Harming an Innocent

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Harming an Innocent

by leafmon1995

Summary

War has been going on between the Nightmare King and the Guardians since the Golden Age. The Guardians swore to protect all children, until they harmed Pitch's younger brother, who he had been looking for since they got separated.

Notes

Takeru: You know you should really finish the other stories you started a week ago.

Leafmon1995: I am but I was reading a lot of ROTG fics and thought of this one. I'll get to Digital Reaper: Lost and Rise of the Demon Lords next week

Daisuke: Stop worrying so much TJ. Apollomon x Stingmon is almost done with the next chapter for Rise of the Demon Lords anyway
Takeru: *glares*

Ken: ignore them *fighting starts in background* enjoy
Ever since the Golden Ages, the Guardians' had fought to protect the children of Earth. They vowed to stop Pitch, the Nightmare King, from harming the children from his nightmares. The battle had went on for centuries with no sign of letting up.

As years went on, the constant battles between the two forces put a huge toll on the children's belief. The Guardians, rather they knew it or not, were neglecting their duties. This did not disturb the Nightmare King though. He hated the guardians and MiM for the destruction and loss it had caused him.

Seeing his family vanquish at the hands of the Guardians, leaving him with a empty feeling inside, made him angry. Trying to stop him from spreading fear made him just as angry. Thinking that the children needed just Wonder and Dreams and Hope and little fairies that collect teeth, sickened him. It sickened him that after all these years they think they could get rid of fear. But what made him hate them worst of all was the fact of what happened to his younger brother.

He remembered his little brother and searched endlessly for him, while fighting his enemies. At one point he thought he might never find him, until he stumbled upon a small village named Burgess.

It was during the colonial period when he found him. He had just managed to survive and loss a huge battle against the Guardians (a temporary setback) and was now resting and replenishing his army of Nightmares in one of his many lairs. He was in his throne room, creating another nightmare to replace the ones he lost, when one of his very loyal, trusted nightmares came into the room. The nightmare was a beautiful Percheron that he assigned to search for his brother, and gain intelligence. All his nightmare horses were intelligent, but this one was the brightest of all of them (considering it was his first successful one) and in a way know his emotions more then anything.

Pitch glanced from his almost completed nightmare to glance at the nightmare entering the throne room. He glanced at the horse curiously as it came running in look excited. He wondered what news his nightmare brought. Maybe it was about the Guardians?

"What is it?"

The nightmare stopped in front of him with a twinkle of excitement in her yellow eyes. "We found him, Master. We found the Prince."

Pitch felt his mouth go dry at what his nightmare was saying. After all this time they finally found him, his younger brother. "Where?" The horse stomped her hooves in excitement.

"In a small village not far from here. The village is called Burgess. I stumbled by his home while delivering nightmares to the children in that area. I found him with a young girl. The girl was asleep, however he saw me, but was not afraid of me."

Pitch felt his eyes widen. Could it really be his little Jackie, his baby brother? "Did he talk to you?"

"Yes." The horse confirmed. "He wanted to know what I was and why I was here. I told him that I was suppose to give them nightmares. The child didn't show any fear though. He asked for me to not give any to his sister, but was willing to take both of their nightmares himself." Pitch looked shocked. Sister? "I didn't want to give your brother nightmares, Master, but he was determined to protect his sister from getting any nightmares."
"Did you give him the nightmares?" He asked threateningly, which the nightmare ignored.

"No, Master. I wouldn't dream of it." The horse said as her ear flicked back when her Master's anger rose. "We made a compromise that I will give neither of them nightmares, but he would have to speak to you tomorrow." A small smile crept onto his face.

"When does he want to meet?" Pitch asked, not realizing the hopeful tone in his voice.

"He is a shepherd and has to get up very early in the morning before returning home to get his sister ready for school while the mother works in town. He said you are more then welcome to come see him while he is herding or after."

"Very well," Pitch said distractedly, shooing his nightmare away, as he thought. The nightmare took no offense to this, knowing that her master needed the time to think. Without a single thought the horse left as if it was never there.

Pitch returned to his uncompleted nightmare. As he worked on finishing his nightmare he couldn't help but think about his younger brother. After all this time, he will finally be reunited with his brother. He wonder who this new family was that was caring for his younger brother? He wondered if he was still the happy, energetic, mischievous child that he remember he was? He wasn't sure if he liked that he was a shepherd and poor, but that was out of his hands. As long as the family doesn't mistreat him, then they are safe from his wrath and vengeance.

He smiled softly as he finishes the nightmare and sends it to the other. He watches it go and ponders on what to do the next morning.
Early the next morning, Pitch steps out of a tree's shadow with one of his smaller nightmares that was about the size of his palm. The little nightmare neighs at him when Pitch feels a familiar tug in his soul. Pitch was surprised at first. He only felt this tug when his brother was around.

He slowly walks through a set of threes that leads to a clearing. Pitch was glad the morning was still foggy so he didn't have to worry about his nightmare too much. He smiles softly as he hears someone's voice. Pitch stays hidden near a tree and watches a young boy with brown hair feeding, at least, ten sheep.

He watches in amazement at how easy he did it. The boy laughs as one of the smaller sheep rams into another playfully. Pitch shook his head at that. No matter the age, kids were very amusing.

He continued to watch in silence as the boy herd the sheep. A few hours passed and the boy finally started to herd the sheep back home. Pitch followed the boy from the shadows and watches him as he walks back home. Once the sheep are all in their pen the boy leans on the fence.

Pitch studies the boy from the shadows. The boy had brown eyes that sparkled with mischievousness and had brown hair. He wore a white undershirt, a brown vest, brown trousers, and a brown poncho to protect him from the morning winter chill. The boy also has a shepherd's staff in his hand.

The boy glances in his direction and Pitch wonders if his brother sensed him. The boy smiles and tilts his head to the side as if he was hearing something.

"You can come out. I know you're there." Pitch shook his head in amusement. Of course his brother would know if he was there. He would have felt the tug as well. With a smile he walks out of the shadows and in front of his brother.

His brother blinked his eyes in curiosity as he appeared in front of him. "Hello Jackson." Pitch said with an emotional smile.

Jackson blinked his eyes for a moment, looking slightly confused. So this was the Boogieman? He didn't seem that scary as the storyteller tells them, but he had a feeling he knew him. Jackson frowned slightly in confusion as he studied the Boogieman.

The man had a grey complexion, as if he hadn't been in the sun in years. Jackson also noticed the man's clothing. It was nothing he ever seen before, though the outfit seemed for someone of Royalty or someone who was really old. Then again the man looked like he was in his late thirties. Jackson looked into his eyes and froze. Those eyes looked so familiar. He seen them before. The man's eyes were yellow with a tinge of silver in them. Jackson studied his eye a little longer and was surprised that the man knew his name. The voice sounds familiar as well. He knew that voice. It was the voice from his dreams that he has from time to time, when he was on a ship with mother, brother, and niece. Could it be?
"Kozmotis? Is-is that you?" Jackson asked hesitantly. What happened to Kozmotis? He looks so different now.

Pitch smiles warmly, with tears in his eyes. Without even thinking, overwhelmed with emotions, Pitch pulls his brother into a hug, which Jackson returned.

"Yes, it's me. Thank the moon that you are all right. I have been looking everywhere for you."

Jackson snuggled closer to his older brother. He felt like Kozmotis, and sounded like Kozmotis, but the outfit and skin tone and the strange, yet cute, miniature black horse baffled him. He wondered what happened. He knew he was pretty young when they got separated. He remembered he was maybe three or four when he and his niece, Emily, fled their home when they were attacked. He couldn't really remember what happen after that, but all he knew was that he was in a hibernation cradle when they crashed landed on Earth and got separated. He wasn't sure how long he was in the cradle, but he was eventually found by the Overland's when they were traveling through the forest. He was grateful for that.

"What happened to you? You look so different." Jackson asked, shifting to gaze at his brother.

"It's a long story," Pitch said as they pulled away. "And I'm not sure if you have enough time, since you have to get your sister ready."

Jackson simply gives him a warm smile as he gestures to a house not far from the small sheep pen house. "Would you like to come in and have breakfast with us, then? We don't have much, but I love it if you joined us." Pitch smiles and nods, but what he said bothered him. He didn't voice his opinions as he followed his brother. He didn't want to voice just how poor his brother's adoptive family are. He would have to fix that. Maybe he can bring them food and supplies to help them. It was the least he can do for his brother's family after all. He couldn't fathom his brother (as well as his family) eating so little and not making enough to support themselves.

Pitch entered the small wooden home and noticed that Jackson's family didn't have enough. There was a kitchen, a table for meals, chairs in the living room and a hallway that must have lead to the bedrooms. Pitch was led to the kitchen and took a seat at the table.

"Tea?" Jackson asks as he put water into a kettle and takes out some herbs.

"Yes, thank you." Pitch watch his brother as he makes tea and puts it over the fire. Pitch places the small nightmare on the table when Jackson goes to wake up his sister. Pitch smiles at the nightmare as he stokes its head with his finger. "At least he's safe." The horse neighed in response. "Stay with him and protect him. I do not want those insufferable Guardian to go after him. Who knows what they might do if they find out I have a younger brother?" The nightmare whined in response, clearly not liking that mental picture. "I made you to be his personal nightmare. He is not afraid of you and would be very curious of you." It neighed and tilted its head as Pitch spoke.

Jackson smiles as he goes to his and his sister room. They didn't have much and have to share a room, but it worked for them. She smiles at his little sister. They might not be blood related but they still loved each other. Flee was his little sister and would do anything to protect her.

He gently shakes her to awake her up. Flee groans as she slowly wakes up. "Flee? Wake up."

Flee slowly opens her eyes and looks at him sleepily. She yawns as she sits up. "Jack? What is it?"

Jack raised an amused eyebrow at her.

"Did you forget you have school today?" She blushed and pouted at his teasing tone.
"I didn't forget, much." Jackson shook his head in amusement. He ruffled her hair affectionately before sitting on the edge of her bed.

"Sure, kiddo. What ever you say," Jackson said teasingly. Flee laughs as she tries to swot his hand away. Jackson laughs, as well, at her attempts to stop him. He ponders on what to say when they calm down.

Flee noticed something was bothering her brother and spoke before he could sort through his thoughts. "Are you okay?" She asked in concern. "Did something happen while you were herding the sheep this morning?"

"Yeah I'm fine." Jackson answered back. "Do you remember when mom and dad told you that I was adopted?"

"Yeah." What's this about? She thought to herself. "You said that they found you while they were traveling and took you to the town's healer to make sure you were alright. Mom said they found you in some kind of strange cradle."

Jackson nodded at that before asking his next question. "Do you remember when I told you that I had vague memories of my family?"

"Yeah. I remember you telling me a little bit about your brother, Kozmotis, and your niece, Emily." Flee said thoughtfully. "Though it's still weird how your niece is older than you." Jackson shrugged at that. It wasn't his fault that he was born after her. "Why you ask?"

"Well," Jackson started with a nervous smile. How would his sister react to his brother being in the kitchen. "He found me while I was herding the sheep." Her eyes widen in shock.

"What? Really? Is he here?"

"Yeah. He's joining us for breakfast." Flee practically jumped out of bed before he finished his sentence. "Where are you going, Flee?" Flee turned to him, her hand on the doorknob.

"To see your brother." Jackson raised an amused eyebrow at her.

"Don't you want to look decent before meeting my brother?" Jack teased as his sister blinks at him and then blushes when she realizes she was still in her nightgown.

"Right. Sorry. I'll get ready." Jackson hummed in response as he gets up to leave the room, but not before ruffling his sister's hair again. Earning a "JAAACCCCKKK!" in response, before closing the door behind him. Jackson snickers to himself as he makes his way back to the kitchen.

As Jackson reenters the kitchen he noticed that his brother was stroking the miniature black horse. Now that he thought about it the horse looked like a smaller version of that nightmare horse that came last night. Jackson frowned. Was his brother this 'Master' that the horse was referring to? Was his brother really the Boogieman? And why was he? His brother was a hero and loved his people. Why would he intentionally give nightmares to children? Not that he was complaining or anything. People need nightmares to keep them from doing something stupid. But still, something wasn't right.

"So," Jackson said as he walked passed his brother, to start breakfast. "Is there a reason that you're wearing a dress?" Jackson smiled smugly as he was rewarded with an exasperated look from his brother.

"It is not a dress!" Jackson snickered, and surprisingly the small horse whined in agreement, as
Pitch glared. "I will have you know this is a very, formal, robe that was very popular way back before you were born."

"Really?" Jackson said sarcastically. "And here I thought it was a dress!" Pitch glared at him and at the horse as they snickered/whined in agreement.

"Brat!" Pitch growled, non-threateningly. Jackson gave his brother a mock, hurt look.

"You wounded me, Koz! That really hurt! And here I thought we were getting along so well." Pitch rolled his eyes at his younger brother's antics. The horse whined at him and Pitch glared at it.

"Traitor." Pitch growled at it as its ears flicked up before leaving Pitch's hand.

Jackson blinks as the horse flies out of his brother's hand and flies in front of him. Jackson wasn't sure what it wanted, especially with the one he saw last night. He studied it for a moment before putting his hand out. The horse neighed in response as it landed in his palm and looked back at him. Jackson smiled slightly as he slowly began to stroke the horse's mane. He was surprised that the horse felt like sand, yet it was a living thing. Well, that's something you don't see everyday.

Pitch smiles as he watches Jackson interact with the small nightmare. He had created the nightmare for him as a present. At least now he will know where his brother is and if he needs help the nightmare will let him know.

"You like it?" Pitch asked, but he already knew the answer.

"It's amazing, Kozmotis." Jackson chuckled as the horse left his hand and flew up to his shoulder to nuzzle his cheek. "I don't know how you did it? But this is probably the cutest thing I ever seen."

Cute? Pitch thought incredulously. Normally he would have retorted a comment, but held his tongue when he saw his brother admiring the small nightmare. I guess I can live with that. He smiles softly. As long as he is happy, I really can't complain.

"That's good than." Jackson looks at him. "She's all yours."

"What? Are you serious?" Pitch smiles at the shocked look.

"Yes, I made her for you." Jackson smiled softly after getting over the shock.

"Thanks Koz. I'll take good care of her." Jackson said with a small smile as the small nightmare nuzzled his cheek again.

Oh, Pitch knew his brother would take good care of his nightmare. The two were already bonding. Usually he would never say or think this, but the sight was very cute. Pitch folded his hands on the table as he watched them. Pitch loved the feeling of being reunited with his brother. It had been a decade since he held him, though Jackson should be a lot older then sixteen. He wondered how long he was in the hibernation cradle.

Pitch tossed that thought away for the moment. It didn't matter now. Jackson was safe and sound. They were together again, despite him having another family. He frowned at the thought that they were poor, but quickly plastered a neutral smile on his face when Jackson glanced at him for a second before putting the nightmare down to get cups for the tea.

He thanked his brother as he handed him the cup of tea. He silently watch as his brother gave him a smile before turning around to start breakfast. This was going to be an interesting morning, Pitch silently mused to himself. If he didn't know any better, you would think that he would be getting
soft. Soft? No. Happy? Yes. If the Guardians knew he had this side of him, they would most likely use it against him to win the war.

Pitch frowned at that thought. The Guardians have been a thorn on his side for ages. They managed to temporarily set him back in a very unfortunate defeat, during the Dark Ages, but that didn't mean he lost. They haven't won. He will defeat them and make them pay for what they did. They destroyed those he loved. He will make them pay.

Yes, they will pay, but what if they go after Jackson? Pitch did not like that thought. He would have to make sure he is safe. Jackson was a child and he doubted that the Guardians was willingly hurt a child. However, if they find out that Jackson is Pitch's brother...who knows what can happen?

Would the Guardians willingly kidnap Jackson and used that as leverage? There is a slight chance. But that was a chance he was not willing to take. Now how he was going to protect Jackson from them was a different story altogether.

Pitch would have kept that line of thought if it wasn't for a slightly awe, slightly surprised female voice.

"The Boogieman!"

Oh god!
Breakfast Conversation

Chapter Summary

pitch tell them a story and about the war

Of all the people to be at their house, Flee was not expecting the Boogieman. Sure she heard that he ate children and gave them terrible nightmares that makes grown men cry. Although, he didn't look that scary. She wondered how many of those rumors are actually true.

The Boogieman turned to face her with equal shock on his face. "Umm...hello." God, this was awkward.

"Hello, Flee," Pitch greeted with a smile.

Flee's eyes widen as the Boogieman, Pitch Black, said her name. She never told him her name. How did he know? Did Jack tell him?

"How? How do you know my name? Did Jack tell you?" Flee glanced at her brother as he prepared breakfast. Jack paused mid-stirring to glance back.

"I didn't tell him," Jack replied. Slight confusion in his voice as well.

"It's my job." Flee turned back to The Boogieman. "Yes see its my job to give nightmares. In order to do my job correctly I need to know basic information about the child I'm giving the nightmare to."

"Why?" She asked.

"Everyone is afraid of something, my dear," the Boogieman said thoughtfully. "Not everyone is afraid of the same thing at the same level."

"Okay, not everyone has the same fear. I get that, but what this have to do with you knowing our names," she asked as she took a seat at the table.

The Boogieman leaned forward a bit, resting his arms on the table. "Simple really. Let's say a boy lived in an area with a pack of vicious wolves. If I don't know this basic information the nightmare I give him wouldn't be as helpful." He paused for a moment as Jack started putting the food on plates. "If I knew this information, I would give him a nightmare about a scenario on what can happen if he isn't careful. However, if I didn't know this information and gave him a nightmare unrelated to his situation, it wouldn't really help him now would it?"

Flee shook her head at this. "No it wouldn't. It wouldn't help him at all." Pitch nodded and didn't comment what he was going to say when Jackson came and placed the food on the table, along with a pot of tea and two cups. They all gave thanks and began eating, switching the conversation to something else.

"So," Jackson said as he munched on a piece of bread. "Mind telling me the whole new appearances and why you're called Pitch Black in our stories?"
"Or how you lost Jack in the first place?" Flee added.

Pitch groaned into he's tea. "That's a long story. I would have to tell from the beginning to answer both questions." Jackson and Flee gave each other curious looks before returning their attention back to Pitch. "Back then there was a war between good and evil. We were at war with every evil thing you can imagine, Fearlings, Pirates, Nightmare Men, you name it. In the hight of that war there was a hero who fought them with his army and finally defeated them. I was that hero.

During that time I was called General Kozmotis Pitchiner, hero of the Golden Age."

"Wow," Jackson and Flee in awe.

"You were still very young at the time, Jackson, when I was assigned to guard their prison. I did it for many years without a problem, until the day they tricked me into opening the gate and setting them free." The children gasped at the same time they finished their food. "They used the voices of you and my daughter, Emily. They made me believe that you two were trapped in there."

Pitch shook his head sadly at how stupid he was. "I should have known that you two weren't in there, that you two were safe at home. But I missed you two so much. I was missing the time to raise the both you and I guess that made me vulnerable to their lies."

"It's not your fault!" Flee yelled. "You were tricked!" Pitch smiled slightly at her comment.

Jackson frowned slightly. Something was telling him that something bad happened to his brother. "Koz? What happened after they were released?"

"They attacked me and almost completely consumed my humanity, turning me into what you see today." Jackson paled. "I guess you can say I went mad. The Fearlings that were in control at the time had me do something I am not proud of."

"Like what?" Flee asked as tears filled her eyes.

"I destroyed our home world without a second thought. I destroyed our friend's home planet, the Pookas. I destroyed many galaxies and planets in my madness."

"And me?" Jackson asked.

"I didn't know it at the time, but you, Emily, and a few others managed to escape in hibernation cradles."

"What's that?" Flee asked as she tried to remember the strange cradle that her parents mentioned finding Jack in when they found him.

"These were made during war time, before the Golden Age. We used these cradles to help those who were hurt, severally injured, or when we needed to escape to another planet that was far from us." Pitch paused in thought, thinking of how to word this. "While in the cradle a person is put into suspended animation. A person can not grow, physically, while in the cradle. This helps when someone is injured. It keeps the person alive until we could help them."

"Wow," Flee said, impressed. "That's amazing. We don't have anything like that. All we have is a healer that comes to the house if we are sick or hurt."

"Indeed," Pitch said with a smile. Pitch glanced at his younger brother, who had a thoughtful look on his face. "While I was...going mad Emily and Jackson's cradles traveled through other galaxies. Emily's cradle crashed landed, after a few days, releasing her from her cradle. She grew up to the
age of sixteen, but didn't get along with the man that raised her. After an outburst she was put in a
ship and sent to crash onto another planet.

During this time I was in control once again and was traveling galaxies looking for you two.
However, I also made many enemies because I now commanded the Fearlings and giving
nightmares to children. Many don't understand that nightmares are needed in life. During one of my
battles I was overwhelmed and crashed onto this planet and was put into a temporary sleep, which
lasted a few weeks.

I didn't realize at the time that Emily was on this planet too. She made quite a name for herself.
You may know her as Mother Nature."

"What?" Jackson exclaimed in shock. "Emily is Mother Nature?" Flee was in equal shock. It's not
everyday you hear that you brother is related to the Boogieman and Mother Nature.

"It's true. However, we are not in good terms at the moment."

"Why?" Flee asked.

"I'm at war with Man in Moon's Guardians."

"Who?" Jackson and Flee asked.

"Nicholas St. North, better known as Santa Claus; Toothiana, the Tooth Fairy; E. Aster
Bunnymund, the Easter Bunny; and Sanderson Mansnoozie, Sandman."

"Why? Why are you in war with them?" Jackson asked, flabbergasted. "They're good guys! They
protect children!" Flee nodded her head in agreement.

Pitch frowned. "Remember when I said I had enemies?" They nodded. "One of my enemies was
the Man in Moon. You see when I awoken I was invisible to those who don't believe in me. I was
fading away. However, I learned that I could prevent this by giving others nightmares. When I was
strong enough I tried to continue my search for you and Emily. However, there was a problem."

"The Guardians?" Jackson asked with a frown.

"Yes," Pitch said with a sad smile. "Man in Moon called them and made them Guardians. They
fought to destroy and stop fear. Foolish I know, but that's what the war was about. This was during
the Dark Ages."

"But," Flee looked at him in confusion. "Wasn't that like a few hundred years ago?"

"Give or take," Pitch replied. "I really don't remember the exact period. All I can tell you is that
whatever survives that managed to survive from our planet where whipped out by the Guardians."

"But that would mean that I should be really old, right?" Jackson asked, worriedly, not really pay
attention to the last part his brother said.

"In a sense yes. But you must remember, Jackson, that you were in the hibernation cradle for quite
a long time. My guess is that by the time your cradle got into this galaxy a lot of time has passed.
You never aged because of the fact that you were still in the cradle," Pitch told him with an
amused smirk on his face.

"That makes a lot of sense," Jackson mumbled as he got up to collect the bowls and cups. Flee
wahtes watches him as he goes into the kitchen
"Are you still fighting the Guardians?"

Pitch looks at the young girl with a grave expression. "They still try to destroy me and my nightmares." Flee frowned.

"That doesn't sound very nice." She glanced at her brother. "Will they try to come after us?" She couldn't help it. She had to ask.

"I'm not sure maybe," Pitch said, remembering the thought he had yesterday. "They don't know I have a brother. When they found out Emily was my daughter they tried to get her to fight with them. She remained neutral and refused to fight with me nor against me, especially with their actions that lead to the death of the refugees from our home world that came here.

To this day she is sticking to keeping the balance and staying out of our war. But she did promise me that if I ever needed help she would come to my aid. She even promised to help search for Jackson and protect him."

Flee nodded in slight relief, but then panicked when she heard the last part. "You're not going to take him away from us, are you?"

Pitch raised his hands up in surrender. "No, no, nothing like that," he told her. "I made Jackson a miniature nightmare." He pointed to the nightmare on Jackson's shoulder. "She can protect him and get me if you kids need my help." Flee smiled as she calmed down a bit. "I can also send some other nightmares to guard your home, if you like. They can keep an eye on you two and protect you from the Guardians." Flee was thankful. After everything she heard, well she really didn't like the Guardians for what they were doing to Jack's older brother.

"What about you?" Jackson asked, surprising them. "I know you're busy, but we just found each other again." Pitch looked at Jackson's sad face. Not liking the fears he was getting from his brother. Pitch got up from his seat, walked towards Jackson side of the table and pulled him into a hug.

"I will not disappear, Jackson. It's true that I am at war, but that will not stop me from seeing you. I can come every morning, like today. I can risk an hour or two of my sleep to visit my baby brother."

Flee squeals at the idea that Pitch would visit them every morning. Jackson was happy too about his brother visiting, even with his busy, war plan, schedule. But he could not show it. He had a reputation to uphold, especially since he was called 'baby brother'.

"I'm not a baby!" He whined.

Pitch, or Kozmotis as Jackson insists to calls him, smirks. "No matter how old you get you will always be my baby brother." Jackson pouts as brother began to ruffle his hair. Jackson heard his sister giggle at him. Oh the irony!

Jackson was going to complain (hey, he had the right to be childish!), but a knock on the door, followed by a young voice interrupted his thoughts. With a smirk at the time, Jackson got out of his brothers hold and walked to the door. On the other side of the door was a young boy. The boy had brown eyes and hair, and freckles on his cheeks. He wore a brown tunic, cloak, and black pants. Jackson smiles fondly at the young boy as a huge smile grew on his face.

"HEY JACKSON!"

"Hey, Jamie." Jamie is the son of Mr. Bennett, the founding father of their village. Jamie is a
sweet, kind young man and just so happens to have a big crush on his sister. Jackson knew that they would be a cute couple one day. "You're just in time. We just finished breakfast," Jackson told him around a chuckle. He really loved the kid.

"Really?" Jamie asked with a confused look. "You guys are usually not ready yet when I come to walk Flee to school."

Jackson smiles as he leaned against the door frame. "We had a visitor today who was telling us such a wonderful story about love and family," Jackson said with a mischievous twinkle in his eyes, not that Jamie noticed.

"Sounds boring," Jamie whined.

"No it was quite interesting actually. We will have a similar conversation when Valentines comes around." Jamie blushed quite nicely at the comment.

"I...umm..."

"Hmm?"

"Jack I'm ready!" Flee's voice rang from inside the house. Jamie let out a sigh of relief, while Jackson looked simply amused. Flee came to them and hugged her brother before moving around him to face Jamie. "Hi Jamie!"

"Hi Flee. Ready for school?"

Flee gave him a disgruntled look. "No, but I have no choice in that matter."

"That's right kiddo," Jackson confirmed with a smile. "Just think of it this way. Knowledge is everything that paint you a path for greatness." He gave her a somber look that was filled with longing. "At least your path will be better than mine."

"I wish you can go to school too," Flee said sadly, knowing that by the time the schools were built and established Jackson had to uphold their dead father's responsibilities.

"Don't worry about me kiddo." Jackson raffles his sister hair, affectionately. "You just go on and learn for the both of us." Flee nodded.

"You can always teach him," Jamie suggested.

"Yeah!" Flee's eyes lit up with excitement. "I can teach you everything I learned in class!"

Jackson grinned at the idea. "Well, you better get going then," he said. "I'm looking forward to my first lesson."

"Okay! Yeah! Bye Jack! See you later!" Flee grabs Jamie's hand, who blushed slightly at the touch, and drags him away from the house and towards the village.

"Bye Jackson! See you at the theater!" Jamie yells over his shoulder as he is dragged away by the excited girl.

Jackson smiles softly as he watches the two run down the path, leading to the village. He continues to watch them until they disappear down the small hill. Jackson stays there, staring at the empty path, for a few more seconds before he decides to go back inside. Jackson sighs as he turns around and unfortunately runs into his brother. Kozmotis managed to steady him before he managed to
ruin his pride.

"Jackson are you alright?" Kozmotis asked, concerned. Jackson nodded.

"Yeah, sorry."

Kozmotis frowned at him. "Jackson, why don't you go to school with your sister." Jackson frowned at him.

"Koz, you need to understand that I don't have the opportunities that Flee has now. The school wasn't built when I was her age. If I wanted to learn I would need a private tutor and we can't afford that." He shrugs. "Beside I have to be the man of the house and take up father's responsibilities."

Pitch frowned. He wanted to say why his father couldn't do his own work. But restrained himself when he heard a whisper of Jackson's fear.

*Why did he have to die? It should have been me? I should have been able to kill that bear.*

Pitch was stunned by Jackson's fears, but Jackson didn't seem to notice. "I have to take care of the fields and the sheep and the hunting. I have to help provide for my family."

Pitch studied his younger brother. He's growing up so fast, too fast. He ponders on what Jackson said and tries to see his point of view. He didn't like it very much. "Fine, but I don't like."

"Of course you don't," Jackson huffed, teasingly. "You're the Boogieman. Work is beneath you." Pitch rolled his eyes. Oh, if only Jackson knew the type of work he does. "Are you going to stay or are you going home Koz?"

Pitch glanced at his brother, only now realizing that he managed to get out of his hold, closed the door, and was now taking out a bow and a bag fully of arrows from the closet. How he managed to do that so quickly, without him knowing, was beyond him. "I should probably get back. Who knows when those Guardians will attack again?"

Jackson frowned unhappily, but understood his brother's position. "Hopefully it won't be anytime soon." Jackson closes the door as he gathers his things for hunting and grabbed his shepherded crock. He turns to his brother, who was watching him silently. "Are you coming back tomorrow?"

Pitch smiles warmly, which is rare for him, at his brother. "Of course." He glances at the nightmare. "What are you going to call her?" Jackson's eyes farrowed for a moment.

"Night. Her name is Night." Night neighs in approval. "I think she likes it."

"She sure does," Pitch mused. Pitch walks towards a shadow in the living room. "If you need me, go to a shadow and call me."

"I will. Be safe."

"You too." Pitch walks into the shadow, feeling more alive then he had felt in centuries. he had to tell Emily the good news.
Chapter Summary

Valentine's Day

Jackson puts his matchmaking plan to action. Mother Nature comes to Burgess and helps her father create a barrier. Mother Nature attends the Valentine's Day picnic.

Valentine's Day had came a lot quicker than anyone thought. Many of the villagers were excited for the Valentine's Day picnic, especially a certain mischievous teenager. Pitch had to listen as Jackson went on and on about getting 'the couple' together. It was a very amusing sight.

Pitch had kept his promise to his brother and visited every morning and some nights when he had time, over the last couple of weeks. He talked and entertained the two children during the night before Sanderson's sand could put them to sleep.

Pitch was getting anxious that his battles with the Guardians were starting to get closer to Burgess. Pitch had used his time by making many nightmares, a lot more then he usually made. He managed to station about two dozen nightmares around the village just in case those wretched Guardians decided to attack.

He knew he must have alerted the Guardians with his recent activities in the village. Sure he managed to hold them back for now, but they were getting to close. He couldn't really keep them out of this village without giving away his true purpose. In truth, after he found Jackson he was in high spirits and fought twice as hard to keep Jackson safe.

He smirked as he remembered their faces when they saw his army of nightmares. Let's just say that Jackson was very helpful when he gave his input on improving his designs of his newest nightmares. In fact these nightmares were more sturdy and durable then the previous ones and was able to go head to head against the Guardians, especially North and that wrenched pooka. He loved having his brother back in his life again.

"Father?" Pitch smiles warmly as his daughter exited from the forest near his lair. Emily Jane Pitchiner, or as the humans know her as Mother Nature, was the spinning image of her mother. Emily had long, flowing black hair that reached passed her lower back. She wore a beautiful green gown, but he knew that she could change it at will. Grey-greenish eyes stared at him in question and warmth. "I came as soon as I got your nightmares. Is it true? Did you really find Jackson?"

Pitch had tried to send a few nightmares to his daughter, but the Guardians had cornered them and destroyed them without a second thought. With the help of two very clever, very upset, children, together they hatched up a plan to get in contact with his daughter. He was thrilled when the two suggested they make two troops. The first was a large group of nightmares to distract all of the Guardians, while they were busy a smaller group of three nightmares would go and inform Mother Nature. It worked like a charm.

"Yes, I have." He reached out a hand for her to grasp. "Come." She grasps his hand and they both walk into a shadow. Pitch and Emily exit through the shadow of a small cottage's hallway. Emily gives him a questioning look as Pitch guides her to the kitchen. "Give them a minute," he tells his daughter. "Flee should be coming back from school and Jackson should be back from his hunting."
"Oh?" She said with a raised eyebrow. "May I ask why Jackson is hunting and not in school as well?"

"The schools weren't up at the time," Pitch said with a shrug. "Kids his age are required to work in the fields and support the family, or get married and settle down." Pitch spoke the last part in distaste. He really didn't like the humans customs of forcing the children of growing up too fast. Emily poised her lips between dislike and sadness.

"He should be in school," she said, her motherly instincts kicking in. "He is far to young for marriage, despite what my children believe. I will not tolerate ignorance."

Pitch chucked. "At least we agree on something."

"What's that suppose to mean father?" She asked with a raised eyebrow.

"Nothing," he said with a smooth smile. "It's just that we haven't seen eye to eye in ages."

"You tried to make Katherine you're Fearling Princess," she commented in a cold voice.

"You, jus assumed that," he said unfazed. He was used to his daughters temper. "I was using her as bait to destroy the Guardians."

"Seriously father?" Emily asked in exasperation. "Don't you think you were going a little too far?"

Pitch shrug. "Maybe a little," he said in agreement. "But you must understand that they were planning on using that weapon to destroy me in hopes of destroying fear. Idiots." Despite her displeasure of the way her father chose to react, she couldn't help but agree. The Guardians were fools if they thought they could destroy fear. That would destroy the balance. And everyone knew that it was her job to preserve the balance, whether she remained neutral or not.

"You do have a point father." They entered the living room and made themselves comfortable. "As much as I hate it, MiM is just as much fault as the Guardians are." She glanced at him. "If I recall it was MiM's idea to send the Guardians and Nightlight after you tried to give every children nightmares. How is that going by the way?" She asked as she moved her hair to the side, away from her face.

"Good as it can ever be," Pitch said with a sigh. "The Guardians make it difficult, but I've managed." Emily gave him a sympathetic look. "Though I'm worried that might recent activity might bring them here."

"You're worried they might go after Jackson?" Emily frowned at this. The Guardians were blind fools, even she could see that.

"Yeah, I am." Pitch runs his hand through his hair. "You remember what happened when they found out you were my daughter." She snorted at that. She certainly did remember that. The fools. "Jackson might still be a child, but I can't help but worry about them using him to get to me. Those fools will do anything to defeat me."

Emily's face twisted in distaste, eyes narrowing coldly. "Yes, father. I understand you concerns. Learning you have a daughter is one thing, but finding out that you have a younger brother is something totally different." She paused in thought. "MiM and his Guardians are blind to the truth. Believing that anyone related to you is bad. Bunnymund still hates you and so does Nicholas." Pitch scoffed at this. "But if they think I'm going to let them get within five feet of Jackson," she smile cruelly. "They are sadly mistaken."
Pitch burst into laughter. "You my daughter might be more crueler then me."

Emily smiles brightly. "I learned from the best."

"Indeed."

"Koz, is that you?" Pitch and Emily look toward the door as Jackson enters with five rabbits and a basket of berries.

Jackson enters the house with the smile. He had done good today. They would be eating good for the next couple of days, then again Kozmotis tends to bring lots of food for them and clothing for them to wear. He blinks as he hears a female voice. He almost dropped the basket he was holding when he recognized the voice. Tears began to sting his eyes when he was right. In the living room, sitting next to his brother was Emily.

"Emily!" Jack puts his caught on the table before rushing to hug Emily tightly. "Oh my gosh! You're here! You're finally here!" Emily smiles warmly as she returns the hug.

"Oh, Jackson. I'm so glad your safe. How have you been?"

"Good!" Jackson said as he pulled away. "Are you coming to the picnic with us?"

Emily looked at her father, who shrugged. "I guess, but no one will see me."

Jackson smirks. "Does it really matter? Me and Flee will see you and it would be nice to have some company since Koz can't go in the light." Jackson smiles innocently as Kozmotis glares at him. "What? You know it's true. Don't lie!"

Emily laughs as Jackson continues to play innocent, while her father glares at him. "I'll have you know that I am very busy. These Guardians are getting too close and I don't plan on given them the chance to attack me at this village." Jackson pales at the mention of the Guardians.

"How close are they? Are they going to attack us?" He asked worriedly.

Emily places a comforting hand on his shoulder. "Don't worry, Jackson. The Guardians will not harm you or Flee. I will help put up a protective barrier if I must."

Jackson looked at her in question. "You can do that?"

"Of course," Emily said brightly. "Isn't that right father?"

"Umm…yes…" Pitch said, still taken aback that Emily suggested the barrier before he could ask.

"It's settle then. But we will work out the details later. Where is your sister?" Emily asked.

"She should be-"Jackson began to say before he was interrupted by his sister's voice.

"Jack, I'm back! And Jamie is with me!"

"Over here Flee!" Jackson turn away from his brother and niece and walks towards his sister and soon to be boyfriend.

"Hey, Jackson. Ready for the picnic?"

"You bet!" Jackson's eyes twinkled in mischief. "This is going to be fuunnn!"
Flee gave him a pointed look. "You're not planning on pranking the Barkin siblings, are you?"

"Whatever gave you that idea?" Jackson asked innocently.

"I know you," Flee replied.

"You could always help me," Jackson said with a grin.

"And get killed by them?" She shrieked. "You're on your own."

"You're losing," Jackson said cheerfully. "You should go get ready. Mom will be back soon and then we will leave." Flee smiled and walked past them to go to her room. Jackson grabbed Jamie's arm and dragged him to the kitchen. "Come on we have to talk."

Pitch smiled as he watched the exchange between the three children. He held himself from laughing as Jackson dragged the poor kid to the kitchen to tell his long-awaited speech that he prepared days for.

"Am I missing something?" Emily asked.

"Jackson's been planning weeks on this lecture for the younger boy." Pitch smirked. "This will be very amusing."

Emily was confused for a moment until she listened to the two boys' conversation. Emily shook her head when she realized that Jackson was playing matchmaker. Oh this was amusing.

Several hours later the Overlands, Bennetts, and Mother Nature reached their picnic area. Everyone in the village had their own little groups for the picnic and were conversing among themselves. The girls were busy setting up the picnic area, while Jackson continued to 'talk' to Jamie. Jamie was looking nervous the more Jackson talked about what he planned on doing later.

"You sure she'll like me?" Jamie asked for the tenth time that day.

"Of course, I'm sure." Jackson gave a confident smirk. "Would I ever trick you?"

"Yes, you do it a lot." Jackson laughed sheepishly.

"Well, yeah. I guess you're right. But I'm serious this time." Jamie sighed, knowing that it was either this or risk Jackson telling his sister instead.

"Fine, you win. When do I give her the flower?" Jamie glanced in Flee's direction.

"That's up to you kiddo. You could do it now or you can do it when you two are alone. I can personally distract the adults while you do this."

"Later sounds good," he said with a sigh of relief. "But aren't you doing your prank later?" Jackson smiles mischievously.

"Yep! It's going to be fuuunn. It will keep them busy for a while." Jamie laughed. No matter what was going on, Jackson always seems to make people smile.

"Jackson, don't change. Don't ever change."

Despite being invisible to everyone, Mother Nature was having a wonderful time. The picnic was
wonderful, even if she didn't eat, but it was beautiful nonetheless. She kept an eye out for the three children as the adults conversed. She smiled warmly as Jackson pranked two older boys. How on earth he managed to get them covered in feathers was beyond her. The wind blew softly as she laughed. She know who Jackson got his mischievous side from and it wasn't from her father that's for sure.

Jackson was laughing as the mad boys chased him. The adult on the other hand had mix feelings. Some were smiles and shaking their heads at the scene, others were laughing along with the children, while others scoffed at the scene and mumbled for Jackson to act his age.

She rolled her eyes at this. Jackson wouldn't be Jackson if he was anything but mischievous. With a smile she send the wind to help Jackson in his play. The wind was more then happy to help. She wanted to play with the child. The child might be Pitch Black's brother, but he was also Mother Nature's uncle. So in right, the boy was to be protected and played with. The child was very interesting in Wind's eyes, if she had any.

While Wind went to play with the child, Mother Nature noticed the two child walking away in the distance. She raised any eyebrow wondering what Flee and Jamie were up to, but she didn't dwell on it. Her father was near by to watch them if something was to arise.

Pitch watched with a smile of his own as Jackson, with the help of Night, dumped feathers on top of the two boys. A few nightmares in the shadows neighed at this. They were clearly amused by this. Over the weeks Pitch noticed his increase in power. He was able to make nightmares more rapidly, in addition to making nightmares that were able to move around during the day. But that was only because of Jackson's powers. Jackson's powers were coming along nicely too, Pitch mused to himself. In time he would be able to make his own creatures as he sees fit. Emily did say that when he was older she wanted to offer him a position as her new Winter Spirit. It would be about time she found a replacement for Old Man Winters. He had dies how long ago?

Pitch was snapped out of his thoughts as a nightmare told him that two children were entering the woods. Pitch traveled through the shadows to see who. Pitch wasn't surprised when he found Flee and Jamie talking. He stayed hidden, knowing that it was part of Jackson's plan. He watched with an amused smile as the boy shifted from foot to foot awkwardly.

