I like to give it to you so I can see you work for it.” Pitch smirks lasciviously, giving a sharp jerk of his hips when Jack descends again, his hand giving a sharp smack on his ass that had Jack gasping at the sting and fierce arousal that shot through him, cheeks aflame with a blush at just how much that affected him.

Holy fuuuuuuckkk.

“Pitch—“ Jack moans, the blush burning the tops of his ears and down his chest. Who would’ve guessed dirty talk and submitting would be what he was into?

“Yes, Jack?” Pitch rumbles in his ear as he leaned against his chest. That deep voice was doing something to him, Jack was sure. He shivered as Pitch’s hold on his hips picked him up and dropped him back down. Jack cries out in pleasure, unable to quiet himself even though Pitch himself seemed to be a rather quiet lover— grunting and groaning straight into his ear like they were for his ears only.

Jack didn’t know how he didn’t already come yet. Magic? Probably magic or something, or maybe Pitch was just naturally that good at keeping someone teetering on the edge. Gods.

“What if— hah!— I don’t wanna work?” Jack stumbles out between his moans. Pitch’s deep chuckle shook him and he groans as Pitch jerks his hips up.

“I can work with that.” Pitch murmurs, hooking his arms underneath Jack’s knees and the next thing Jack knew was that he was on his back on the bed, and with the way Pitch had his arms under Jack’s
knees, Pitch was practically pressing Jack down spread-eagled and it had Jack *speechless* in pleasure.

Pitch took control and Jack couldn’t have fought him for it even if he wanted to as Pitch expertly rocked his hips and pleasure zinged up his spine as Pitch’s cock brushed against his prostate. Jack’s nails found Pitch’s back, uncaringly digging them into his back as he moaned his name so loud he thought the heavens could hear.

The pleasure just kept building and building and building — that when Pitch touched his cock, he came harder than the first time, squeezing Pitch unintentionally while he orgasmed that he felt heat spread through him— *inside him*. Pitch worked them through it, his rocking hips coming to a slow stop while he extended their post-coital bliss. Pitch’s arms slowly lowered Jack’s legs, letting them straighten on either side of him.

Jack pants for breath, eyes up at Pitch once he comes back down enough. He was so damn *warm*, inside and out. There were many things he thought spirits couldn’t feel, but he was glad to be wrong. He was warm, something he didn’t think he could really, truly, feel. His muscles ached, not really from pain, but he hadn’t really felt exertion before.

Pitch hovered above him, carefully pressing him into the mattress and Jack traced the lines of scars reverently, curiously, and he wouldn’t be against it if Pitch would put his whole weight on him. He finds he rather likes it, actually, the steady weight on him was like a blanket of security. As if reading his mind, Pitch settles a little heavier on him, causing Jack’s hands to slide up his shoulders and around to his back as Pitch settles his face in his neck, giving little nips that sent extra pleasure tingling through him.

Pitch raises his head, letting his forehead rest against Jack’s. Jack hums, closing his eyes and taking a slow, deep breath. *Pine and white fir,* it suits him. Gentle and lovely, but strong its own way. Grounding, steadying. Jack opens his eyes, gazing into the eyes like solar eclipses; not like the sun, not blinding at all, but the deepest and warmest honey and Jack thinks his mind is running away because that was the weirdest description he’s ever had about somebody’s eyes. But that didn’t make it any less true.

Jack tilts his head back, catching Pitch’s lips for another kiss and arching into him, rocking his hips despite the ache because it felt too good to stop until he was utterly exhausted.

Jack laid his head on Pitch’s chest, listening to the slow steady beat of his heart, Pitch’s heat seeping
He had always thought that when he and Pitch would finally come together, it would be cold and lovely. He remembers how Pitch’s skin was chilled when he was the Nightmare King, not as cold as his own skin, but enough that Jack had come to accept that their union would be cold. Because it was ice and dark, and whenever people think of dark, they think of cold, too.