"I've known you for a long time and I love hanging out with you. You don't have to feel the same way, but I like you more then just a friend. I was hoping maybe you would let me take you out for dinner tonight at my families cottage. If you want."

Flee looked at him with wide eyes, but she smile nonetheless. "I like you too Jamie. I would love to go to dinner with you."

Jamie was shocked when Flee suddenly hugged him. But he smiled when she said yes. "Great! I'll come by before supper then. We should probably head back," he told her after they separated. "I'm worried Jackson might have overdone it this time."

Flee laughed. "No one can stop the King of Pranks. Those two are no match for him."

"True, he is good with plans."

"What you mean?" Flee asked as the walked back to the chaos that Jackson started.

"He was the one to help me ask you out. I probably would have waited until next year if it wasn't for him."
Flee blinked at him before laughing again. "So this was his plan all the long. I should have known he had an alternative motive."

Jamie chuckled as well. "Maybe, but that's Jackson for you." Flee nodded as they continued to walk out of Pitch's line of sight. Well, things turned out a lot better then he thought. Pitch turned to a nightmare that was trying to get his attention. He glanced at it when he noticed that his daughter was behind him.

She smiled at him. "They make a cute couple."

"That they are." Pitch gave a worried look when he realized that she wasn't with Jackson. "Is there something wrong? Is Jackson okay?"

"He's fine father," Emily said with a small laugh. "I have Wind looking out for him. She seems to take an instant liking to him."

"Really?" The four winds were not always the most friendliest of spirits. Even he didn't dare to upset one. It was a surprise to see Wind take a liking to his brother so quickly. "Did she have a reason?"

Emily shrugged, still uncertain herself. "She said it was a feeling or something."

Pitch nodded. "I see. Was there something you needed?"

"The barrier." Pitch frowned a bit.

"Right, which one should we make?" He asked. "Jackson needs to be protected, but I don't want to attract them either."

"How about a non-magic barrier?" She said thoughtfully. "They will be able to enter and exit, but their magic will be cutoff within the barrier if they are seen as a threat towards Jackson."

"Alright," Pitch said with a protective gleam in his eyes. "The Guardians are going to be for a surprise if they ever get near him."

A powerful pulse of magic was felt instantly. They all were curious about what their mother was doing. If she was summoning a barrier, then something must be up. They were curious what moron upset Mother Nature this time. They all sensed the magic of protection, even when they were in their required locations to spread their seasons.

It was then when they felt it. Mother Nature was summoning them to the palace for a meeting in a few hours. Something must be up if mother wanted them. What was going on?

Bunnymund shivered as powerful spring magic pulsed through his Warren. Whoa, nelly! The Sheila sure was mad! He was glad he wasn't the object of Mother Nature's anger. A mad sheila was never a good thing, especially one that can control the natural balance of the planet. Maybe he should tell North about this. MiM knows what disaster can happen when a very angry Mother Nature is on the loose.
Jackson and the older kids perform for the kids. Pitch finds a tooth fairy in his lair.

The sound of the children's laughter was heard as Jackson and a few other older kids prepared their 'stage' for the main event. Jackson had begged Pitch for clothing for their storytelling and some props to go with it. Pitch was curious on what they were for, so he willingly gave Jackson the stuff he wanted.

Pitch watched his brother from the shadows as Jackson handed handmade robes to the children and told them what they were going to be doing. The younger children were laughing as they sat on the ground to watch the performance.

The crowd grew silent when Jackson faced his audience of children. "Our story begins in a lost kingdom." Two girls with brown hair walk up to the stage in blue furry dresses, facing the crowd with baskets of flowers. "It was the Princess's coronation. Elle was the oldest of the two and was to be queen. Everyone was happy and excited."

The two girls walked around as he spoke. The performer playing Elle stood tall and proud, smiling as she faced the audience. The two girls walked together for a bit before splitting up. The two performers stopped at the edge of the stage, each one throwing flowers everywhere.

"All except her sister, Linda." The performer placed a scowl on her face and positioned her hands on her hips. "Linda was jealous of her sister. She believed she was more capable of being queen then her sister."

The children gasped and whispered, "Oh no."

"Linda had a plan. She found a book that described of a potion that can make her sister blind."

"She can't rule if she can't see. Mwahahaha!"

Pitch smiled as the children booed at the 'evil' sister. He watched as Jackson continued on with the story. More children came forth playing the roles of the Priest, Knights, the Peasants and Prince Jack, which of course was played by Jackson. Pitch was very amused by their performance as the prince managed to stop Princess Linda and saved the day.

"And they all lived..." Jackson began, pause for effect.

"Happily Ever After!" the children finished with cheers and giggles.

Jackson and the other five older kids smiled and bowed to their audience. "Thank you! Thank you! You've all been a wonderful audience!" Jackson thanked as the parents came to collect their children. "Thank you for watching our play and don't forget we are performing the story of the Dark Ages tomorrow night. Goodnight!"

Pitch blinked as Jackson mentioned the Dark Ages. Why was Jackson going to perform that tomorrow night? He watched the crowd as they dispersed. Jackson was happily talking to the
parents that thanked him and the other older kids for babysitting their kids and gave them a few coins for their trouble.

Jackson walked home with a smile on his face. Flee was talking nonstop about the play. He smiled as Kozmotis appeared next to them with one of his horses.

"How you liked the play?"

"It was interesting," his brother replied. "You do this all the time with the village kids?"

"Yup," Jackson and Flee replied.

"The adults always go to the town meetings around that time. Many of them have kids so we babysit them. It was actually my idea to do this performs three years ago."

"Hmm," was Kozmotis response.

"So how's your battles coming?"

"Better," Kozmotis said with a smile. "I managed to defeat the little fairies and their queen. The new nightmares are working like wonders."


Jackson nodded while Night neighed in approval. The little nightmare horse had grown a bit since Kozmotis gave it to him two months ago. Night was now slightly bigger than his palm. He wondered just how big his little nightmare will grow. That was an interesting thought.

They walked the rest of the way to their cottage. Jackson glanced at his brother as they all entered the house. "Hi mom!"

Ms. Overland had brown curly hair and light brown eyes. She wore an apron over her dress. "You two are just in time for supper."

"Yeah!" Jackson and Flee yelled as they ran to the table.

Pitch smiled at his younger brother as they ran to the table. He waited for his brother to go into the kitchen to gather some bowls before he announced that he was leaving. Jackson gave him a quick glance in acknowledgement before returning his attention back to his mother. With a smile still on his face, Pitch entered the closest shadow and shadowed back to his lair.

Pitch walked out of the shadow and entered his lair when he felt something. He narrowed his eyes. Something was here. He blended in with the shadows and commanded his nightmares to find the intruder. Hundreds of nightmares ran out of the shadows and started their assault. The sound of hooves and neighs echoed throughout the caverns of his lair. But what made him growl in irritation was the sound of a chirp. Oh of all the...

"Master!" Pitch came out of the shadows as his favorite nightmare, Onyx, appeared with one of Toothiana's fairies. The thing chirped angrily at him.

Pitch glared angrily at it. How it found his lair, he didn't know. But he wasn't going to let it live to tell. "Destroy her."
The screams of the fairy echoed as his nightmares first tore the fairy's wings to prevent it from flying away. After that was done they tore at her feathers and flesh, leaving a bloody mess in it wake. Pitch stared at it emotionlessly as the dead body of the fairy laid in a pool of blood and feathers.

"Onyx, gather some of others and triple the guard of the lair and surrounding village. Make sure no other unwanted guests are found."

"Yes, Master," she replied.

Pitch turned to a second group of nightmares. "The rest of you, gather nightmares. If you see any of the Guardians or their helpers drive them away from the village. Attack them. Destroy them, if you can. Divert their attention to a different village or country. I do not want them anywhere near Burgess."

"Yes, Master," they replied before disappearing into the shadows. Pitch sighed and glared at the dead fairy. He moved his hand and summoned black sand to transform it into a Fearling. When he was done the the blood was gone and all that was left was a black and grey mini tooth fairy.

"Come," he ordered. "We have much to do." It chirped and obeyed as they shadowed away to the study room for much needed planning against the Guardians. They were getting too close, especially with Easter one month way. They had much to do.
Night

Chapter Summary

Night loves her master. She follows him around and helps him communicate with her

Night loved her master. Master was nice. Master was kind. Master was fun to be with. Night had the best time of her life when she helped him with those bad humans. The prank was so much fun. She laughed as she followed her master. Master was so funny.

Her ears flicked back and further as she watched the play. Master was a good actor and storyteller. He was so funny when he played Prince Jack. It was like he was made for the role.

Night stayed close behind her master when Creator appeared. It was always nice to see Creator. Night entered the house and watched her master have supper with his family. Creator left soon before but that was expected. Creator had to plan his next move against the Guardians, the bad spirits.

Night followed Master when he finished dinner and cleaned the dishes. Night landed on his bed and neighed at him again. Jackson pulled the covers after blowing out the candle. Night snuggled next to Master. Flee had passed out the moment she hit the pillow.

"Master," she called.

Master stared at her in confusion. He didn't understand her. "What is it Night?"

She licked his nose. "Master," she repeated. He frowned.

"I wish I knew what you were saying," he whispered. "Is there a way I can understand you?" Night's ears flicked to the right as she thought. Creator made her, so it was natural that they understood each other. However, she was made for Master. There had to be a way for him to understand her. She licked his nose again and neighed softly when an idea came to her.

Jackson laughed as Night licked his nose. It ticked. He blinked when he saw black sand floating in front of his face. Night neighed again and gestured to the sand. He wondered. Jackson touched the sand and was amazed on how it swirled around his hand. The black sand began to merge with his powers and fused together, creating a pattern of a snowflake on his arm.

"Wow."

"Master?"

Jackson's eyes widen. Did he just hear Night? "Night?"

"You can hear me now?" she asked.

Jackson nodded. "This is cool."

"Yes it is, Master," she said as she licked his nose.
"Do you have to call me Master?"

Night blinked at him as she snuggled closer under the covers. "But you are Master, Master."

Jackson sighed as he saw Night drift to sleep. Night was obviously not going to stop calling him master. He yawned. ***Well, I guess I can't do anything about that.*** He smiled as he pulled the small mare closer to him before joining her in sleep.
Jackson and his friends go search for eggs. Bunnymund sees Night and tries to destroy her.

It was a bright and sunny day. The sun was just rising. The wind was blowing softly, caressing the leaves and spreading the scent of the flowers. The clouds parted, promising a rain free day. All the conditions were perfect for a wonderful Easter hunt. All the Burgess children had prepared for this day. Everyone was excited for the chance to try and see the Easter Bunny. Well, almost everyone was happy.

Pitch groaned. He hated that he had to let Bunnymund into the town. He had spotted the damn pooka the moment he exited out of his hole. He sneered as he stayed by the sidelines within the shadows.

The Guardians have been a huge problem. They were getting too close and now they were in the village. Oh, how he loathed that pooka. He hated him so much that he wanted to annihilate his very existence.

Pitch sighed as his nightmare whispered their reports. The Guardian was hiding his eggs. Pitch smirked slightly though. He doubted the pooka had enough time to make so many. By the looks of it, he only had two dozen or so. Pitch frowned. Jackson and Flee would be very disappointed if they can't find enough for the kids. Well, he can't have his own family upset. Jackson deserves better than that.

"Onyx."

"Yes, Master?" she asked as she appeared next to him.

"Gather NightStorm and Phoenix and go and create two baskets of Easter eggs. Make sure there is enough for every kid in the village. I know for a fact that Jackson would give it away if there is not enough for everyone."

"Yes, Master. We will place it in their room when we are done," she paused. Her tail flicked to the right and her head snapped in that direction. "Master, the rabbit is near the Prince's location!"

Oh no.

He was terribly sore from last nights battle. He barely got any sleep and the magic that flowed through the ground and trees weren't helping much. He was curious why a warning barrier was in place. But he didn't put much thought into it. There were kids nearby and he was horribly behind schedule.

Bunnymund gently motioned his Googies to their hiding places in bushes and behind trees with good cover from the grass. He hid behind a tree as he saw a group of children. One of the ankle-biters seemed to be sixteen or seventeen years old. Bunnymund smiled at the older ankle-biter as
he told the younger ones about the egg hunt and what spots they should look. The eight younger ankle-biters were very excited to start their search.

Bunnymund remained in his hiding place as the ankle-biters split up and searched the area. The corner of his mouth twitched into a smile. He really did love moments like this. Human children were so filled with hope and life. It was sad that these weren't his best Googies though.

"Jack look!" Bunnymund heard a young girl yell. Bunnymund decided to look in their direction as he opened a hole in the ground. However, he came up short with a gasp when he saw one of Pitch's nightmares trailing right behind the two ankle-biters.

Bunnymund reached for his boomerang in his holster. He didn't know why Pitch was attacking children during the day or attacking this village in general. But he did know that nightmare had to be destroyed. The ankle-biters were in danger.

Bunnymund glared at the nightmare. The horse shaped nightmare looked young. It was about the size of a baby horse that he seen humans ride on. Pitch must have just made it. Though why he didn't make it a regular size like the others, he wasn't sure. Nor did he care.

Bunnymund moved his arm back. He was ready to throw his boomerang when something strange happened. Bunnymund found himself being swirled around by magic. He grunted as he felt his energy and magic being drained.

_Cricky! What is going?

And in that moment Bunnymund found himself surrounded by eight of Pitch's nightmares. Bunnymund was in more trouble than he thought. He didn't see Pitch anywhere, but that didn't stop the nightmares from attacking.

Bunnymund barely had time to dodge as he was attacked. Usually he would be able to take them, but now was not one of those times. Bunnymund grunted as one rammed him further into the woods. Bunnymund tried to defend himself. But with every second he was here, he felt his strength getting weaker and weaker. If he stayed any longer he would have been killed by the sand horses.

Bunnymund managed to avoid one of the horse's attacks and dived into his hole back to the Warren, closing it behind him. Bunnymund hated it, but he had no choice. He had to retreat and return with the others another day.

He frowned at the eggs. He and Flee only managed to find five eggs. You would have thought there would be more. Jackson studied the egg in his hand with a frown.

"The Easter Bunny couldn't have done this," Jamie replied as he studied the two eggs he found. The other kids agreed.

Jackson might have to agree. The eggs looked like they were rushed. The eggs were half finished and smudged in some places. The eggs didn't have a pretty picture of flowers or other pretty spring picture. Jackson knew the Easter Bunny was real. He was a Guardian and one of his brother's enemies, but…

He sighed as the second group came back. There were disappointed looks on their faces. Some of them didn't have any eggs. Jackson looked at his with a frown. How could the Easter Bunny do this? Didn't he care them?

He could tell from their faces that they were doubting the Easter Bunny. He might only have five,
but… "Here."

They looked at him with shock. "But, Jackson, that's yours," a young girl with blond hair replied.

"You take it, Lillian, and share it with the others. I don't mind."

"Thank you so much," Lillian and a few others replied.

Jackson nodded. "Why don't we come back and search a different area in two hours. Maybe the Easter Bunny will come back." Some of the kids looked uncertain but agreed anyway. It would be fun to look.

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Pitch saw the disappointed looks on the children's faces when they decided to take a break. Jackson plastered a cheerful smile on this face, but he knew Jackson was disappointed too. He was right to gather his own baskets for him.

He waited until Jackson was in hearing distance before he talked to him. "Are you okay?"

Jackson sighed, keeping an eye on the disappointed children. "There weren't that many. They couldn't be from the Easter Bunny. They seemed rushed."

"I'm sure he didn't have enough time," Pitch commented.

"Koz?" Pitch looked at him. He frowned at the troubled look on his features. Night began nuzzling his cheek.

"What's wrong Jackson?"

"I saw him," Jackson smiled softly at his sister as she held his hand. "I heard a noise when we found an egg. When I looked up I saw him with a boomerang."

"He could have hit us," Flee mumbled fearfully.

Pitch stiffened as he held back a curse. Were they scared now? He was afraid of this. "I'm glad your nightmares saved us though, so thank you."

Pitch nodded. As much as he hated the Guardians, he couldn't stand the sadness and fear he was getting from them. He bit his lip as he thought about a way to help them.

"You know he's not really a rabbit."

The two children looked at him. "Huh?"

"He has an Australian accent and is very tall too," He smirked at the children. "He's more of a Kangaroo than a Bunny."

Jackson barked out a laugh. "A kangaroo?"

"That thing doesn't have a pouch though," Flee commented, but did laugh along with her brother and Night.

"But an Easter Kangaroo?" Jackson continued to laugh, not caring who saw.

Ah, much better.
Jackson was dumbfounded. On his bed were two baskets of Easter eggs. Each egg were beautifully decorated with horses and rabbits. Many of them were plain, but they sparked when light touched them. Jackson wasn't sure how, but they did.

"Are those for us?" Flee asked. He nodded. Flee smiled and looked through them. "Looks like we don't need the Easter Kangaroo. There's more than enough for us and the others."

Flee turned to him with a smile. Looks like Easter wasn't so bad after all. Who needs the Easter Bunny when they have family.

"Let's go to the others," he told her as he grabbed one of the baskets. Flee grabbed her basket and ran out of the room. Jackson followed, but stopped near a shadow. He stared at it for a moment before a grateful smile formed on his face.

"I don't know how you did it, but thank you. Thank you for saving Easter for us." Jackson looked at the eggs. "I know you are fighting the Guardians and that many might see you as evil and stuff." He looked back up with tears in his eyes.

"But you're not. You care about me and Flee. You care about my friends and this village. You might hate them, but to me you are a true Guardian. You're my Guardian, Koz."

Jackson turned away from the shadow and began to walk away. "I love you."
Are the Guardians Real?

Chapter Summary

Pitch goes rabbit hunting. The Burgess kids question their belief. Jackson tells his mother about brother.

Tears ran down his face as Jackson continued to talk to the shadow. He smiled softly as his nightmares gathered to do their missions.

"I love you too."

Pitch wiped away the tears that gathered on his cheeks. He was glad his brother was happy, but was he really a Guardian? Did he deserve it?

Pitch shook his head and stared at his growing nightmares. He had a certain rabbit to hunt. And attacking the Warren sounded like a good testing ground for his new nightmares.

The beautiful grounds were lush with vegetation and waterfalls. The air was warm and smelled like Spring. Pitch hated Spring. He glared at the stupid eggs that tried to go into the tunnels or scattered around.

"Pathetic," he murmured under his breath as he pick one up. The egg was definitely not one of the pooka's best. He wouldn't be surprised if he lost a few believers on the way. Then again it wouldn't matter anyway. If they lost their believers then they would disappear.

Hmm, that brought a pleasant thought.

"Pitch!" Pitch ducked a boomerang.

"How horrible we are today," he taunted. Bunnymund glared at him. Oh this was going to be fun.

"Wow!" Lillian squealed when she saw all the colorful eggs.

"These look so much better than the one the Easter Bunny left!" Becky chimed in. Becky was a brunette with hazel eyes. She and Lillian were among the youngest of their small group, being eight-years-old.

"Where you find these?" Jamie asked as he sat next to Flee, completing their circle of fifteen.

"Jack's brother delivered it," Flee answered as she helped divide the eggs.

"Brother?" everyone asked in confusion. "I thought you were adopted?"

"I am," Jackson replied with a shrug. "Koz found me about three months ago. He heard about our Easter hunt and decided to make these for us."

"That's nice of him," Ellen said and her sister, Lina, nodded.
"Is he here on business?" Lina asked as she munched on her egg.

Jackson wasn't sure if battling the Guardians and protecting the village counted. But he couldn't say that to them. "Yeah, you could say that."

"What does he do?" Lillian asked, her blue eyes shining in happiness.

"He raises horses." Well, that wasn't a lie per se.

"That's cool," Jamie spoke up. "He's far from home though."

Jackson shrugged in response. "So what do you guys want to hear tonight?"

"Let's hear about the Guardians again!" Lillian and Becky suggested.

"I don't know," Caroline, another brunette, replied. Some of the other kids nodded in agreement.

"Why not?" Eli, a boy with black hair, asked.

"Well, we played that story so much. I don't know about you guys, but I'm kind of tired of performing that story."

"It has gotten a little old," Jonas murmured. "It's a cool story and all, but I'm kind of sick of it."

"Beside it's not like they're real," Lina added.

The younger kids frowned, wanting to protest. But after today, they too were having thoughts. "They are real, right Jackson?"

Jackson bit his lip at the eight younger kids. They were all so young. They didn't deserve not to believe in the Guardians, even if they tried to kill him and Flee. "That all depends on what you believe in."

"What you mean?" Lillian asked with confused eyes. Jackson ignored the looks the other older kids were giving him.

"Tell me," he said with a smile. "Do you believe that everything brings new life? Do you believe in the lessons our God did for us?" They nodded. "Do you trust in his miracles and that he was resurrected on this day?" They nodded. "Then yes, I believe. I believe Easter is all about bringing hope to others. Even it he is a six foot Kangaroo with an Australian accent."

"Serious Jackson!" Ellen laughed with the others. Jackson laughed with them. He knew his friends didn't believe anymore and that the majority of them were doubting their belief.

"Though it is a nice perspective to look at," Jamie commented. Flee nodded.

"True," Caroline agreed. "Although I'm surprised that you actually remember that stuff. You usually don't listen to the Priest."

He struggled. "I don't, but mom never stops talking about it." Caroline gave him an understanding smile.

"What about the Boogieman?" Eli asked.

"And the Tooth Fairy?" Becky asked.
"She's not real," Lillian told her best friend. "I lost a tooth yesterday and she never came. It was still there when I woke up yesterday."

"Same with me," Eli mumbled.

Jackson frowned. *The Tooth Fairy never came? What are these Guardians doing? I know they are fighting against my brother, but are they so hateful that they are forgetting us?*

"The Boogieman?" Ellen asked with a raised brow. "Well, he's no Guardian, but I guess I believe in him." She shrug when the kids looked at her. "I mean he gives nightmares to teach us. I doubt those stories about him are true thought. We need nightmares to stay safe and all."

"He's still scary," a blond girl named Amy whispered.

"Don't worry," Jackson said soothingly. "I bet he means well. He just wants to make sure you stay safe in dangerous situations."

"That's right!" Flee added.

Broken eggs littered the grounds of the Warren. Pitch might have won this battle, but he has not won the war.

Bunnymund felt the pain in his chest of all the ankle-biters that were losing their belief in him. It wasn't much, but it still hurt, even if it was a few dozen of them. He sighed as he escaped his home and traveled to North's Workshop.

He hated the cold. He shivered as his hole opened from the snow covered ground of the North Pole. He ran as fast as his tired body could take him. Thankfully the Workshop wasn't that far.

Bunnymund huffed tiredly as he knocked on the door. However, the events of the day finally caught up to him. He held onto the wall as he began to sway. When the door was opened by one of North's yetis, Bunnymund managed a "Hey Mate..." and then everything went black.

"Jackson, were all these clothing and eggs come from?" Jackson shifted from foot to foot as his mother questioned him. What could he possibly tell his mother without sounding crazy?

"You might think I'm crazy if I tell you."

She sighed tiredly. "Jackson Overland, nothing you say will make me think you're crazy. Now tell me where you got this stuff. You certainly didn't get this from the village. We don't even have this stuff here."

Jackson sighed and sat down at the table. "My brother." His mother almost choked on some water that she was drink while she waited for a reply.

"I'm sorry. Did you just say your brother?"

"Yeah." Her eyes grew wide in shock.

"Your birth family? Here? Why didn't you tell me?"

"It's just my brother and his daughter," Jackson replied as he fidgeted in his seat. "And they have been here."
"What? When?"

"Well, that's the thing. You can't exactly see them."

She blinked in confusion. "What? I don't understand."

"My brother was changed. His name is Kozmotis Pitchiner. But today he is called Pitch Black."

"But...isn't that the Boogieman?"

"Yeah and before you start think I'm crazy. I want you to meet someone. Night!"

Night shadowed next to him. His mother looked at him in confusion. "Now you need to believe that there is a baby horse next to me."

"Oooookaaaay," she replied in confusion and uncertainty. His mother looked over his shoulder with a raised eyebrow. "I don't..." she paused and blinked her eyes. She rubbed her eyes when she saw a vague outline of a horse. When Night finally came into view she gasped.

Jackson smiled. "Mom his is Night. Koz made her for me."

"Hello, Master's mother."

"She said hello."

"Wow, I mean...oh my."
Nightmare Sand

Chapter Summary


Chapter Notes

Hello A03 fans! I would like to thank you for reading and pressing the little heart at the bottom. My plan for the next few chapters are to have four or five or more before Christmas Eve and Day. I have an outline down but I would love to hear what you guys want to see between Pitch and Jack (before he dies of course). And on that note, enjoy!

Everything hurts. His arms. His legs. His back. His head. Everything hurts. He felt off too. He felt empty in his chest. It was as if the children's hope were gone. Or was that because of this lack of energy. Where did it all go?

He moved his fingers and felt something soft. He wasn't at the Warren. He was certain of that. Why wasn't he at the Warren? He had to direct his Googies through the tunnels. He focused on his nose next. The air smelled of sugar cookies, wood, and fur.

He groaned as he fought to regain consciousness. Why was he at the North Pole? He had Googies to deliver.

"Easy old friend," a familiar booming voice spoke when he tried to move. North? Bunnymund slowly opened his eyes. The room was thankfully not very bright, so it took less time for his eyes to adjust. Bunnymund focused his vision on the big man in front of him. North's blue eyes was watching him in concern. "How you feeling?"

"Tired," Bunnymund groaned softly. His throat hurt like hell. How long has he been out? North must have sense his discomfort, since he reached for a glass of water and lifted his head to help him drink. "Thanks mate," he said, thankful for the cool water.

"You are very welcome, my friend. Mind telling me what happened last week."

Bunnymund blinked. "Nah, mate. I was attacked yesterday." A week? No that can't be right.

North frowned. "Bunny, Phil found you at the door when you passed out. You've been out for a week now." Bunnymund felt he had just been hit by a mallet. It had to be a lie. No way he slept that long.

"It can't be, mate! This is a joke right? I wasn't done delivering my Googies."
North looked at him sadly. "I am sorry."

Bunnymund closed his eyes. No.

Thunder viciously crackled in the air. The four winds moved together in anger feeling just as agitated as Mother Nature was. They had all felt it the moment it happened.

The end result: a very unhappy Mother Nature.

Emily Pitchiner was not happy. The protective energy she added to the barrier around Burgess warned her of the threat and the harm the child was in. If she hadn't been so busy she would have hunted the rabbit down with her father. But of course she was busy giving directions to her children for the seasonal shift.

Emily sat in her tree throne. She tapped her fingers on the armrest and waited. She gritted her teeth as she did so. Where was that blasted nightmare? She had to know what happened before she went to destroy that pooka.

_Screw MiM and his Guardians! If Jackson was hurt in any way, they will pay. They will pay dearly_, she thought darkly that would put her father to shame.

The trees whispered of a horse then. Whispering of the sand and the fear. Her father's messenger was here. About time.

Jackson had wanted to introduce his mother to his brother for months now. However, he never thought it would be this awkward. Jackson watched them from his hiding place (and by that he means the hallway) as he spied on them talking. Well, it would have been if there weren't huge gaps of silence in between. This was sooo boring.

Flee fidgeted next to him. She must have felt the tension too. Was it really that obvious? "Mother is clearly still in shock."

Jackson groaned. "Why are adults so complicated? It would be so much easier if she just asks him about himself and our family, instead of trying to come up with a gentler way to ask. She's being so complicated."

"No one can be as carefree as you, Jack."

Jackson shrugged as he continued to listen to the disaster known as adults' conversation. "I think we are better off playing with Night." Flee smiled.

"Let's go then." Flee spun around on her heels and headed towards their room. Jackson rolled his eyes and followed her.

"I understand this is a lot to take in Ms. Overland." Ms. Overland curled and uncurled her fingers around her tea cup. She had not expected any of this. Her baby boy coming from another world, Mr. Black's old job and turning into the Nightmare King, being in a war against the Guardians… Although they seemed ridiculous and just plain awful for causing the poor man so much grief. He was just doing his job, just like the rest of them.

"No, it's fine. I was just not expecting my baby boy to be from another world. Then again that thing he was in was not something I've seen before."
"The Hibernation Cradle," Pitch replied. "It's was made for escaping into another planet or to help those who were injured when we didn't have the resources at the time."

"Wish we had that," Ms. Overland said with a thoughtful look. "It could help when we get sick and are unable to get the healer. Many have died because of it you know."

"Don't you have medicine for that?" Pitch asked with a worried frown. Did he have to worry about his brother getting sick?

She sighed. "I'm afraid we don't have the resources for it. It's unknown to us and many have died already." She smiled slightly in hopes of calming him down. "Thankfully I have strong kids."

Pitch nodded. "That you do."

Another silence fell between them. Neither Pitch nor Ms. Overland knew what to ask next. There were so many things to ask and yet neither of them could figure out what to ask next.

"Tell me," it was Ms. Overland who broke the silence. "Are they a threat to my children?" Ms. Overland took a sip of her tea. "I overheard them when I went to check up on them. Flee was terrified that the Easter Bunny almost attacked them." She looked into his goldish-silver eyes. "Will they be harmed because of you being here?"

Pitch was taken aback by the statement. He expected it. He too had the same thought himself. But to actually hear it. To actually have those thoughts thrown in his face - it hurt quite a bit.

Ms. Overland must have saw his expression, since she gave him an apologetic smile. "I'm sorry. That came out wrong. What I meant was that these Guardians seemed to have it out for you? You are a very powerful man, Mr. Black, and to be able to fight them for this long is amazing. However, I'm just worried for their safely."

"I understand. I have been making preparations with my daughter to keep Jackson and Flee safe. We put up a barrier that can cut out the magic if Jackson is threatened. I also have some of my nightmare watching out for him." Pitch smiled slightly. "I can't always be here for...obvious reasons, but I also have several of my nightmares distracting the Guardians away from the village, for now anyway."

Ms. Overland smiled at him. "You put a lot of thought into this."

"I lost him once, I don't plan on losing Jackson again."

Ms. Overland reached out her hand and placed it on Pitch's grey one. "You won't," she said softly. "You and Jackson just found each other. If you play your cards right, I know you and Jackson will live a long happy life together." She lightly squeezed his hand. "I know it."

"Thank you, Ms. Overland. That means a lot."

"You are very welcome." She smiled. "And please call me Susanna."

"Alright, Susanna, and please call me Pitch."

She smiled at him. "Welcome to the family, Pitch Black."

"What happened old friend?" North asked his friend. Bunnymund sighed as he rested on the bed in the infirmary room. Tooth and Sandy were there waiting for an explanation as well.
"I saw a Nightmare in a small village. Pitch must have just made his new nightmare and I saw it near a two kids."

Tooth gasps. "Pitch is attacking the kids now?"

"I thought so too sheila. I tried to destroy it, but…"

"But, what?" North asked when he paused.

"Some weird magic started draining me. I could barely defend myself when more nightmares attacked me." He sighed sadly. "I barely made out of there alive, especially when Pitch attacked me at the Warren."

North and Tooth looked at each other in worry and shock. Pitch was getting more dangerous by the minute. They had to stop him. Tooth opened her mouth when five blizzards suddenly surrounded North's palace.

"What's going on?" North yelled as Phil came running in.

"What he say?" Tooth asked when she saw North go as pale as his white beard.

"Emily is here in the Globe Room. She is not happy."

"Oh dear." Toothiana covered her mouth with her hand, her eyes going wide in shock and worry. Bunnymund groaned. "What did we do to the sheila now?"

Jackson watched as his brother summoned black sand in his hand. It was really cool actually. The black sand seemed to have a life of its own as it moved around in Kozmotis's hand and comes together to become different shapes.

"Here, now you try." Jackson blinked as Kozmotis placed a small amount of black sand into his palm. Jackson blinked and looked at his brother.

"Go on," Kozmotis coaxed. Jackson returned his attention to the sand. He looked at it and tried to focus on the sand. Nothing happened. He frowned.

"You can do it Master," Night encouraged.

Jackson narrowed his eyes in concentration. He wanted the sand to move. He wanted the sand to move. He wanted the sand to move. While Jackson was focusing he didn't notice the snowflake mark on his arm starting to glow.

Pitch watched his Jackson as he tried to move the sand. He knew sand wielding was difficult but he knew Jackson could do it. He just needed to find the right outlet to channel the connection between him and the sand.

Pitch blinked when the mark on Jackson's arm started to glow. When did that get that? It wasn't to long after that when Jackson finally moved the sand into a small circle.

"I did it!"

Pitch smiled as Flee squealed with her brother. "That's so cool."

"Very good. I knew you could do it. Now with a little more practice you'll be able to make you
own nightmares or better yet, improve Night."

Jackson smiled brightly as he turned to Night. "You know Night. I think you would look cool with a big snowflake right here." Jackson gestured to the horse's side.

"And some pretty swirls," Flee added.

"Whatever you like Master," Night simply said to the excited children. Pitch rolled his eyes. This was going to be very interesting.
Belief Globe

Chapter Summary

Mother Nature traps the Guardians at their home and neutralizes their powers; Pitch prepares his army; light disappears on the globe

The winds roared in anger. They dared attempt to harm the child. They will face their wrath. The pooka will face judgment. It is Mother Nature's will. Mother Nature will not rest till the rabbit is slathered. They roared in anger as they created blizzards.

*More!* North Wind yelled. *We will not let them escape!*

*More!* East, South, and West yelled together. They moved faster. They combined their powers. They made five huge blizzards. They surround the Workshop, making sure none of the Guardians escaped Mother Nature's wrath.

They will learn what happens when you anger Mother Nature.

Mother Nature didn't hide her fury when she entered North's palace. She didn't stop the winds from creating blizzards outside. She didn't care. All she cared about was to make the Guardians pay, rather they knew it or not.

She glared at the beast when she appeared in the Globe Room. "BRING THEM TO ME YOU UNINTELLECTUAL BEAST! OR SO HELP ME, I WILL BRING BACK AN ICE AGE TEN TIMES MORE DEADLIER THAN BEFORE!"

Mother Nature watched as the beast retreated through the doors he entered. The beast didn't disappoint her either. Not even five minutes passed by when those fools entered. She scowled when the pooka didn't show up.

"Emily," Nicholas greeted cheerfully. "What can I do for you?"

"You DO NOT have the right to address me like that!" she growled, the wind blowing harder in her anger.

Nicholas face fell in uncertainty. "Well...I…"

"Mother Nature," Toothiana fluttered nervously. "What are you doing here in the North Pole?"

Mother Nature gritted her teeth as the building began to shake. "What am I doing here?" she asked in a voice that was as cold as her ice. "WHAT AM I DOING HERE?" The windows cracked as her anger escalated.

"Em-Mother Nature, please calm down!" Nicholas corrected himself as he tried to calm her down.

"I will not calm down you no good for nothing Guardians!" They flinched at her icy tone. "Where is that rabbit?"
Sanderson forms a Dreamsand bed above his head. Mother Nature growled. The Dreamsand changed into a question mark, an arrow, and then a rabbit.

"What do I want with that rabbit?" she asked, getting a nodded from the dreammaker. Her eyes narrowed threateningly. "Easter Day," she told them. "That damn pooka is going to die for threatening the child that is to be my future Head of Winter!

"Bunny, didn't threaten anyone," Toothiana denied in confusion. "He was attacked by Pitch."

"DON'T LIE TO ME GUARDIANS!" The screams of several yetis and toys breaking could be heard from the workshop. "I have a spell in place to protect the child. It tells me when he is threatened. And the pooka has definitely threatened him with his boomerang."

The Guardians didn't say anything about that comment. They looked confused and scared. Good, they should be.

"I am only going to say this once." The temperature dropped dramatically as the fire in the fireplace goes out. "If any harm comes to the child; if I see a scratch, a cut, one hair out of place, you won't have to worry about my father." The Guardians looked at each other in worry. "I will will hunt you down. I will bury your homes in an eternal winter and ice. I will have the earth and all of its elements eat and bury you alive." The four winds entered the room and surrounded her; obscuring the Guardians vision of her. "You will face the full wrath of nature!"

And then she was gone from their sight. But not before leaving a present behind.

Pitch sat on the edge of the bed, watching the two sleeping children. He smiled softly as they dreamed. Above Jackson's head was a Dreamsand of him and Jackson. Dreamsand Jackson was throwing a snowball at Dreamsand Pitch. Pitch shook his head at that. He glanced at Flee next. Above her head were all three of them and they were laughing. Dreamsand Jackson was telling a story. What he was telling, he wasn't sure.

Pitch brushed back a brown strand from Jackson's face as they continued to dream. Pitch stayed like that for a few more minutes, thinking about how peaceful Jackson looked, before heading home through the shadows.

He was still smiling when he shadowed into his lair. The Fearling Fairy chirped upon his return.

"All Nightmares you requested are really, Master."

"Thank you," Pitch said with a twitch of a smile. "Have them gather and…"

Pitch didn't finish his sentence when Onyx came stomping into the throne room. "Master!"

"What wrong, Onyx?" he asked when she stopped in front of him.

"The Globe Room," she told him. "Come!" She turned around and shadowed away. Curious on what was going on, he shadowed after her.

Pitch didn't find anything out of the ordinary when he exited out of the shadows. He raised his nonexistent eyebrow as Onyx stomped her hooves near his Belief Globe. Pitch walked to the globe and stared at it. He blinked as he registered what he was seeing.

Many white lights were going out. "What the?" Pitch looked at the area that he was in and noticed that the kids in Burgess were losing their belief in the Guardians, then again that was the pooka's
fault. His eyes wandered to other areas on the globe. More children were not believing. There had to be at least two dozen kids who didn't believe in the Guardians now.

Well, this was an interesting development.

"We're bloody trapped!" Bunnymund yelled for the tenth time as he tried to open up a hole. Nothing happened. Sandy and Tooth were unable to leave due to the five blizzards. All magical items (including their powers and North's Snow Globes) were unaccessible.

In other words: they are stuck at the North Pole. No magic. No help. And no way to escape.
Pitch is the Nightmare King. He does not make flower crowns. To bad his attitude might just hurt his brother's feelings. That would have to be corrected and fast.

Flora was excited to go to Burgess. Sure she's been there plenty of times way before the settlers first came. But this was going to be the first time to see her soon to be brother, even if he doesn't see her. Mother had told them of her plan to appoint her uncle the position of Winter when he gets older. It would be nice to have someone new added to their small family, especially after Old Man Winter's death five centuries.

Flora smiled as East Wind gently carried her through the air. She giggled at Wind's playful manner. She loved spring.

*Mother Nature is going to join us,* East Wind whispered as they flew over a forest.

"Oh?" Flora look slightly confused. Why would Mother want to join her on her runs? "Mother is more than welcome to join us. Although I have a feeling she has an agenda then coming to join me spread spring."

East wind giggled as she swirled around Flora. *The child. The child. She wants to see the child again.*

Flora laughed along with her friend. Mother wasn't the only one.

Pitch wasn't that surprised to see his daughter. In fact he had a feeling that she was the reason he hadn't seen the Guardians.

"Morning father," she greeted as she landed on the flower covered ground of the forest.

"Morning," he greeted with a smile. "You just missed your Head of Spring. She just went to tend some flowers and trees that needed blooming."

"Oh, I'll catch up to her soon enough," Emily said in dismissal. "How's Jackson?"

"Okay." Pitch leaned against a tree. "He hasn't had any of those dreams that Sanderson usually sends." He raised his nonexistent brow. "In fact I haven't seen them in over a month now, neither have my Nightmares. You wouldn't happen to visit them by any chance, have you?"

Emily flushed slightly. She began laughing, twirling her hair around her finger in a nervous matter. "I may have threaten them and allowed the Winds to create five magical blizzards around the workshop."

Pitch smirked at his daughter. She was just as bad as him. "I'm assuming you left one of your enchanted flowers to neutralize all magic."

"Of course," she said as she walked on one of the paths that would take them to the cottage. "It's in
the Globe Room. The only way they will be able to get out is if they find it. But that could be a very months."

Pitch shook his head in amusement. That explained why some lights went out. Although Toothiana and Sanderson are the ones that are in trouble since they work everyday. The Guardians must be regretting their actions now. Oh Pitch was loving this.

Pitch walked next to his daughter as they exited the forest. Emily gave him a confused frown when he walked passed the cottage.

"Father where are you going?"

Pitch stopped walking and turned slightly to her. "The children are not at home. They are just over the hill," he said as he gestured to the hill that was slightly covered by the forest.

"Why would they be over there?" she asked in bewilderment.

"Apparently it's Mothering Day," Pitch said as they resumed walking.

"Oh, yes. I vaguely remember that holiday. That's today?" Emily asked. Was Mothering Day really today? Was she really that distracted to forget the day dedicated to her and mothers?

"Yes, that's day." Pitch wasn't surprised that his daughter forgot. She usually doesn't pay attention to holidays, especially when she's busy with keeping the balance.

The two walked in silence as they made their way through the forest. At the end of the clearing and just over the hill was a small Indian Tribe. Pitch had wondered how Jackson managed to befriend the Indians, especially since the settlers don't seem that accepting of them.

Pitch glanced at his daughter and noticed the slightly confused look on her features. Pitch shrugged when she gave him a questioning look. He wasn't sure either. They continued walking in silence as they made their way to the small tribe. As the entered they were surprised (more Emily then Pitch) when they were greeted by both adults and indian children.

The Indians all bowed their heads in respect as they passed by. They stopped when they came face to face with the chief of the tribe. "Ah, Nightmare King, Great Mother, welcome to our humble tribe." Chief was just as tall as Pitch. He had brown eyes, rich black hair, and tan skin. He wore pants made of brown animal fur and skin, and brown shoes. On his chest, arms, and face were various paint markings.

"Thank you, Chief. Thank you for having us."

"It is always a pleasure," Chief said. "Anything for old wise spirits."

Pitch smiled in turn with a nod. "Chief I'm looking for my younger brother, Jackson Overland. Is he here?"

Chief nodded with a smile. "Yes, he is near river with daugher, Ali."

Pitch nodded and bowed slightly. "Thank you, again, Chief."

The chief bowed. "I must be going. We have feast to prepare for. I hope you will attend."

"We'll love to," Pitch told him.

"Yes, thank you," Emily replied. Chief nodded and then walked off. Pitch directed his daugher
further into the tribe and in the direction of the river. They walked in silence as they were greeted several times by the Indians. When they reached the end of the tribe Emily finally spoke. "How are they able to see us?"

Pitch continued to walk as he answered, "Indians, unlike the settlers, believe in all spirits."

Emily hummed in response as they made the short distance to the river. The sound of laughter was the first thing they heard before Jackson, Flee, Ali, and Night came into view. Emily smiled as she saw the three children making crowns out of the flowers that they were surround in. Pitch stopped behind Jackson and looked at the numerous carnations, daisies, and marigolds that Jackson was weaving into a crown.

"What are you doing, Jackson?"

Jackson jumped slightly at Pitch's voice. "Koz!" Jackson greeted cheerfully after he quickly collected himself. Flee tried to stifle a laugh. "What you doing here? I thought you'll be sleeping or making nightmares."

"I have a day off," Pitch told him as he sat next to him, Emily did the same to Flee.

"Hello, Nightmare King, Great Mother. I'm Ali. It's very nice to see you again." Ali greeted as the wind gently blew her long black hair

"It's very nice to see you again too, Ali. What are you three doing?" Pitch asked.

"We are making crowns for mothers," the tan Indian Girl replied.

"It's Mothering Day today and we thought we would make some for mom," Flee told them.

"Want to help?" Jackson asked Pitch. "I'll be fuuuunnnn."

"Why not?" Emily replied as Ali handed her some flowers.

"No thanks. I'll just watch," Pitch answered and got a pout from Jackson in return.

"You have no sense of fun."

Pitch huffed. "I do to have a sense a fun. My apologizes if I don't find making flower crowns fun." Pitch snapped his mouth shut when he realized the dangerous, venomous tone that laced his words. He opened his mouth again to apologize, but the damage was already done.

A flash of hurt appeared in Jackson's eyes before it was quickly replaced with a cold glare. Pitch felt his shoulders slump as Jackson return his attention back to his work. Pitch mumbled under his breath as he sulked. He couldn't believe he said that to his younger brother. All his brother wanted to do was make flower crowns with him.

He was the Nightmare King. The Nightmare King does not make flower crowns. However, Kozmotis Pitchiner wouldn't have snapped like that. Wouldn't have have spoke in a tone as if Jackson was the enemy. He would have sat through it and made crowns with him. Like he used to do when Emily was a little girl.

He wanted to hit himself. He was a stupid moron. Now Jackson was mad at him. He looked at the girls and noticed the disappointed looks they were shooting at him. Emily raised a brow at him. She tilted her head towards Jackson and then mouthed the word 'apologize'. He sighed.
He shifted his gaze back to his brother and cleared his throat. "Jackson?" He ignored him. Okay. He may have deserved that.

He placed his hand on his brother's shoulder. "Jackson," he tried again. He sighed again when he got no response. He mentally crushed down his pride. Damn him if he was going to let his pride get in the way of fixing what he had damaged. "Jackson, I'm sorry."

"It's okay." Okay he got a reply this time. But Pitch wasn't sure if he liked the neutral, non-cheerful tone in his brother's voice. It wasn't like him. Jackson was a hyper, cheerful, mischievous child. He would not accept anything else.

Pitch mentally kicked himself. "No it's not. I was just a little irritated today and I took out my frustration on you." He sighed when Jackson looked at him, hesitantly. "You didn't deserve that. I'm sorry."

Jackson frowned at him. "You didn't have to snap at me, you know?"

"Yes, I know. I couldn't stop it. I'm sorry I didn't mean to hurt your feelings." Pitch smiled slightly. "Can you forgive me?"

Jackson smiled slowly at him. The hurt in his eyes were gone now and was replaced with relief. "Yeah, I forgive you." Jackson paused and lifted up the unfinished crown. "Do you want to help?" Pitch stared at the crown. He honestly didn't want to. He was the Nightmare King. Those flowers do not go well with his reputation. "You don't have to if you don't want to." Jackson's face fell in disappointment when Pitch didn't answer right away. "I mean...I just thought..."

Pitch crushed down his pride again and locked it away. He will not make Jackson sad. He will not! Pitch reached out his hands in front of him. "Hand it over."

"Wha?" Jackson blinked at him for a moment in confusion before his whole face lit up. Jackson excitedly placed the unfinished crown in Pitch's offered hands. Pitch smiled as he began weaving his own design into the crown. Jackson, meanwhile, was happily talking a mile a minute on how his mother will love her gifts. And then he started plotting how to get his mother here for the feast, without her knowing of course.

Pitch shook his head as he worked. Jackson will never learn. I hope he never changes, Pitch thought with a smile. Jackson please stay the way you are. You deserve to be happy and carefree.

While Pitch was distracted with his own musing he didn't see the look Jackson and Night shared. He didn't see the amused looks on the girl's face. And he also didn't see Jackson getting on his now fully grown horse and dramatically placing a fully finished marigold and sunflower crown on his head.

"All hail the Nightmare King!" Jackson announced as he and Night laughed. Pitch growled as he dropped the crown he was working on and tuned to face his brother, his robe dramatically spun around with him as he did so.

Jackson waved at him with a look of mischief in his brown orbs. "You are dead, little brother."

"Come and get me!" Jackson said around several giggles as Night galloped away. Pitch shadowed right behind them, completely ignoring the laughters behind him.
Jackson hates summer, so he decides to see visit his brother. He and Flee had a wonderful time!

Jackson loved many things.

Jackson loved his mother and sister. Flee was fun, smart, and the best thing in his life. Yes, he knew they weren't not blood related, but Flee is and always will be his little sister. He will admit that he have a protective streak for her. And he is also proud to be the one to hook her up Jamie. Best day ever, if you ask him. Jackson also loved his mother. He was grateful that he was found by the Overlands. His mother was the best mom in the world.

Jackson loved the Burgess kids. He loved telling them stories and watching over them. What can he say? He loved kids. Maybe he'll have kids someday, if he finds the right girl.

Jackson loved Night. She was like his best friend. She was amazing, cool, and loyal. She even helped him with his pranks. Night was the best! Now if only he can figure out how to give her snowflakes on her side.

Jackson loved his Brother. Even if Kozmotis spends hours with his nightmares to plan against the Guardians, he still loved him. Kozmotis makes him feel safe. Kozmotis cares for him and his sister. Jackson loved having Kozmotis back in his life! Being reunited was the best thing that happened to him. Okay, that may be tied with the birth of his sister though. But that doesn't matter. Kozmotis was in his life again! He loved the eggs that Kozmotis got for him. In all honesty, Kozmotis was a better guardian than the Guardians.

Jackson loved winter. Winter was the best season ever and no one will tell him other wise. Jackson loved the beautiful snow from winter. He loved making snowballs, and snow angels, and making snow forts for snowball fights. Yeah, snowball fights were the best.

Jackson hated many things as well.

Jackson hated bullies. He hated when they hurt the younger kids. He hated that they take great joy in making others miserable. He especially hated it when they pick on his sister. That was a very bad day for them. But he will never tell Kozmotis about it. Who knows what he might do?

Jackson hated bears. Ever since he lost his father to one Jackson couldn't go near one. Jackson could still hear the screams and pain filled gasps from his father as he died. He could still smell the blood whenever he goes to that spot in the forest. He hated bears so much that he refused to hunt them when the adults do. He rather hunt rabbits instead.

Jackson hated boredom. He was an active teenager. He hated to not be doing something. That usually lead to him making plans for pranks. The pranks were always fun. Jackson loved having fun.

Now Jackson had one more things to add to his lists of things he hated with a passion: summer.
Jackson hated summer. Jackson does not like the heat. He does not like the lack of snow. Sure, Spring is cool. That's when Easter is. However, Jackson can not, will not, tolerate summer. Jackson can't stand summer.

Jackson sighed for the umpteenth time that day. Jackson stared at the ceiling of the living room. It was sooo hot. Why? Why did it have to be so hot? He hated summer.

He sighed, again. He really hates summer.

"Jackson if you are going to sulk all day then do that in your room," his mother told him form the kitchen. He groaned as he got up and marched back to his room. It was hot in here too! He groaned when he saw Night and Flee napping on the bed. Night lifted her head and looked at him when he entered.

"Your mother sent you to your room, Master?"

Jackson groaned. "Apparently I was sighing too much." Jackson flopped himself on the floor. It would have been too hot to go to bed now.

Jackson stared at the ceiling before the sound of hooves were heard. It wasn't to long before Night was in his vision. He blinked at her and stared into her golden eyes.

"We could always go to Creator's lair. It is always cool there."

Jackson blinked for a moment before a huge smile appeared in his face. Jackson sat up and jumped to his feet, completely ignoring the heat. "Cool! Let's go! Flee wake up!"

Flee lifted her head and looked at him sleepily. She yawned, her hair still tousled from sleep. "What is it? Is it dinner already?"

Jackson smirked. "It's still noon and no it's not dinner yet."

"Then why did you wake me?"

"I thought you might want to visit Koz and all his nightmare glory!"

Flee perked up at this. "It would be fun to see the Flower King."

Night and Jackson snickered. Pitch was a bit annoyed after what happened on Mothering Day and Jackson may had gotten tickled in the end, but it was soooo worth it. What kind of younger brother would he be if he didn't make sure the whole 'I am the Boogieman! Fear me!' didn't go straight to his head?

Pitch was busy with his nightmares when two non-nightmares entered his domain. He grumbled under his breath in annoyance. It couldn't be the Guardians. They aren't that quiet, especially with North and his swords. Pitch stopped what he was doing and send out his Nightmares to capture the intruders.

Whoever these intruders were, they were in for a rude awakening. Pitch stepped into the shadows and followed his nightmares. He was shocked when the neighing stopped at the throne room.

*What are they doing?* Pitch wondered to himself as he entered the throne room and exited the shadows. He blinked. Petting two of his nightmares were Jackson and Flee. What were they doing here?
"Hey Koz!" Jackson's cheerful voice yelled from the dozen of nightmares that surrounded him.

"What are you doing here?" Pitch asked, still baffled that they were here. Actually he was surprised that any child was in his lair.

"I was bored and it was sooo hot up there," Jackson whined.

"So we decide to visit," Flee added in excitement.

Pitch turned to Night with a questioning stare. "Was this your idea?" Night flicked her tail.

"I thought it was a good idea. Master and Flee were inside all day. I figured it was better than them annoying their mother."

Pitch sighed as he watched his nightmares return to their jobs. Pitch was left alone with his brother, Flee, and Night.

"So," Jackson said as he eyed the place. "This is where you live?"

"Yes," Pitch said as he turned towards the door way. "Are you hungry? I have some pie in the fridge."

"Pie?" Flee asked with wide eyes.

"Sure, we haven't had that in a while."

Pitch didn't comment. He gestured the two children to his dining room. He watched them as they looked at every detail of his home. He never seen such wonder in their eyes before. He smiled. It was so nice to have children in his life again.

When they got to the kitchen Jackson and Flee stared at the huge round marble table.

"Wow!" Pitch smiled as they took a seat at the table. The table was white marble mixed with black. Pitch had personally added flakes of gold to the edges to make it stand out.

"Like?"

"It's amazing, Koz. I've never seen a table like this before." Pitch wasn't surprised. The villagers weren't really that rich to afford something like this. That was kind of sad now that he thought about it.

"I'll be right back with the snacks," he told them and then shadowed away. He was gone for only a few minutes before he came back with three plates of pie and three glasses of milk.

The children happily ate them. Pitch wondered if they ever had five berry pie before. Probably not.

"So? How is it?" he asked as he ate a spoonful of the sweet pie.

"Good!" Jackson said with a smile. Flee nodded in agreement.

"Glad you like it. I'll pack a few slices for your mother then when you two go home." The two children's eyes lit up at the mention of bringing more home.

They all ate in silence. It wasn't uncomfortable or tense silence. The silence was peaceful and positive and wonderful for the two human children and the Nightmare King.
Pitch watched the children when he finished. The two were so happy. Pitch was glad for that. He hoped it stayed that way.

"So is this your library?" Jackson asked as they stopped at a room with many, many bookcases of books and other old stuff. There were even a sofa and fireplace.

"I call it a study, but yes this is my library."

Jackson and Flee stared at all the books. There were so many! They never seen so many before. Noted they only have two books each. But to have this many?

"Go on," Kozmotis said. "Go take a look."

Jackson and Flee rushed in as Kozmotis leaned against the door frame. Jackson looked at a lot of books. There were books on fairies, yetis, the Easter Bunny, Santa, Old Man Winter, the leprechaun, and many others.

Jack was curious as he picked up the yeti book. This look cool to read. Then he remembered he probably wouldn't be able to. He's reading isn't all that great. He frowned and only vaguely notice his brother moving in his direction.

"Ah, the yetis. That's a good story."

Jackson jumped. "Y-yeah. It looks cool."

Jackson turned towards his brother and noticed a small frown. He tilted his head a bit. He wondered what Kozmotis was thinking about.

"How's your reading?"

Jackson laughed nervously. He should have known that his brother would pick up his worries. "Not great," he managed weakly.

"Want me to teach you?" Jackson blinked in shock.

"Really?" Kozmotis gently took the book from his hands and gestured him to the old looking sofa near the fireplace. Flee was already on the sofa reading some princess fairy tale. She didn't look up when Kozmotis took a seat in the middle and Jackson took the seat next to him.

Kozmotis opened the book to the first page. Jackson snorted at the picture of a yeti. It didn't look that scary. Kozmotis read the first few lines and then had him repeat. Sadly, Jackson was more than a little frustrated when he struggled with the words. He had tried sounding it out and putting it together. It was frustrating and embarrassing. Flee didn't seem to have trouble with this. She made it so easy.

He glared at the evil page of words. He can't do this. It's too hard. Kozmotis was patient though and read the lines again and then he had to repeat. This lasted for a few hours or so. After what felt like forever Jackson was able to read five sentences without trouble. This continued for another few hours until his eyes felt heavy.

Jackson leaned against his brother's shoulder and listened to the story. He smiled as he closed his eyes, thinking about how cool it was to meet a yeti.
Pitch was proud of his brother for reading this far. His daughter would be proud. Pitch flipped the page to begin reading again. He read a few lines about some yetis that helped fight with a bandit.

"Now you try, Jackson." He paused for Jackson to read, but there was nothing but silence. He frowned and shifted his eyes away from the book and looked at his brother.

"Jackson did you—" Pitch paused when he noticed that Jackson had fallen asleep. He glanced at Flee and noticed that she was in the same state. He smiled softly at the sleeping children. He closed the book and shadowed it back to the bookshelf.

Pitch gently shifted jackson into his arms. He stood up and shadowed to one of the bedrooms he had prepared for this brother.

The room was a pale blue. The room had a bed, a small desk, and a lamp from his home world. Pitch had also had a few items that was Jackson's before they got separated on the desk. Pitch placed Jackson on the bed and tucked him in. Pitch watched with a fond smile as Jackson sighed into the white covers.

"Sleep tight, Jackson." Pitch gently kissed his forehead before shadowing back to the study to take Flee to her own room. Once both children were fast asleep in their rooms Pitch reflected on his life. He was happy. Truly happy. And he hoped it stayed that way.
Second Home

Chapter Summary

Jackson wakes up and explores. Pitch makes breakfasts. Pitch freaks out when Jackson is not in his room.

Jackson snuggled into the warm sheets. He was so comfortable and didn't want to move. To bad his mental alarm would not let him be. He groaned as he cracked an eye open. Is it still dark out?

Jackson frowned as he tried to adjust to the dark room. He knew it was a little bit past dawn. So why was it still dark? Jackson sat up and noticed the small gas lamp on a desk. He furrowed his brows in confusion. He didn't remember having a lamp in his bedroom. Speaking of bedroom, where was Flee anyway.

Jackson reached over to turn on the lamp. He blinked to the light. He raised a brown brow when he took in the room. This was not his room at home. He was in a cave of some sort that was converted into a room. It was quite cozy though.

Jackson's eyes traveled around the room until it landed back at the door. Was he still at Kozmotis home? Did his brother make this room for him? When did he have the time to prepare it? Did Flee have her own too? His mind swirled around with thoughts. And then there came the headache. He groaned and decided to get out of bed.

Jackson swiftly made his bed and walked towards the door. The empty halls mocked him with its silence. Jackson hated silence. He looked left and right from the doorway before stepping into the hall. He wondered where everyone was. Or more accurately who was awake at this hour?

Jackson shrugged his shoulders and decided to look around. How big could this place be?

Okay so exploring without a guide, not one of his best ideas. Jackson was totally sure he was lost. How was he supposed to know that the hallway split into multiple ones? Sheesh! Kozmotis should really have signs for when people come over. Jackson paused at that thought. He wondered if anyone ever came down here.

Well, that might explain why the horses looked shock when they found us, Jackson silently mused. They act like they hadn't had people visit before. Jackson smirked at that thought. The horses were funny though. He and Flee were surprised when they came out of nowhere, charging at a possible enemy. Their expressions were funny when they stopped suddenly when they realized it was them at the throne room. Then again, were bright curious yellow eyes and flicking ears considered shock?

Jackson paused mid-step when he came upon a door. Jackson gazed at the door in curiosity. He wondered what was on the other side. Jackson didn't think twice about possible dangers that could be on the other side or asking for permission. He simply opened the door and blinked. He raised a brow in surprise.

"Who would have thought that Koz would have a room filled with weapons." Jackson looked at all
the various weapons. There were staffs, bows, swords, some big ball with spikes, and a bunch of
other weapons he hadn't seen before. Jack inspected the staffs. Some were made of wood, while
others were made of some kind of metal. There were also carvings on them, as well as strange
writing.

"I wonder what it says?" Jackson studied it a little more before looking at something else. Jackson
slowly studied the other weapons before something caught his eye. At the back of the room was a
clear display case. Jackson sucked in a breath as he eyed the golden armor and sword that was
within it. The armor was engraved with various symbols and strange writing. The armor had a big
cut on the side that left the armor slightly black. The sword had jewels on the hilt and had strange
writing as well.

"Amazing," Jackson breathed as he touched the glass.

"Jackson!" Jackson jumped at the voice that echoed throughout the hall. He turned and rushed to
the door. "Jackson, where are you?" Jackson smiled weakly at the panic tone. He hadn't meant to
make him worried.

"Jack-

"Koz! Over here!"

Pitch had been with his brother long enough to know his wake up schedule. Jackson usually wakes
up around dawn. As much as he hated getting up that early, he lived with it. He yawned as he
shadowed his night clothes away and changed to his usual robe. When he was done dressing he
shadowed to the kitchen to make breakfast.

Eggs, potatoes, and milk seemed appropriate for a balanced breakfast, Pitch silently mused as he
cooked. When he was done he shadowed the plates to the dining room. With a satisfied smirk he
shadow to the children's rooms.

Pitch shadowed to Flee's room first. Pitch had painted her room a nice shade of greens and blues.
Like Jackson's room, there was a desk and a lamp. Resting on her desk was a stuffed rabbit and two
sets of dresses for it. He smiled fondly at the little girl as he walked in and turned on the light.
Pitch stood near the bed and began to arouse the sleeping girl.

"Flee, wake up."

She groaned as she tried to shrug him away. "Five more minutes Jack," she slurred in sleep.

"I am not Jackson, Flee," he told her with an amused smile. "I would be then happy to let you sleep
in, but I figured you might want some breakfast and you don't want your brother coming to wake
you up instead."

Pitch wasn't sure if it was the fact that he mentioned his brother waking the young brunette up or
that fact that he said breakfast. Because the girl sat up rather quickly with bedridden hair.

"Breakfast?"

The corner of his mouth twitched into a smile. "Yes, breakfast. I have everything waiting in the
dining room. I will have Night walk you there." Pitch turned behind and called "Night!" and then
said Nightmare horse appeared.

"You called Creator?"
"Show Flee to the dining room for breakfast. I'm going to get Jackson." And then he shadowed away to Jackson's room.

Pitch stopped in place as he stared wide eyed at the empty room. The light of the lamp was still on when he entered. He figured Jackson would be awake but he didn't think the room would be Jackson free.

At the back of his mind a voice screamed that his baby brother hand been kidnapped! The Guardians had taken him! Oh, he knew that was impossible and highly unlikely. The Guardians have no idea he has a brother, but that didn't calm him one bit. Nor was he thinking about the logic at the moment.

"Jackson!" Pitch turned and ran out of the room. "Jackson!" His voice echoed throughout the halls as he shadowed from one hall to another. He checked room after room and got more and more frantic when he got no reply.

Please let him still be here. Please.

"Jackson, where are you?" Pitch yelled frantically as he shadowed into the hallway. Pitch was not expecting an answer. He feared that Jackson had been taken by his enemy. What if he were starving? What if they have him locked up?

Oh, god. What if they harm him...and use him as a hostage? "Jack-"

"Koz!" Oh thank the gods! He's alright! "Over Here!"

Pitch shadowed quickly to the direction of his brother's voice and appeared in front of him. Jackson opened his mouth to say something, but Pitch paid him no mind. Relief filled him as he pulled him into a hug.

"Thank the gods you're alright!"

"Wha?" Jackson yelped as he was pulled into a bear hug by his brother.

"I was so worried!" Pitch said before pulling away to glare at him. "What were you thinking? I was worried sick! I thought you were kidnapped!"

Jackson looked at him with a raised brow. "Who could possibly kidnapped me in your home?"

Pitch narrowed his eyes. "Don't underestimate the Guardians or their helpers. They are foul beings."

Jackson rolled his eyes. "You're being a drama king."

"I am not!" Pitch snapped, resulting with the shadows growing darker around him. Jackson continued to stare at him without a response. Pitch deflated a bit and took his shadows with him. The halls went back to being lighter again.

"I was exploring," he said with a smirk. "I woke up and decided to explore. However, I kinda got lost."

Pitch groaned and looked at him in exasperation. "You are going to give me gray hairs."

Jackson shrugged with a smile. "All out of love I hope."

Pitch glared at him. "Brat," he mumbled as he grabbed Jackson's arm and shadowed them to the
Jackson blinked at him, slightly dazed, as they appeared in the doorway of the dining room. Pitch watched his brother as he shook off the dizziness from shadowing for the first time. Pitch gestured to Jackson to take a seat and he did so without only problems.

"What took you?" Flee asked as they sat down.

"I got lost," Jackson said as he picked up his fork. "And Mr. Drama King over here thought I was kidnapped," Jackson said, totally ignoring the glare from Pitch.

"Why would you leave the room though?" Flee asked. "We don't know our way around here."

Jackson pouted. "You, little sister, have no sense of adventure."

Flee raised one brow at him. "And you have no sense of not getting into trouble."

Jackson huffed, but didn't comment. Pitch shook his head in amusement. Jackson does have impeccable timing and skills when he does his pranks or anything else for that matter. Although most of the time his actions do lead him to some...consequences with the other boys and adults.

Pitch smiled slightly in amusement. Oh, Jackson will never change. Even if he does find trouble, that didn't really mean it was his fault all the time.

"How did you two like your rooms?" he asked them.

"Ours?" Flee asked with wide eyes.

"So you did…?" Jackson started but couldn't quite finish his sentence as Pitch's words swirled in his head.

"Yes these room are yours for whenever you want to visit." Pitch smiled at them. "I hope they are to your liking. It took a month and a half to prepare them."

Flee nodded, her eye glistened with tears. "I love it. Thank you so much."

Jackson nodded, looking at his brother with a small smile. "Thanks. I don't know what to say."

"No need to thank me." Pitch looked at them with a fond smile. "You two are always welcomed here. Don't forget that you will always have a home here."
Jackson is the ultimate prankster and storyteller. He is the ring leader of his pranks and has help from Pitch's Nightmares and Night. Pitch mocks MiM.

Jackson was born for this day. It was the best day in the world. Well, Christmas was awesome and Easter is great! But nothing beats Hallows' Eve. Jackson should have been born on this day. It was practically a day dedicated to pranksters, or at least that's what them kids believed. The adults on the other hand are a different matter altogether.

Jackson smiked as he conversed his plan to Night. Night's ears flicked to the side as she listened to his ultimate plan.

"So we are going to prank those awful boys, Master?" Night asked cheerfully. Jackson nodded with a mischievous smile. Oh, he knew that Night disliked those boys. They kept picking on Flee. And what Jackson didn't like, she didn't like.

"Yes, we'll make them regret for hurting my sister's feelings."

Night stomped her hooves in glee. "I think some of my brothers would be able to help. We all have become attached to you."

Jackson's grin widen. "Perfect! Let's go gather the troops!"

Pitch had been amused by all the preparation at the village. There was so much collected fear in the air that it was intoxicating, but in a good way. He watched as the adults prepared for the harvest. Pumpkins were picked and cooked and prepared for the winter season.

Many of the adults fussed over the vegetables and preparing for the harvest and feast. Pitch rolled his eyes at how pathetic the adults looked and decided to watch the children instead. He studied the children as they talk about the feast and about the scary stories. Many of the stories were about him and other dead spirits.

Pitch stared at them as they talk more about the bonfire stories and what stories Jackson might tell. Pitch wondered himself. Jackson had been rather secretive lately. He worried that Jackson might not trust him anymore. He shook his head at that.

That wasn't likely. Jackson loved him to no end. He welcomed him in and talked to him non-stop. Sometimes Pitch forgot what it was like to have other people who liked him around. And then there was Flee. Jackson and Flee might be the only ones who see him that aren't afraid.

Hmm? That was an interesting thought.

Pitch shifted his eyes to the sky when he felt the shift of the shadows growing. *The sun's going down*. He smirked. *Time to get to work.*
The kids huddled together as Jackson told a scary story about the Boogieman. The fire flickered and grew as the wind blew. The glow of the fire created shadows, monstrous shadows. The shadows danced and formed into pictures. None of the kids noticed the shadows taking the form of horses. The horses moved around, moving different belongings, moving the branches, puffing air on their *victims'* neck. It was an amusing sight.

Pitch rolled his eyes in amusement. He watched as Jackson told them that ridiculous story about him. Oh, the Boogieman is the monster under your bed. Oh, the Boogieman gives you fears. Oh, the Boogieman will turn you into his Nightmare Prince if you do not behave like the good boys and girls that they are.

*Seriously, kids would believe anything these days.*

Pitch smirked as he hid in the shadows. He appeared and reappeared behind kids. He whispered words into their ear. He tapped their shoulders when their belief in him was there for only a second. He smirked as the children jumped in fright. The children laughed, not realizing or seeing the Boogieman behind them.

Jackson continued his tale, much to Pitch's annoyance. His brother can be quite the storyteller. Though he wondered why Jackson kept glance at Night who was…

Wait a minute. Why was Night, Phoenix, and Mystic floating above three older boys? Pitch blinked for a minute as he studied the boys. He frowned as he shadowed closer to them. When the boys' voices reached his ears he realized who they were.

"Of course." Pitch shook his head. "I should have known. Jackson will never learn to leave them be." Pitch looked at his Nightmares, realizing that they were equipped with feathers, sand, and possibly maple sap. Pitch's mouth gaped open when it dawned on him that Jackson somehow managed to get them to help him. How he managed to do that, without him knowing no less, was beyond him.

When Jackson got to the point of his story about the Boogieman - Moon help him - giving terrible nightmares to a few very bad boys, Jackson's three partners in crime released they load. The simultaneous screams were heard when the boys were first covered in sticky maple sap, followed by the sand and feathers. By the end of it, the boys looked like a mixture of the sandman and a chicken.

"And that is what happens when you anger the Boogieman!" Jackson yelled over the laughing children.

The three boys glared daggers at Jackson as they yelled, "You are dead Overland!" And then they gave chase. The chase gave Pitch an exhausting sense of deja vu. He couldn't remember the last time when Jackson is not pranking those boys, followed by them not chasing him.

Jackson laughed as he ran. Unfortunately for the boys, much like last time when Wind assisted the boy, Night and her sisters tripped, neighed, and flew around the boys as they chased Jackson. The three boys were spooked by this and really thought they were being attacked by the Boogieman. The three boys stopped chasing Jackson and ran the other way.

Pitch, the other children, and the adults laughed. Oh, Jackson truly was the ultimate prankster.

The late night was still cool when Pitch and the Overlands arrived home. Pitch tucked in both Flee and Jackson. He smiled as the two tried to stay awake. Tried being the key word. Pitch rolled his
eyes as they fought sleep, but they both passed out after they hit the pillow.

Pitch frowned when he noticed no dreams above their heads. Sanderson must still be trapped at the North Pole. Pitch raised his nonexistent eyebrow and walked to the window. The moon brightened as it beamed at him.

"Your Guardians are slacking, old friend," he mocked. "If you think you can destroy fear then you have another thing coming. Fear cannot be destroyed, but your Guardians are another thing altogether." The moon dimmed slightly before brightening brightly again. "Your ignorance and naivety is what going to be yours and the Guardians' downfall."

Pitch stepped away from the window and closed the curtain. He smirked at that before glancing at the children again. He smiled at them before making his leave. He had a feeling that MiM was up to his tricks again. He had to prepare for their arrival.
The Brightest Lights

Chapter Summary

Flee and Jackson have a sleepover at Pitch's! Pitch thinks his plans are ruined but it is just the beginning. Sanderson muses over the lack of belief. Pitch tells the children about the Belief Globe, but Jackson does not react well to it. Manny muses over his mistake.

Jackson thought it was very amusing. The Barkins' thought they could prank him. No one could beat the master. He smirked as he passed by their failed attempt at what looked like a pie launcher. They glared daggers at him when he, Flee, and Jamie laughed.

"Just you wait Overland! We will get you!"

"When we are done with you, you'll be a dead shepherd boy!"

"Just like your father!"

Jackson ignored their comments as he dragged Flee and Jamie with him. The two were five seconds away from pouncing on them. Jackson glanced at his sister. If looks could kill, the Berkin siblings would have died five times over from Flee's intense glare.

"Flee, let it go." Flee turned her glare to him.

"Let it go?" she growled softly. "How can I let it go? They just insulted Papa!" Tears shimmered in her eyes, not allowing them to fall.

Jackson frowned as he came to a stop. "Papa was a hero. Not only did he protect me, but some of the others as well. The other adults didn't do anything to help him. They were cowards. Be proud that Papa died a hero's death. Those guys are just jealous."

Flee faltered a bit before sighing. "You're right. I'm sorry. I just miss him."

Jackson smiled sadly, while Jamie placed a hand on Flee's shoulder. It had been hard since Papa's death. Jackson still had nightmares about that day, but it had gotten better over the past few months. Kozmotis had made sure he had less, though natural nightmares were something he had no control over.

Jackson gently ruffled his sister's hair. "Come on let's get you home. I believe we have a sleepover to get to." Flee smiled weakly at him before they continued walking.

"That right!" Jamie chirped. "You're supposed to be staying at your brother's home, right?"

"That's right!" Jackson replied. "Koz got a house at a different village not far from here." Well, that wasn't a lie. His brother lived underground and his entrance happened to be near the lake that he and Flee loved to skate at.

"That's so cool!" Jamie exclaimed. The trio came to a stop when the path divided into two. "See you guys tomorrow!" Jamie waved and ran down the left path.
"Bye Jamie!" Jackson and Flee yelled as they took their own path home.

The two walked in silence, which really annoyed Jackson. But what could he do? Flee was upset and nothing he said helped very much. He sighed as they spotted their home. Jackson smiled at Night as she materialized next to them.

"Master!"

"Hi Night. How's Koz?"

"He was offaly busy with the preparations of our arrival."

Flee looked at him as he raised an eyebrow. "Why am I getting the feeling that he thinks we are having a huge party or something?"

"I thought we were just sleeping over?" Flee asked as they entered the cottage.

"We are, but I guess Koz has other plans for us." Kozmotis could be a bit of a drama king. Jackson knew Koz felt bad for not being there for him, or for not finding him earlier...or maybe it's his big brother complex taking over. Jackson wasn't too sure, but it came down to the same thing: Kozmotis is overdoing it. Again.

"I wonder what he is planning," Flee mused silently, momentarily forgetting that hurtful comment about their papa.

Jackson shrugged. Knowing Koz, it's going to be awesome.

Jackson blinked. He couldn't be seeing that right. Was that a penguin? And snow? How did Koz managed to get snow in here?

Jackson stared at the black and white penguin. The penguin seemed to be at least four feet. This one must be the leader. The penguin stared back at him. It stood tall and didn't move. Its eyes stared down at him as if challenging him to do anything.

Jackson narrowed his eyes in turn. "I bet you are the leader of your colony." The penguin ruffled its wings as many of the female and baby penguins waddled around in Kozmotis's winter wonderland. Flee was excitedly watching them. She squeaked when three baby penguins waddled to her. She giggled when the three cuddled against her legs.

Jackson snicker at their cuteness and returned his attention to the glaring leader. "Well, it looks like it's just you and me my friend."

The penguin ruffled its wings again and squawked in response. Jackson watched as the leader penguin waddled closer and pecked his arm.

"Ow!" Jackson glared at the penguin. "What was that for?"

The penguin squawked and grabbed the bottom of Jackson's shirt. Jackson was shocked as the leader penguin began to pull towards the babies and females.

Jackson's voice echoed off the walls as he laughed. "Okay! Okay! I'm coming!" Jackson got up and followed the black and white penguin.

It had to be perfect. It had to! How could everything go so wrong?
Pitch pulled at his hair as his Nightmares bought piles and piles of snow. Snow! Why would they think he wanted snow? He had specifically told them to find something fun for the children's playroom he was creating. How on earth could snow be anything signifying fun?

He had poured hours into books and research. Hours! He read some of the old texts that he had from their home world. He had read through multiple books from different countries that humans wrote on what children deem fun.

Hours of research. Hours of planning! Hours! All ruined by a bunch of penguins and snow! He must be the worst brother ever!

Pitch sighed, hitting his head against the rocky wall. This day was supposed to be perfect. How will Jackson and Flee react to this? How could I failed so miserably?

Pitch slammed his head against the wall again. How could this have happened? He wanted it to be perfect. He had made sure every detail was perfect. He sighed again and stared at the dark hallway.

His lair was usually dark and creepy. He was the Nightmare King after all. He normally didn't do bright and colorful, but he wanted to make his brother feel at home. He sighed as he wondered where Jackson and Flee were. Hopefully they weren't here yet. Maybe he could fix everything before they get here. Although he would have to get rid of the colony of Emperor Penguins first.

Pitch straightened and stomped down the hall. His nightmares neighed as they brought more and more snow. Pitch gritted his teeth and stomped faster. He had to stop this. Pitch entered the room that he had wanted to make into a fun, game room for his children. Yes, he said his. Jackson and Flee were his. Not the Guardians, his!

Pitch froze where he stood as he spotted Jackson and Flee playing with the baby penguins in what looked like a miniature version of Antarctica.

"What is going on here?" he asked as a few of those walking terrors waddled near a huge pile of snow. He felt his eye twitch slightly at the scene in front of him. Flee was building a snowman. Night and her siblings were dropping snow around. And Jackson, oh dear, was making a snow angel with three baby penguins sitting on top of him.

Jackson lifted his head to stare at him. Jackson cheeks were slightly rosy from being in the snow without proper clothing. He noticed that Jackson seemed to be shivering slightly, but what baffled him more was the huge smile on his face.

"Hey Koz! When did you have a winter wonderland down here?" Jackson asked as he sat up.

"I don't." Pitch frowned and crossed his arms over his chest. "My Nightmares thought having snow and penguins here was what I meant when I said to bring something that is fun." Pitch sighed and ran his hand through his hair. "I'm sorry. I wanted to make your first sleepover with me special," Pitch finished with a sigh.

"What you talking about Koz?" Pitch blinked for a minute before glancing at his brother. Jackson's brows were furrowed and his lips were position into a small frown. He tilted his head as Pitch stared at him in confusion.

"I wasn't planning this." He gestured to the snow infested room. "And them." He glared at the black and white terrors. "I wasn't planning on having them here." Pitch sighed as the penguin cocked their heads at him. "I wanted for you to have fun here." He lowered his eyes, feeling like a complete total failure. He couldn't even get this right.
"But Koz," Jackson's confused voice rose up. "This is fun." Pitch glanced back at him suddenly. His eyes were wide as he took in Jackson's small smile.

"Really?"

"Yup!" Flee added. "I've never seen a penguin up close before!"

Jackson nodded as he sat up. Jackson smiled softly as he added, "It doesn't matter where we go or what we do, Koz. I'm fine as long as I'm spending time with you."

"Same with me," Flee said with her own sweet smile. "We are family after all."

Pitch stiffened for a moment before he too smiled at the two wonderful children. He felt a warm feeling in his chest that always seemed to come while he's with his brother. No, not just his brother. His family. His wonderful, wonderful family.

After all the months he spent with his brother, he felt content. Once again he found himself not caring about the war. Not caring that his daughter was always working or that the god forsaken moon had some plan to free the Guardians. Not at the very moment he didn't care about what was happening outside. All he cared about was to the children that loved him for him. His family. His believers.

Pitch dabbed at his eyes and slowly allowed his anger and hatred towards the Guardians die down a peg or two. He smiled at the two children, smiling fondly at them. "How would you two like a tour of my home?"

The two children smiled at each other and jumped to their feet. Excitement radiating all over their faces.

Yes, as long as he had these children in his life, rather he won the war or not, he knew he would be alright.

More lights flickered to a very dull yellow. Many of the light went out completely, while others border between belief and disbelief. The children were losing their belief in them and there was nothing they could do about it.

He had felt the effects of the lights since they were trapped at the North Pole. Many were not dreaming, many were not believing. It was heartbreaking to say the least. Let he could feel the nightmares that Pitch spreads.

Out of all the Guardians, Sanderson was the only one who didn't hate Pitch, the only one who understood the Maker of Nightmares. Sanderson, as a fellow dream wielder, know of the delicate balance between the sands. Dreamsand was just as important as Nightmare sand and vice versa.

Sanderson sighed as he stared at the dim lights. He and the Guardians had been fighting Pitch for centuries. To be completely honest, Sanderson hated fighting. He and Pitch were similar in a way. Not only were they able to wield and understand the sand, but Sanderson knew first hand just how dangerous the sand could be. Non-sand wielders would not understand the amount of focus and control it takes one to not be controlled by the sand.

Sanderson knew Pitch was not at fault for his rampage during the Dark Ages. Pitch was not in control at the time. Pitch had destroyed galaxies, killed many people and friends. Pitch had so much blood on his hands. But he was no different.
When Manny asked him to be a Guardian he was angry at Pitch. He had destroyed his ship, attacked him, and made him crash into Earth. He had vowed to protect the children with his dreams and to stop Pitch from spreading his evil nightmares. If only he knew what he knew today.

Sanderson would forever blame himself for misjudging a fellow sand wielder. He should have known that Pitch was not in control at the time. And yet he had attacked Pitch when he finally took control. He had listened to Manny when he told them of allies and followers of Pitch. He didn't realize that those people were the survivors of Pitch's home world.

Sanderson knew he had blood on his golden hands. He could still hear their screams and anger as he and the other Guardians destroyed them when they disagreed with Manny and this war. He had killed innocent people. People who wanted nothing to do with this war. Yet he had taken their lives. Lives he swore to protect.

He closed his eyes and his shoulders slumped slightly. We deserve it, he thought. Pitch has every right to be angry with us. Sanderson sighed as he felt weaker from another light going out. He opened his eyes and stared at the black dots around the colonies in the north. More children from Burgess do not believe.

Sanderson sighed and turned towards his fellow Guardians. Toothiana, Aster, and Nicholas were around the table discussing ways to get in contact with Manny. He floated to the table and sat in his seat. He listened in silence as Nicholas and Aster argued.

"What you mean we can't get in contact with MiM? Have you even tried?" Aster asked, the 6 or 7 foot Pooka tapped his foot in impatience.

"What I mean, Bunny," Nicholas said wary. It was obvious that Aster was getting on the jolly man's nervous. It was actually a shock that Nicholas looked tired and not, well, jolly. "The snowstorms are blocking Man in Moon's moonbeams. It can not get through."

Then again they have been trap at the pole for several weeks. They had tried figuring what was preventing them from using their power to escape, but no such luck. And the lack of belief was not helping them other. And on top of that...Sanderson was positive that everyone was on edge. Nicholas was not his usual jolly self. Then again, he hadn't been happy and full of life or wonder for someone who was supposed to be Father Christmas.

Aster was usually grumpy and rude. However, he seemed more so and has been getting worse since he healed up. Sanderson noticed that Aster was snapping and yelling more at Nicholas. Not even their 'Easter vs Christmas' was getting any better.