But Pitch’s skin was like a burning inferno, gaining heat the longer he was awake. First, it was only a slight warmth that Jack felt. Then, he felt the heat rise like a pot boiling over. It burned and melted him all at once, searing his skin and insides with his touch in a way he’d ever thought of before, and it was magnificent. Life transformational, life altering. Jack had never thought he’d ever be warm in his life again, and he was glad he was wrong.

“I’m still coming with you.” Jack says to break their quiet reprieve, legs tangled together. Jack lifts his head, resting his chin on Pitch’s chest to watch the emotions play out on his face. “I’m not letting you do it alone.” He reiterates and watches Pitch’s resolve crumble. “We’ll figure something out.” Pitch heaves a sigh, Jack moving with the expansion of his chest.

“That I have no doubt, Jack.” He smiles, then, small and sweet and Jack couldn’t help but smile back, closing the distance between them to kiss his lips.

The others would probably be looking for them right about now. Two spirits don’t just disappear without causing alarm to their teammates. The great thing is, is that they would probably search every place besides North’s attic, so in reality they had plenty of time to themselves.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for patiently waiting! Sorry it took me so long to update. Because I’m ace, smut scenes are kinda hard to write for me cuz I’m always like, is this what people like?? Is this what people feel?? I have no flippen clue.

So, if ya’ll could lemme know, that’d be great. Maybe one day I’ll be able to write smut like my favorite smut-authors.

Somewhere outside the door, Bunny actually finds them. However, upon hearing the noises he debated walking in. In the end, after serious deliberation and being scarred by Jack’s moans, he haughtily left, and when questioned if he found them, he said “check the attic!” And thus traumatized the other guardians as well.
When he had first woken up, it felt… odd, for a lack of a better word, peculiar. Like he’d been there time and time again. And the first thing he woke up to was eyes as blue and crystal as the rains of Titan, hair as white as the banks of Marceledos; a chill hand over his, small compared to his own.

Blue.

Vastest of blues; whoever this was. They radiated blue, like Sirius; stars that burn so hot they feel cold, burn so hot they burn blue. And that voice, soothing like a herbal balm.

“Pitch?”

His eyes catch the speaker’s, his hand twitches in the boy’s grasp. Mouth opens, and he can’t speak. Whispers of pitch black, pitch black… pitch black, echo in the recesses of his minds, things he doesn’t understand.

It was only until the boy helped him sit and drink his fill did he manage to form thoughts that linked together, as if spinning webs of reality. He looks down at the hands in his lap, covered with a thick fabric that slid down as he raised his hands and balled his hands into fists.

Pitch black, pitch black, pitch black, they whispered again, rolling like the sand dunes of Huinaan on his subconsciousness.

“... yes.” He had answered. “I am Kozmotis Pitchiner, and you are?”

“Jack Frost.”
Jack Frost was the first person he woke up to. He was kind and eager, helpful. However many years he’s been in this coma, for however long, and Jack Frost was there when he woke. He thanked his constellations for his blessings, for he could have just as easily woken up alone and with no recollection of who he once was but with the weight of his life on his shoulders all the same.

And then came the big one, and the bird, and then the rabbit. And then the sandman.

*Wonder, memories, hopes, and dreams.*

*Got you all together now, didn’t I?*

But Jack Frost was a constant at his side. Catching his attention again and again; *eyes on me.* His memories were slotting back together like pieces of a puzzle; his home, his family, his duty, and the never ending consuming black he’d been trapped in. He could feel the magic tingle under his fingertips, ready to dance and be used like he hadn’t used them in years.

He trusts Jack, and Jack calls him *Pitch.* He had never really been called that. Koz, at most, but *Pitch?*

*Pitch black, pitch black—*

It was a strange occurrence, the name licking at an unconscious part of his mind he couldn’t find to get the truth. Something so ineffable but vital to understanding what has happened.

*Pitch Black—*

So much has happened since he first awoke, had it really only been a few days? It felt like years. But those years were filled with something he had felt was missing for centuries. Company, love.