Toothiana was probably in the same condition as he was. Toothiana had her fairies to collect the teeth, but they were pretty much lost without her direction. Toothiana wasn't fairing to good, like him. The fairy seemed less chatty and violent, which was scary since she was a warrior with plenty of yelling and punching to go around. Sanderson noticed that Toothiana's colorful wings were starting to lose its colors.

This is bad. At this rate we will have no magic left.

Sanderson felt a growing fear filled him. Without the children's belief they would certainly lose power and then disappear.

"And what about finding what's keeping us bloody here?" Aster yelled in frustration.

Sanderson sighed. There they go again. I hope we get out of here soon.
The light flickered on and off like a candle. It was offaly interesting. He wasn't sure why a globe was in this big open room or why it had lights on it for that matter. He blinked as a light went out.

*Did the light die or something? Maybe Koz needs to change it.*

"This is the Globe Room," Kozmotis said as he gestured to the large open, and mostly empty, room.

"Wow," Flee said as she eyed the room. "It so big."

"And dark," Jackson said as he continue to observe the flickering lights. He tilted his head as he looked at the lights in the northern half of the globe. *Why did Koz put those bright lights away from the others.* "Koz these lights just went out. I think you have to change them."

Kozmotis looked at the him and walked towards him. Kozmotis looked over his shoulder and grimaced.

"Jackson, do you know what these light are?"

Jackson raised a brow as Flee came to look at the globe as well. "Umm...not really. You didn't put them there?"

Jackson blinked as a light flickered and then went out. "The light went out!" Flee pointed out.

"No, I didn't," Kozmotis said slowly and pointed to the two brightest lights that Jackson was observing. "These two are your lights."

Jackson's eyes widen in surprise. "Our lights?" Flee blinked in surprise as well, looking just as shocked.

"What you mean, Kozmotis," Flee asked.

"Every human child that believes in the Guardians are a light on the globe. And these two are yours." Pitch pointed to the two brightest lights on the globe. He smiled. "And you two have the strongest belief."

"Wow!" Flee exclaimed in excitement. Her eyes lit up as she looked at their lights on the globe. Jackson stared at the lights too, but with a frown on his features. He eyed the lights with suspicion.

*Do we really believe in the Guardians?* he wondered. *They are treating Koz like a monster. They believe that he is evil. How can I still believe in them this strongly.* Jackson shifted his eyes to the ground. Not noticing one of the two lights dimming a bit. *The Easter Kangaroo tried to hurt us. He tried to kill us. The Guardians might really attack us if they find out that Koz is my older brother.* He bit his lower lip. *How can I believe in people who just wants to hurt my family?*

"Jackson?" Jackson was startled out of his thoughts when Kozmotis placed a grey hand on his shoulder. Jackson felt strong hands move him around so his back was facing the globe. Kozmotis was kneeling down on one knee in front of him. Golden-silver eyes stared into his in concern. His lips were pressed into a thin line as both of his hands rested on Jackson's shoulders.

Jackson stared into his brother's eyes. He wasn't sure what Kozmotis was worried about. Was it something he said? Or was Kozmotis just naturally worried like he usually was? He couldn't figure it out. Night gently nuzzled him as Kozmotis opened his mouth to speak.

"Jackson, don't worry about the Guardians," Kozmotis said firmly. His slender thumb briefly
caressed his cheek. "They. Will not. Harm. You." Kozmotis spoke each word strongly and with conviction. "I will protect you." He paused and smiled over his shoulder. "The both of you." Jackson swore he saw Kozmotis's eyes soften to a soft yellow mixed with a shiny silver. "I will not let anything happen to you two. You two mean the world to me."

Jackson was a very independent boy. He was stubborn and headstrong. Everyone looked up to him. That was why he put up a cheerful persona for his friends and family. He wouldn't dare show them that he was sad, that he had doubts of his own. But at this very moment, he felt like a frightened little kid. He felt the need to cry and be enveloped in a calming hug from someone who would protect him and drive the fears and doubts away. He wanted, surprisingly, to not be responsible for everything, to allow his more childish desires to be let loose.

Jackson closed his eyes as Kozmotis pulled him into a hug. Jackson didn't stop the tears that stung his eyes, nor could he stop the small tremors that encased his body. Jackson clung to his brother as he let out the pent up fears and doubts that he had held in for years.

Pitch had always admired his two brightest lights. He hated that they strongly believed in his enemies, but he didn't let it bother him. However, he was greatly concerned when Jackson's light dimmed. He quickly looked at him before he was hit with his younger brother's fears.

Pitch sighed at the intoxicating fears. Usually he would savor the fears. It's usually delicious and empowering. But this was his little brother, his family, and because of this he found himself feeling sick with worry. He had the strong urge to rid these fears from his brother, and that's surprising considering who he was.

*The Guardians,* Pitch thought darkly. *Even when they are not here they are hurting my family!*

The Guardians were not going to succeed. They were not going to harm his family members ever again. Pitch allowed his protective instincts to take over. He told Jackson the truth. The Guardians would not harm him. As long as he was there to protect him - no, to protect the both of his children - he knew they would be safe. He knew the Guardians would not touch this family. Not again! Not ever again!

Pitch gently pulled Jackson into a hug. *How long had he been holding all these fears in?* Pitch thought with a frown as Jackson sobbed slightly into his shoulder. *I don't like how he has to act like a grown up. Sure he acts like his usual prankster self, but he has to. He tries so hard to not show his doubts and fears. He tries so hard to bring smiles to others, yet he sacrifices his own.*

Pitch glanced at Flee, who had a worried frown on her features. He could tell she wanted to comfort her brother, but wasn't sure if she should disturb them. Flee managed to catch his gaze. Brown eyes stared into golden-silver eyes before Pitch opened arm to her. Flee immediately rushed towards him and joined in on the group hug.

Pitch held both of his children and whispered comforting words. He told them of how they would be protected. He told them that they had nothing to fear. He told them that they didn't have to grow up, for he loved them for who they are. And there was nothing that would stop him from making sure they remained safe.

Nightmares were the worst thing imaginable. The monster had killed his parents. The monster had destroyed worlds and galaxies. He was a monster! He had to be!

But as he watched his Guardians fight the Monster of Fear he began to doubt his decision. He was
still convinced that he was evil until they came upon the survivors. They had told of the Golden Age. The peace thanks to the hero. The hero had saved them and protected them for years. Until the Fearlings tricked his tired mind, using his family against him. They refused to fight Pitch Black. They respected him!

General Kozmotis Pitchiner, hero of the Golden Age. Victim of the very evils he swore to stop and destroy.

He moaned at his mistake. Pitch Black was not a monster. He was a victim to the Fearlings. The Fearlings were the monsters. And yet he, and many other, had put blame on him for his wicked deeds.

Manny had seen the shock and disgust on the Guardians' faces, mainly Bunnymund, North, and Toothiana. He had watched in horror as the Guardians attacked the survivors. They were innocent people and they were killed for refusing to fight the Nightmare King.

He had yelled and cried for those people. He had moned for they lives. He had prayed and yelled for Pitch Black's forgiveness. But no one could understand moonbeams. The Guardians could barely decipher them correctly.

Manny watched as Pitch spent his time near the two Overland children. Why? He didn't know. But he had the feeling that Pitch cared about the Overlands. Manny watched Pitch and saw how he protected the two children.

He saw everything and also saw something that he had hoped for for some time. Love and belief. Pitch loved the children. And the children loved him. Maybe the war could finally end on a bright note. But then Easter came.

Manny bang his head on the wall. *The war will never end. Pitch will never forgive me. He will never show mercy now.*

But worst of all, the Guardians had continued to plot their next move. They continued with their plans to destroy fear.

*Fear can not be destroyed. Why did it take me so long to realize?*

And then Mother Nature brought her wrath. Manny winced as the Guardians were trapped at the North Pole. Manny tried to send messages. To tell them to stop this war, that he had made a grave error. But his moonbeams could not go through.

He watched helplessly as the children lost their belief. He watched as the Guardians remained trapped for months. He watched as Pitch spread his nightmares and interacted with the two Overlands. He watched as the two played and smiled.

A smile crept on Manny's face as he realized why Pitch cared about the children. It all made sense. Why else would Pitch and Mother Nature put up the barrier? Why else would Mother Nature attack the Guardians? Why else would Pitch, the Nightmare King, spend his every waking moment with these children? Protecting them? Helping them? Supporting them?

*They are his believers!* Manny shook his head at that. No, it wasn't just that. It wasn't just because they believed in him. It was something more. More than belief. Love. It was love. But not just any love. It was the type of love that reminded him of the Moonbots, the Moonmice, the Glowworms and his parents. *Family. This is the rest of Pitch's family.*

Family was a very powerful thing. Having a family was what keeps a person sane. A family was
what makes sure you are protected and happy.

Families are indeed a powerful thing. If let untouched then the war could end with everyone happy. The war was only continuing to this level because of the damaged he had caused. But if the children get taken away or harmed? Manny feared that the worst would come if that ever happened. He prayed the Guardians get his message on time.

If not...he feared the worst is yet to come.
Mother Nature invites Jackson and his family to a Thanksgiving Dinner at her castle. Jackson and Flee meet the other Seasonal Spirits and Father Time. Father Time foresees two futures for Jackson Overland.

Susanna had thought she would spend another painful Thanksgiving without her husband. It was a tradition they did since his death. Every Thanksgiving they would mourn in silence, they would then mourn together before and after dinner, and then mourn again alone in their respective rooms. They had done this every year, every year since he was deemed a hero for sacrificing his life for his son and fellow villagers.

This year, however, would be the first time in three years that they would celebrate Thanksgiving with new family members. Susanna never thought she would personally spend her Thanksgiving at Mother Nature's castle. She never thought Mother Nature was actually a living person, until now.

She never thought she would meet Mother Nature in person. Noted, she never thought she meet Pitch Black. And she never dreamed that her baby boy would be related to these supposed myths. It was amazing how many times she could be surprised and proven wrong.

And she had once thought that the Boogieman wasn't real. She cringed at the thought. She was glad that Pitch was such a kind and forgiving person, despite the cold, fearful persona he exhibited to the world.

Susanna tightened her grip around Pitch's waist as the Nightmare, Onyx, galloped through the cool night sky. Susanna glanced at her excited children as they rode on Night. Clearly they were more relax then she was. Susanna sighed and rested her head on the square of Pitch's back. She closed her eyes and allowed the black horse to take them to their destination.

She silently listened to the wind blowing by as it blew her hair. She silently listened to the surprised gasps of her children and the occasional giggles from them. She smiled as Pitch laughed at her children's excitement. His laugh was so deep, but it held such an old warmth that it reminded her of her grandparents. It made her feel safe and protected.

"Mom! Look!" Susanna opened her eyes and looked at her children. Flee pointed in front of them and her breath caught. The moon was so big and bright in the sky as it reflected over the crystal blue sea. The sea seemed to sparkle in the moon's rays. The sight was breathtaking, but not as beautiful as the dancing dolphins.

"Wow," Susanna breathed. She never seen dolphins before.

"Would you like a closer look?" Pitch's deep voice reached her ears, making her look at him. Soft golden-silver eyes was looking at her in question. Susanna smiled gently and nodded to the man in front of her. Pitch smiled as he told Onyx to get them closer to the grey dolphins. Night and her passengers were giggling as they followed suit.

"They're beautiful," Susanna whispered as they got closer to one of the three dolphins that jumped
out of the water.

"Much like you." Susanna blinked and looked at Pitch, who was just as shocked by his own words.

"I...um...let's hurry to my daughter's castle. We are almost there."

Susanna blinked as Pitch returned his attention to the two black horses as they made their way to their host's home. Susanna and Pitch were silent as the horses traveled through the darkness of the cold November sky. Susanna rested her head on Pitch's back again. She smiled gently as she thought about the words that the man in front of her spoken unexpectedly.

"Thank you," she finally said. "It means a lot coming from you."

"Wow! This is so cool!" Flee's voice was heard over the winds as they approached a large island that was stranded in the middle of the ocean. Jackson eyed the island in interest as they passed the barrier and come upon a huge castle. The castle seemed to made of some type of clear metal that sparkled and glimmered in the moonlight, which of course was surround and seemed to merge with a huge tree. Jackson never seen anything like it before.

He awed at the sight as they flew above the forest of lush greens. Flee held on to him tightly as they passed by a white bear in a snowy region of the island. It was amazing, despite how frightening seeing the bear gave him.

The island seemed to be divided into four regions with the castle connecting them right in the middle. Behind the castle was a snowy region filled with beautiful, fluffy white powdery snow, hills, and snow covered trees. The region next to it had trees that were a mixture of browns, reds, oranges and yellows. Colorful leaves decorated the light yellow and green ground. In front of the castle there was a region full of lush greens. Tall trees grew high and tall, at the peak of its prime. Different types of flowers decorated the trees and ground. Many of the flowers and plant were something Jackson never seen before. The region next to it was a mixture of bright sand and tall skinny trees with big leaves on them. Jackson also saw strange green plants of different sizes and shapes with thorns on them.

Spring, Winter, Summer, and Fall. Amazing.

Night and Onyx made their way to one of the large open windows. As they entered Jackson felt the hairs on his arm stick up as they seemed to pass through a secondary barrier. When they landed Jackson was captivated by the inside of the castle. The castle was just as huge on the inside as it was on the outside. The walls were decorated with symbols of snowflakes, flowers, suns, and leaves. Light sparkled beautifully as the moonlight reflected on it, making the details of the patterns stand out beautifully.

"This way," Kozmotis said after he helped their mother get down. Jackson did the same with Flee and followed his brother as he strolled down in a very dramatic fashion.

"Of course he wants to make an entrance. Why am I not surprised?"

"So, how many shadows will he use this time?" Flee whispered as they watched Kozmotis gather his shadows, making the hall look darker.

"I'm guessing a few hundred," Jackson whispered to his sister.

"Maybe two," she giggled back.
"What are you two giggling about?"

Jackson and Flee stopped their side conversation and not so silent giggles and looked at their mother. "Nothing!" Their mother raised a brow at them as they smiled innocently.

It was still amazing how pretty she looked in her new gown. Kozmotis had made each of them a special outfit for the dinner. Their mother was given a pretty blue silk dress. Jewels decorated the cuffs and waist of the dress. Flee was given a pretty knee length dress. Her dress was orange and had a black belt around her waist. Her hair for once was tied back into a bun. Jackson, much to his own surprise, was given a fancy white shirt, a golden vest with the same markings that he saw at Kozmotis's home, and dark blue pants. Kozmotis of course was wearing a black robe, but this one was in layers and had gold sewn into it.

Jackson felt a little odd wearing these clothes, as soft as they were. Clothing like this were something they couldn't afford. This was something a king or queen or even the rich villagers would wear. I'm not surprised though. Koz is the Nightmare King. Jackson stopped in his musing as something came to him. If Koz is the Nightmare King, what does that make us?

Jackson would have mused on that a little longer, but it seemed he didn't need to. His little sister seemed to be thinking the same thing. Great minds do think alike.

"Mom?"

"What is it, sweetie?" their mother asked as she glanced behind her.

"If Kozmotis is the Nightmare King, does this make you his Nightmare Queen?" Flee asked innocently.

Jackson tried to hold in his laughter as both adults stopped dead in their tracks. Both spun on their heels to stare at them with twin looks of shock on their faces. Jackson found it next to impossible to not laugh as he saw twin blushes on their cheeks.

Jackson was dying of laughter by the time they both shrieked in denial. Ah, denial was a beautiful thing. And so was making both of the adults blushing like crazy, he wished he had a camera to capture that moment. It was priceless!

Emily smiled as she waited for her guests to arrive. It had been so long since she felt this excited to have her little Thanksgiving dinner. For the first time in centuries her uncle was coming with his mother and sister. She smiled fondly at the thought of her uncle.

It would be as if none of us have been separated in the first place. Even father seems more happier and caring. I'm so glad.

Emily gazed at the preparations of her huge dining room. The room had several large windows for her sprites and fellow spirits. On the windows she had beautiful gold, light blue, fiery red, emerald green, and orange drapes. She had made the drapes herself, except for the one that she had managed to save from her mother's personal collection. Emily's shifted to the large golden table. The table sparkled with gold and various jewels that her husband managed to find for her. Where he go it? She didn't ask, nor did she want to know. On the table several of her fall, summer, and spring sprites were finishing up decorating the table.

The little sprites were different to the ones that help her children with their seasonal duties. These sprites were about the size of a six year old child. However, they were nowhere near a child. These sprites as well as many others were made of pure magic and come in a variety of shapes and sizes.
She smiled at her little helpers as they finish placing the plates, cups, and napkins. Spirits usually don't eat but Emily enjoy the exquisite foods her children make from time to time over the past several decades.

"All done Mother Nature," one of the sprites told her as they curtsied and flew out of the windows to complete their other duties for the night. Emily smiled as they left, looking at her sprites handy work before her husband arrived through the doors.

The golden doors swung open revealing a tall, well-built, older gentleman. The man had a long white beard that could put Nicholas to shame and the brightest blue eyes that Emily had even seen. He was not fat like the cookie loving Guardian, no her husband was more muscular and had more class. He was ancient, like herself, and was very wise. He wore a blue and golden robe, thankfully his hoodie was down, and in his hand was a blue scepter with an hourglass within its orb on the top. She was glad he took her request to not bring his scythe. She had children coming for Pete's sake.

"Mother Nature, it's been too long," he said as he walked over and gave her a kiss on the cheek. "Oh Father Time," Emily said with a bright smile. "It's so wonderful to see you. How long has it been? 3...5 years?"

Blue eyes sparkled with love as he laughed. It sounded like those wonderful church bells that the winds travel back to her from time to time. "Indeed, my lovely wife," he murmured as he lifted up her hand to kiss it.

Emily cheeks warmed slightly. Father Time was always such a sweetheart. Now if only she could get her father to like him.

The shadows grew and then faded with his raging emotions. Despite it being Thanksgiving, and he wasn't saying he wasn't happy to have his baby brother or a new family, Pitch was finding it next to impossible to not give the two insufferable children nightmares for three weeks. But of course he would never do that. Jackson was family, his baby brother, who just happened to get on his last nerve. In other words, his patience was getting very, very low.

Pitch glared onward as the two brats laughed behind his back as they walked down the long hallway. Susanna was walking next to him, looking amused at her children antics and by his current mood.

"Don't take it personally," she had told. "They are just children."

*Insufferable brats.* Pitch continued to stomp down the hallway as Jackson began singing.

"Koz and mama sitting on a Nightmare!"

"K-I-S-S-I-N-G!" Flee sang after a fit of giggles.

"Will you two knock it off?" He did not like Susanna like that. Nope. Not at all!

Although, she does look exquisite in that gown he made for her. And her eyes just seem to sparkle in the moonlight. And her smile, oh her smile was magnificent. Her smile was so bright and so beautiful that it made his dark heart skip a beat. And…

*AHHHH! I'm am not thinking this! Quiet you treacherous thoughts!*

*He hates me.* Pitch sighed at the small wisp of fear. He didn't hate Flee. He just didn't like being
teased, especially by his own family. In all honesty, it was nice having two laughing children around him. Although, he's not used to being seen by them and not controlling his temper when they play with him.

He sighed again and stopped moving. Pitch turned to face Flee and Jackson. Pitch raised an nonexistent eyebrow at them as the two stopped talking. They looked back at him with innocent looks on their faces.

The brats are up to something.

"So, have you come to your senses?" Jackson asked with a smirk. The brat was looking for it.

Flee giggled as she jumped on the balls of her feet. "Do you like mommy, Kozmotis?"

Pitch smacked his forehead. He could feel the warmth creeping up on his cheeks and the warm fuzzy feeling that gripped his heart. But would refused to show the brats any indication that their words were affecting him. I will get back at those brats.

"That is not any of your concerns!" Pitch snapped at the two overly happy brats. Pitch ignored the twinkling glint in Jackson's eyes and spun around in his usual dramatic flair. He was the Nightmare King. Nothing he did was normal or boring or undramatic. Pitch promptly marched away from the two giggling brats. Unfortunately, he only managed to get a few feet away before he slammed into one of the many spirits that deemed the title of "nuisance".

Pitch glared at the orange spirit in front of him. "You know, for someone who lives in the dark, you sure are clumsy?" Pitch growled and glared at the flaming nuisance in front of him.

"I would watch what you say Blaze Heat." Blaze Heat was a man in his late thirties, at least in looks. He had short dark orange hair that looked like fire and green eyes. He wore a flowy red ruffled shirt and yellow pants. Although Pitch swore sandals didn't work well with that outfit.

"Or what?" Blaze asked with a wide smile. "You'll send your Nightmares on me?"

Pitch was about to retort the cocky bastard, but his brother spoke in confusion. "Koz, who are you talking to?" Pitch groaned. He forgot Jackson, Flee, and Susanna couldn't see other spirits other than him.

"Oh, Pitch! Is this your brother?" Blaze asked. Pitch could practically feel and see the fire head's heat coming off him in waves from his growing excitement. God help me.

"Yes, this is my brother," Pitch said as he got up. He turned to his brother and saw all three look at him in confusion.

"That wasn't my question."

Pitch rubbed his forehead in annoyance. Oh, he was not annoyed with them. He was annoyed with a certain fire head next to him. Blaze smiled brightly as the children looked at him in confusion.

"You know, they're going to think you're crazy if you don't tell them about me and the others?"

Pitch shot him a glare.

"It's a spirit isn't it?" Susanna asked with a raised brow.

"Smart women!" Blaze said cheerfully, a little too cheerfully for Pitch's tastes.
"Yes," Pitch replied with a sigh.


Blaze laughed at their enthusiasm. "I love these too!"

Pitch sighed and pinched the bridge of his nose. "Do you remember what I told you about spirits?"


"Yeah, we have the Tooth Fairy, the Easter Kangaroo, Santa, Sandman, Mother Nature, Father-"

"Yes, yes!" Pitch interrupted before he could finish that man's name. "All spirits that you know from myths are real. Some have faded over time."


"Okay," Susanna said with a confused frown. "So who is next to you then?"

"Do you know who does the seasons?"

"Emily," Jackson responded as if it was obvious.

"Yes and no," Pitch told him.

Jackson blinked. "Huh?"

"Emily is in charge of the weather patterns, yes. She does not do everything alone." Jackson and Flee looked at him in confusion. "For the changing of seasons Emily instructs the Seasonal Spirits on where the weather needs to go and what area needs what."

"Seasonal Spirits?" Susanna, Jackson, and Flee asked.

"That's right!" Blaze beamed.

"Yes, that correct," Pitch said as he glared at the seasonal next to him. "You may recall me and Emily mentioning that Old Man Winters was in charge of winter."

"I thought you said he died," Jackson murmured.

"Faded," Pitch corrected. "He got overwhelmed by his powers and got destroyed."

Blaze snorted. "The old geezer was too harsh and old for his own good. Of course he was destroyed by his own magic. It destroyed his center."

"That's so sad," Flee whined.

"Yes, yes!" Pitch waved in impatience. "Old Man Winters was one of the Seasonal Spirits, until he faded. Emily needs to find a new one." Pitch glanced at his brother, but didn't say anything. "Now for the other three seasons we have the Spirit of Fall, the Spirit of Spring, and the Spirit of Summer."

"Saving the best for last I see," Blaze commented with a smirk.

"The Spirit of Spring is Flora Flower. The Spirit of Fall is Autumn Leaf." Pitch glared at the
seasonal next to him. "The annoying spirit next to me is the Spirit of Summer, Blaze Heat."

Pitch sighed as he waited for them to see the annoying spirit. It didn't take long sadly. Both Jackson and Flee gasped as they stared at the Spirit of Summer.

"You know that was a horrible introduction," Blaze complained.

"Wow!"

Blaze smiled softly at the children. "How's it going kids?" he asked with a smile. "As Mr. Dark and Gloomy said I'm Blaze. Nice to meet ya! Mother told us so much about ya!"

This is so cool, Jackson thought as he and Flee followed Blaze into the dining room. Kozmotis had went on ahead, storming all the way down, with their mother following right behind him. Jackson's eyes went wide as they took in the huge room. This room is bigger than our house.

Jackson wasn't all that surprised with all the huge windows. He noticed there were a lot of them and it made the place more open. He even noticed plants and trees growing from out of nowhere on the walls. Well, this is Emily after all. She is Mother Nature.

"Looks like we are the last to arrive," Blaze commented with a smile as he glanced at the other spirits that were there.

Jackson scanned the huge room as he tried to take in everything at once. There were at least six spirits (including Kozmotis and Blaze), his mother, Flee and himself. Jackson recognized Emily on the far end of the table. She was sitting next to some old gentlemen, wearing a blue and gold robe. I see Koz is not the only one who likes to wear robes.

On the right side of the table were two female spirits. The first spirit had brown, shoulder length hair and blue eyes. She wore a light brown, knee length dress and brown flat shoes. Jackson raised a brow as he saw colorful leaves on her dress and hair. She seemed to be in her mid-twenties, it he was guessing right. Next to her was a girl with short black hair (strips of pink, green, and yellow decorated her hair) and the prettiest violet eyes. She wore a more flowery dress that reached above her knees, but she did seem to have some type of thin green material on her legs, and she wore green shoes. Jackson raised a brow as he figured the girl seemed to be around the age of nineteen or so.

On the other side of the table was Kozmotis, who seemed to be glaring at the older man, and his mother, who was talking to him. Jackson had a feeling Kozmotis didn't like the older guy very well. Jackson remained quite as Blaze walked them to the table, where all three them sat. Kozmotis didn't seem to happy that Blaze was sitting next to him.

Emily smiled when they took their seats. She sat up and began to speak. "Thank you everyone for coming to my annual Thanksgiving Dinner. As you know we spirits don't really need to eat, but we do it to come together as a family."

"So true," the girl in the flower dress said.

"Today I've invited some very important people." Emily shifted her eyes to him. "As you know my father has a younger brother," Kozmotis straighten slightly in his seat. "He was lost to us during the Dark Ages, but my a miracle we finally found him several months ago." The three spirits that Jackson didn't know turned their gazes to them. "My fellow spirits I would like to introduce my uncle and his family."
Emily smiled softly as he and Flee waved slightly at them. "Hi."

The three spirits gasped. "They can see us!"

"Thanks to Mr. Dark and Gloomy," Blaze snickered.

Emily rolled her eyes and shifted her gaze to the other spirits. "Anyway this is Jackson Overland, his sister Flee Overland, and their mother Susanna Overland." Emily turned to him then. "Jackson this is my husband, Father Time." Jackson blinked at the older man, who smiled at him.

"It's very nice to meet you, Jackson."

"This here is my Head of Spring, Flora Flower." The girl in the flower dress beamed at him.

"It's very nice to meet you Jackson and Flee!" Jackson smiled in turn at the bubbly girl.

"This is my Head of Fall, Autumn Leaf." The girl covered in leaves smiled at him.

"It's very nice to meet you, Mr. Overland, Miss. Overland, Mrs. Overland," Autumn said politely.

"And of course you already met my Head of Summer, Blaze Heat."

"Of course they did!" Blaze said cheerfully. "We are all best buddies now!"

Kozmotis scoffed at that. "Over my dead body."

"Aw, what's wrong Mr. Man of Fear? Afraid I'll take them away from your parade?"

Jackson and Flee snickered as Kozmotis glared at him. "I am afraid of no one!" Kozmotis sneered. "I'll have you know you'll have to get through a thousand of my Nightmares before that happens."

Blaze smirked. "I accept your challenge."

Kozmotis growled as shadows began to form and lighten. Jackson and Flee laughed at the incoming fight. *I like him already! Best! Thanksgiving! Ever!*

Emily glanced out the window, seeing her father's nightmares growing smaller and smaller. She smiled. The dinner came out perfect. Sure, Blaze and her father argued and taunted each other throughout the night, but that was expected.

Emily would have laughed at the overwhelming excitement that filled her. She felt so alive and so very happy. Her family was complete again. Yeah, her mother was gone, but she had gotten over it. She still had her uncle and her father, along with her children and husband. Life couldn't be better.

She turned away from the window and made her way to the bedroom, where she knew her husband would be. Father Time was a wonderful man. He was kind, wise, and a complete know-it-all, literally. He's not the Father of Time for nothing.

She smiled softly as she spotted Father Time sitting in his usual chair. Emily's room consisted of trees and plants. The bed was made from one of her personal enchanted trees. The tree bed was decorated with a cotton mattress, blue cotton blankets, and a variety of pillows in all types of colors. On the far wall she had a desk filled with books and plants, and a big wardrobe for all her dresses she made over the years. Near the window she had a small table with tea cups and plates with two comfortable green cushion chairs.
She walked towards her husband with a smile and sat down gracefully in her chair. She looked at him and felt her smile falter. Father Time seemed tense. A grave frown graced his features and his eyes were glowing. Emily felt uneasy for some reason. She was used to seeing him seeing visions of the future. But something in the back of her mind was telling her that what he was seeing would affect her and her family in a horrible way.

She looked at her husband with worry as the glowing began to fade. Blue eyes stared at her with so much despair that it made her heart clench. "What happened?"

Father Time sighed and didn't say anything for a while. Emily bit her lip, waiting for her husband to collect his thoughts. "Two possible futures."

Emily frowned. "Two futures?"

He nodded. "Both show the death of a child." Emily felt her heart freeze in place. No. No! No! NO! Emily covered her mouth as she stared at her husband with teary eyes. "What did they show?" Her voice trembled slightly.

Father Time rested his hand on hers and gave a small squeeze. "The outcome is unclear," he stated. "War will continue for three centuries, maybe more."

"Because Jackson dies?" She choked on a sob.

Her husband nodded. "In one, he dies and is resurrected by MiM. In the other, you both do it."

Emily was shocked by this. Why would MiM resurrect her uncle? She took a shuddering breath. "What else?"

"That's the tricky part," he said with a frown. "One leads to isolation and pain, confusion, betrayal and false trusts." Emily stiffened. I will not allow that. "The other leads to love and safety, but there will be a great amount of confusion and fear." Emily frowned. This one doesn't sound so good either. It's less, but still.

"The rest is unclear I'm afraid," he continued with a frown. "They keep changing and shifting. But there's one thing that repeats. And I know will come to pass."

Emily saw despair in his eyes. "The child will die," Emily felt the tears fall. "And your father will seek revenge." Father Time gently got up and pulled her into an embrace. "For it is the Guardians fault."
Birthday Wish

Chapter Summary

While trying to figure out what to get Jackson for his birthday, Pitch gets advice from Night. Pitch goes to Emily and gets disturbing news.

The cool wind caressed his face as he walked through the field. The sun was barely up in the sky, not that he expected it to. The clouds were perfectly in line, suggesting that it could rain later, or bet yet - snow! And, of course, Jackson was watching the sheep eat and play with a fond smile.

Jack swung his staff loosely in his hand as he watched them. They were a curious bunch. Many were very young in terms of age (especially the black one!), but they were overall very well behaved. A smile crossed his features when one of them walked towards him. He smiled fondly at the little black sheep.

"Hey, Cece. Are you done eating?" Little black eyes blinked at him before she headbutted his leg playfully. He laughed softly. "Okay, okay! I guess it is time to get back!"

The black sheep stayed close to him as he went to herd the other sheep back home.

Night watched her master from a distance. She couldn't leave him alone, even if the enemies were still at the North Pole. She had to keep him safe. She watched with interest as a black mammal rammed its head on Master's leg. Master laughed and went to herd the other white mammals. The black one still walking next to him.

Night tilted her head to the side. What did Master call them again? Sheep? Yes, sheep! That was it.

She stomped her hooves at her discovery. The sheep were cute and fluffy. The black one was small, though, very small.

She blinked when she felt the tug. What did Creator want?

Night gave Master one more glance before walking into the shadows.

Night appeared in the lair seconds after she felt the tug. She tilted her head as she materialized in front of Creator. Night blinked. Creator looked frantic. His hair was messy as if he got caught in one of Mother Nature's hurricanes. His robe was untidy and uneven, and he had a scowl on his face.

"Morning Creator," she greeted. "Did something happen?"

Creator sigh. "No, not really." He attempted to fix his hair. "I was just trying to figure out what to get Jackson for his birthday."

Night tilted her head. "He doesn't want anything, though."

"I know!" Creator growled. "That's the problem! This is going to be the first time we will celebrate his birthday as a family! I have to give him something!"
Creator began pacing around the room, looking stressed out. Night watched him silently as he paced. Night blinked as Creator reached to grab a golden locket from around his neck. Night excitedly stomped her hooves, getting Creator's attention, as she got an idea.

"What is it?"

"Why don't you get him a locket, like the one you have around your neck?"

Creator blinked as he stared at the locket around his neck. After several second a smile, slowly, appeared on his face. "That is actually a good idea. Maybe a picture of me and Emily will do," he said more to himself than to her.

"And you might want to ask Mother Nature about making it snow." Creator's invisible brows furrowed as he gave her a questioning look.

"Why may I ask?"

"Master was hoping that it could snow on his birthday!"

Creator sighed, loudly. She wasn't sure if it was because of the snow or because Jackson wanted it to snow. "I'll ask Emily, but I can't promise anything," Creator then glared at her. "And no traveling to the South Pole or penguins in my lair."

Night flicked her tail. "Wouldn't think of it."

"Be very careful about what you tell your father, Mother Nature," Father Time spoke softly as they snuggled on the bed. He rubbed her back soothingly as she sobbed softly. "Young Jackson Overland's death can not be stopped."

She sniffled. "But father could--"

"It wouldn't matter," he said sadly. "His name is on Death's list."

Emily sighed sadly as she sat on her throne. Death's list? Tears began to well up in her eyes as she thought about her uncle. Her poor, young uncle will die? He was too young! He hadn't had the chance to live his life! He was still a child! A child! A child should not be growing up so fast and doing work that an adult should do. A child should be able to have fun...to be a happy, laughing child. A child shouldn't be worrying about helping the family, or herding the sheep, or getting some rabbits for dinner.

Emily pressed a hand to her mouth, stifling her sobs. He's just a child. Why? Why him?

Emily's mind was in turmoil as she thought and thought about Jackson and his life being cut short. Emily was barely aware of the raging storms formed by her conflicted emotions. She was barely aware of the dark clouds engulfing the white fluffy clouds above. She was barely aware of them spreading and pouring on the world. She was barely aware of the sea and ground, reacting to her emotions, creating minor quakes and violent waves as it collides with the land.

Emily wasn't aware of anything until she heard her father's voice. "EMILY!"

Emily blinked her blurry eyes and focused her vision on the person in front of her. Strong hands were gripping her shoulders firmly. The figure, who she assumed was her father, shook her shoulders as he yelled for her to calm down.
"EMILY! EMILY! CALM DOWN, SWEETHEART! YOU'RE CREATING NATURAL DISASTERS OUT THERE!"

It took a moment for her to feel the unbalance of nature's patterns. With a sigh, Emily closed her eyes and forced herself to calm down, calming the weather as she did so. When she opened her eyes, she stared into her father's concerned, searching ones. Her father was clearly searching for what was upsetting her.

"What are you doing here father?" she asked, noticing the corners of his mouth twitching down.

"I came to ask for a picture of us and for a favor," he told her with a frown still graced on his features, his eyes still searching. "What's wrong Emily? Why were you crying?"

Emily averted her eyes at her father's questions. She didn't want to see his crushed expression when he finds out about Jackson's death.

"Father Time," she choked out.

"What about him?" her father asked, his voice took on an edge that suggested his dislike for the spirit.

"He saw...Jackson's death…"

She was met with silence. From the corner of her eye, Emily saw the shadows grow and quiver, showing her father's distress. Emily slowly looked up at her father and froze. There was only one word to describe his expression and that was pure horror.

"Koz! Oh, Koz!" Jackson frowned as he got no response. Where was he? "Koz, are you home?" he called again as he stared at the hole in the ground, the entrance to his brother's lair. Jackson tapped his staff on the ground nervously, wondering if his brother was even home. He continued to stare at, hoping his brother was home.

Jackson sighed in disappointment. He really wanted to spend some time with his older brother before going home. Flee was still in school for three more hours. Jackson pouted and stared at the hole in disappointment.

Honestly, he would go in himself, but he wasn't sure how far the hole was. Night usually shadowed him and Flee through a shadow. He hoped Kozmotis would put a ladder for them eventually.

"Where could he be?" Jackson asked to no one in particular. "I know he knows it's my birthday, so where could he be?" Jackson continued to stare at the hole as he thought about where his brother would go at this hour of the day.

Jackson's frown deepen as he remembered the conversation he had with his brother the week before.

"Koz? What's wrong?" Jackson asked his older brother as he finished telling them a bedtime story. Flee had fallen asleep through half of it.

Kozmotis sat at the edge of the bed with an annoyed expression on his face, suggesting that he was thinking hard about something. "What do you want for your birthday?"
Jackson blinked at the question. "Nothing."

Kozmotis looked at him, incredulously. "Nothing? There has to be something you want. Clothes? Money? Shoes, maybe?"

Jackson smiled tiredly at his brother. "Koz, I already have everything I want," Jackson said over a yawn. "I have my family, my friends, Emily and you. I don't need anything; I have everything I have ever wanted."

Jackson ran his hand through his hair in frustration. "I told him I don't want anything," he said with a sigh. Though, Jackson couldn't stop the small smile that crept on his face. "I wonder what he's getting me, though?"

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Jackson's death? Those words repeated in Pitch's head like a curse. He collapsed onto a chair that the shadows created for him. Pitch stared at his daughter blankly as he tried to process everything she told him.

He will die...at the hands of the Guardians... The thought made the shadows grow in anticipation of an upcoming fight. They sensed his anger and hatred for the Guardians and his fear for his brother's life. The Guardians had taken much from him over the last several decades. But to learn that his own brother's name was already on Death's list, and there was no way he could stop it...

The very thought made Pitch want to cry. He wanted to destroy the Guardians before they could take his baby brother away from him. Pitch wanted to shadow Jackson to a safe place, but there was no place like that. Jackson and his family would not go for it. Jackson would rather fight and protect his home.

Pitch rubbed his face with his hand in frustration. What am I going to do? Jackson can't die. Not now, not so soon...

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"Happy Birthday Jackson!" Jackson smiled at his friends. Tears filled his eyes as he inspected his surroundings after the blindfold was removed.

I can't believe they did this for me, Jackson thought as he eyed the decorations on the trees. They were currently in a clearing that bordered between their village and the Indian Tribe. He remembered finding this place two years ago with Ali. The area was spacious enough for them to play around and eat. It was also well hidden, thanks to the trees; so no one, who weren't his close friends, would be about to find them.

Jackson looked at the area in awe. His sister, Ali, Ellen, Lina, Jamie, Caroline, and Jonas all smiled at him with huge grins on their faces. Jackson wiped away a few tears from his eyes.

"You guys are the best! I don't know what to..." Jackson's voice trailed off and his eyes grew wide. His sister and the rest of his friends all gawked in surprise as cold, white fluff began falling from the sky.

"SNOW!"
The Ultimate Snowball Fight

Chapter Summary

Emily makes it snow, while Pitch worries about his brother. Pitch thinks back to Jackson’s first birthday. Pitch warns Jackson, Flee, and Susanna about the Guardians.

It didn't take long to gather a bunch of grey clouds and direct them to Burgess. Once the clouds were in place, she lowered the temperature a bit to make sure the snow stuck to the ground. She knew she did not schedule snow for today, but it was for a special occasion. It was Jackson's birthday and she was determined to give him a birthday he will forever remember.

She smiled slightly as she heard at the collected shock gasps. "SNOW!" Jackson looked so happy and totally unaware that his death was only weeks away.

"He looks so happy," Pitch said sadly. Emily glanced at him and saw a sad smile on his face. Her father's cheeks were still stained with tears and his grey face was slightly lighter than usual. Oh, father.

Pitch was leaning against the tree, watching Jackson as he and the other children watched the white, fluffy, wet snow fall from the sky and stick to the ground. After several minutes, the snow piled to about a few feet; just enough to give the children the chance to make snowmen, igloos, snow angels, or Jackson's personal favorite…

"SNOWBALL FIGHT!"

A huge snowball fight among all the kids in where there were no rules or limits. Despite the situation and how badly his heart was crying, Pitch couldn't stop the smile or the wet laugh that escaped him.

Jackson was laughing as he gracefully made a snowball and threw it at his victims, not giving them time to prepare. Pitch watched as the children formed into groups and attempted to hit each other with snowballs. None of them were as graceful or accurate as Jackson though.

Pitch looked on with water dripping from his eyes. His brother was his everything. He had been searching for Jackson for centuries. Centuries! And what? To lose him again; only permanently his time!

No. Pitch removed his eyes from his brother and opened his clenched hand. In his palm laid a light blue heart locket. Pitch opened the locket with his thumb and stared at the two pictures within. On the right heart was a current picture of him and Emily during the Thanksgiving Dinner. On the left heart was a picture of Emily, Jackson, and himself; on the day of Jackson's first birthday.

Pitch smiled at the memory of that day. Jackson was so young and innocent and so full of energy.

Bright brown eyes stared at him as he held the one-year-old. Pitch smiled down at his baby brother as small hands tried to grab the cuff of his grey tunic, while he was bouncing the small child on his left knee. Pitch laughed, making Jackson smile and giggled with him. But his little
giggles might have been for a different reason.

He hugged his brother close. "I love you, Jackson. You will be a wonderful warrior when you grow up. Sad, mom and dad can't be here to celebrate your birthday." He smiled fondly at his daughter as she rushed over with a camera, with Caroline close behind.

"Let’s take a picture!" Emily squealed as her black hair whipped around her face as she skidded to a stop them. Pitch nodded as his daughter gave the camera to Caroline with a happy squeal. Emily sat on his other knee, while he sat in a gold, puffy chair. Jackson giggled as he was turned around on Pitch's knee and forced in the direction of the camera. Pitch thought it was cute how Jackson stared at the camera with interest.

"Say, Happy Birthday Jackson!"

"Happy Birthday Jackson!"

"Koz! Koz!"

"GOT YOU JACKSON!"

Pitch was snapped out of the memory when he heard the children's proud yells. Pitch looked up to the that the children all decided to work together to go after Jackson. Emily was laughing next to him as Jackson pretended that he was wounded and pretended to die.

"OOOOHHHH, YOU GOT ME!" he yelled as he pressed his hands to his heart and collapsed to the ground in a dramatic fashion.

All the children cheered and laughed, clearly looking exhausted from their fight.

Pitch looked on with a small smile on his face. Happy birthday, baby brother.

Jackson sat on his bed with his sister and stared at the light blue locket. A white snowflake was engraved on it, which he liked very much. It's beautiful. Jackson watched as Kozmotis showed him how to open it. Kozmotis's thin thumb undid the latch on the side and popped open the heart. Jackson stared with wide eyes as he saw the two pictures within.

Jackson felt tears at the corners of his eyes as he saw the group picture of Kozmotis and Emily that Father Time took at the dinner party; followed by the picture of Kozmotis dressed in a light grey tunic with gold trimmings, a younger Emily (probably around four or so) and a baby version of himself. Jackson smiled gently as Kozmotis placed it around his neck. Jackson held the heart in his hand as he stared at himself. He looked as happy and carefree.

"This is amazing Koz," Jackson whispered breathlessly. Flee stared at the picture as well with a smile.

"You're so cute Jackson!" she squealed. Jackson felt his cheeks warm at this.

"I'm glad you like it," Kozmotis said with a smile. Jackson looked up with a bright smile on his face, but his smile fell slightly when he saw something in Kozmotis. Was that a flicker of sadness in them?

"Koh, what's wrong?"

Kozmotis stared at him with a grave expression and for once, Jackson could see the pain and fear
that had aged him for over several centuries. In that moment, Kozmotis looked worn and old. Kozmotis closed his eyes and took in a deep cleansing breath. Jackson glanced at his sister in worry.

"Kozmotis?" Flee asked his time in uncertainty.

"There's something you need to promise me," Kozmotis said once he opened his eyes again.

Jackson furrowed his brows and he knew Flee was doing the same. "Sure, what is it?"

Golden-silver eyes stared into twin brown eyes for a long moment before his word stuck their inner core and filling it with fear. "The Guardians are coming and are bringing war with them." Flee whimpered and clung to his arm rather tightly. "Emily managed to trap them at North's palace. However, it won't hold for long. They will be here in the coming weeks."

Jackson gritted his teeth, trying to be brave for his sister as he pulled her into a hug. He gently rubbed her back in a soothing motion. "What do we do?"

Kozmotis frowned in response. "I would have liked you to leave to a safer place, but I know that's not going to happen." He's right. I would never leave my friends behind. Jackson watched as Kozmotis sighed and placed his hand on his shoulder. "Jackson, Flee, do not underestimate the enemy. They might be Guardians, but they will not hesitate to use you to hurt me."

Jackson swallowed nervously as Flee began to shudder. "You're going to fight them?"

"I am," Kozmotis replied. "Now I need you two to promise to protect each other and to be careful. If you see the Guardians, run. If you see little blue and green fairies, you run. If you see golden sand or a huge rabbit going towards you, run as fast as you can. If you have to, run to my lair. You know where it is. I will have two of my Nightmares station there to shadow you in. Do you two understand?"

Jackson nodded firmly. "Don't worry Koz, we'll be fine. I promise to protect Flee with my life."

"I promise too," Flee mumbled. "The Guardians will not take Jackson away."

Kozmotis smiled at them then and pulled the both of them into a hug. "I know you two will protect each other. You two and your mother are all I have now."

Jackson snuggled closer to his brother and breathed in his scent. He felt safe in Kozmotis arms. Kozmotis was safety and home. He thought about the Guardians and wonder about the future. What will happen if the Guardians do come? Will I be able to protect Flee and Mom?

Susanna choked back a sob as Pitch warned her of her baby's possible death. This could not be happening. Jackson was too young. Susanna buried you face on Pitch chest, allowing the tears to fall. What was she going to do? If Pitch can't stop this, then what could she do?

"I'm doing everything I can," Pitch said brokenly. "I need you to try and keep them from going past the lake. My lair is close by there. I have shelter there for all three of you."

"How do I get there?" she asked softly.

"Night and the kids knows where it," Pitch explained. "However, I would like you to have something to help you enter my lair." Susanna pulled back and looked at the handsome man in front of her. Pitch cupped his right hand and to her surprise shadows and sand began to form
together into a clear crystal vial, attached to a metal chain. In the vial was some kind of black liquid.

"What is it?" Susanna asked as she studied the fine details of the necklace.

"It a potion," Pitch stated. "I had planned on giving this to you when the threat was over. But I felt now was the right time to give it to you." Pitch shadowed it around her neck. "I want you to join me," he told her. Susanna looked at him in shock. He wants her to join him? "I want you to stay with me by my side, for eternity. I didn't want Jackson or Flee to get any ideas before I asked you myself."

Susanna felt her heart warmed inside. The kids were right about her liking Pitch. He was such a sweet and handsome man, even if he was several centuries old. Over the last several months, she never thought she felt this way after her husband's death. She was glad she was wrong.

"I would love to Pitch," she told him with a watery smile. Pitch smiled as well. "What does the potion do?"

"When you are done with your life here," Pitch pauses as he glances at the crystal. "When you drink this potion, this will turn you into a spirit. I designed it so that you will have shadow powers and Emily added some winter magic as well."

Susanna smiled slightly. "You had planned on keeping the family together," she said with a soft smile.

"That was the plan," he confirmed before sighing. Pitch ran his hand through his hair. "Promise me you will be careful."

Susanna nodded as she cupped Pitch cheek. "We will. You be careful too."

Pitch smiled as he closed his fingers over hers. "I'll try."
Nightmare

Chapter Summary

Jackson has a nightmare about his death

Chapter Notes

Thank you to all who reviewed, fav, and followed, both previous and new readers. Thank you to those of you who left suggestions. They were a great help in my planning process! Now I'm sad to say that the Human Jackson Arc will be wrapping up in the next 4 chapters. I love Human Jackson but I have big plans for the Jack Frost 300 Years Arc and then the movie. I feel bad for Pitch already and I'm the writer! I do not own ROTG or "Jellyfish Song/Kurage no Uta" by Clear (Nakazawa Masatomo). And on that note: ENJOY!

11/18/16 AN: The song at the end had been changed. I thought this one was a cute and better lullaby for Pitch to sing to Jackson.

Trees were everywhere as he ran. Jackson pushed aside branches as they got in his way. He had to run faster; he had to escape.

"Get back here you ankle-bitter!" a deep Australian voice yelled.

Jackson continued to run. He jumped over branches and tried not to trip over his own feet as he lost his shoes.

"Stop! You will not get away!" a female voice snapped back.

"Stop!" Jackson felt his heart beat faster. The Russian voice was deep and freighting. It held none of the kindness or jolliness that Jackson remembered from his stories. "There nowhere to run!"

And he was right. Pretty soon Jackson found himself in front of a stone wall as he exited the forest. Jackson's eyes went wide as his chasers stopped behind him. Jackson turned around in defiance, pressing his back to the wall.

"What do you want from me?" he yelled as he stared at the huge human adult, the hummingbird, the giant Kangaroo, and a golden man.

"You are a naughty child. You have aligned with Pitch?" the Russian man said. Jackson looked at him with dread. He couldn't believe Santa was attacking him and calling him naughty. How could he be on the naughty list?

"He is a monster!" the Austrian Kangaroo said this time with raised boomerangs. "And you allowed him to escape!"

"He destroyed millions of lives!" the hummingbird fairy yelled back. Her eyes were narrowed in
anger. "Don't you understand! He and his fear needs to be destroyed!"

Jackson swallowed nervously as the golden man flashed pictures above his head as he held two
whips in his hands. Jackson was filled with fear as they spoke, but anger soon filled him when they
talked about destroying fear and his brother.

"You can't destroy fear!" Jackson snapped back. "Without it, there will be chaos!"

The Russian man scoffed. "Ha, I see Pitch has brainwashed you. Fear only brings destruction and
death. It needs to be destroyed." He laughed as he raised his swords. "I guess Man in Moon would
have to fix you. Then you will tell us where Pitch is when you see the truth, ya?"

"You stupid Guardians, you can't destroy fear or darkness! If you think I will help you hurt my
brother then you have another thing coming!"

The Guardians look darkly at him.

"Then we will force you, you bloody ankle-bitter!"

The Guardians attacked and Jackson screamed.

Jackson frowned in his sleep. His eyes move back and forth behind his eyelids and his lips allow a
fearful moan to escape, "Koz." He tossed and turned as the dream changed.

Jackson gasped as a sword came out of the sky and struck the ice. Jackson could only watch in
horror as the ice started to crack under his sister's feet.

"Jack, I'm scared!" Flee sobbed as she stared at him with pleading, brown eyes. Jackson looked at
his sister calmly, not wanting her to see his fear as well.

"Hang on Flee! I'm coming!" Jackson took off his shoes and slowly moved his feet towards the ice.
He slowly made his way towards the middle of the ice, wincing every time the ice cracked under
his feet. Jackson glanced at the ice fearfully as the cracks began to spread under his bare feet.

"J-Jack?" He looked up at his sister and saw her fearful expression. Jackson pushed his fear down
and smile reassuringly at her.

"It's alright. I'm coming. You're going to be alright."

"Jack!" Flee sobbed as Jackson reached for her. Flee reached out her hand shakily to grabbed his.
Jackson managed to grab her hand before a boomerang collided with the ice. The motion of the
boomerang caused the cracks to break underneath their feet.

"NO!" Jackson looked up to see his brother watching in absolute horror. "JACKSON!" was the
last thing he heard before he and Flee fell through the ice and into the icy water.

"KOZ!" Jackson woke up with a start. His soaked hair clung to his face as he sat up. Jackson
looked around the room fearfully as the dream of his death lingered in the air. Jackson sighed after
a moment and attempted to slow his breathing.

"It's just a dream," he whispered to himself. "It's just a dream." But was it really? Jackson
shuddered slightly and shifted his eyes to his sister and Night. Flee was still sleeping peacefully on
her bed. Night was sleeping on the makeshift bed of mismatch blankets and coats at the corner of
the room. Her ears twitched slightly in her sleep as she began to wake up. Jackson pressed his lips
together to try and not make a sound. He didn't want to wake her up.
Much to his dismay, Night cracked open one yellow eye at him. "What's wrong, Master? Nightmare?"

Jackson sighed. *Maybe I should lie.*

"It's nothing. I'm fine." This made Night become more aware of what he was most likely trying to hide. Jackson watched as Night got up and walked towards him. She nuzzled his cheek with her muzzle in a soothing gesture.

"Don't lie to me, Master. I can taste your fear."

Jackson sighed tiredly. "It's just a bad dream, Night. But…" his voice trailed off to a soft whisper. "I felt so real. It felt like it was happening for real."

"Nightmares are like that sometimes." She paused as if thinking of something. "Do you think you have developed your grandparents' powers? Creator often said that they were more psychics than warriors."

Jackson furrowed his brows. "You think I saw a possible future?"

Night's ears twitched at the question. "Maybe. It's hard to say. But it could be possible. What was the dream about? All I could get was something about the Guardians and then something about ice water."

Jackson sighed again. This time, he felt more worried and scared. Night continued to nuzzle his cheek and occasionally licked his cheek to lap away tears that he didn't realize were falling. "It was two actually," he whispered. "I was running from the Guardians. I saw them clearly too, which was weird, considering I didn't know what they actually looked like. Koz never showed me and all I know is from what are in our storybooks." Night snorted at the mention of the Guardians.

"Why were you running?" she asked softly.

"Apparently, I helped Koz escape them and they were angry. They wanted to destroy him. They said he was a monster and that he should be destroyed. They said other stuff too and I didn't like it."

"What happened?" she asked when he paused with a shuddering breath.

"I yelled that I wouldn't help them, so they…attacked."

Night looked at him sadly and licked away his tears. "It's okay, Master. Creator and I won't let them hurt you."

Jackson choked out a sob. "I…know. But it gets worse."

Night nuzzled him some more. "What is it?" she asked in a protective tone that made him relax slightly.

"We were at a lake and we were skating. I wasn't skating yet, but Flee was. When I was about to go on…this sword came out of nowhere and struck the ice." Jackson took a shaky breath. "It began to crack." Night looked alarmed at this, but he continued his story before she could say anything. "I was scared, Night. Flee was in danger and I went to save her. It was so real and I was so scared." Jackson's voice shook as he tried to suppress his sobs. "When I got to her a boomerang came out of nowhere and broke the ice." More tear began to flood over without stopping and he began to sob. "I saw Koz before we fell in. It was so cold. We died! We died, Night! We died!"
Jackson then sobbed into Night's fur, wrapping his arms around her neck and never letting go. As he sobbed, Jackson listened to Night's breathing and soothing words. Jackson felt so safe with Night and the reminder that his brother would protect him. But what if he wouldn't be able to protect him? What if he really did just see his and Flee's death? What if the Guardians harm Kozmotis and prevent him from protecting them? Or worse, kill him before he could do so.

Jackson cried harder into her fur for the rest of the night. He didn't know how long he cried into Night's fur. He hadn't realized he fallen asleep several hours later with Night standing protectively near him. Nor did he notice his brother shadowing into his room, interrupting his job of spread nightmares, and holding him close. What Jackson did remember though was his brother's voice singing the same familiar lullaby that he used to sing to him all the time before they got separated.

"Sway, sway, swaying between the waves
Sparkle, sparkle, sparkling, their voices drift into the distance
The dreaming jellyfish sing their song
and sleep on the gentle shore
Sway, sway, swaying, a ray of light
Sparkle, sparkle, sparkling, their voices drift to you
No matter when, as long as this song echoes out
In many colors, they hang in the clear sky
Sway, sway, swaying between the waves
Sparkle, sparkle, sparkling, their voices drift into the distance
The dreaming jellyfish play their song
Sparkle, sparkle, sparkling, their voices drift to you"
Christmas Eve

Chapter Summary

Pitch has a Christmas Eve Dinner at the Overlands. After 7 months, the Guardians are finally set free. North quickly sets out to do his deliveries but is unable to get every child before morning. Onyx spots North while giving Nightmares in Europe.

Despite the nightmares and uneasy feeling she been feeling over the past couple of day, Susanna still decided to hold a Christmas Eve dinner for her family. Besides, the kids wouldn't stop talking about the presents Pitch might get them. Some might think it would be odd that they weren't chatting about what Santa might get them. Susanna still found it strange that he was one of the said Guardians and could be responsible for her son's death.

"Why this looks good." Susanna jumped in surprise and turned to see a smirking Pitch Black.

Susanna smacked his shoulder playfully with her wooden spoon. "Don't scare me like that while I'm cooking."

She smiled as Pitch's laughed. She so loved it when he laughed. "Sorry! Sorry!"

Susanna returned her attention to the soup that she was making. "You are early."

Pitch shrugged and leaned against the counter. "I finished early," he said. "So, did they ask yet?"

"Oh? You mean about you courting me? And us living with you when we are done with this life?" she asked innocently.

"Yes," Pitch drawled out, sounding impatient.

"I don't know," she said as she glanced back at him. Pitch gave her an annoyed look. "You tell me." Susanna raised her voice loud enough for the kids to hear. She knew they were spying on them somewhere nearby.

Pitch blinked at her and gave her a perplexed look at her statement. Before Pitch could even respond two singing voices was heard from the hallway and got louder as Jackson and Flee entered the kitchen.

"Kozmotis and Mommy sitting on a Nightmare. K-I-S-S-I-N-G! We knew they were in love! And soon to be married and then they fight…while…um…the Guardians cry!"

Pitch laughed at the last part. Jackson and Flee clearly just added that for their enjoyment. "I knew you loved mom, Koz." Pitch's voice choked at the smug statement.

Susanna looked back to see Pitch rolling his eyes and glaring at his brother. "When's the wedding?"
Susanna was slightly startled by her daughter's question. Although, she assumed they were only thinking this way because she made them dress up for what was suppose to be a family dinner. Knowing how devious Jackson was, unfortunately, there was no doubt in her mind that her son had been spying on them closely when she and Pitch went out together, alone, over the last several weeks. She knew Jackson knew something, but was staying quiet for some reason. This made her pause as she put the spoon down to grab the bowls from the counter.

"Nowhere near now," Pitch told them.

"But why?" Jackson asked. "It's not like you're getting any older." Flee and Susanna giggled in response. Susanna turned around with two steaming bowls of soup in her hands and saw Pitch glaring at his brother in a playful brotherly manner. Not even Pitch could keep his cool with Jackson's little quips.

"Why you little brat! I'm going to give you nightmares for a week," Pitch growled, but she knew the threat wasn't valid; Pitch didn't have the heart to do that to his brother.

Jackson smiled sweetly at his brother. "Why Koz, I have to say that I'm hurt." Jackson looked as if what Pitch said struck him in the chest, painfully. "You would give your brother nightmares for only looking out for your love life?"

Pitch crossed his arms over his chest and continued to glare at his younger brother. "I don't need your help. I can do it on my own. I am older than you if you don't remember."

"Oh, I remember," Jackson acknowledge. "And you must remember who hooked up Flee and Jamie."

Susanna took that moment to clear her throat, stopping Pitch from whatever comment he was going to growl in response.

"Boys," her voice had a hint of authority and disappointment in it. "This is not the time to argue. It is Christmas Eve and you two promised to behave." The two siblings stiffen at her tone and nodded.

"I remember," Jackson said with a nervous smile.

"Me too," Pitch said, trying to act as if he was not acting like a child a few minutes ago.

"Good. You two can take these to the table then. Food is done." Pitch and Jackson complied without arguing as they took the two bowls and left the kitchen. They were soon back to retrieve two more bowls, while she and Flee brought four cups and a pitcher of cider.

"I wonder what Kozmotis got us," Flee whispered as she spotted presents under the tree. Susanna smiled.

"You just have to see in the morning dear."

Seven months.

They had been trapped for seven long months. It had been very stressful and tiring watching the Yetis preparing for Christmas, while they were searching for the cause of their lack of powers. However, as months went on the others were starting to lose hope.

First, it was Tooth. She knew her fairies were working hard to collect the teeth while they fought
against Pitch. However, without her guidance form time to time, they could get lost or forget. The effects of the lack of believers were not too strong. She could still fly, but her color was faded slightly.

Next was Sandy. The lack of believers was stronger with the golden man. Unlike Tooth, Sandy could no longer fly. He was more tired now and barely had the strength to communicate with his sand.

North was still hanging on, but barely. He wasn't the jolly, annoying block that he usually was. But he was still creating toys and rushing it off to the Yetis for production. North was still clinging on to the hope that the blizzards would be gone before he had to leave to deliver the presents for the ankle-biters. But even he was coming to the end of his ropes. The Yetis were behind on their work because of the lack of supplies. The crazy elves kept breaking things (like most of the presents). Where they get the energy? He had no idea. And the worst of all — it was past his departure time.

Bunnymund's nose twitched as he entered the workshop. There weren't enough toys this year. There only seemed to be enough for a couple thousand ankle-biters. Bunnymund frowned as he walked towards North. North was dressed in his red suit. The deathtrap (that North swore was fun and fast) was ready with about half of the usual load he usually had.

"North?"

"Hmm?" North looked at him with dull blue eyes. The joy and cheeriness were slowly leaving the man's body and was being replaced with despair.

Bunnymund sighed and looked at his friend worriedly. "I've picked up a very strong magical scent from the Globe Room."

"What type of scent?" North's eyes were wide and were starting to fill with hope. Bunnymund felt his own hope rise. Maybe they finally found what was keeping them there.

"It's not one of ours, the Yetis, or the elves. I would recognize it."

"What did it smell like?" North asked as they began to leave the Workshop and walked quickly towards the Globe Room, where Tooth and Sandy were sleeping.

"Strong Spring magic, mixed with Fall, Winter, and Summer."

Onyx stared at the child as he slept. Black sand formed into a picture of a clown chasing the child. Onyx flicked her tail as she made her departure. Human children were odd creatures and very silly with their fears. What they were afraid of were silly.

Rabbits.

Sharks.

A talking sandwich.

Buttons.

Indians.

Water.

It was all very silly.
Onyx shadowed out of the room and into the dark night. She neighed pleasingly at the cool winter night of Christmas Day. It would just be a few more hours before the Prince and Princess would wake up to open their presents.

She neighed pleasingly at the thought as she flew to the next house in Europe. They were going to love their presents. She wondered if Master was having a nice time at the dinner with his family. He did say we would be staying there 'til morning.

"Now Dasher! Now, Dancer! Now, Prancer and Vixen!"

Onyx stopped in surprise as she heard the voice. She looked up with narrowed eyes.

"On, Comet! On, Cupid!"

She saw a red sleigh and eight reindeer flying above her as they left the house she was about to enter.

"On, Donner and Blitzen!"

The Guardians have finally escaped their prison.
Christmas Day

Chapter Summary

Jackson and Flee get up to open their presents but realized that Santa never came. Pitch surprises the children and Susanna with their presents but is angry when he gets bad news. Sanderson finally awakes from his forced slumber. He is disappointed that the others misinterpret Manny's message, again, as they set out to Burgess. Pitch prepares for their arrival.

The sun slowly rose over the horizon on a beautiful Christmas morning. Freshly fallen snow covered the ground, making it seem beautiful and magical as it sparkled in the sunlight. Beams of light passed through the slightly frosted window and entered the dark bedroom. As more light entered, the room started to lighten up as it traveled around the room. The light slowly made its way to one of the two sleeping children in the bedroom.

A soft moan escaped the young boy's lips as his face was hit by the light. His nose scrunched up in discomfort and he attempted to hide from the light. But the light was persistent. For today was a very special day for the young Overland children. It was Christmas Day.

One brown, unforced eye cracked open. He slowly opened the other one and waited for his vision to focus. With a groan, he sat up and looked around. It was still fairly early in the morning, too easy actually. Jackson was used to getting up early to shepherd the sheep, but that would be in an hour or two.

Jackson yawned and glanced at the window. The window was coated with pretty designs made of frost. Jackson could see small snowflakes falling gently down and touching the window.

Jackson smiled softly as he got out of bed. He walked towards his sister's bed and smiled softly when he saw Night waking up. Night's ears flicked and she opened her yellow eyes (although, he swore it looked like gold at times.) when he passed by her corner.

"Merry Christmas, Master."

Jackson smiled. "Merry Christmas, Night. Sleep well?"

She nodded as she proceeded to get up. "Yes, are you going to open the presents now?" she asked.

Jackson nodded. "Yeah, you want to wake Koz and mom for me?"

"As you wish," she said as she turned around and walked into a shadow.

Jackson returned his attention to his sleeping sister. Flee was sleeping peacefully as she snuggled into her bear fur covers. Her hair was tousled and bedridden as she continued to sleep, oblivious of Jackson being there. Jackson smiled softly as he shook her shoulder.

"Flee, wake up. Wake up, Flee."

Flee moaned in her sleep. "Not now Jack," she said sleepily.
Jackson smiled mischievously. "Oh, but I thought you wanted me to wake you up so we can open…our presents." Jackson whispered the last part into his sister's ear and watched in amusement as her eyes snapped open to stare at him.

"Presents!" Jackson chuckled as his sister removed her covers and jumped off the bed. She then proceeded to snatch his hand and dragged him out of the room.

Emily tended to her garden of Seasonal Flowers. These flowers were a part of her in a sense. They were made of very ancient magic from her home world.

Emily gazed at the petals of the growing Seasonal Flowers as she dug some dirt and planted some seeds before covering it up again. The Seasonal Flowers had four different color petals: a reddish-orange, a whitish-blue, a bright green, and dark green mixed with brown, orange, and yellow. In the center of the flower were four pink buds, one for each of her precious seasons.

The flowers made her smile. The Seasonal Flowers were very special and her absolute favorite. These wonderful flowers had a very unique ability to negate any spirits' powers. The flowers also had the ability to create a barrier. The barrier varies depending on the environment and could either trap a spirit within the barrier or keep others out, depending on the owner who activated its abilities. However, the flower had one flaw: if destroyed or removed from its resting place, the spell would be broken.

Emily hummed as she began to plant another seed in the hole that she created. She began patting the ground when she felt the tightening in her chest. Emily gasped as she felt ancient magic returning to her. Emily froze in place as she stared at the flowers that she had grown. Her eyes were unfocused as she waited for the tightness in her chest to dissolve.

Fluffy white clouds turned an ugly gray, making the sky seem dark and eery. The clouds rumbled and roared as lightning bolts angrily flashed across the sky. The winds whipped around the trees violently as they responded to Emily's emotions. Emily's tilted her face to the sky and glared at it.

*The Guardians destroyed my flower.* She wasn't sure how they found it. She hid it in the Globe Room with the other plants Nicholas had above the fireplace. It was hidden well, unless the Guardians got so weak that their magic was weaker than her flower, making it easier for that Pooka to pick up the scent.

Emily screamed at the thought of the Guardians destroying her beautiful flower. She was going to make their lives a living hell!

Emily glared at the lightning bolts that flashed across the sky. They were going to pay dearly. But first, she had to inform her father about this before it was too late. She was starting to get a very bad feeling that something bad was going to happen.

He was a bit disoriented when he returned to consciousness. It was amazing that he could wake up at all. After losing so many believers, he felt so tired and fell into a coma (so to speak). Sanderson slowly opened his eyes and noticed that light was entering the huge windows of Nicholas's Workshop. The sound of grumbles and footsteps could be heard. Sanderson recognized them as the Yetis. Sanderson also heard the voices of his fellow Guardians behind him. The coach that he was on was near the fireplace and facing the globe, so he wasn't facing the others.

"So you weren't able to deliver presents to all the children?" Sanderson heard Toothiana ask.
"I'm afraid not." Nicholas sounded upset and tired. "By the time I got to the new world it was already morning."

"The poor dears will be so disappointed."

Sanderson shifted his eyes to the globe. He noticed the east side was glowing brightly with yellow lights. *Well, that explains why I managed to wake up.* He frowned when he noticed that the west side of the globe was either dimming or going out.

"Pitch had taken advantage of our absence," Aster's Austrian voice said with a hint of disgust and anger. "I felt the lights going out. No doubt from him."

"We have to stop him!" Toothiana yelled as her wings beat faster. "I'll knock a tooth out of his mouth for giving those awful nightmares to the children!"

Sanderson felt his heart cringe for the other sand wielder. Pitch was just doing his job. He needed to give nightmares to the children. Like him and his dreams, nightmares are needed to preserve the balance.

Sanderson sighed and shifted his eyes to the ceiling. He was aware that Aster was the cause for fueling the flames of hatred towards Pitch. Pitch had killed his kind, but that was not his fault. He had lost control. It saddened him to think that a good man could cause so much destruction, unknowingly. It made him wonder what would happen if he ever lost control of his sand. Would he be seen as a monster too? Would he destroy everything that he loved and cared for?

Sanderson shuddered and sighed as he tried to move. He could move a little, but not enough for his comfort. He might need a little more believers before he could fly again. With another sigh, he tried to move his legs.

Sanderson blinked when he saw moonbeams coming into the room. The others gasped. "Well, it's about time," Aster yelled.

"What's he saying?" Toothiana asked.

Sanderson stared at the beam as he heard the message. Unlike other spirits, sand wielders had special abilities, aside from giving nightmares or pleasant dreams to children or granting wishes. Sand wielders, like him and Pitch, were able to read different languages and different magics that associated with them to help answer they greatest wish or fear.

*Do not harm Pitch Black!*

"Manny is saying something about Pitch!" Toothiana exclaimed.

Sanderson blinked. Did Manny finally realize something?

*I have made a grave error. He is not a monster or evil. He is not harming the children."

"I don't understand, Manny," Nicholas said in confusion. "What is Pitch doing to the children? Is he harming them?"

*Do not harm Pitch Black. Stop this war. Do not attack him anymore? He has finally found his missing family.*

Sanderson gasped. Pitch found his family? He thought Mother Nature was his only family. Maybe there was another other than the people from his home world. Sanderson smiled. If Pitch had his
family then maybe the war between them could finally end. He just hoped the others didn't interrupt the message wrong.

The tree looked beautiful as light gently reflected off the ice horse ornaments. The horse ornaments were a gift from Emily and Kozmotis. These ornaments were made of ice and black sand and it just seemed to make the tree sparkle as the light touched them. Jackson loved the little horses. It reminded him of his older brother's Nightmares. It was such a wonderful gift, considering they never had a Christmas Tree before. But when he and Flee made it downstairs they paused. Jackson could only stare at the presents with a raised brow. It seemed that Santa never came to their house since the presents that were under the tree were the ones that his brother brought. *I guess Santa never came.* Jackson wasn't sure why he felt a slight pain in his chest. He was upset that the Guardians were fighting his brother and it annoyed him greatly, but shouldn't the Guardians make an attempt to make sure they were alright? Or at least make sure their belief in them was still there?

Jackson shook his head at that thought. *No, it doesn't matter. We don't need them.* Jackson looked at his sister, who seem slightly disappointed that Santa didn't come to give them presents. *We are fine with Koz, Who needs the Guardians anyway?*

"Merry Christmas!" Jackson and Flee jumped and glanced behind them when they heard Kozmotis's greeting. Kozmotis and their mother stopped behind them, giving them curious looks. "Is something wrong dears?" their mother asked. "No," Jackson said with a smile. He knew it was forced but he didn't care. "We were just admiring the ornaments."

"It's beautiful, isn't it?" their mother asked with a soft smile.

They both nodded in response. "Let's open the presents now!" Flee said, disturbing the comfortable silence.

Jackson chuckled and ruffled her hair. "Sure thing kiddo."

Pitch watched with a smile as Jackson and Flee were given their first present to open. He had given his favorite and only believers two presents each and gave one present to the beautiful women next to him. Although, she decided to not open hers just yet.

Pitch watched silently as Jackson and Flee tore the golden paper off the bigger present first. Both children seemed so excited to finally get to know what he got them. Oh, they were in for a surprise. He couldn't help the grin that formed on his face as the two children gasped in surprise. Within each box laid two new ice skates. Flee's skates were a nice white laced with gold and Jackson's was black laced with gold. Pitch had decided that it was about time that they got a new one. The old ones they had were just about ready to be thrown out.

"Oh, thank you! Thank you!" Pitch was slightly startled by the hug he got from the younger girl. But his shock didn't last too long. He returned the embrace with a smile.

"You are very welcome, Flee." He shifted his eyes to his younger brother to see that he had tears in his eyes. He too was touched by the gift. Jackson smiled at him and thanked him as well. That made Pitch's heart warmed a bit. He did love having his brother in his life.
"Oh, Pitch." Pitch glanced at Susanna then with a soft smile. Wide brown eyes were staring in awe at the blue dress. The dress was a nice light blue that had sheer sleeves and a cape that sparkled like freshly fallen snow. White snowflakes were stitched into the skirt of the dress and laced with gold trimmings, making it look like it had just fallen from the sky. The dress was absolutely gorgeous. "It's beautiful."

Pitch sighed in relief. He was glad to see that she liked it. It had taken him a week to create the dress. Although it wasn't hard considering she was the same height, size and weight as his Caroline. Pitch felt a small level a guilt but pushed it aside. Caroline would want him to move on and love again, right?

"Ooooh," Pitch glanced back at the children to see that they opened their smaller gifts. In them were the same necklaces that he had given Susanna.

"Is this the same stuff that could turn us into a spirit?" Flee asked. Pitch nodded, earning a bright smile on her face.

"Cool!" Jackson said this time as he placed the necklace around his neck and helped his sister with hers. "I can't wait 'till were are older." Flee squealed and smiled in response. Pitch nodded and forced a smile on his face to hide the pain. If only you would live to adulthood, Jackson. If only you would.

Sanderson frowned as the others rushed towards the sleigh after figuring out that Pitch was still in Burgess. He wasn't surprised that the others misinterpreted Manny's message. They thought he meant that Pitch was harming the children and that they should go after him. Of course, Aster encouraged this since he still had a grudge over what Pitch did to his family and race. He really needed to get over it.

Sanderson sighed and tried to fly. He only managed to float an inch off the ground. He cursed at his luck and wished his powers would come back soon. The others were leaving him behind in order for him to rest and gather his strength. However, all he wanted to do was stop them from making the worse mistake of their lives.

But of course the other didn't listen to him. They didn't interpret his message right and gave up after several tries. Sanderson sighed. He hoped his powers hurried up and come back soon.

Pitch was not in a good mood. He had to leave his family earlier than he wanted. Pitch gritted his teeth as Onyx told him that the Guardians escaped and that she spotted North delivering presents. He had a very bad feeling about this situation. He glanced at Susanna. Jackson, Flee, and Night had just left to go ice skating just moments ago.

"Is something wrong?" Susanna asked.

"Onyx just spotted the Guardians in Europe."

Susanna gasped. She looked nervously at the door. "Should we go after Jackson and Flee?" she asked worriedly.

Pitch bit the inside of his cheek. He was worried about his younger brother safety, but at the same time, he had to make sure the Guardians didn't get close to the village. There was no doubt that once North got back to the North Pole they would come here. He gritted his teeth in frustration.

"Pitch?" Susanna gently took his hand in hers.
Pitch sighed as he ran his hand through his hair. "They are coming here and I need to gather my Nightmares to fight them."

Susanna nodded in understanding. "I can go after them," she suggested.

"I can send one of my Nightmares to go with you."

Susanna smiled and pecked him on the cheek. "Thank you," she said with a smile.

Pitch nodded and turned towards Onyx. "Take care of Susanna and help her find Jackson and Flee. When you do, take them to my lair."

Onyx nodded. "As you wish Master."

Pitch nodded and turned back to Susanna. "Be safe."

Pitch smiled. "I will." And then he walked into the shadows and entered his throne room. He called all his Nightmares and within minutes they appeared. Millions of Nightmare Horses appeared, waiting for his command. "It is time," he told them. "The Guardians are coming."
Death of Jackson Overland

Chapter Summary

Jackson, Flee, and Night go to the lake to go ice skating. Night hears the Guardians nearby and Flee is startled when a sword comes out of the sky and collides with the ice; Jackson remembers his dream when the ice cracks. Jackson saves his sister from drowning but ends up taking her place.

Chapter Notes

All I have to say is that I wanted to cry while writing this.

Jackson held his skates in his hand as he turned towards his mother and brother. "Mom, Koz, we're going to go ice skating!" Jackson yelled to his mother as she talked to Kozmotis about something he didn't care about. Kozmotis gave him a concerned frown.

"I don't think it's a good idea, Jackson."

"But I want to go ice skating!" Flee whined, making Kozmotis sigh.

Jackson glanced at his mother, who was glancing at him with a sad look. He wasn't sure what the look was for, though. He'd have to ask her later. "We'll be careful," he said, hoping to ease her worries.

"Well, alright," she said with a small nod. "But make sure to check the ice first."

Jackson nodded and saw that Night shadowed away and reappeared with his staff in her mouth. "Night's got it covered!" he said cheerfully as he took the staff from Night before leaving the house with Flee with Night close behind them.

"BE CAREFUL!" his mother yelled as they left. Jackson smiled. Mom sure was protective of them.

"We will!" they responded back before walking onto a familiar path that would take them to a familiar lake in the forest.

Night snickered as she followed Master and his sister as they happily ran out of the house. She followed the two overly excited children as they made their way to the lake. The lake was under a very big tree and not too far was Creator's lair. But that was a little deeper in the woods and was hidden pretty well by all the trees that surround it.

Night's ear flicked as she heard something. The odd sound sounded like bells and something clashing against something, but it was far away from them. At least for now, she thought. Night huffed as she glared at the sky. They are close.
"Hurry up, Jack!" Night turned her attention back to the children. Flee was already done with putting on her skates and was waiting impatiently for her brother. Master had put his shoes aside and glanced at his sister with a smirk.

"Don't be so impatient," he told her. Flee pouted in response. "You, little lady, have to wait 'till I check the ice. It would be terrible if we fell in." Night saw the flicker of uneasiness flashing in Master's eyes and the uneasy scuff of Flee's skates as she moved nervously from side to side. He must be remembering that nightmare. It was slightly odd that she was thinking that. She was a nightmare after all.

Night huffed and stomped protectively in front of Master while he was tapping the edge of the ice with his staff. Master looked at her in concern when she stopped in front of him.

"What is it Night?"

"Get on, Master. You won't be able to check the center without getting on the ice yourself." Master gave her a puzzled look at first before he nodded in understanding. Night bent down and waited for Master to settle himself on her back. Night glared at the ice as she stood at the edge. Master held onto her mane with one hand as he tapped his staff on the ice with the other, double checking the edge of the lake. When the ice seemed sturdy enough, Night floated above the ice and made her way around the edge of the ice. After making a trip around the ice twice, making sure the edges were fine, Night floated deeper into the ice. They did the same procedure: going around the ice twice; Master tapping the ice to make sure it was safe for skating; and then moving to the next section of ice to check, while doing the procedure all over again.

When they got to the center, however, they both frowned. The ice wasn't fully frozen all the way through, like the rest of the lake. It was slightly thin, but no cracks appeared when Master tapped it. Night decided to land on the ice to check if it could hold their combined weight. Thankfully nothing happened. Although, water could be seen moving from under the layer of ice.

"I think it's safe," Master observed, it was obvious that he was frowning; it was in the tone of his voice.

"It could hold our weight just fine," Night said. "As long as nothing heavier or pointy comes in contact with it."

"Is it safe!" Flee yelled from the snow covered ground.

Night turned around and began sliding back to solid ground. Once Master was off he nodded at his sister's question as he leaned on this staff. "Yea kinda," he said. "The edges and some of the inner sections are frozen, but it's a bit thin near the middle of the lake. I doubt it will break under us, though." Flee nodded as she glanced at the ice. "Although, let's try to stay on the edges more; I don't want to take any chances."

"Okay!" Flee yelled with a big smile on her face as she quickly got on the ice. They watched as Flee began skating happily on the ice. Night's ears flicked in amusement as Flee spun, and jumped, and twirled on the ice. It wasn't perfect and she occasionally lost her balance, but she was having so much fun, so it didn't really matter.

"She's good. Did you teach her?" Night asked as she relaxed on the ground, deciding to stand guard, just in case.

"Yeah," Master said with a nod as he continued to watch his sister with a fond smile. Night returned her attention to Flee when Master began putting on his skates. She watched in amusement
as Master skated gracefully on the ice. He was amazing. She wondered how he was able to do that so perfectly.

"Night, do you want to join us?" Flee squealed as she twirled around on the ice. Night neighed before shaking her head no. She would just keep watch. Flee shrugged and squealed when she and Master started to play ice tag. Of course, Master was letting her win.

Night watched silently as the two played and danced. But her attention soon shifted when she heard a crash, followed by yelling and clashes between swords and sand and something else. Night shot to her hooves and glared towards the bushes and trees towards her right. That sounded too close. They were too close.

"Night?" Night turned her gaze to the children. They noticed her stiff posture when she shot to her hooves. Master skated towards her, while Flee continued to skate on the ice. Night noticed that she was a little too close to the center. "Is something wrong?"

Night turned to Master and said urgently, "The Guardians are close!" Master stiffened and paled. "We must leave to the lair, now!" Master nodded as he bent down to take off his skates.

"Flee, get off the ice!" he yelled as he managed to get one skate off. "We have to go! The Guardians are nearby!"

Flee paled at the mention of the Guardians. "Okay," she said shakily as she started to skate back. However, Night then heard a swooshing sound and something rustling among the trees. Night barely had a second to process what was going on before a sharp sword struck the ice right in front of Flee.

The world around them became as silent as death as the ice started to crack.

The fear in his sister's eyes was painful to watch as a spider-web of cracks formed under her skates. Jackson tried to shake the sudden fear he felt as he remembered his nightmare.

"Jack, I'm scared!" Flee sobbed as she stared at him with pleading, brown eyes. Jackson looked at his sister calmly, not wanting her to see his fear as well.

"Hang on Flee! I'm coming!" Jackson took off his shoes and slowly moved his feet towards the ice. He slowly made his way towards the middle of the ice, wincing every time the ice cracked under his feet. Jackson glanced at the ice fearfully as the cracks began to spread under his bare feet.

"J-Jack?" He looked up at his sister and saw her fearful expression. Jackson pushed his fear down and smile reassuringly at her.

"It's alright. I'm coming. You're going to be alright."

"Jack!" Flee sobbed as Jackson reached for her. Flee reached out her hand shakily to grabbed his. Jackson managed to grab her hand before a boomerang collided with the ice. The motion of the boomerang caused the cracks to break underneath their feet.