Millennia had passed with him none the wiser, a villain of his own creation. Koz was ashamed to realize he had fallen from grace. He had thought he was above that, above the lessons he’d learned when he entered into the army. That what will rise, must fall down. His heart still felt sore from the poison of the nightmares, causing a physical ache in his chest. Unless that, too, was an after effect of being alone.
He had woken up to blue and he was glad for it.

Koz looks to the side, raising a hand to thread through Jack’s mused hair. Jack barely moves, giving a little sigh in his sleep. He was still so cold, and yet somehow still so alive. Koz wishes he, too, could sleep beside him, but his mind prevents him from sleep; duty and consequences weigh heavy on his mind.

What is there for him? After the life he’d lived, what could he possibly achieve? What kind of future could he have that wouldn’t put Jack in misery?

Cooped up in the attic, with the blinds half closed on the circular window, he thought about many things as he stares at the glistening light of the moon that shone on the floor. It didn’t reach them, not even close, but Koz could still hear the messages loud and clear.

Talk to me.

But Koz refused, at least for the moment. He would rather not say a word until he had come to his decision.

I’m going with you, Jack had told him, determination in his eyes and it hit Koz that Prince Lunanoff did not make Jack into a guardian because his center was fun, or what have you. He chose him because of the strength in his heart, for the conviction of his beliefs. Jack didn’t care what lay ahead for him, but Koz did. Koz cared deeply. He cared for Jack more than he had cared for his wife, though he had come to love her dearly, in a shorter span of time. He had been with Katherine for decades, he has been with Jack for days.

I’m going with you.

It’s what he said, but that was when Jack had thought Koz’s delima was going back to becoming general, rounding up nightmares and keeping them locked in their cages. Go back to work for the royal family who had, intentionally or not, left him to his fate, as Jack had pointed out.

Now his delima was so much more. So much more.

Koz had lived many lives, many millennia; he had been both the good and the bad, completing the cycle. He had seen empires fall, his efforts and accomplishments swept underfoot. Koz himself knew
how vital it is to keep balances in check; he was the one who made the universe safe, too safe. So safe, in fact, he jeopardized the same people he swore to protect. He is what happens when one scale is tipped too far to one side.

As he saw it, he had two choices, each equally in the realm of keeping balance.

Koz could go the route he had been thinking at first: become general again, get his lair back and hunt down nightmares. Of course, if he does this, the scales will tip in favor of the good and that, in turn, will cause another Golden Age, which, in turn, will cause another fall from grace. Another Dark Age, another loss of self and life. He could, in theory, occasionally let out some nightmares into the world to run amok before rounding them up again to make sure the scales don’t tip too far one way.

On the other hand, Koz could sink back into the darkness, where the universe needs him to be. He could be the Nightmare King they need him to be, let the creatures run amok and pull them away when they get too wild; overpowering for too long. All in theory, of course. Now that his heart has been freed from both Nightlight’s and the Nightmare Men’s malediction, he didn’t know how well he could control them, if at all.

On both hands, Jack dies.

Koz becomes a general, Jack goes with him, he loses belief from the children, the ones who still remember, and he dies.

Koz becomes the Nightmare King, Jack goes with him, he loses belief from the children, and he dies.

Would Jack really go so far for him? Koz couldn’t make up his mind. Yes and no; Jack will either say yes on either sides, or say no. Would Jack really say yes to following him should he become the Nightmare King? Chance being infected by the black abyss and fade earlier than expected? Koz liked to think he knew Jack pretty well, but he didn’t. Not really. Not everything. Would he even have the stomach to push Jack away, for his own safety? Surely not with any convincing emotion. Not any that Jack would accept, anyway.

Not after last night.

“Pitch?”
Jack’s voice was rough from sleep and Koz turned to look at him, watching him blink sleepily up at him before scooting up to lift himself up on his arm. The blanket that was pulled up to his shoulders slipped down his back, revealing the expanse of ivory skin and the bruises he’d collected over the course of the night.