"NO!" Jackson looked up to see his brother watching in absolute horror. "JACKSON!" was the last thing he heard before he and Flee fell through the ice and into the icy water.

Jackson took a shaky breath as he pushed the memory towards the back of his mind. It would not happen. They would not die! Kozmotis would be able to hear their combined fears! He would come! He was nearby!
As the ice traveled and cracked further, Jackson realized he could not wait for his brother. "Jack, I'm scared." The ice began to splinter some more under Flee's skates. Jackson pushed his fear down when Flee began to wobble on the ice. He would not let his sister die. He had to save her, no matter what.

Jackson placed his skates on the snow and slowly began to get on the ice. The ice was freezing cold as his bare feet came in contact with the ice.

"MASTER!"

Jackson ignored Night as he kept his eyes on his sister. "I know, I know…but you're not gonna fall in alright." He quickly glanced at Night and gestured for his staff. "You're not gonna fall in." The sound of hooves was heard, so he knew Night did what he was trying to tell her. "We're gonna have a little fun instead."

"No we're not!" she retorted fearfully. Jackson smiled calmly at her.

"Would I trick you?" he asked. Although, he kinda knew her response to that already.

"Yes!" she yelled with tears in her eyes. "You always play tricks!"

Jackson fought the urge to cry himself. But her comment did put a smile on his face. He chuckled nervously and replied, "Well, alright." He admitted it was true, at times. Okay, maybe all the time. But, it was who he was. "Well, not, not this time. I promise." He meant it. All he could think about was saving his sister and making sure she lived. "I promise, you're gonna be...you're gonna be fine."

Jackson ignored the distress neighing of Night, followed by the surprised gasp from Night as something came out of the bushes towards her, followed by someone yelling something about a Nightmare harming children and something about his brother. Jackson ignored the clattering of his staff as it landed on the ice near him. He ignored all of that and just focused on his sister. He held her gaze with his own. You are going to be fine, Flee. Even...even if I have to die to make sure it happens.

"You have to believe in me." Jackson watched with a calm smile as Flee smiled through her fear. Jackson felt better seeing that and allowed himself to relax (despite the situation) as he thought of a way to keep his sister calm.

"You wanna play a game?" Jackson asked playfully, for what he knew was for the very last time. "We're going to play Hopscotch! Like we play every day!" This boosted Jackson's confidence when he saw Flee more relaxed and reassured that they would be fine. It only that was true.

Deciding it would be a good idea to make her laugh, he moved his foot as if they were playing hopscotch on solid ground. "It's as easy as one..." Jackson took one leap and pretended that he was losing his balance. "Whoaaa..." When he caught himself, Flee laughed, making him smile. Almost there, he thought as he spotted his staff. "Two.." He made another jump. "Three!"

Jackson turned towards his sister and silently cringe when he saw Night on the ground (looking dazed) with a familiar boomerang near her. The Kangaroo attacked her!

Jackson returned his attention to his sister (forcing down his irritation for the Guardians) and spread his arms out in front of him to show that everything was okay. "Alright..." Jackson reached down and picked up his staff from where Night dropped it. He extended it towards Flee with a confident smile. "Now it's your turn." Flee's confidence seemed to waver a bit, but Jackson kept his...
gaze on her. He never broke it even when he started to hear others running towards their direction.

"One..." Flee hopped like Jackson did before. Flee had a worried look on her face when she wobbled a bit, but she, luckily, caught her balance.

"That's it, that's it..." Jackson encourage. You're doing so great.

"Two..." Flee hopped again and was almost able to reach his staff. Almost.

"Three!" Flee grabbed the staff with her last hop. Jackson didn't waste any time as he used his staff to sling his sister with all his might. Flee squeaked as she was propelled to the edge of the lake, which was still solid.

"JACKSON! FLEE!" Jackson looked up with a relieved smile when he saw their mother riding Onyx as they emerged from the left side of the forest. Jackson kept a smile on his face as she looked at him with absolute fear. Jackson felt his smile falter as he felt the ice completely break under him.

"JACK!"

"JACKSON!" As Jackson fell into the cold icy water, Jackson found himself reliving his nightmare; he saw the fear in his mother's and sister's faces. But what hurt the most was the total angst on Kozmotis's face as he ran towards the ice, while three familiar figures (that he recognized from his nightmare) looked on with shock.

"I'm sorry," Jackson cried to his brother before he was completely under the icy cold water.

Jackson gasped as the cold water threaten to crush him. It felt like he was going into shock. He struggled and struggled as he saw the faint image of his family.

"Jack! Come back!" Flee...

"Jackson! Jackson!" Mom...

"No, Jackson!" Koz...

Jackson soon found his body becoming numb. He was freezing to death. His mind became sluggish as his movement started to slow down.

Jackson's vision started to go fuzzy, the images started to mix together, as his body began to sink to the bottom of the lake. Jackson moved his head a bit as he slowly moved his hand to the floating vial around his neck. He weakly held it in his numb hand.

Koz, please take care of...Mom and Flee. They mean...everything to me. Jackson struggled weakly as water filled his lungs. Be there for them...please. They need you now more than ever.

Jackson's heart began to hurt from the pain he was feeling for leaving his family behind. I'm sorry...I couldn't keep my promise...I guess we won't live...forever...as spirits...

Darkness began to surround him as the light began to fade from his fuzzy vision. Jackson could hear his own heart slowing down and getting weaker and weaker. This eyes grew heavy as he finally stopped struggling in the icy water.

I love you...Koz...Don't...forget...me...
A Broken Heart

Chapter Summary

Pitch watches as Jackson falls through the ice; he hears Jackson's fears and completely loses it.

Chapter Notes

I originally had planned on ending this arc with this chapter (with the title being Pitch's Anger *couch...couch*). However, I decided to divide it into 3 or 4 more chapter for the different POVs for Pitch, Susanna, Flee and maybe the Guardians (maybe). Enjoy!

Nightmare Horses clashed with swords and boomerangs and the sharp wings of the Tooth Fairy Queen. A frustrating battle between the Nightmare King and his Nightmares against the Guardians was raging on. The Guardians were barely matching Pitch's attacks as he attacked with his Nightmares and scythe. However, the Guardians continued while blabbering that they were going to destroy his Nightmares from harming the children. How stupid could they be?

Pitch knew the Guardians were not at full strength. But he was too busy trying to push the Guardians away from the village, to really put much effect into attacking them. But they kept trying to attack him directly, making it almost impossible to force them back. Keyword: almost.

Pitch grinned wickedly as he stepped into the shadows before the Pooka's boomerang could hit him. The Pooka growled in anger as his boomerang returned to him. He so wanted to end that rabbit's life and maybe use him for rabbit stew. Hmmm...now that was an idea.

"My, my, angry are we?" he mocked through the shadows. The Guardians continued to fight his Nightmares as he hid in the shadows. It was amusing how they tried to defeat all his wonderful Nightmares. They were outnumbered by a few thousand or so.

Many of his Nightmares were also not like the others. They were the improved ones that Jackson helped him with. Jackson was very good with his powers over energy. They had managed to find a way to strengthen his Nightmares with his energy powers. With it, the sand would by more solidified. It would take a lot longer for them to be destroyed by his stupid enemies that he sought to destroy.

"Pitch! Get out here and fight us! Or are ya bloody afraid we'll kick you back to that hole you came from?" Pitch watched the Pooka, unamused, from the shadows. Were the Guardians really that desperate? Or were they just stupid? They were the ones losing here.

Pitch smirked as he laughed. His laughter seemed to come from all around the fighting Guardians as the shadows amplified it, making it echo and menacing. The Guardians jumped as they tried to fight the Nightmares, in addition to finding out where he was. But in truth, he was everywhere and yet not at the same time. The shadows quivered and moved around them as they sensed the
Guardians' fears. It was very amusing. Did they not realize that they were fighting fear?

"Well," Pitch held his scythe in his hands. "If you insist, vermin?"

"Who are ya calling a vermin, ya bloody ratbag!?"

"Why you of course," Pitch said as he materialized behind the Pooka. Pitch held his scythe close to the Pooka's neck.

"BUUUNNNY! DUCK!" Pitch quickly staggered back, his scythe cutting a few strands of Bunnymund's fur. He wasn't expecting North to throw his sword at them.

"Crikey, North! You could have hit me!" Bunnymund yelled, looking very stunned and very angry as he glared at North.

North shrugged. "Ha, you survived. You worry too much," he said before he got attacked by three improved Nightmares.

Pitch growled as he disappeared into the shadows just as Toothiana was about to hit him. "Pitch get back here!" Pitch ignored the fairy and watched the battle from the shadows.

Pitch frowned slightly as he saw Bunnymund still glaring at North and not paying attention to the three Nightmares that were charging at him before it was too late. They seem to be fighting each other more than me. Pitch rolled his eyes at the insufferable Guardians. I can't believe these were the ones who almost defeated me during the Dark Ages.

From the shadows, Pitch glanced at the moon. The moon was a little more than half way. It would be a full moon within the next couple of day. "You're Guardians are slacking, old friend." The shadows quivered as they keep his words away from the Guardians. They did not hear a word he said, not that it mattered, but the moon did.

The moon seemed to dim before sending several moonbeams. Pitch frowned as one of the moonbeams came close to him, while the others scattered around to make it look like it was reflecting off the snow and not a direct message to him.

Pitch frowned as he heard the ancient magic of the moonbeam deliver a message to him. The message was a soft whisper of a very young man, filled with regret. I am very sorry. I was wrong.

Pitch frowned. He couldn't be serious.

I realized too late. Fear can not be destroyed.

Pitch felt his eyes widening for a moment. Was the Man in the Moon really apologizing to him, after all this time? Pitch couldn't believe it. So little Tsar Lunar XII was actually apologizing for attacking him once he got in control again, for blaming him for the stuff the Fearlings did when they were out of control, and for raging war on him for only doing his job? Well, he never thought he would see that day.

Pitch glanced at the Guardians who were still fighting his Nightmares. If that was the case then why were they still fighting against him? Did he not tell the Guardians to stop this pointless fighting then? Or were they so insufferable that they were not listening anymore?

My moonbeams have failed to reach my Guardians. Their anger and hatred have blinded them. I fear only those who could hear old magic like you and Sanderson would understand what I'm saying.
Pitch clucked his tongue. Only old spirits could accurately communicate with kindred spirits much like himself, Sanderson, Father Time (unfortunately), his daughter, Jackson (sorta), little Tsar, the four Winds, and Death. It would be next to impossible for others to understand Sanderson, considering he speaks a very old language that not many know now and had resorted to sand charades.

Pitch found himself rolling his eyes at that. Charades might be one of the worst games ever invented, considering if a person actually had the patience for it (not many do). Oh, he felt bad for the little Guardian. He must be constantly annoyed when the other fools gave up when they could not figure out his symbols. He would have to remember to tease the little man later.

Actually, now that he thought about it. Where was Sanderson?

We're going to die!

Pitch stiffened in horror as he heard the intoxicating, sickening fear of his two children. The Nightmare Horses whined as they felt their fears; the Guardians were oblivious to what was going on and were startled when the Nightmares started to go crazy.

Koz, help us! The ice is cracking! I don't know what to do.

I'm scared! I'm scared!

Pitch felt his own fear raising and completely ignored the Guardians as he exited the shadows and made a run for the path that he knew would lead him to this children; his family; his believers.

It's like my nightmare! I'm scared! I'm scared!

I don't want to die!

"No," he whispered; he prayed he wasn't too late to help them.

"PITCH, YOU RATBAG! GET BACK HERE!" Pitch ignored them and cursed under his breath as the Pooka threw his boomerang, which he dodged before it could halt his progress. He didn't have time for them. His children were in danger.

I have to save Flee. She will not die! Will Koz be mad at me, though? I might not survive this.

Pitch gasped and ran faster. His eyes began to sting with unfamiliar tears. He ignored the insults and screams of the Guardians that were close on his heel. All he could hear was Jackson and Flee's fears, along with the fast beating of his own heart. "No, no, no! Why now? Why today?"

I'm sorry Koz. I don't think I can keep my promise.

"Jackson hang on! I'm coming!"

"JACKSON! FLEE!" Pitch took a sharp left around the trees and practically jump over several boulders and logs. He felt his heart pounding the life out of his chest as he emerged into the clearing where the lake was located. And what he saw made his mind go blank as the cracking of ice reached his ears.

"JACK!" Jackson was on the lake and was starting to plummet into the frigid cold water underneath.

What Pitch did next was merely a reaction. Pitch ran towards the ice (looking on with absolute
horror) and used his sand to create a whip. "JACKSON!" The sand moved quickly to grab Jackson before he completely submerged in the water. But by then it was too late.

"I'm sorry!" That was all he heard when he reached the lake. Pitch fell to his knees and saw Jackson struggling, but he was too far under.

The tears freely fell as Jackson's movement slowed down. "Jack! Come back!" Flee's cries struck a cord in his heart as he glanced at the woman and child kneeling next to him with tears on their faces. Flee looked horrible as she whimpered and cried for her brother. Susanna had to hold her back from getting too close to the hole in the ice.

"Jackson!" Susanna's cries broke his heart. The sadness in her brown orbs, the quivering of her lips was too much to bear. "Jackson!"


The pain. Oh, the pain was worse than he ever imagined. Emily told him about Jackson's death. But the vision was so vague…not even Father Time could pinpoint where and when. All he saw was snow and ice…and multiple visions. Nothing was clear! Why didn't he put two and two together sooner?

The tears fell harder. His pain intensified. The distress whines of Night and Onyx added to their misery and pain. Night sounded so upset and broken. Her voice was laced with pain; no doubt from the Pooka's boomerang he passed by before when he was running towards the lake.

Pitch closed his eyes as he tried to keep his anger at bay. But is was so very hard. The pain was so much. He had promised to protect his baby brother. And Jackson? Jackson promised to protect his sister. And he did. But why did you have to die? Why did you have to leave me? It was not your time!

"Pitch is crying?" Pitch gritted his teeth at Toothiana's soft voice. "When did he start caring for the children?"

And then he heard it.

*Koz, please take care of...Mom and Flee.* Pitch's eyes shot open as he heard Jackson's pleading fears. *They mean everything to me.*

Everything around him seemed to fade. The screams of Flee and Susanna became muted. Night and Onyx whines became distant before his ears silenced them. The soft, shocked whispers of the Guardians were cut out of his mind. Everything around him seemed to fade into darkness and disappear from his vision, leaving only his dying brother underneath the ice.

*Be there for them. They need you now more than ever.*

Pitch wanted to reach out to his baby brother. He wanted to argue. He wanted to beg for him to keep fighting. He wanted to tell him that he was going to be okay.

But then he froze.

*I'm sorry…I couldn't keep my promise…I guess we won't live…forever…as spirits…*

His breath hitched. "No!" Pitch saw Jackson holding the vial weakly in his hand. Jackson was so close…and yet...so far.
I love you...

Pitch wailed brokenly. "Jackson! Don't go!"

Koz...

"Don't leave me! Please, come back!"

Don't...

"We just found each other! We were going to be a family again!"

forget...

"LITTLE BROTHER!"

me...

And then the dam broke. Pitch's heart shattered into pieces. Only one-fourth of his shattered heart remained for Flee and Susanna.

But without Jackson to keep him sane...

To keep him smiling and light and happy and filled with love...

Without his prankster brother to make his life filled with energy and warmth and laughs...

Without his soft words and cocky attitude...

Without his warm brown eyes, that twinkled with mischief...

Without his hugs and reassurance that he was the best brother ever...

That he was real...

That he was here...

That he was alive and whole...

And not invisible and hated...

The chains broke.

Anger descend.

And the Fearlings roared...

For Pitch's anger was released on the Guardians.

Vengeance for the death of his child.
Flee had never felt so scared in all her life. But when so close to death, she realized all the things she could have lost and what she did. Flee is angered by the Guardians lack of sympathy and stupidity. She lashes out at them and loses her faith in the Guardians. She is forced to retreat with Onyx when shadow creatures descend and attack. What is happening to Kozmotis? and are these creatures the Fearlings?

Flee had never been so scared in all her life. She would have never thought the Guardians and Kozmotis would be so close. She never thought that a sword would come out of the forest and break the ice.

Flee had never felt this scared before. She never thought she would die. She was so scared and truly thought she would never see her friends again. She would never see her brother again playing tricks and laughing. She would never see her mother making meals and scolding them for silly stuff again. She would never see Kozmotis’s smile or frown again or the roll of his eyes when annoyed. She would never see Night or the other horses joking around again. She would never see her Jamie laughing or comforting words ever, ever again.

At that moment, she was terrified. Truly, truly terrified. She didn't know what to do as the ice cracked under her. But like everything else, her brother was there. He was there to help her. He was there to ease her fears as he tried to get her to safety. He was always there for her, just like all those times before. Jackson would make sure they were both out of harms way.

But she knew it was different this time. Because Jackson did save her. He made fear into something fun. He made her laugh and reassured that they would be alright. But it wasn't alright. She was safe on the thicker part of the ice, while Jackson…

While Jackson took her place.

When she saw it, she couldn't believe it.

Her brother smiling face turning into one of shock and realization as the ice gave way. And then she screamed, "JACK!"

But she wasn't the only one. Mother had screamed as well as she got off Onyx and made a run for it. Her horror and tears made her heart break even more. Flee had got up then and made a run for the ice. Maybe she could save him.

"JACKSON!" Flee whimpered as she heard Kozmotis's screams. She turned to see him running towards them as well. He created a whip out of sand in hopes of reaching Jackson before he was completely gone and out of reach. But as she feared, they were too late.

They had all collapsed on the ice and stared at Jackson as his movement got slower and slower, and as he sank deeper and deeper. "JACK! COME BACK!" She could not stop the flow of tears or the heart-wrenching sobs that left her lips. Her body shook as her mother cried and cried. The broken words left like a knife that was cutting through her heart. She had wanted to stop the pain.
She wanted her brother back. She tried to move closer to the hole, but her mother held her back.

"JACKSON! JACKSON!"

Her arms felt warm around her. They trembled and shook as she screamed and cried. Her mother felt the same. Her mother was just as heartbroken as she was. She whimpered ever so often whenever Jackson's movement got weaker and weaker and when little bubble flowed out of his mouth and towards the surface. He was suffering so much. She couldn't imagine what he must be thinking or feeling as the icy cold water entered his deprived lungs and licked his pale skin. It must be so cold down there.

"NO, JACKSON!" Flee didn't want to look at Kozmotis. His voice sounded broken, much like theirs. There was grief, longing, horror, and denial. When she finally did look at him, she cried even harder. There was only one word to describe Kozmotis. And that was shattered. Tears were following down his gray face. His hands and shoulders were trembling as he tried to keep himself from screaming and lashing out.

Flee couldn't believe this was happening! Jackson was drowning and very close to death. Her tears continued to fall as she stopped struggling in her mother's arms. Her arms were loosened when she noticed this.

The sound of two wailing horses soon caught up to her ears. Mixed with their own screams and cries were the distinct whines of Night and Onyx. Flee felt her heart sink further in pain. Night's whines sounded so heartbroken. Flee knew Night was made for Jackson and had come to love the both of them. Flee couldn't imagine what she was feeling at this moment. It was too hard to listen. But even if that was the case, she still gathered her courage to look behind her.

Flee gasped quietly as she got a good look at Night. Night was injured and crying in pain and sadness on the ground with Onyx next to her. Black tears with swirls of yellowish gold were leaking from her yellow eyes. Black sand was swirling around her front right leg, which was almost completely severed off. Onyx, who was close by, was moving the black sand back into the cut of Night's leg. It seemed that all the fear and sadness around them was helping her fix the wound on her leg. But even then, it still felt horrible and sad and heartbreaking to hear and very, very lonely and painful.

"Pitch is crying?" Flee frowned at the disbelieving voice. She shifted her gaze to three unknown figures. The female voice came from a woman with tan skin. Flee noticed that she looked like a human size hummingbird with feathers as her hair and body. The feather made a somewhat upward style and was a mixture of blue, green, and yellow. The feathers on her body were the same colors but were much smaller. There were also long feathers that started at her waistline and ended near her knees. In a way, it looked like a dress. From this distance, Flee could see the colors of the hummingbird's eyes. The left was a bright pink, while the right was a bright green. That was actually pretty interesting. It made her look beautiful. However, Flee noticed that the strange woman had a frown on her face as she looked at Kozmotis, who was crying harder. Flee didn't like the look, though. It looked disbeliefing, but there was also a hint of concern, sadness, and shock in them. She seemed unsure too as she fluttered around.

Next to her was a very intimidating man. He was tall, buff, and round. He had blue eyes that were filled with grief and shock; they looked haunted. He had thick black eyebrows, and a long white beard and mustache. On his head was a black fur hat (she briefly wondered what kind of animal he killed to make that.) and a long red coat with black fur trims. Flee could also see a red plaid shirt. Flee noticed that the man was very pale as he started at them in guilt. Flee noticed his hands were shaking as he held a familiar sword in his left hand. Flee found herself stiffening as she recognized
the sword. So that sword was his?

The last person with them — or should she say kangaroo — was a very tall, six or seven-foot tall rabbit (kangaroo?). He had grayish-blue fur, flower-like symbols on both his forehead and shoulders and the brightest emerald-green eyes she had ever seen. Flee found herself standing up and walking away from the ice. As she walked, she eyes scanned the rabbit's boomerang that was in his hand; the same one that was near Night. The rabbit didn't move; he seemed stuck in place as he watched the sad scene in front of him. He looked stunned and grief-stricken.

"When did he start caring for the children?" When the woman asked that question, however, the rabbit's demeanor changed. His emerald eyes grew hard and filled with hatred as he glared at Kozmotis. Flee found herself hating the rabbit as she saw a small twitch of a smile forming on his lips at Kozmotis's pain, followed by a disbelieving scoff.

"The ratbag doesn't know anything about caring for kids," he stated, coldly. "He's nothing but a monster, a murderer."

"Bunny," the older man warned shakily, but it was obvious he was struggling to speak through the pain and grief he was feeling.

"The only monster here I see is you!" Flee was surprised by the anger that filled her voice. The three figures stared at her in shock.

"No!"

The hummingbird flew towards her. She had a kind and gentle smile on her face. One that said that she meant no harm and that she wanted to comfort her in her time of grief. "Sweetie, you don't understand. Pitch is…" she began, but her voice trailed off and her kind smile fell when Kozmotis's broken wail reached a new height. It made her shiver in despair and anger.

"Jackson! Don't go!" And then it clicked. She knew who these beings were. And she was not happy about it; it hurt.

"Don't understand?" she asked, her voice dripping with sarcasm. "You are the ones who stupidity attacked and blamed a person who was not in control of his actions!" she snapped, ignoring the gasps from the Guardians and the whines from the two horses.

"Don't leave me!"

"You blamed him for what the Fearlings did! You raged war against him and killed the last of his people that were here!" The female Guardian stepped back in shock.

"Please, come back!"

"You are so stupid for thinking that you can destroy fear!" Flee snapped as frustrated tears fell from her eyes. "Fear is needed for the balance!"

"We just found each other!"

"By destroying fear, you are destroying the natural balance of nature!"

"We were going to be a family again!"

"What would you know, Ankle-Bitter? You don't know Pitch as well as we do! He's nothing but a monster!"
Flee glared at the Kangaroo with all the hatred she could muster. "You, no go for nothing Kangaroo!" The Guardian was taken aback by the name and huffed slightly at it, but she didn't let him comment on it. "You are no Guardian!"

"LITTLE BROTHER!"

"YOU DESTROYED MY FAMILY!"

And then Kozmotis screamed, "NNNOOO!" Flee closed her eyes as he screamed. She couldn't stand to see the Guardians. They were no Guardians. When she opened them to glare at them…

Nothing.

They were gone.

Flee shook her head and frowned, feeling her anger disappear into emptiness. Flee vaguely noticed strange human-like shadow creatures flying around the area and blasting the ground, but they did not touch her, though. With a saddened heart, she walked towards Onyx and Night and collapsed and sobbed.

Flee buried her face on Night's neck as she continued to sob. The pain was so much. She whimpered as Kozmotis's screams grew louder and slightly hysterical; it almost bottom lined inhumane. She didn't want to look behind her to see what was going on with her family.

"NIGHT,ONYX! GET HER OUT OF HERE!" Flee was slightly startled by her mother's voice. Her voice sound strained, grief-stricken, and fearful.

Both Onyx and Night neighed in distress but obeyed to the frantic command. Flee lifted up her head and turned towards her mother and was started with what she saw.

Kozmotis was surround by a dark aura. The shadows around them burst to life; many seemed to exit the very shadows of the trees and plants that surround them, while others seemed to exit Kozmotis body. There were hundreds of human-like figures with red eyes. Many looked like buff warrior and spears, while others look skinny shapeless black ghosts with no distinct features. They flew around and attacked, but they were attacking nothing from what she could see. It was confusing when some screeched, disperse into wisps of smoke and traveled back into Kozmotis. But what worried her the most was Kozmotis's eyes. They were no longer the silver-gold she came to love so much. They were pitch black. And scream made her shiver in fear. It was like a million voices at once. Were these the Fearlings?

"MOM! KOZMOTIS!" was all she could yell before she was shadowed away from the death and madness around her.

I can't lose you too.
Susanna is devastated and falls into despair over Jackson's death. When Pitch goes out of control she fears that she would lose him too. She tries to bring him back.

Ever since Pitch told her about Jackson's death, she prayed every day that it would not happen. Every day, when she woke up, she prayed at the church and then again when she left work. At night, she would pray and beg God to spare her baby.

At first, she thought it worked. Nothing had happened yet. Why didn't she listen to the odd feeling she had the day before? She should have known. It was a sign of something to come. But she pushed it aside as nothing.

Susanna fell to her knees and cried for her baby boy. He was so young. He hadn't lived his life, outside of his father's shadows. Susanna felt numb as she gave into the despair that she was feeling. Everything felt empty and painful. She didn't want that feeling.

Susanna felt like she was floating in a pool of nothingness. She could not hear the screams or words that came out of Pitch's or Flee's mouth. She could not hear the whines of the Nightmare Horses. She couldn't hear anything, except the painful beating of her heart as it beat in tone with her broken heart.

Susanna stared at her baby boy as he got weaker and weaker. He was drowning and there was nothing she could do to ease his pain. She mentally scoffed at herself. Some mother she was.

Susanna didn't think as she wrapped her arms around her baby girl; her only living child. Her body trembled with her daughter as the pain engulfed her senses, silences the noises around her like a cotton ball. She would not let her go. Her baby would not die too. Susanna closed her eyes as Flee started to calm down.

She didn't move when Flee moved away from her. She didn't move when Jackson started to stop moving. She didn't move when Pitch started screaming for Jackson as he completely lost it.

Susanna could not bear his pain.

He looked broken, shattered. That was not the man she came to love. She fell in love with the kind, proud soul that fought for what he wanted. He didn't give up. He didn't let his feelings get in the way of protecting them.

But Jackson was gone.

And Susanna suddenly felt scared.

Susanna looked at Pitch when he began to wail for his brother. Tears fell faster as her slow mind processed his broken words.

"Jackson! Don't go!"
"Don't leave me! Please, come back!"

Why? Why did this have to happen?

"We just found each other! We were going to be a family again!"

A family? Yes, we are family. We were all supposed to live together. You were supposed to help prepare our wedding that you teased us about.

"LITTLE BROTHER!"

The tears fell. The pain. Oh, the pain.

Susanna felt like her own heart shatter along with Pitch's.

She felt his pain.

She felt his sadness.

She felt his misery, loneliness, and despair.

And yet, at the same time, she felt her world turned upside down as her daughter screamed at the Guardians. Susanna felt as if the scene was in slow motions as she turned to face the beings that were supposed to protect her children. Flee was angry, to put it mildly. The Guardians. The Guardians. These were the Guardians? These cold, uncaring beings. These beings who completely destroyed her family.

Susanna felt her heart, one that held so much warmth and understanding, turned to anger and hatred.

The words seemed to echo in her head as they argued.

"The ratbag doesn't know anything about caring for kids. He's nothing but a monster, a murderer."

"The only monster here I see is you!"

Susanna closed her eyes and held her head in her hands as the tears fell. A monster? Pitch is no monster.

"You blamed him for what the Fearlings did! You raged war against him and killed the last of his people that were here!"

"You are so stupid for thinking that you can destroy fear! Fear is needed for the balance!"

Idiots! Everyone is afraid of something. Why do they believe they need to destroy fear?

"By destroying fear, you are destroying the natural balance of nature!"

"What would you know, Ankle-Bitter? You don't know Pitch as well as we do! He's nothing but a monster!"

Susanna's eyes snapped open in shock as she stared at the Guardian. She couldn't believe he said that. They had been with Pitch for months. He was a kind and gentle soul. One that cared deeply for his younger brother. Pitch had been taking care of them for months now. He was no monster. He was a gentleman.
"You, no go for nothing Kangaroo! You are no Guardian!"

Susanna soon felt her anger starting to fill her senses. She wanted to yell at those Guardians. She wanted to show them just how it felt to feel this pain.

"YOU DESTROYED MY FAMILY!"

She would make them suffer.

She would make them pay.

Susanna glared at the Guardians and noticed with a slight satisfaction when Flee walked right through the female Guardian. The woman gasped and her hand went straight for her chest.

She doesn't believe, she realized with a smile. The Guardian looked on with wide, horrified eyes, but Susanna soon found it unsatisfying. The Guardians needed to suffer more, more than being walked through and not being believed in by one child.

But as Susanna came to that line of thought, she saw something truly frightening.

Shadow creatures.

And red eyes.

Susanna shook her head and push her dark thoughts away and finally heard everything that was happening around her.

Pitch's screams.

Susanna paled as she heard his screams. His screams were broken, shattered, void of any emotions and warmth; he sounded dead. But what made her heart stop for a moment was the thousands of voices that echoed one word over and over again.

"NO!"

Susanna gasped as she turned towards Pitch and saw a frightening sight. Pitch was engulfed in a black aura. Shadow creatures came out of the very shadows that were formed from the trees and plants, anything that cast a shadow. They were fearsome as they attacked the Guardians. The Guardians, coward and retreated from the shadow creatures. They fought the shadows every so often, but they soon realized they were no match. Every time one shadow turned to smoke and returned to Pitch, another one would take its place to attack the Guardians.

However, Susanna ignored all of that. She kept her gaze on Pitch. He was no longer himself. He seemed to be Pitch and many, many others.

The Fearlings. Oh, god!

Fear filled her as she recalled Pitch telling her about how he came to be the Nightmare King. The Fearlings tricked him. They took over his soul and body. They changed him. And when they did… he lost control.

"Pitch! Pitch!" A sudden panic and fear filled her. She just lost Jackson; she could not lose Pitch too. Susanna ran to Pitch, noticing his black soulless eyes. It frightened her to see no emotion in this eyes. Her throat dried as she fought against the need to flee for her life as the shadows became more violent; to escape from this madness.
Maybe if it was another time.

Maybe if she never got to know the real Pitch Black, then she would have left him alone to deal with his problem.

But she could not do that.

She had gotten to know this man, this lovable, sweet, sweet man.

She refused to abandon him because…

She loved him.

It was that love that drove her to be so reckless.

Susanna ran to her love. She ran and didn't turn back. She didn't turn to the Guardians who were screaming and panicking as they retreated. She didn't glance at Flee or the Nightmares as she yelled, "NIGHT, ONYX! GET HER OUT OF HERE!"

Her heart pounded within her chest as she stared at Pitch fearfully. His screams made her own heart ache with pain. She didn't stop the few of tears as she hugged him from behind, "STOP, PITCH! STOP!"

Her body trembled and shock as the dark aura tried to push her away. Tried to push her to a safer distance. But she held tighter and tighter. "NO! I WON'T LET GO! YOU CAN'T MAKE ME!" She felt Pitch stiffened slightly. "I KNOW IT HURTS!" she cried, her face buried in his back. "IT HURTS SO MUCH! BUT YOU HAVE TO COME BACK! YOU HAVE TO!"

The shadows screeched as they attacked aimlessly.

"W-why?" Susanna pulled back a little as she heard the question. It sounded like she was getting through to him. It was faint, but it was still there.

"Because…" she whispered as she pressed herself to him again.

"I can't lose you." she swallowed, feeling Pitch's body shuddered. The loud screeches of the shadow creatures started to fade.

"I would not be able to stand it."

Pitch's let out a small sob as his body continued to shudder violently. Pitch's voice sounded a lot more emotional and not as dead as he was before.

"I already lost Jackson…"

Her voice sounded so small as she spoke, but she knew he heard her.

"I can't lose you too."

She felt Pitch place a hand on hers.

"I love you."

As they left her lips, those three words seemed to trigger something in Pitch. Pitch let out a sorrowful cry as he fell to the ground, taking her along with him. Susanna remained quiet and allowed Pitch to pull her into an embrace. Pitch continued to cry his grief; she buried her face into
his chest and cry with him.

They held each other, crying their grief as sobs racked their bodies. Tears of sadness left their eyes as the pain of losing Jackson crushed their souls.

The pain left a hole in its wake.

And with a whole that big, hatred crept in to fill it.

And with hatred there was vengeance.

And vengeance they would have, no matter how long it takes.
The Uninvolved

Chapter Summary

Sanderson finally has enough power to leave the Workshop. He rushes to Burgess in hopes of stopping the other Guardians before something happens. Emily arrives too late to warn her father. She is grief-stricken when the trees tell her what happened. She watches her father and Sanderson talk.

Sanderson stared at the globe with a huge smile. Lights! Beautiful, beautiful children were believing in him again!

Sanderson smiled as he tried to make his sand cloud. Little specs of sand swirled around to make a small fluffy cloud of golden sand. It was a bit smaller than he usually had it, but there was nothing he could do. Out of all the Guardians, he was affected the most. He had fallen unconscious when his belief got too low. Unlike the others, Sanderson did not have extra help or have a holiday one time a year. His job involved him going to each child every night to give them beautiful dreams.

But when he got locked in, no children were getting his dreams. They were getting empty blank canvases. And if they got a nightmare, there were no dreams to replace it. This was why it took longer for him to regain his strength. With the belief of Christmas, children were believing in all the Guardians again, including himself. But it was slow due to his non-presence to give them dreams.

Also unlike the others, he needed a certain amount of belief to be able to do anything. When belief in him is below thirty percent, he would fall into a coma. When belief is forty-five, he would wake up and might be able to move. Half way would allow him to walk and float an inch off the ground. Three-fourths would allow him to fly and give dreams, but at a slower pace in comparison to being fully believed in.

At this current moment, he was close to three-fourths. He wasn't there yet, though. Because of this, he was only able to make smaller creations. Sanderson could wait a little longer, but something was telling him he needed to get to Burgess and fast. Without a second thought, Sanderson got on his cloud and flew out of the Workshop.

His destination: Burgess.

Getting to her father was a bit longer than she would have liked. It was sad she didn't have any powers over shadows. Traveling through the shadows and getting to Burgess would have only taken a second or two. Shadowing was definitely so much easier than her method of transportation.

Unlike most spirits, Emily had two methods of transportation. Like any Seasonal Spirit, Emily could call upon any of the Four Winds: the North Wind of Winter, the South Wind of Summer, the East Wind of Spring, and the West Wind of Autumn. The Winds were always happy to assist her when they are not busy with her children. However, in most times, Emily just sticks with her own special ability for travel: Tree Shimmering. Tree Shimmering was in a way a lot like her father's Shadow Shadowing, only without the shadows.
When Tree Shimmer, Emily's body would change and morph into the right essence to allow her to walk through it. However, unlike Shadowing, Tree Shimmer took a bit of time. Not all Trees know where the exact location that she wanted to go. It all depended on how old the Tree she entered was. If a Tree was young, then they would not know the exact location; they would know a general location, instead, but they would have to whisper to an Elder Tree for direction placement. This often took some time and often lead to her being placed several miles away from where she wanted to go.

Elder Trees were very knowledgeable and knew exactly where a location was, anywhere in the World. Most times, Elder Trees would place her at her desired location within minutes. However, all Trees were very protective of her and knew she was Mother Nature, their nurture. If an Elder Tree sensed a fight or danger in a certain area, they would place her several miles away from the action of danger. They would often place her deep within the forest, but would not intervene if she decided to walk or fly there, which also took a long time as well.

It was a shame she couldn't shadow like her father. It so would have been a help right at that moment when the Elder Tree sent her deep into the forest of Burgess. Emily sighed as she walked down the path that she knew that would lead her to her father's lair. Emily had a very bad feeling that something bad was happening if the Elder Tree placed her this far. She frowned as her mind wondered to her father. *He must be fighting the Guardians, then. That is the only explanation I can think of. I hope I'm not too late.*

And then an explosive and painful tightness of her chest was felt as her magic returned to her. Jackson had been harmed. The protective barrier had shattered.

Emily paled as she gasped for breath, trying to get air into her lungs. She fell to her knees as the pain intensified. Tears stunned her eyes as the whisper of her protective magic told her what happened.

*The Guardian of Wonder broke the ice.*

*The Guardian of Hope prevented Night from saving the children, putting them at risk.*

*Jackson sacrificed himself to save Flee.*

Emily gasped in pain, ignoring the fact that the clouds were not supposed to be turning gray.

*The future Frost and Nightmare Prince has fallen into the ice.*

Tears began leaking from her tears at the news. She had known Jackson would die. Father Time and Death told her. Death had mentioned that he would not come for him, though. He was destined for another life among the Great Spirits of Nature and Children. But what she heard next… completely shattered her heart.

*Pitch Black has lost control.*

Emily sobbed for her father and uncle.

*The Fearlings have escaped and are attacking the Guardians.*

A bloody, heart-wrenching scream, filled with pain and angst left her lips.

And then the winds whipped violently around the trees, reacting to Mother Nature's emotions. And the clouds darkened and roared for an incoming war.
Being the Sandman was not an easy job. Every time he came upon a town, a city, or a village he would hear their wishes. Sanderson's instincts were in tune to these wishes and it was by instinct that he would grant them by dreams; it demanded it.

It was second nature to give the Children of Earth his most beautiful dreams. They had gone months without it. Sanderson, unlike the others, was always closer to the children and would rather be doing his job than fighting in a losing war with Pitch. The children were everything and at times he felt that he might had been neglecting them.

It always made him sad to hear Pitch's wishes. All he ever wanted was to find his family and then accelerated to making the Guardians pay for destroying his remaining people and for trying to destroy fear.

Sanderson never told the Guardians of this knowledge, not that they would listen or understand anyway. Sanderson always felt that they were wrong, that Pitch didn't intend to harm the children with his nightmares. Nightmares were needed in the unconscious world to help a person fear certain things in order for them to be safe from harm.

He sighed as he watched over the children as he worked. He smiled softly as his sand created a dolphin for the little girl. She smiled and sighed in her sleep, finally having a peaceful rest.

Sanderson smiled as he finished the area he was in. This was his last stop before going over the ocean. He was glad he was strong enough to make his plane again.

Sanderson created his plane, placing his goggles on, and sat in his plane; an excited grin crossed along his features. He so loved flying planes. Sanderson turned on the engine and soon he took off. A silent laugh (one that could not be heard by those of the modern and the new) left his lips as he was propelled into the semi-dark sky of the east coast. Sanderson tilted his plane a bit to see his reflection. It had been awhile since he saw himself smiling like a child and wearing plane goggles as he flew over the blue ocean.

Sanderson relaxed as the sky got lighter and turned into morning, a definite sign that he was switch time zones.

"I hope I'm not too late to stop my friends. I have to make sure they understand Tsar's errors," Sanderson spoke in his ancient tongue to himself as the winds edged him on. Sanderson knew it would be a difficult task to do. Unlike Pitch and Emily Jane, who were human before turning into spirits, Sanderson had never been human, to begin with. He was an ancient being among others who's sole purpose was to travel the cosmos and space to grant wishes and dreams. The Sand Wielders were ancient beings and had been alive since the universe was created and that was eons ago.

They were made of sand and spoke the language of sand and the stars. To others, it would seem as if they were mute and couldn't speak at all. However, that was far from the truth. Their sand was laced with very old magic. Only those who could understand old magic or are sand wielders themselves would be able to understand them.

When Sanderson crashed onto the planet many decades ago, he was baffled that no one could hear him. He was able to understand the thousands of languages that the different children and adult of Earth spoke, but no one would be able to hear him at all. It would be as if they were talking to the ancient winds. Sanderson had resorted to making symbols with his sand to get his point across. But even then it was difficult; no seemed to have the patience to understand them. It was frustrating at times.
Sanderson stared at the sun rays as he got close to the barrier of Mother Nature's realm. He had been there a few times in the past. But with the war going on, he decided to stay back. He didn't want to get on her bad side.

As the magic barrier of Mother Nature's realm gave out their warning that he was not allowed to enter, he gasped in horror as he felt the dimming of belief from one of his strongest believers.

*Koz, please take care of...Mom and Flee. They mean...everything to me. Be there for them...please. They need you now more than ever.*

Sanderson's heart ached as he heard the death wish of Jackson Overland. As the wielder of Dreamsand, he had the ability to hear all wishes, even ones formed from a child's death. That was one thing he always hated about his job. It filled him with so much sadness.

*I'm sorry...I couldn't keep my promise...I guess we won't live...forever...as spirits...I love you...Koz...Don't...forget...me...*

The poor child would never get one of his special dreams. Sanderson often enjoyed glimpsing at Jackson's dreams. They tended to be filled with snowballs and dolphins and seemed to be filled with so much laughter. It was a wonderful sight to see in such an innocent and maybe a bit mischievous child.

Sanderson's smile fell as he saw the land in the distance. It broke his heart to know that the child would not dream ever again. He was too late. Sadness filled him with dread as he approached the land.

*Jackson! Don't go! Don't leave me! Please, come back!*

Sanderson was shocked by the sudden wish. This wasn't a wish from a child. It was from Pitch! He knew he could hear all wishes. He usually only concentrated on children, though; but Pitch's wish was so overwhelming. He was glad that he was just over the land of the other country. Sanderson quickly lowered his plane to the ground before he ended up crashing. The emotions that accompanied the wish was so intense that it almost made his vision black out.

*We just found each other! We were going to be a family again! LITTLE BROTHER!*  

"Little brother? Oh, my!" Sanderson straightened (after the surging emotions passed) in his seat and stared at the forest in front of him in shock. "Jackson Overland and Pitch Black are brothers?" Sanderson ran his golden hand through his hair. "This must have been what Tsar was worried about. Does this mean that Toothiana, Aster, and Nicholas had something to do with it?"

Sanderson wished it wasn't true. The others would never harm an innocent child. But he couldn't shake the feeling that something bad did happen and that the other Guardians and Pitch were involved.

Sanderson shook off his uneasiness that suddenly started to fill him. Something about the uneasiness suggested something dark and evil. It wasn't Pitch that's for sure. But he couldn't place what the source was. Sanderson frowned as he pushed the feeling aside and restarted his plane. He had to hurry. He needed to get to Burgess. He just hoped what he thought happened was wrong.

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The scene before her was awful. It was no wonder the Elder Tree placed her far away. Her father had lost control of the Fearlings. She swallowed nervously as she saw her father crying softly as Susanna slept in his arms. Her own tears had yet to dry on her face as she stood behind a tree.
She slowly averted her eyes to glance at the damage around the lake. The scent of the Fearlings still lingered in the air. Emily frowned and gently touched the Elder Tree in front of her.

"Show me what happened," she commanded softly and waited as the tree implanted images of the fight into her mind. A low hiss left her lips as she saw three of the Guardians attacking her father. She saw Nicholas's sword struck the ice. She saw Jackson getting his sister to safety. She saw the damn rodent attacking Night, injuring her to the point where she could not save the children. She heard her father's screams. She saw Flee arguing with the Guardians as they tried to convince her that her father was a monster. She growled at the smirk that twitched on the rodent's face. Oh, she was going to make sure she skinned him alive and use his fur as a coat! And then she saw her father lose control.

When the image faded Emily collapsed to the snowy ground. She couldn't believe what she saw. Father Time was right. She remembered her husband saying that he saw snow and ice and shadow creatures. She should have realized what that meant. The Fearlings would only be set free if her father lost control of his emotions to that extent. Only death of a loved one would have driven him to that. The tears fell faster and her vision began to blur.

"Pitch!" Emily blinked her eyes and focused her vision back to her father. She recognized that old, calming voice anywhere. It was Sanderson!

Emily saw Sanderson land his plane near Pitch and jumped off; resulting in his plane returning to sand once again. Emily had no ill feelings towards the golden man. It was the others that she hated, but she did wonder why he was not with the Guardians when they attacked. Maybe he was somewhere else when it happened.

"Are you okay? I heard your wish," Sanderson said as he placed a hand on Pitch's shoulder.

"Do I look okay?" Pitch asked sarcastically. Her father's voice was filled with bitter sarcasm but was also hoarse from all the yelling and crying he had been doing since Jackson's death.

Sanderson gave him a very sad smile. "No, you look like crap actually." Pitch snorted at Sanderson's attempt in lightening the mood. Emily couldn't help but smile, though. It was sweet of him.

"I did just lose a family member and lost control of the Fearlings all in one day," he said with a bitter laugh. Emily shivered in response.

"I know. I heard both of your wishes, while I was on my way here."

Pitch stiffened and his eyes narrowed slightly, searching to see if Sanderson was lying. "You heard Jackson?"

Sanderson nodded; his eyes were filled with sadness. "I most likely heard the same thing you did. His greatest wish seemed to also be his greatest fear," Sanderson said softly. "I am sorry that I couldn't stop them and for everything else I've done; I was wrong. Tsar told us not to fight you. He said he was wrong in attacking you. He wanted the war to end. The others didn't read his message right I'm afraid."

Pitch nodded tiredly. "He told me the same thing." Pitch sighed as he securely held Susanna in his arms as he stood up. "Thank you for apologizing. I appreciate it." Pitch was silent for a moment as he stared at the lake. "I can not forgive the Guardians, though. It is because of them that my little brother is dead." Pitch turned back to Sanderson, who was looking very, very sad and guilty. Emily assumed he was guilty of not getting here on time to stop the other idiots. She knew she never
I really liked the rodent, bandit, or the fairy.

"I have nothing against you, Sanderson," Pitch said tiredly. Emily watched as her father's eyes grew dark with a need for revenge. Pitch's form started to fade as the shadows surround him. "But I will not let this go. I will get my revenge on the Guardians."

"Pitch! Wait!" Sanderson yelled, his sand creating symbols rapidly. But it was too late. Pitch was gone. Sanderson's shoulder slumped in disappointment. Sanderson stared at where Pitch was before he shadowed away. His eyes were downcast and his hands were clenched tightly as golden tears began to fall down his face. "I'm sorry. I should have never doubt you, old friend." Sanderson wiped away his tears and created his plane once again. He slowly floated into the seat and put on his goggles. "I'm sorry I got here too late to stop them. I hope you can forgive me."

Emily watched in silence as Sanderson started his plane and flew off. She didn't move when the golden plane got smaller and smaller. When the plane was completely out of sight, she decided to slowly move towards the ice. Emily looked down and saw Jackson's lifeless body. He looked so peaceful, so in tune with the ice that surrounded him. Her bottom lip trembled and her eyes began to moist again.

"Why?" she whispered as she took in Jackson's still form. "Why did you have to die?" Jackson's body seemed to be frozen in time, like a beautiful ice sickle, shimmering in the moonlight.

Emily sighed heavily as snow began to fall around her. "You love the snow. Don't you Jackson?" Emily didn't expect an answer. She was sadden with grief to care as her emotions caused the sky to make it colder and snow faster. The snow did not bother her as it touched her face. She welcomed the numbing coldness, even if she couldn't feel it. No weather bothered her.

The tears began to stick to her face as she watched the ice starting to freeze over, covering the hole that was once there. Emily rested her head in her hands and shivered. But she wasn't shivering from the cold. She was trying to get a grip on her emotions. If she didn't, she could bury Burgess and the surround villages in an eternal winter.

Emily took several deep breaths as she tried to calm herself. It took a while, an hour maybe. But she did calm to the point that it stopped the snow. Emily sighed again and looked up from her hands and slowly got her way to her feet. She felt very numb inside and barely noticed the glowing of the moon until she was engulfed by MiM's moonbeam.
Chapter Summary

On the full moon, Emily sends her magic to break the vial to release the Winter and Shadow Magic within. Manny brings Jackson (now Jack Frost) back to life, but there are some side effects. Jack Frost has no memories and Manny, using a lot of magic is forced to rest for a long time. While Emily Jane is talking to Night, Jack Frost has some fun with his powers and Wind. When he sees a village, Wind takes him there.

Emily stared at the solid ice that encased her uncle with a sad smile. It had been seven days since she been at that small lake that took Jackson's life. She had been angry when it happened and terribly heartbroken and sad at the same time. She was not able to do anything. She could have told her father and she regretted not remembering in time to do exactly that.

There was no excuse for forgetting to tell him. She admits that she had been hysterical (okay, maybe a little more than that) when her father came to see her on Jackson's birthday a week before Christmas. Things just came out of her mouth as she cried from her breakdown. Though, she was surprised herself that Jackson's resurrection and other important details never slipped from her lips when she wasn't aware of what she was saying.

When she realized that she had completely forgotten to tell her father about Jackson's possible resurrection, she couldn't reach him. Her father had been so busy watching the children and going off to create more and more Nightmares for his army. When her father was free, she was not. With winter coming to the peak of its season, she had to direct it and make sure it didn't cause too much damage to the humans, in addition to her other duties she had to attend to around the world. By the end of the day, she had completely forgotten to tell her father and was unable to warn him to not leave Jackson alone before it was too late.

Emily felt incredibly guilty about not telling her father everything she knew. But then again, she didn't want to give him false hope. Father Time had told her many times that visions were never reliable. He had described it as a gentle river. If it was left alone, it would forever flow in one direction. But visions and river were not like that. There are always actions or obstacles that would change the flow of the river, making it change completely or divide into multiple streams and rivers.

The vision of Jackson's death was one of those multiple, ever-changing rivers. The only thing that was clear was that Jackson would die somewhere around snow and ice, her father wanting revenge, and that it was somehow the Guardian's fault. The vision was so vague and constantly changing that there was the question that Jackson would never be resurrected. Father Time saw her and MiM resurrecting Jackson in one and in another saw MiM doing it alone. But that was not guaranteed if it kept changing and there was also the outcome of his death and resurrection to think about.

Emily sighed. All this vision stuff was giving her a major headache. There were reasons why she preferred weather control and plants. Keeping track of time and futures were not her thing.

Emily gently touched the ice as she poured her magic into it. She was happy that MiM wanted her help to resurrect Jackson. Jackson would be alive again. Emily looked at the sky and saw that the sky was almost completely dark. It was almost time for MiM to do his part.
Emily still found it surprising that he wanted to resurrect Jackson and his reasoning was just as surprising.

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_Seven Day Earlier_

Emily was taken aback by the moonbeam that engulfed her. She hadn't been expecting the MiM of all spirits to want to talk to her. Although, she would have scoffed and frozen him where he stood if he was in front of her in person.

Emily tilted her face to the moon and glared at it heatedly. "What do you want from my life, Tsar Lunar XII?"

"Mother Nature." Tsar's voice echoed around her in a soft voice. Emily did notice the guilt and sadness hidden within the voice as he spoke. "I am truly sorry for everything I have caused you and your father. I know you have every right to curse me out and not hear me, but I beg you...do heed my plea."

Emily frowned. Her first instinct was to curse him out and leave, but there was the tone in his voice that stopped her. It sounded sincere and truly sorry. What could he want to say that could fix this? And then the vision popped into her head and she ended up sighing in defeat. "You have five minutes, Lunar."

"Thank you," he said in relief. "I have spoken to your father briefly and apologized to him. I know I don't deserve forgiveness, but I had to express how sorry and wrong I was for thinking fear needed to be destroyed." Emily blinked in surprise. Well, she wasn't expecting that. "I have tried to tell the Guardians to not attack, that I was wrong, but they didn't understand my message or take the time to understand Sanderson's."

"I am well aware of that. Sanderson apologized to my father before shadowing away."

"Yes, I have seen it as well. I had also seen that the young Overlands were Pitch's family and believers. It wasn't until I heard him scream that I realized that they were brothers. And I am sorry for the death of such a bright soul." Emily looked down and didn't say anything. "I understand that you needed a Spirit of Winter and that Jackson Overland was to be your spirit."

"That is correct."

"I do not have the power to make him a Seasonal Spirit, but I can resurrect him. It is your choice, but I would like your help in making him so."

Emily blinked in surprise. It was as Father Time said. MiM wanted her to help him resurrect her uncle. "I accept the offer Lunar, but resurrection is a tricky business."

"Indeed it is," he agreed. "I will be able to resurrect him on the full moon in seven days. On that day, you would need to pour Winter Magic into him before I can resurrect him. But I must warn you, this will take a lot of magic since he would be dead for seven days. There will be a possibly that he will have little to no memories when he is reborn."

Emily's heart sank at that. But it was a risk she had to take and there was no way around it. "Alright. I'll see you in seven days."

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Emily sighed as she swirled her magic around. She might be directing her Winter Magic to Jackson, but it was not to give it to him. No, she had a different plan in mind.
The beautiful blue magic swirled around as it was directed to Jackson's hand. She smiled as her magic surrounded Jackson's hand and slowly began opening the clear vial of the magic potion that her father had given him. She had her magic open the vial and enter it in order to pull the black liquid out. Her magic then surrounded the black liquid, keeping it from dividing and mixing with the surrounding water, and had it travel to Jackson's chest. Emily then closed her eyes and broke down the liquid into the same essence as her magic, so it could be absorbed into his body. When that was done, she had the Winter and Shadow Magic enter Jackson's body.

She smiled softly when MiM's moonbeam shined over the lake and poured his magic into Jackson. Jackson's body glowed a soft blue as Emily's and MiM's magic reacted together. Jackson's deadly pale skin glowed softly into a healthier tone that showed that he was not dead anymore, and his lips returned to its natural pink color. Jackson's brown hair lightened and turned as white as freshly fallen snow. Emily knew that Jackson's brown eyes would change into a soft blue, the remnant of ice. But what really surprised her was the snowflake pattern that glowed once again on Jackson's arm.

Emily stood up and started backing away from the lake when MiM began to pull Jackson up from the water. She watched in anticipation but was startled by a familiar sound. Alarmed by this, Emily turned around and walked towards the sound.

She entered the forest and walked several feet within before she came face to face with a Nightmare Horse. She blinked as the horse neighed in distress and excitement. Emily usually didn't understand Nightmare Sand, sadly; at least, not without her father enchanting them with old magic for her to understand his messages anyway. Her father had so many Nightmares that she couldn't remember all their names. But something was telling her that this one was not her father's. And there was only one that wasn't his.

"Night?"

Darkness.

That was the first thing he remembered when he woke up. He knew that he shouldn't be afraid of the darkness. For some reason, it felt like an old friend. It felt safe. So he was not afraid. It reminded him of someone, but he could not remember the name or what that person looked like for that matter.

The water was cold around him, and yet not cold at all. That confused him, but not as much as being underwater. He was slightly worried about being underwater. He couldn't remember how he got there to begin with, or who he was for that matter. And that's what scared him to his very core.

He tried to move, but he found out that he couldn't. He felt his body drift towards the surface as something bright pulling him forward. He was startled when the ice above him began to crack. Something in him stirred as he heard the cracks. It reminded him of something. Fear, maybe?

As the cracks spread across the ice, he found himself feeling afraid of it. In the back of his mind, he heard screaming from three unknown voices. They were just screaming, though. He could not see or hear what they were screaming about (all he could tell was that two were female and one was male). But the very though made his heart ache painfully. But why?

A big crack was heard above him as the smaller cracks connected together on the ice and created a hole right above him. He gasped as he was pulled out of the water. Cold air filled his lungs and his blue eyes shot open. He hung in the air and stared in awe at the moon as he was bathed in its moonlight. The screams that echoed in his head were pushed away until it faded completely.
He stared at the moon in awe. It was so big and so bright and so warm. The moment of fear just seemed to disappear. And then he heard a soft voice of a man.

"Jack Frost." Jack Frost? Was that his name? He blinked in confusion. For some reason, that name didn't feel right to him. Then again, he had no other name anyway.

"Who are you?" Jack asked the moon. Though, he felt a bit silly doing it.

"I am Tsar Lunar XII, but you may call me MiM or Manny if you like."

"I think I like the name Manny. It's easier to remember."

The voice called Manny laugh softly. "Very well, Jack Frost." Jack soon found himself being settled down on the ice. He looked at Manny in confusion when the light began to dim.

"Where are you going, Manny? Don't leave me alone!" Why was he leaving him? Why was he here at all? What was he supposed to do? He was so confused.

"Child, I have used a lot of magic bringing you back to life. I would need to rest for a while," he said tiredly. "Do not fear, Jack Frost, you are not alone. I may not be able to talk to you for some time, but you will have the aid of Mother Nature and the North Wind. Until we meet again." And then the beam of light dimmed and vanished as it returned to the moon.

Jack looked around, confused. What was he supposed to do? Who was Mother Nature and the North Wind? Jack carefully walked across the ice, looking at the snow covered trees in awe. Everything looked so new and yet familiar at the same time. He looked down when his foot hit something. On the ice was a wooden staff. He touched it with his toe and was surprised when white frost patterns coated it.

You don't see that every day, he thought as his curiosity got the better of him. He bent down and picked up the staff. The staff immediately began to glow a cold blue. Wha? He almost dropped the staff, startled, when the base of the staff shot out frost when it came in contact with the ice. He watched in amazement as the frost patterns swirled around across the ice. It was beautiful.

He looked at the staff, curiously, and walked towards a tree. Jack slowly touched the trunk of the tree with his staff. Beautiful patterns of frost swirled up and around the trunk. Jack touched a few more trees, watching in amazement.

What else can I do? With that one thought, Jack swung the staff around and ran across the frozen lake. Frost swirled around the ice as he slid across the ice like a pro. Jack vaguely wondered how he was able to slide on the ice like that. It felt like he had done it before.

"Play with me, Frost Child," a female voice said as a gust of wind swirled him up into the air. Jack was startled by the female voice. She sounded playful and kind. There was also the power that radiated from her — ancient. She was ancient.

"Who are you?" he asked curiously. He wasn't that afraid as he found himself hovering above the trees and staring down at the lake filled with his frost patterns.

"I am one of the Four Winds. I am the North Wind of Winter, Frost Child," the female voice said with a laugh in her voice. "I am your friend! Play with me!"

Jack laughed as the North Wind twirled him around in the air. She was gentle and very playful. North Wind was fun!
And then the North Wind lost her grip on him. Jack let out a surprised yelp as he fell back to the earth and into the trees. Jack grabbed hold of a tree branch and pulled himself up with North Wind's help. She gently twirled around him in apology. It looked like they needed to get into some practice before flying into the air again.

"It's okay, Wind. I'm fine," he said with a smile before something caught his eye. It was a small village. He blinked in surprise. If there was a village, maybe there was someone who knew him. "Wind?"

"Yes, Frost Child?"

"Can we go over there?" he asked as he pointed to the village. North Winds swirled around him in a comforting embrace.

"The village?" she asked.

"Yes, can we?"

"Okay," and then she picked him up and they flew to the village.

Night's ears flicked back and she neighed in confirmation. Emily smiled at the young horse. She might not understand Nightmare Sand like her father, but she could guess why Jackson's horse was here.

"You and Jackson have a connection, I'm assuming. You felt Jackson coming back to life, didn't you?"

Night neighed and stomped her hooves in reply. Emily guessed that was a yes. Emily assumed Night probably saw what was happening.

"MiM is able to resurrect Jackson," she told the horse gently and noticed the horse stomping her hooves in distaste for the Man in the Moon. She smiled at that. "But he needed my help since he has no control over Seasonal's. I used my magic to open the vial that my father gave Jackson for Christmas. His body has already changed into a Winter Spirit. MiM is breathing life back into him and is pulling him out of the lake as we speak."

Night's eyes widened at the news before she neighed happily. Her front legs were kicked in front of her as she stood on her back legs for a few seconds before she began galloping around her. Emily laughed softly as she watched the Night galloping around her. She seemed very, very happy to have her child back.

"Night? There is something I should warn you about." Night stopped and looked at her curiously.

"Since Jackson's been dead for seven days there is a chance that he will not remember anything about his previous life. It would still be there in his head, but it could be some time before he gets a few of his memories back on his own. That's unless we snatch his tooth box from Toothiana."

Night's ears flicked down, showing her obviousness sadness at the fact that Jackson will not remember her. But she nodded in understanding. They were getting Jackson back, that's all that mattered. Although, at the mention of one of the Guardians, she stomped her hooves angrily. Emily understood how she felt.

At the sound of a familiar child laughing and a branch breaking, Emily suddenly remembered that Jackson would have no idea that he was a spirit now and that no one could see him, except maybe the Indians. They believe in all spirits. Emily and Night ran out of the forest and towards the lake, only to see Jackson riding the North Wind to the village.
Emily looked at Night in worry. "Oh, dear. This could be bad."
Chapter Summary

Jack Frost goes into the town and see a little girl crying with a boy. He’s not sure why he gets this pain when he see her. He is shocked when he is walked through and flys back to the lake. Jack encounters Mother Nature and Night and he is told what he is.

Yeah, they so needed lots of practice. But Wind had him in the air...maybe...for about four-seconds or so. And he kept bouncing off the rooftops of the houses and trees (and maybe crashing here and there and maybe way over there), but it was all good and fun! Sure, it was scary, but it was so exciting! Jack knew he never flew like this before! Besides, who would have thought he was so light? He was surprised he hadn't died yet.

Jackson chuckled around a groan as he landed on a rooftop, unsteadily. He looked down to see people near fire pits as they tried and get warm. He saw other adults rushing to and from houses with items. He guessed they were trading or something. He even saw children running around as the snow fell gently. They looked so happy and the snow looked so pretty.

The Wind caressed him gently, apologizing for the bumpy ride, as they looked at the village. Jack looked at the small village in awe. There were so many people at this hour at night. His eyes wandered around the faces of the different people. He felt like he should know them, but he came up with a blank. He frowned as his eyes caught sight of a young girl with brown hair. She seemed upset.

Jack frowned as he jumped off the roof (with Winds help) and landed next to the girl as she cried into a young boy's arms. The two children looked to be ten or so. He tilted his head questioningly. What was she so upset about? And why did it feel like he knew her?

"He's dead Jamie," the girl's muffled voice cried. The girl sounded familiar, but why? "It's all my fault. I shouldn't have been near the middle." Jack frowned along with the boy. Why did his heart hurt? Did he know this girl and his boy that she's crying over?

"It is not your fault Flee," the boy named Jamie said softly. Jack noticed that he had tears in his eyes as well, but held it in for Flee. "Jackson risked his life to save you. There was nothing you could have done. What about your mom and Jackson's brother? Did you tell them yet?"

The girl didn't say anything for a while. She was silent as she sobbed harder. Jack felt a sudden tightness in his chest. He had a bad feeling about this. Jack got on his knees and smiled sadly at the girl.

"Hey, kiddo...I knew it's hard losing Jackson, but...you have to be strong. He wouldn't want you to be sad like this. And what about your mom? She must be heartbroken, just like you. I bet you two can comfort each other."

The girl continued to cry as Jack spoke. Jack figured she must have loved this boy a lot. She seemed so heartbroken. He wished there was something he could do to cheer her up.

"...She..." Jack perked up at the hoarse voice. "She didn't take it very well." Jack's face fell. He
figured as much. This Jackson must have been someone special. "She found us and..."

"What Flee?" Jamie asked softly as he rubbed Flee's back.

"She...jumped into the water...after he fell in."

Jack's eyes widen in horror. *Oh, my god. The poor girl.* Jack opened his mouth to speak, but his throat felt too dry. His chest also ached terribly as well, but why? It didn't make sense. Maybe he knew these people. But how? He just woke up in that lake not long ago.

"I'm so sorry, Flee," Jamie said sadly as tears fell down his cheek. Flee cried some more.

"Kozmotis…was devastated…"

Jack froze in place at the name. *Kozmotis? Where have I heard that name before?* Jack sat on his knees for a while, lost in thought. He felt hurt for some reason and lost. His chest hurt too much as well. He took a shuddering breath as his own tears began to fall. Why did everything hurt? Why did it feel like he was hurting people and that it was his fault? That didn't make sense either.

"I'm so sorry," he whispered to the girl as the boy wrapped his arms around her to support her. Jack looked at them and paused when he saw the girl's face. She looked familiar. He felt something tugging at his mind, but all he could get was a small laugh. He frowned when he noticed them walking towards him. "Do I know you?" he asked, but he didn't get a response. What happened next completely shook Jack to his core. Jack gasped as the children walked through him, instead of around him. His hand flew to his chest as he seemed to become translucent for a moment before becoming solid again.

Jack felt the color drain from his face as he turned around. *What just happened? Did they just... go...through me?* Jack felt his breath hitch as two little kids ran in his direction. "Excuse me?" he tried to ask, but the rest of his words died in his throat as they ran through him. Jack staggered back with tears in his eyes. Jack felt an emptiness in his chest as more people walked through him. It was a very unpleasant feeling. It was as if he was being torn apart.

Tears fell down his cheeks as the North Wind rushed towards him. "Master!" Jack barely heard the familiar, yet unknown, voice as he cried for Wind to get him away from the village. The Wind complied and pulled him into the air and back to the lake.

Jack sobbed as the Wind caressed his cheek and tried to wipe away the tears. Everything hurt. He was so confused. What was he? Was he dead? Was he a spirit? A ghost, maybe? Why was he alone? Jack sobbed as he landed on the ice. Frost swirled around the ice as his hands touched it, creating beautiful patterns and designs.

Jack couldn't stop the tears that kept on falling, nor the pain he felt in his chest. He wasn't sure why, but he felt like he failed the young girl somehow. Why couldn't they see him? Why couldn't she hear him? Who was this Jackson that she was talking about? Why did it feel like he should know all of these questions that swirled in his mind over and over again? Why couldn't he remember? Why? Why? Why?

Jack continued to cry in misery, completely unaware of the snow that was fall above him. Jack was so lost in his conflicted thoughts and emotions that he didn't notice a woman and a horse coming towards him.

"Master?" Jack was startled by the voice and looked up to see a black horse with yellow eyes. Jack blinked his blurry eyes in confusion. *Does she see me?* The horse lowered her head and licked his
tears away. Jack was stunned for a moment before he laughed and smiled at the black horse. Jack was curious about the grains of sand that he felt when he petted her mane. *What is she?*

"What are you? And why did you call me Master?" Jack asked the horse.

"You are Master, Master," the horse replied. "I am your Nightmare Horse."

Jack blinked in confusion. He had a horse? Since when? He frowned as he tried to remember if he had seen this horse before. "What's your name?" he finally asked after a moment.

"Her name is Night," a female voice said from behind the horse. Jack lifted his eyes to see a tall elegant woman (maybe around the age of twenty-five) smiling at him. The woman had long black hair that reached her lower back. She had gray-greenish eyes and a warm smile. The woman was wearing a beautiful blue gown that seemed to sparkle in the moonlight and had vines stitched in certain areas of the dress. Jack noticed that the woman had black shoes that had gold in it. Jack tilted his head to the side in question. The woman looked familiar. But he couldn't place where he saw her before.

"Night's a pretty name," Jack said softly to the horse. He looked at the woman. Maybe this was the person Manny said he was supposed to help him. "Who are you? Are you this Mother Nature that Manny told me about?"

A flash of pain flashed in the woman's eyes for a seconds before it was covered up. Jack blinked in confusion. Did he miss something? "I am Mother Nature, Jack Frost." The woman smiled sadly at him. He wondered why.

"Do you know what am I?" Jack asked her softly. "Those people walked right through me." Jack's shoulder slumped slightly at the memory of being walked through. He still didn't understand it and it frightened him a bit. He could still feel the hollowness in his chest.

Mother Nature was silent for a second before smiling gently at him. "Jack, the reason you were walked through is because you are a spirit. The humans need to believe in you to see you."

"A spirit?" Jack's voice shook slightly. So he really was dead.

"But you are not just any spirit." Jack blinked in confusion. Mother Nature bent down so that she was kneeling on the ice as well. "You, my dear child, are very special." *Special? How? "You are a Winter Spirit."

"A Winter Spirit?" Jack repeated slowly, his brows furrowed in slight confusion. "How does that make me special, though?"

The corner of Mother Nature lips curved into a smile. "You are not any Winter Spirit, Jack. You are the Winter Spirit. You are the Head Seasonal of Winter."

Jack's brows shot up. "Wha... really?"

Mother Nature nodded as she got up. "Yes, really," she said with a light smile that made her look even more beautiful. "Come child. Time for us to leave."

Jack quickly got up as Mother Nature began to walk towards land. "Where are we going?" Jack asked as he walked after her.

"Home," she replied with a smile. *Home? I have a home?*
When he got on land he noticed that Night was bending down so he could get on. When he did, Mother Nature got on behind to him. Jack felt her arm going around him as she settled herself on Night before she started floating.

"To my castle Night." And then Night took off into the night sky to his new home.
Chapter Summary

Susanna mourns the death of her son and says her final goodbyes

The room felt suffocating and lonely. The shadows quivered in reaction to her wild emotions. They were moving the same fluid way when Pitch was mourning in the room with her three ago. They were reacting to her anger, to her loneliness and pain, to her confusion and guilt, and to her hatred towards the Guardians. Everything still felt so raw and fresh. It was as if Jackson's death happened yesterday and not a week ago. The pain was still all too real.

She sighed as she stared at the small shrine in front of her. On a small wooden table laid three portraits. The portrait on the left was a group picture of Jackson (when he was a baby), Pitch (when he was human), and a younger Emily. The one on the right was another group picture. Only this one was from the Thanksgiving Dinner, which was taken by a sprite. The picture had Jackson, Flee, herself, Mother Nature, Father Time, Pitch, Blaze, Flora, and Autumn. The picture in the middle was a single close up picture of Jackson.

Susanna smiled sadly at the picture. Jackson was so young and playful. He was the heart of their family. The heart of their lives. He was what kept them together as a family.

She stared at the picture of her dead son. Brown eyes stared at her with mischief, love, and warmth. Jackson loved to play pranks on the villagers, especially bullies. He was a very lovely boy. He was loved by everyone at the village. Jackson loved everyone and tended to act very childishly at times, but that was who he was. Always playing, always cheerful and fun, always making sure everyone was safe and happy. Jackson was everything.

Susanna stared at the picture as tears fell down her cheeks. She ignored the droplets freezing into ice and then shattering when it hit the ground. She was filled with so many different emotions. She didn't know what to do. She sighed as she looked at the empty vial in her pale hand. Flee should be at the village by now, telling the cover story she told her to say. Susanna felt guilty for having her child to live several more years without her, but it was for the best. Flee had someone to love her and care for her. She knew Flee didn't want to leave Jamie behind, not yet anyway.

Susanna sighed as she placed the vial necklace back around her neck. She had made this choice. Jackson's death crushed all of them. And there were only three individuals to blame: the Guardians.

Jagged ice formed under her knees and spread slowly across the floor. Susanna gritted her teeth as she thought about those spirits. They will pay. They will pay with their lives. Susanna looked at the pictures and lifted a hand to gently touch it. Her fingertips gently caressed the glass that covered the picture of Jackson's cheek.

"Goodbye, my dear," she whispered softly. "No matter where you are…I hope you are happy. I will avenge your death." Susanna bent over and pressed her lips to the glass. "I love you, Jackson."

With a sad smile, Susanna got off her knees and walked into the shadows. The shadows swirled around her as she seemed to melt into the shadows. Susanna could feel herself being everywhere at
once and yet, only being in one place. Susanna didn't try to understand it. She went along with it as she exited through the shadow in Pitch's library. Pitch was sitting at his desk, plotting his revenge.

The both of them had lost everything. They were both hurting. They were both angry. They both wanted revenge. Susanna wrapped her arms around Pitch's neck, resting her cheek on her head.

"How are the plans coming?" She asked him as he paused writing in the strange language of symbols.

Pitch sighed and gave her a tired glance. His quill fell out of his hand, however, when his gaze fell on her new form. Susanna smiled softly at him. After taking the potion, her appearance had completely changed. Light brown eyes had changed into a dark shade of blue that looked cold and threatening. Her naturally fair skin had turned pale, but not the type of pale that suggested that she was dead. Her brown curly hair had changed to the color of snow and had black highlights in them. Replacing her normal colonial brown dress was the beautiful light blue dress that Pitch had given her for Christmas. On her feet, she wore glass shoes that sparkled like ice.

"You look amazing," Pitch said as he turned to face her. Susanna laughed softly as she was pulled into his lap.

"Why thank you, my King," she said with a smile.

Pitch smiled as well before kissing her cheek. "So my Nightmare Queen," he said with a soft smile that briefly reached his eyes. "I have a lot to teach you about the Spirit World, but first things first." Pitch gently lifted his finger to tuck a white strand behind her ear. "As you know, to both the Spirit and Physical Realm, I am known as the Boogieman and the Nightmare King and how Emily is known Mother Nature, Gaia, and Mother Earth." Susanna nodded. "What would you like to be called outside these walls?"

Susanna furrowed her brows for a moment. As of today, she was no longer Susanna Overland. She was a Winter Spirit and the Nightmare Queen. She had powers over ice, the harsh part of winter, and powers over shadows. Several names popped into her head, but only one made her sound fearsome to all who would cross her path. Susanna looked at Pitch with a smile. She had the perfect name.

"Call me the Snow Queen."
While grieving Jackson's death, Autumn, Blaze, and Flora question where Mother Nature was and her odd behavior. But as they talk out loud what each of them knows, they figure out something very unsettling. That is until they feel their centers reacting to a new Winter Seasonal.

Ever since the beginning of creation, everything needed balance. Without balance, there would be chaos and destruction. The lack of balance caused many wars and bloodshed and even the end of planets and galaxies. Many species had become existent because of this. The Pookas and their neighbors the Ostreovlases were a good example of this lack of balance.

She actually found it quite intriguing that these Ostreovlases were actually a different form of Humans. The Ostreovlase were more magically inclined than Earth's Humans. The Ostreovlases weren't as diverse as Earth's human race with all their culture and religions, but they were divided by what their abilities were. The Ostreovlases were a brilliant race of people of Warriors and Psychics. From what she read, Ostreovlases that had abilities that were physical (like powers over weapons or martial arts) were considered Ostreovlase Warriors. Ostreovlases that had abilities that were more magical (like powers over nature and energy) were considered Ostreovlase Psychics.

Mother Nature (before her planet was destroyed and the beginning of Dark Ages) was an Ostreovlase Psychic. Pitch Black (before the Fearlings corrupted him) was an Ostreovlase Warrior, as surprising as that sounded. She never would have thought that he had no powers over shadows and Nightmare Sand before becoming a spirit. Though, it wasn't hard to see that he was a fierce warrior, especially with the way he fought the Guardians and how he holds himself in public. And Jackson...

Autumn's hand froze mid-turning as she stared at the page of the old thick leather book. Jackson was said to have powers over energy. That was said to be a very rare gift in the Pitchiner family, considering they were mainly Ostreovlase Psychics with Pitch being the exception. However...

Autumn sighed as she closed the book that she was reading. She had read the history of the Ostreovlases, the Pookas, and the Lunars dozens of times, but she couldn't quite focus on it. It had been rather hard to distract her mind from the pain and depression they were all feeling.

As Elemental Spirits, they were not only connected to the seasons, but to each other. They all had to balance each other in order to keep the balance. But with Old Man Winter (or Father Frost as some humans referred to him as) gone, winter had been more harsher and unstable lately and very unpredictable, causing many problems for them when it was their season. Mother might have managed to keep the damage to a minimal, but even she couldn't be everywhere to control the course of the weather when she had her own duties to do. It had been hard trying to keep all the seasons balanced, to make sure it didn't cause chaos to the planet.

So when Mother announced that her uncle would be the new Winter Seasonal in the coming years, they were so excited. They hadn't had a Winter Spirit in centuries (considering Old Man Winter killed many of them, along with the majority of the Winter Sprites when he was alive). With Jackson, the season would be balanced once again and with that a new sibling!
Old Man Winter was never a sibling. He was too harsh in the way he delivered his season. He did what he wanted without collaborating with any of them and even ignored Mother's and the Groundhog's instructions and warnings. This had caused lots of problems with other spirits, especially Bunnymund and some of the non-Elemental Spirits.

But that was not the only thing. Old Man Winter outright hated them. The feeling was rather mutual. Autumn couldn't remember a time in where any of them liked Old Man Winter and his disrespectful attitude. The tension was always so high between them that they were always fighting. The last time they fought to that extent created the first Ice Age and every other one following that. He could have destroyed the planet if Mother Nature and Father Time hadn't intervened.

Autumn left out a soft sigh as she shifted her focus from her closed book to her two siblings. They had all felt the painful hole in their chests when Jackson died. They were connected to Mother after all and they all felt the intense pain that she was in. It was unimaginable. Autumn hadn't felt this much pain since she lost her husband when she was still human. But it wasn't just that. It was the fact that they lost their youngest sibling before he officially joined them. It was heartbreaking.

And the way it affected them was scary.

Mother had been a mess. They all were devastated and reserved from what happened. They were grieving. But it was more so with Mother. Mother's emotions had been all over the place. One minute she was calm and then the next she was summoning thunder clouds, earthquakes, tidal waves, harsh winds, and whirlwinds. It got worse when they felt a new Winter Spirit being born, but for some reason, Mother could not get to the new spirit. The spirit was hiding underground and was on the move. And also, for some reason, Pitch had closed off his current lair and left. He was on the move again. To where? They weren't sure. It was very distressing.

"Where you think Mother went?" Mother wasn't the only one who was affected by Jackson's death, though. With the little time they spent with him, they all came to love him as their younger brother. They saw the innocence and compassion in him within his carefree, mischievous nature. It was something that they were missing in their family, something that Old Man Winter never had. His death left a gaping hole in their chests and the outcome was clearly having an effect on them.

"I'm not sure, Flora." Flora was a very cheerful, bubbly person. She was always talking, alway smile. But now she seemed listless; it was as if the life was sucked right out of her. The flowers that were on her dress were usually full of life and colorful as if it was a fully bloomed flower on the first day of spring. But now the flowers were dull and wilted. Flora was also rather reserved. She still talked, but not with the cheerfulness that usually accompanied it.

"I hope she's okay." Blaze was quite reserved as well. Usually, he was cracking up a joke or two or trying to be the annoying brother that loved messing with his sisters. However, Blaze hadn't told a single joke all week. He hadn't tried to pull a prank on them or get them to yell at him or do something that would make them go after him when he did something that annoyed them. In fact, all he'd been doing (since coming home early from his duties) was staring longly at the flickering fireplace, while Flora looked out the window and stared at the snow listlessly.

Autumn knew that her sibling would have placed his two Summer Spirits in charge of spreading the season with the sprites for the next few weeks while he was gone. It really wasn't that uncommon for a Head Seasonal to put their second in commands in charge of directing the sprites and handling the season while they were gone. They've done it plenty of times when they had to attend the season preparation meetings on the solstice and equinox every year or when there were major parties they had to attend. Noted, their second in commands weren't as powerful as the Head
Seasonals, but it got the job done.

But still, Autumn was worried. Sure, she was here with them, but it was hers and Flora's offseason. But Blaze would have to get back to work within the next couple of weeks or at least until Mother kicked him out for not doing his job.

Autumn sighed for the eleventh time that day before she straightened her posture from her spot on the green sofa chair. "I'm sure she's fine, Flora. There's nothing to worry about."

Flora glanced at her from her position near the window with a frown gracing on her delicate features. "Yeah, but...Mother's been acting strange lately." Flora twirled a black strand around her finger. "She seemed rather in a hurry to leave before nightfall."

"She's right." Autumn turned to Blaze. Blaze was leaning against the armrest of the brown sofa chair that he was sitting on. Dark orange brows were furrowed slightly as he thought. "I know she might be taking Jackson's death a lot hard then the rest of us, but her behavior is not normal, for her anyway."

"What you mean, Blaze?" Flora asked with a hint of her usual curiosity lacing her words.

"Well," Blaze started as he ran a hand through his flaming hair. "She's been very moody lately and constantly summoning odd weather patterns. I'm sure you've noticed. It was raining when I went to Africa last month." He pouted slightly. "It wasn't supposed to be raining. Rain was scheduled for this month."

"You know it was starting to snow slightly when I went to Europe after Thanksgiving." Autumn had been a bit baffled by that, considering it wasn't supposed to snow for another two weeks.

"Well, not that you mention it," Flora spoke quietly with a frown. "It was a bit too warm when I went to South America in November."

Autumn looked at her siblings in total bewilderment. All of them experienced some type of unexpected weather ever since the Thanksgiving Party. Mother was known to have unpredictable moods, but what could have caused them within the last two months? It didn't make sense. Everything was fine during and after the party. So whatever was causing Mother to be this troubled must have happened between the party and Christmas.

"What could be troubling Mother so much?" Flora asked, unknowing speaking Autumn's thoughts.

"Pitch maybe," Blaze suggested with a shrug. "There has been a lot of issues with the Guardians lately. Have you heard about that? I heard from Eve that they have caused some inconvenience for some of the other holiday spirits."

"I heard about that too," Autumn said with a nodded. "There's a rumor going around that they are locking themselves in their palaces."

Flora nodded, clearly showing that she had heard about it. "What about this other Winter Spirit? Maybe Mother finally found him or her."

Autumn poised her lips up in thought. "That would explain why she's been agitated all week. Though, she usually doesn't bother with new spirits unless they did something to disturb our work. Besides, I figured Mother would be trying to figure out where Pitch went. I've talked to Minerva and she told me no one has seen him since Christmas. She was actually worried when he didn't show up to the Annual Christmas Ball with his guests."
Blaze frowned as he got up and began pacing. "We didn't go either for obvious reasons, neither did Pitch, but the Romans don't know that. Not since they lost their Greek halves. However, I'm not sure that's the whole reason for Mother's behavior. It could explain half of it, but not everything."

"What's the other half then?" Flower asked, looking slightly confused, but was trying to follow along.

Blaze stopped to face them with an uncertain look. "And that, my lovely sisters, is the missing puzzle piece we do not know. But I will tell you this: whatever Mother is hiding is big. And I have a funny feeling Father Time knows what that thing is. Mother was pretty upset that day after Father Time left."