*Come talk, come talk,* the moonbeams called, but Koz ignored them and Jack didn’t seem to understand they could speak. He looks gorgeous in the dim reflected moonlight, his body aglow with the paleness of his skin, hair mused in all directions, ring of kiss marks on his neck. Jack’s eyes were half lidded, sleep calling him back to the dreamworld like a siren calling a sailor to the sea. Eyes so deep Koz would do anything to drown in them if he could. Pale pink lips bitten red, a smile on his lips.

Koz reached out a hand, caressing his cheek, thumb swiping gently along his cheek and feeling the chill of his body juxtaposed against the heat of his hand. Jack closed his eyes, leaning into his hand like a cat searching for scratches, on the brink of purring. His thumb swiped along the corner of his mouth and Jack opened his eyes just barely, opening his mouth as he turned his head, letting Koz’s thumb slide along his bottom lip and his pink tongue pressed against the pad of his thumb before closing his mouth around it and sucking gently. Arousal pooled in his stomach, heating up his skin and pouring lava in his veins.

Koz presses his thumb down on Jack’s tongue, Jack easily letting his jaw fall however much Koz wanted, giving a hum. Jack shouldn’t be so… so *titillating.*

Koz leaned down, pulling his thumb out to kiss him. His tongue dominates his pliant mouth, Jack leaning back so his head rested on the pillow, moaning softly into his mouth. Jack’s hand finds his neck and the chill makes him shiver, the hair at the back of his neck stand and it spread the heat in him like wildfire, provoking such deep desire he was sure to fall into him again with immense pleasure.

*Oh,* how Koz wanted to do nothing but that.

Koz slipped his hand to the back of Jack’s neck, twirling the short hair between his fingers and tugging *just* right for Jack to groan, eyes rolling in pleasure and none the wiser that Koz was pulling him into sleep. Koz glides his tongue along Jack’s lip as he pulled back, seeing Jack fall back asleep with a satiated look, mouth half-open, lips curled just barely in his sleep. Koz presses gentle kisses to his neck, eyes grazing down his chest to watch the rise and fall of his chest, need stirred in him even with Jack asleep and he let it simmer as his hand left the back of his neck, finger tracing his collar bones, down his sternum; the dip down into his belly.

It would be so *easy* to wake Jack and continue what he had started, bring them to ecstasy again and again until Jack falls into sleep for real and Koz could go back to his dilemma.
Koz entertained the idea of doing nothing but being with Jack, but even then, Jack would die.

*I should have never become a guardian.*

Because Jack didn’t want to be a guardian, and who knows if he would continue to try and spread the belief of himself to children even if Koz chose to do absolutely nothing?

With a deep breath, Koz reeled in his arousal, letting his hands trace up Jack’s chest one last time, and because he was weak, he leaned down to kiss right on his neck, breathing in the scent of frost. He admired Jack a few minutes longer, like time could just stand still.

It would be brilliant if time could stand still.

Koz pulls away gently and stands. With a soundless spell he was donned in sleep pants, done only to keep his modesty, and he stepped into the moon’s beams. He doesn’t open the shades more; Jack was his to gaze upon in his vulnerability and no one else.

They talk, silent as the grave.

Few moments later he steps back into the shadows and out from the beams. It didn’t help come to a decision, and why would it? Of course, someone who grew up in light would not see the downside of there being a Golden Age. Prince Lunanoff was still only a fraction of his age, and little of wisdom.

Koz went back to the bed, sitting on the edge while taking up gazing at Jack’s slumbering face, looking for answers to what he should do, what he should choose. He weighs and weighs and weighs every option he has, twice, thrice, hundreds of times over in a span of a handful of minutes. How can he think so long with no answer? It was an impossible decision.

Koz lifts a hand to caress Jack’s cheek, watching him sigh happily in his sleep. How could he feel so much love for someone he knew for so little time? Moments pass by and Koz steels his resolve, once his thoughts follow the progress of his rationalization, as he decides on his fate.

Chapter End Notes
So, what kinda ending do you want to read? The Nightmare King, or General Kozmotis Pitchiner?

See you next time in Tipping Scales!

End Notes

If you like my work, buy me a coffee!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!