"This is just getting more confusing by the minute," Flora said with a heavy sigh. "I wish she would tell us what is going on. I mean you were here in November, Blaze, and me and Autumn were here in December. Why didn't she say anything to us? We could have helped."

Silence fell between them as they tried to figure out what was wrong with Mother Nature. "What if…"

"What if what, Autumn?" Blaze asked when she started to speak out her thoughts. She really hoped she was wrong.

Autumn looked at the flame flicking around in the fireplace. "What if…Father Time told Mother something?" She paused as she tried to put her thoughts into words. "Something that shook her so badly that she…couldn't speak it…Something she might have wanted to change...or prevent." Autumn shifted her eyes to her brother. "There's only a few things that could rattle Mother to this extent: Pitch…" She pointed to the three of them. "us…the balance of this planet…and…"

Blaze and Flora looked at her in horror. The truth was right there in front of them this whole time. The missing puzzle piece. "Jackson."

The weight of the truth as their voices said that one name made it all too real. Blaze stumbled back into his chair, his tan skin turning pale at the implication of what must have been going on and Flora had tears slowly leaking from her eyes. "No—you—don't—think…?" Flora started to ask through her sobs.

"That Father Time saw Jackson's death and Mother tried to prevent it?" she asked gravely.

"The Guardians!" Blaze shot to his feet in that instant. "That's the only thing that makes sense," he said frantically, his voice lacing with anger. "Father Time must have seen Jackson being killed because of those reckless Guardians! Mother told us what the trees showed her!"

Autumn couldn't make a comment to that. Suddenly, everything seemed all too real. Yet, it all started to make sense. Mother would have gone after the Guardians herself. She would have summoned storms and other natural disasters to stall them or change their course. Mother would have been driving herself crazy because of this.

It explained her behavior.

It explained everything over the past two months.

But there was one thing that didn't add up.

"Where is she now?"
No answer came, not that she was expecting one.

But what she really wasn't expecting was the sudden power that filled her chest, right to the depths of her center. They all gasped as they felt their elemental centers reacting to the newly made center. This new center being added was their missing element, their missing link, their new brother.

Mother had chosen a Winter Seasonal. But what their centers told them of their new brother greatly confused them, but brought happy, shocked, tears to their eyes.


The tears she'd been holding finally fell. How was this possible? Autumn didn't know. But all she could say was: "He's alive." And that was all that seemed to matter to her. Jackson was alive. He was alive and he was their new brother. How it happened didn't seem to matter.
"This—is—where—you—live?" Jack hadn't known what to expect when he and Mother Nature got on Night to her home. He was curious why they were heading towards the ocean. It was big and vast and very empty. They had passed many small islands along the way and were heading towards the middle of the ocean, with nothing around it.

That was until they passed by some energy field. Jack wasn't sure what it was but it tingled his pale skin as they passed through it. When they reached the other side, Jack couldn't contain his shock. It looked like something off a storybook.

What he thought was an empty space of clear blue water was a huge island. In the middle was a huge castle that seemed to glisten in the moonlight. The island on the four corners, surrounding the castle, was breathtaking. There was an area that was filled with golden brown sand, another was filled with snow (lots and lots of snow), another was filled with blooming flowers and plants, and the last was filled with colorful leaves falling from the trees. Jack recognized it as the four seasons. Though, he wasn't sure how he knew that.

Jack felt Mother Nature's arms tighten slightly around him, but he didn't pay any mind to that. He was preoccupied with how beautiful everything looked.

"Yes, along with several sprites and your siblings," Mother Nature replied as they flew over some snow covered trees.

Jack blinked at the answer. Jack had no idea what sprites were. However, at the mentioned that he had siblings got his attention. Jack looked over his shoulder to look at Mother Nature with surprised blue eyes. "Siblings? I have siblings?"

Mother Nature smiled at him, but it seemed tight. It was like she was sad about something, but was putting on a calm face as she replied: "They are not your biological brother and sisters. They are Seasonals, much like you. The four of you are all connected to each other as well as the seasons, so the four of you are siblings, in a sense, if you wish to see it that way. I know they do."

Jack's smile was radiant as he absorbed what Mother Nature said about the other Seasonals. As he turned back to look in front of him, Jack's mind wandered to his siblings. I wonder what they look. Jack narrowed his eyes slightly as several images came to mind. He shook that thought away when his mind began creating crazy images of humans with animal features. With a small shrug, Jack trained his eyes in front of him as they got closer to the castle. He would meet them soon enough. He smiled. I wonder if they like pranks.

Mother Nature knew her three children's centers told them who Jack Frost was to them. She also figured they would have figured out an idea of the situation of the last couple of months. They had
known her for centuries, especially Blaze. Blaze and Old Man Winter (before he faded) were the oldest of the Seasonals. Blaze lived during the Ancient Greece era and became a spirit before the end of the Greek-Punic War. Autumn became a spirit before the end of the Western Han Dynasty and Flora became a spirit during the Anglo-Saxon period.

Old Man Winter was a different case altogether. When she crashed into this planet, Old Man Winter and several other spirits were already on Earth. He had been nice and kind at the time. Old Man Winter was always mysterious and closed off. It didn't surprise her when he began distancing himself and getting colder as the decades came and passed.

Then again, she had never really been close to the Winter Seasonal. He had shown his dislike through his harsh blizzards when she chose new Seasonals to take the load off her when it became too much. Though, she was disappointed that her children couldn't get along with Old Man Winter. Then again, Old Man Winter had been alone for so long and didn't think he needed others help or attend the Seasonal Sessions to coordinate the seasons each year.

Mother Nature sipped her vanilla and honey flavored milk as she watched Autumn drink her herbal tea. She knew her children were smart and would have figured it out, given time. She knew her children would pick up on her unpredictable moods. Mother Nature had always had unpredictable moods, a family trait sadly. It wasn't like her moods weren't common knowledge among the Spirit Community. However, only a few are able to read her moods so well to tell what was normal and what wasn't. Her children just happened to be those few who could read her, along with her father and Father Time.

Even then, she should have known that at least one of them would confront her about it. They were smart spirits and just as protective of her as she was with them. Mother Nature knew right away that they figured it out (to some extent) when she returned to the castle with Jack. They had all been depressed since Jackson's death. But when they returned, her three children's state were less depressed and more shocked and happy, yet confused. They had been crying (it was obvious by their slightly red eyes and the signs of them hastily wiping tears away), but with the way they kept glancing at her and then at Jack with questioning eyes told her that they figured some things out.

Of course, the three had figured out right away that Jack Frost, formally Jackson Overland, had no memories of his previous life. Blaze and Flora were for once speechless as they stared at their new sibling. Thankfully, Autumn was more composed and collected than her two talkative siblings. She managed to handle introductions quite smoothly and then sent the three to go tour the castle and to show Jack his room, leaving the two of them to go to her private study to talk. Blaze and Flora took the hint and were more than happy to play tour guides (for now). Blaze had taken the role quite quickly and lead a curious Jack down a set of halls while telling him the history of the castle and what spells Mother Nature cast on them and around her island.

That had been a little over a half hour ago since they parted ways. Mother Nature had been sitting on her chair in her study ever since. Mother Nature didn't mind the silence. It was peaceful and calm, but that peaceful atmosphere was about to break with a simple question.

"Why didn't you tell us about Jackson's death, Mother?"

"And this is my favorite room in the entire castle." Blaze gestured to the light green room that they were currently in with a huge smile on his tan face. "The kitchen!"

Jack eyed the huge space in wonder. There were huge wooden tables along the walls of the kitchen and another right in the middle of the room. Cabernets rested on the long walls, storing cups, bowls, plates, different ingredients and other stuff Jack hadn't seen before. On one of the walls,
Jack noticed a strange rectangular thing resting on the wall. It was white and had doors on it. It reminded him of a very updated ice box (how he knew that he wasn't sure). He wondered what it stored.

On the long table near the wall were bowls and other ingredients and other things to mix stuff. There was also a rectangular thing with lots of buttons. Hmm...he wondered what was.

"Cool right?" Blaze asked excitedly. Jack nodded.

"Yeah, what is this stuff?"

Blaze smirked as he puffed out his chest, his thumb pointing to the strange objects. "That is a fridge and that is a freestanding stove. It's an oven and a stove in one machine! Isn't that cool?"

Jack nodded dumbly at the strange machines. He knew what a stove was but he had never seen anything like that. Jack tilted his head a bit in confusion. How did he know what a stove was anyway?

"I know. I had the same reaction when I first saw this," Flora said with a smile. "Many of this stuff is from Mother's home world."

Jack blinked at that. "Really?"

"Yup, this stuff was actually what survived before the planet got destroyed. This stuff belonged to Mr. Doom and Gloom. Mother convinced Father Time to go back in time to get this stuff and to make it look like new."

"Mr. Doom and Gloom?" Jack asked in confusion.

"Ignore, Blaze," Flora told him with an amused smile. "That's Blaze's nickname for Mother's father."

"Don't forget Man of Fear," Blaze interjected with a smirk. "He hates it when I call him that."

Jack chuckled softly. "Man of Fear? What is he? The Boogieman or something?"

Blaze and Flora blinked simultaneously before staring at each other, their eyes looking uneasy. "Yes."

"Oh," was Jack's response. The three of them were reduced to an uncomfortable silence. Jack wasn't sure why, though. It felt like he should know who this Boogieman was. "What now?" Jack asked his two siblings.

"Well, we have the library, the gardens, and the bedrooms," Flora said.

Blaze perked up at this. "Hey, the sprites should be in the gardens."

"Blaze, no!" Flora scolded with a frown. "No, pranks. Mother said not to prank her sprites anymore."

"You're no fun, sis," Blaze whined.

"What kind of prank?" Jack couldn't keep the curiosity out of his voice.

Blaze's grin widened as he rested his arm on Jack's shoulders. "Tell me, little brother, have you ever launched three thousand sticky fruits at unsuspecting sprites with the aid of Wind and then
having those sprites get covered in feathers and vines afterward."

Jack blinked. That actually sounded awesome. "Noooo."

Blaze continued to smile as he grabbed his arm. "You are now!" And then Blaze pulled him out of
the kitchen and into the hall. The two of them laughed as Flora ran after them.

"Blaze! Jack! Get back here! Mother is so going to kill us!"

"No, she's not!" Blaze said as he laughed. "She's going to have to catch us first!"

Autumn knew Mother Nature well enough to know that she had her reasons for not telling them.
Though, that didn't mean Mother's methods were the right choice or even made sense at times. As
of right now, Autumn was still trying to make sense of the situation and why Mother chose to not
tell them after she managed to process what Father Time told her. Sure, she understood that Mother
wouldn't have been able to do much due to winter been harsher this year, hence needing more of
her attention to direct it. But she still was a bit confused.

"But, Mother, even with you being very busy doing winter this year, you should have told us. We
could have helped."

Mother sighed sadly as grayish-green eyes stared into hers. "Autumn, you know the rules.
Elementals, Seasonals, Sprites, and all Non-Nature Spirits are forbidden to get involved in other
spirits wars."

Autumn frowned at the calm tone of Mother Nature. They all were aware of this. It would disrupt
the balance of nature if they ever got involved in other spirits affairs. They all learned the
consequences of that when the balance was thrown off course when many of them got involved in
a war between the Roman Gods and Goddess and the Greeks. It had gotten so bad that they had to
call the aid of the Norse Gods to help stop the chaos before Earth (and maybe several other worlds)
got destroyed from the crossfire.

"I know Mother. We have no intention of getting involved in other Spirits' wars and conflicts, but
we still could have helped Jackson before he fell into the lake."

Mother's lips tighten into a frown. "Autumn..." The firmness of Mother's voice made Autumn
tighten her grip on her mug. There were reasons why no one ever questioned Mother Nature's
authority and just labeled her as unpredictable. Mother Nature was by far the most powerful spirit
in the Spirit Community, alongside Father Time and the Roman Gods, and would not hesitate to
put someone in their place. They all knew when not to push Mother Nature.

Autumn swallowed nervously as three of her leaves dislodge themselves from her hair and fell to
the floor. She would be lucky if she didn't get hit by a lightning bolt by the end of this.

"Jackson was on Death's list." Autumn paled at that. Death wasn't exactly mean, evil, or heartless
as some spirits believe (by that she meant Non-Elemental/Nature Spirits and the Gods), but he did
have a temper when others intervene in his work. Death and his Horsemen were just very busy and
it was rare for them to show themselves, even to other spirits. But when he did, he could be quite
frightening, even at a distance. Autumn remembered seeing him once when she was delivering fall
to Europe. She had happened to be near a house where a person was dying. She had seen Death in
his skeleton form when he arrived on his ashen horse. His appearance alone was downright
frightening, but he wasn't a bad guy as she came to learn later on.

"But, Mother, wouldn't Death be annoyed that you and Lunar intervened in his work?" she asked in
concern. The last thing they needed was a vengeful and angry Grim Reaper going after them.

"He was aware of a possible resurrection," Mother Nature said with a raised brow. "Don't worry about him coming after us. He is aware that Jackson was supposed to be my Head of Winter."

Mother Nature picked up her glass of milk again and resumed drinking it. "That was one of the things that were clear. Jackson's death, it being the Guardians fault, and my father wanting revenge were the only things that were clear. Everything else was very vague and kept changing. There was nothing you or the others could have done."

"I see," Autumn said softly as her shoulders slumped slightly. Well, now that Mother put it that way...there wouldn't be anything they could have done in the end. If they did try to help, they would somehow get involved in the war and breaking Mother's rule. And it also wouldn't matter anyway since Jackson was meant to die, considering that he was on Death's list. Autumn ran her hand through her hair. Everything just sucked. It was unfair that Jackson had to die so young. But what was more troubling was the outcome of him dying before becoming a spirit: him losing his memories. "Mother? Do you think we could get Jackson's tooth box?"

Mother Nature frowned as she thought. "I'm not sure. After what happened on Christmas, I'm sure the Guardians upped their security. Besides, none of us are scheduled to be near Asia at the moment."

Autumn nodded as she pondered that thought. If the Guardians were now isolating themselves in their homes (if the rumors she heard were true) then it would be next to impossible to get the tooth box without raising suspicion.

"Mother Nature! Mother Nature!" Autumn blinked as she heard several frantic yells from three of Mother's sprites, who were knocking on the door. Mother Nature swiftly got up from her chair and walked towards the door of her study. When she opened it, she was faced with three upset sprites. The thing about the sprites was that they were covered in white and gray feathers and vines.

Autumn covered her mouth with her hand to stifle a laugh as Mother's right eye twitched. Blaze was in so much trouble when Mother was done with him.

"BLAZE!" was all Mother yelled before she stomped out of the study with flames starting to emerge from the tips of her hair. Autumn shook her head as the three sprites ran after a furious Mother Nature. Blaze would never learn.
Jack notices just how scary Mother Nature can be, but the thought gets tossed aside as they continue their game. Mother Nature ponders about her uncle and his second chance at life. Maybe his death wasn't so bad after all.

Jack's laughter echoed along with the Winds' excitement as he dropped feathers and vines on the fruit drenched sprites that Blaze blasted seconds ago. It was exhilarating how fast the Winds were as Blaze flew along the trees. Jack wished he and Wind could be like that. Wind tried but she couldn't keep him in the air for very long; they hadn't figured out their coordination or balance just yet. Because of this Night had taken the job of carrying him around while he and Wind covered the sprites with feathers and vines as Blaze instructed.

Jack couldn't help the laugh that left him as the sprites yelled at Blaze while he blasted them with a strange purple fruit, followed by the South Wind whooshing around the angry sprites violent before he grabbed Blaze in a swift embrace and heaved him away from the sprites before the sprites could chase him. They never saw him thanks to Night, who had been galloping above the trees and near the trees shadows to avoid detection. Jack found it funny as Blaze outright laughed at the sprites as they chased him. Blaze must do this a lot.

Jack looked down towards the flowerbed (right next to the open door of the castle that they exited from) to see Flora sighing at their obviously fun and hilarious scene he and Blaze were causing. Jack couldn't help the smile that crossed his face; however, it soon fell when his sister began glancing behind her nervously. Jack looked at her curiously, silently wondering what Flora was so worried about. Well, that was until the island began shaking violently. Jack only had a second to wonder what was going on before an angry (and somewhat scary voice) echoed around them.

"BLAZE!"

Jack was slightly startled by the voice and by the violent shaking. Was Mother Nature causing this?

"Mother Nature is angry," Wind said with a soft laugh as she swirled around him. Well, that answered his question. But it amazed him how powerful Mother Nature was. He assumed she would be mad but he wasn't expecting this. Then again, he barely knew her.

"BLAZE HEAT! HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU TO STOP PRANKING MY SPRITES? THEY ARE VERY BUSY AND HAVE NO TIME FOR YOUR MEDDLING! THE SPRING EQUINOX IS JUST TWO MONTHS AWAY AND WE ARE ALREADY BEHIND SCHEDULE BECAUSE OF THOSE MORONS AND THEIR GOOD FORSAKEN WAR!"

Jack placed a hand over his mouth to stifle a laugh as the sprites that were chasing Blaze retreated to the safety of the castle when an enraged Mother Nature graced them with her presence. Jack had only had one word to Mother Nature and that was downright frightening.

Jack could sense the immense power coming from Mother Nature. It was overwhelming. It was empowering. And the very power could easily be seen by the older spirit's current appearance. Mother Nature was still wearing the blue gown that she was wearing when she found him.
However, her kind and compassionate face were twisted in rage and were fierce. Her black hair seemed to be engulfed in a red fiery flame that only grew as she yelled and her gray-greenish eyes were glowing fiercely.

Mother Nature was furious and clearly not happy with their prank. Jack wondered nervously what the female spirit would do to him when she caught him. Although, that thought was tossed aside as the South Wind dramatically dropped Blaze on a tree branch just as Mother Nature glared in Blaze's direction.

She should have known Blaze would not be able to resist his god for shaken pranks once the shock and depression wore off. Blaze was never known to be still and unproductive for very long. In fact, Blaze was a lot like Jack personality and prank-wise (with the exception of him being for more mature with his less than innocent pranks). In a way, Blaze and Jack were the perfect opposites to each other in season and personality wise.

She wasn't sure if that was a good thing or not. Jack and Blaze were no April Fools, but the pranks the two could pull would give her gray hairs before the next major blizzard would be set to schedule in the coming decades. Mother Nature exhaled heavily as she glared at her Head of Summer. Mother Nature ignored the fact that the South Wind dramatically dropped Blaze on one of the farthest branches he could find before retreating.

Mother Nature didn't find that suspicious at all. The Four Winds were as old as this planet. They were free spirits of nature (even if they no longer have a physical body) and did what they pleased. Each of the Winds had their own personality of course. Out of the four, North Wind and South Wind had the harshest personality and temper. The North Wind was just as cheerful as Jack, but she had her moments of being violent and overprotective of her charge when she wanted to be. The South Wind was always harsh (towards others anyway) and despised those that he felt were a threat to his charge. All the Winds respected her and knew not to get involved when it came to her and her children. However, North Wind was the only one to fight against her if she felt the need to.

Like now for instance. The South Wind had left his charge on a branch that was the farthest from her, leaving Blaze to her wrath. However, the North Wind continued to force her back when she attempted to grab Blaze with some of her vines. Her vines barely made it to the first branch of the old oak before the vines froze solid from the cold. Mother Nature gritted her teeth in frustration.

What on earth is she doing? she wondered silently to herself as the North Wind froze her vines more quickly than before.

The North Wind was clearly having fun, considering how much she was laughing. Mother Nature narrowed her eyes at Blaze as he began laughing along with the North Wind. Why the little brat? Just wait 'til I get my vines on him! He's going to be cleaning the castle for five decades!

Mother Nature growled in irritation as she summoned stronger vines to grab her little troublemaker. Several vines managed to avoid the North Wind as they emerged from the ground and either wrapped around the old tree or climbed straight up towards the Spirit of Summer. She smiled smugly upon seeing Blaze beginning to laugh nervously as the vines managed to continue their pursuit after avoiding the Wind's attempts to freeze them.

I got you now, she thought right before she heard a familiar laugh that made her anger dissipate slowly.

"BLAZE, GET ON!"
Mother Nature could only watch as Night exited from behind a tree's shadow and galloped towards Blaze. Night had two bags attached to her side, which she could clearly see was filled with feathers and vines and sitting on her back was a very cheerful, very happy Jack Frost. Mother Nature felt her heart tug a bit as Jack grabbed Blaze's hand, allowing Blaze to sit behind him. *He seems so happy.*

"CATCH US IF YOU CAN!" Jack yelled back before Night galloped further into the darkness of the forest.

Mother Nature blinked as her mind slowly processed the laugh and words of her uncle. It had hurt so much when he died. She had believed that she would never hear his laugh again or see his sweet smile. But here he was; laughing and pranking along with his seasonal brother.

A soft smile graced her features as she wiped away a tear that formed on her black eyelash. Her sweet uncle was alive again. Alive and healthy and laughing like a child should be.

"Mother? Are you okay?" Mother Nature looked at Flora with a small smile.

"Yes, I'm fine, dear.* Jackson, you were given a second chance and this time I will make sure you have the childhood you deserve. "Let's go get your brothers."

Flora nodded as the East Wind picked both of them up to chase the troublesome duo on a fun filled merry chase through the various gardens of rare plants and bright forest and laughing all the while.
After Jack falls asleep, Night joins Mother Nature as she and the other Seasonal Spirits discuss an unscheduled blizzard in Southern Asia caused by the Snow Queen.

Today had been the most fun she had had since Christmas. It felt just like yesterday when she felt the bond between her and her master snap when he died in that lake. Night had felt so lost and empty in the last couple of days. All Night had done in those days of grief was stay in Master's room in Creator's lair. Night hadn't attended the small service Creator did for Master, nor did she leave when Flee returned to the land above, nor did she leave when the Nightmare Queen came to check up on her before she and Creator left to carry out their latest plans towards the Guardians. Night hoped those spirits suffered a slow and painful death. She wished she could have done it, but Night saw no point. Her pure, sweet, childish Master was gone, not those powerful, selfish spirits. It made her mad just thinking about them.

But then she felt the empty bond mend back together. Night had been startled when that happened. She had never felt anything like it before. Night wasn't sure how it happened, but she just knew that her Master was alive once again. Night had been alone in the lair at the time when she left Master's room. Creator and the Nightmare Queen had left the day before to enact one of their revenge plans towards the Guardians.

Night had ignored the fact that all her siblings were gone and were seeking vengeance as she shadowed out of the lair and arrived in the forest near the lake. Night hadn't known what Creator's daughter was doing when she stepped away from the lake. However, when she saw a moonbeam hit the lake, followed by the bond between her and her master intensifying, Night couldn't help but stagger back in surprise.

Night may have stepped on some branches on the ground. And may have alerted Mother Nature that she was there, but the end result was the best news she had heard in the past week. Master was alive again and that's all that mattered.

It did hurt that Master didn't remember anything, but she really didn't dwell on that fact. Master would soon have his memories back once Mother Nature found the right time to go get them. Apparently, there was a horrible blizzard going on in Southern Asia at the moment and there was said to be Nightmare Horses and other odd snowstorms around Australia and the North Pole. Well, Creator and the Nightmare Queen sure had been busy.

"Night?" Her ears flicked slightly as she watched her Master snuggle into the blue covers. They were currently in Master's room. The room was a pretty baby blue with white snowflakes decorating the walls. Master had a closet on one of the walls and a desk and dresser on another. The dresser had a mirror above it. The bed seemed to be made out of a tree but was somehow able to withstand the very cold temperate in the room. The bed was decorated with blue and white quilts, pillows and comforters; fitting for a winter child. Next to the bed was a big window that showed the winter wonderland outside. It was quite beautiful. "Why am I the only one that understands you?"

Night nuzzled Master's cheek as tired blue eyes stared at her curiously. "Because I was made for
only you Master. We are bonded to each other. That is why only you can understand me."

Blue eyes blinked tiredly before he began to yawn. He had a long day. "Who…made you…for me?" Night nuzzled his cheek again as blue eyes began to close.

"Creator made me for you," Night said softly, noticing her master's breathing evening out as he fell into a deep sleep. "He misses you, Master," Night whispered softly after several minutes. "He's in so much pain now. I fear for him and the Nightmare Queen. They are so angry now and…I can't even sense where he is." She paused as Master snuggled into his covers a bit more with a small smile on his face. "He's far away now and…" Her ears flatten slightly as she thought about Creator. "Mother Nature will not allow you to go near Creator when he's like this. You would not be allowed to be near him when he is fighting the Guardians or scheming his revenge." Night sighed as she glanced at the blue heart necklace. The sides seemed to be rusted shut. It would be difficult to open it. "You will see him again." Night turned around and slowly walked towards a shadow. "I promise and hopefully you will remember what a wonderful spirit he is, despite what others say."

Night shadowed away and entered Mother Nature's Weather Room where she and the other Seasonals were. The room was quite impressive. The walls were engraved with various weather patterns and symbols that represented the four seasons. In the middle of the room was a huge glass-like table with a huge map of the planet on it; strange lines of different colors were moving across certain areas on the map. Near the table was a globe that looked similar to Creator's, but it had several different colored lights flashing on it.

Night's ears flicked slightly in curiosity when she noticed the frown on Mother Nature features as she studied the flashing lights on the continent of Asia.

"Mother, the blizzard is growing massive! The blizzard hadn't spread to the rest of the continent, but there's no telling how far it will get! At this rate, Jarek and Berilo won't be able to finish spring in that area." All the Seasonals looked nervous as they looked at the globe. However, Flora looked more so.

"I know Blaze. I fear this must be that new Winter Spirit's doing."

"It's odd, though," Flora spoke up as she looked at the globe. "It seems the blizzard is revolving around Punjam Hy Loo."

Autumn and Blaze's heads snapped up then before they regarded their sibling. "Are you sure?" Autumn asked her sibling as Mother Nature got up from her seat.

"Yes, the blizzard seems to be near the mountain range in South Asia. If I remember correctly that particular mountain range is where the Tooth Palace is."

"She's right." Flora, Blaze, and Autumn all turned to look at Mother Nature. Mother Nature was standing near the globe and staring at it with a grim expression on her face. "The blizzard is coming from Punjam Hy Loo."

"But why?" Flora asked as she gazed at the globe in concern. "All the Winter Sprites and animals are busy spreading winter right now. Why would a Winter Spirit be causing a blizzard in Southern Asia?"

Night watched as Blaze and Autumn looked at each other with deep frowns on their feature. Night had a feeling that they had an idea of who and why. "My father." The three Seasonal Spirits looked at Mother Nature as she spoke.
"You think this spirit is working with Mr. Man of Fear, don't you, Mother?" Blaze asked as he massaged his temple.

Mother Nature sighed. "I'm afraid so." Mother Nature turned to face her children. Night noticed that she looked slightly tired. "I'm afraid I know who this spirit might be."

The three Seasonals perked up at this. "Really? Who?"

Instead of answering, Mother Nature returned to her seat and looked at Night. "Thank you for joining us, Night. I'm assuming he is asleep now." Night nodded as she walked farther into the room and stopped next to Mother Nature. Mother Nature smiled at her. "That's good. He needs his rest."

"Yes he does," Night said as she nodded in agreement. She was aware that Mother Nature couldn't understand her, not without the spell anyway.

"Tell me, Night. Is this new spirit Susanna?"

Mother Nature's children looked taken aback by this. "Jack and Flee's mother?" Flora asked with wide violet eyes.

"How?" Blaze asked next. "She and Flee should still be alive. They didn't die too, did they?"

Mother Nature shook her head tiredly as she leaned into her chair. "No they didn't die, Blaze. However, one of them did drink the potion I helped my father create for them."

"What potion?" Autumn asked with furrowed brows.

Night's ears flicked. She guessed Mother Nature forgot to mention the vials. "I guess I forgot to mention that," Mother Nature murmured to herself before she started explaining to her children about the three vials. "You see a few months back my father wanted the Overlands to live with him when they were done with their human lives. He wanted to keep the family together. Father was creating a Spirit Potion and asked me to give him some Winter Magic so Susanna and Flee could become Winter Spirits along with my uncle."

The three spirits blinked for a moment as they processed what Mother Nature told. "So you believe Susanna Overland drank the vial then?" Autumn asked slowly.

Mother Nature nodded. "I do."

"But couldn't Flee have drunk it as well?" Blaze asked as he tapped his finger on the table. He was obviously still trying to process all the information together.

"Not possible," Flora spoke up, making Blaze and Autumn look at their sister questioningly.

"What you mean, Flora?" Blaze asked.

"I just finished talking to Wind a little while ago. She told me that this Winter Spirit is an adult and is calling herself the Snow Queen."

"It is Susanna," Mother Nature said with a grave expression. "She was just as heartbroken as my father. It is clear that she is helping him get his revenge."

"But Mother," Autumn spoke up as she looked at her mother with furrowed brows. "Susanna would be an Elemental then. Wouldn't she be forbidden by your rule to aid Pitch in his war against
the Guardians?"

Mother Nature sighed tiredly again as he looked at her children. "I'm afraid that's where things get complicated." Autumn, Blaze, and Flora all looked confused at this. Night looked at Mother Nature in curiosity. She was actually wondering the same thing. By law, the Nightmare Queen should not be aiding in the war; yet she was helping Creator by creating harsh blizzards and snowstorms.

"You see, the vials also have some of my father powers in it. Susanna might be a Winter Spirit (to be more accurate, Susanna has powers over the harsh and cruel side of winter), but she also has powers over the Shadows. Because of this, my authority over her is very limited. In other words, she is not bound to me like the rest of you are."

Night's ear perked up at this. If that was true then would Master not be bound to her as well. Would Master be able to willingly see Creator? "But what about Jack then?" Blaze asked. "Jack wouldn't be bounded to you either because of this?"

"That's the tricky part," Mother Nature replied. "Technically, he wouldn't be bounded to me because of his mixed origins. However, because of the nature of his rebirth and because of his powers over winter and because of the fact he is a Seasonal makes him bounded to my authority."

Night flicked her tail as she tried to understand what Mother Nature was saying. Master might have powers over Shadows and Winter, but because he is a Seasonal…he is therefore bounded to Mother Nature's will. So…would the law still apply to him?

"Wait so Jack is bounded to you just because he it tied to winter, like how were are tied to our seasons?" Blaze asked in confusion.

Mother Nature nodded in response. "It's because he directly connected to winter itself. Because of this, he is bound by my authority."

"That makes sense," Flora said. "But what are we going to do with Susanna then. We can't let her disturb the balance like this, just because she's not under your authority."

"I said my authority was limited," Mother Nature corrected the female spirit. "I might not be able to forbid her from helping my father in his war, but she does have a responsibility to keep nature in balance." Mother Nature stood up then as she continued. "I'm setting out to Punjam Hy Loo in an hour. Until then you four are to aid Jack in his training until I return." Flora, Autumn, and Blaze all nodded as they got up from their seats as well.

"We will, Mother," Autumn replied.

"We'll teach him everything we know," Blaze said with a smile. Night wasn't sure if that smile was a good thing or not.

"We'll do our best, Mother," Flora said with a small nod.

"I know you will." Mother Nature smiled at all of them. "I will see you all in a few days." And with that, Mother Nature ended the meeting. Night watched as the Seasonal Spirits left to go to their own rooms. Night stayed with Mother Nature a little longer, before taking her leave.

"Watch over him," Mother Nature told her with a concerned smile. "I know I don't have to tell you this, but as long as he is my Head of Winter, Jack cannot be near my father at this time. My father is very unstable and by law…Jack cannot be near any war involving non-elementals." She sighed softly. "My father deserves to know that Jackson is alive, but the balance must come first."

Night flicked her tail to the side as she listened to Mother Nature. She had a feeling that was the
case. She didn't like it, but she understood. Besides, it would be hard to tell Creator that Master is alive if they can't find him. Night nodded to Mother Nature, making her smile in thanks.

"Thank you." Night nodded again before she shadowed back to Master's room. Night exited the shadow to see that Master was still sleeping peacefully. Night continued to watch him for a few more minutes before she decided to get some rest as well. Tomorrow was going to be a long day. She just knew it.
Blizzard at Punjam Hy Loo

Chapter Summary

Pitch and the Snow Queen seek their revenge. Pitch attacks the Warren, while the Snow Queen attacks the Tooth Palace.

Chapter Notes

Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah (for those who don't celebrate Christmas) and a Happy New Year everyone! Here is my Christmas/Hanukkah gift for you! Hope you like the chapter! Enjoy!

Pitch was right when he said that the Guardian of Memories' palace was in a mountain and how awfully pretty and sparkly it was. The Snow Queen would have been impressed at the massive ancient structure that sparkled and shined with its golds and blues, but she wasn't. The owner of said palace, this Guardian, was one of those spirits that she loathed immensely for killing her baby boy and for breaking Pitch's heart. She frowned as she remembered the heartbroken look he wore every time he thought about Jackson or saw something that reminded him of his brother, her son.

Cold dark blue eyes glared at the palace. There seemed to be little fairies everywhere (as her lover predicted) with little teeth and coins in their small feathered hands coming and going. She eyes them coldly. They looked like the female Guardian. They were her children in a sense or maybe copies of her. It was plain to see that the Guardian didn’t leave the palace unless it was to fight against her king. The witch.

She scowled at that. She would make them pay, dearly. Starting with what the Guardians care about most.

The Snow Queen tilted her head as the shadows quivered. Pitch had reached the Warren. Her lips twitched into a smile as she glanced at the miniature Fearling Tooth Fairy as she spread his arms in front of her.

"I believe a blizzard is in order. Don't you?"

Pitch laughed wickedly as he glared at the Warren. The pitiful land had seen better days. The Spring Magic seemed weaker than usual and was in the process of healing itself. Spring Magic was repairing ancient structures that had crumbled and plants that had started to wilt and die. The little eggs that the Pooka cared about so much were running around as they were born from the very ground of the Warren. Everything seemed to be livening up with the return of the Pooka's magic. He was going to have to fix that little problem, now didn't he?

The Pooka was nowhere to be found, most likely at the North Pole with the other Guardians. He doubted Sanderson was there, though. He was upset about the whole situation. Pitch wouldn't be surprised if the golden man distanced himself from his friends, for now.
He held his scythe loosely in his hands as hundreds of eggs scattered upon seeing him and his Nightmares when they materialized in the middle of the valley that the eggs were being born in. He laughed as his Nightmares gave chase. The silent screams of their death as they were stomped on was like music to his ears. The song of death and revenge. The sound of the Pooka's hope breaking under his foot. He would make him pay.

Pitch laughed again as the big stone sentinels came to defend the worthless.

Let's see how the Pooka feels after he destroyed his precious Warren and those worthless eggs. He would avenge his brother. Revenge would be his.

The aurora borealis was beautiful with its greens and blues. It was always amazing to see it in the night sky, but not now.

Sanderson stared at the lights as he flew over the ocean. The aurora was Nicholas way of calling them. For what? He really didn't want to know. He could not face them right now...not after what just happened...not after what they did. The poor Overlands...

He couldn't face them right now. Not after what they did to Pitch and his family...to that poor family...and to Pitch's little brother...How? This should never have happened. Not to a good and pure boy like Jackson Overland.

Sanderson sighed at his conflicted thoughts. What was he going to do now? Should he go back or should he keep his distance? He could use some advice.

Sanderson looked at the horizon as he flew over the ocean and towards a familiar golden sand island in the distance. He was home. It had been awhile since he'd been home. What had it been? Three? Four years, maybe? Sanderson looked on with a fond smile as he spotted some of the mermaids talking among themselves never the edge of the golden beach and the ocean. He hoped the ladies weren't too mad at him for not coming home sooner.

_The girl was running from him. Why she was running and where they were going were answers he still didn't have but wanted to know._

"Come on, Jack!"

Jack looked at the girl. She had brown hair that reached her shoulders and wore a brown dress and brown boots. He, however, could not see the girl's face. It was somehow too dark in this forest to see her face. Not that she was facing him at all. She just kept on running and laughing joyfully.

"Where are we going?" he asked the girl questioningly.

_The girl laughed. "To see Kozmotis, silly!"

Jack blinked. There was that name again. Who was Kozmotis? He felt like he should know that name. That name felt familiar like he had known that person for a long time, but why?_

_Jack looked at the girl in confusion as she laughed and squealed. Deep within the forest was a hole in the ground. Near the hole was a shadow. The shadow twitched and shivered as it began to take form. It started to look like a person, but there were no features to tell who this shadow was forming into._

_"Who...?" Jack started to ask the girl when she stopped in front of the shadow. However, he never_
Jack groaned as he opened his eyes. He knew it was fairly early in the morning. Something was telling him it was about close to nine if the sun rays were anything to go by.

Jack yawned as he focused his eyes on the being who woke him up. The being was one of Mother Nature's sprite. He was about three feet tall with bluish wings. His outfit consisted of a blue shirt and white pants that were decorated with frost patterns. Jack knew right away this was a Frost Sprite. The Sprite also had sky blue eyes and ice-like hair.

"Um...hello," Jack said as he sat up.

"So sorry to wake you, Master Frost," the Frost Sprite said with an apologetic smile. "But breakfast will be ready in an hour. The others are waiting for you in the dining room."

"Um...thank you..." Jack was slightly startled that a Frost Sprite was in front of him and calling him master. Night called him that as well, but for some reason, he felt she would never stop calling him that. "Could you tell the others I'll be down soon?"

The Sprite bowed as he replied: "Of course!" And then he turned to leave the room, closing it shut behind him.

Jack remained on his soft bed for a little longer before he decided to move. Jack wasn't sure how he felt about being called master. Although, it seemed to briefly pull at a memory, but he couldn't quite grasp it.

Jack frowned at that. Why couldn't he remember and who was that girl in his dream? He wondered if that was his mind trying to help him remember.

Jack shook his head as he opened the closet door. Jack blinked at the different pairs of clothing that rested within. There were three light blue tunics (these tunics seemed to reach below his waist and pointy towards the bottom. There were golden trimmings on them that went from the shoulder to the bottom and then around the edges. On the lines were golden snowflakes), and three white ones of the same design (only the snowflakes were a dark blue). Next to the tunics were three pairs of vests: one blue, one white, and one gold. There were also six pairs of pants. Some of the pants were dressy, while some weren't. Although, they had a similar theme of colors: gold, blue, and white. And lastly, there were two cloaks. The first one was a dark blue. It had a border of white and was decorated with a snowflake pattern on the shoulders. The other was also a dark blue, but the border and snowflakes were gold instead.

Jack looked at the different clothing he had. They all looked like nice clothing. But for some reason, the colors felt like they should remind him of something. Of what, he couldn't recall. Jack stared at the light blue tunic and a pair of white pants.

Mother Nature sure knew how to pick clothing. Might as well thank her for all his new clothes. He doubted his old ones could be fixed anyway.

The frantic chirps of green and blue miniature Tooth Fairies echoed off the magnificent columns and walls of the palace that resided within the mountain of Asia as strong winds carried freezing cold air (averaging below twenty degrees) and freezing snow and jagged ice, creating a fearful raging blizzard.
The raging blizzard roared as it blew and struck everything around it, freezing anything that got too close and knocking anything that was lightweight and fragile and shattering any and everything that was made of glass. Thousands of Tooth Fairies chipped fearfully as they tried to avoid being sucked in (as the blizzard shattered glass and knocked down tooth boxes) and becoming a fairy sickle. Many of the fairies were unlucky and ended up dropping the little teeth they were holding before they were frozen into a block of ice.

The icy laughter of the Winter Spirit brought chills to their little bones. The miniature fairies didn't know what they (or even mother) did to anger the Winter Spirit. But they did know one thing, they were not going to stick around to find out and risk being frozen solid. All except one brave fairy that was.

This miniature Tooth Fairy was the youngest of her sisters. She was also said to be different when compared to the rest of the miniature Tooth Fairies. This Tooth Fairy was similar to her mother. Much like her mother, this Tooth Fairy had a fiery and compassionate personality that would make the Sister of Flight proud. While her sisters had either a pair of green or pink eyes, this Tooth Fairy had the rare gift of having both colored eyes: one green, one pink.

While the other fairies were flying away from the blizzard (and attempting to avoid getting frozen alive), this young and brave fairy charge straight for the Winter Spirit that invaded their home. Of course, she was now cold and had ice forming on her feathers, but she was far away from the blizzard, making sure she didn't get frozen alive. She ignored the frantic chirps of her sisters as they yelled for her to fly the other way.

"Turn the other way, sister!"

"Fly, sister, fly!"

"We must tell mother about the Winter Spirit!"

"Please don't! We can't lose you too!"

She ignored them as she flew above the current. She flew higher and higher until she was directly above the blizzard. She could hear the jagged winds as they carried ice with them from within the blizzard. The Tooth Fairy looked toward her right when she heard a female laugh. He laughter was from the Winter Spirit, she realized. The laughter sounded menacing and mocking. What had mother done to anger her? The young fairy wondered as she flew to the top platform that the spirit was summoning the blizzard from. I know many spirits are not happy about the war. Mother is neglecting her job, in favor of fighting Pitch. But...could she had done something to anger one of Mother Nature's spirits?

The fairy chirped in uncertainty. If their mother did do something like that then they were in trouble. It was bad enough that they were struggling to gather the teeth without their mother's help, but to have their mother (and the other Guardians at that) to mess with the balance of nature (and other spirits' jobs) would not end well; not for them and certainly not for the other Guardians. The young fairy dreaded to find out what their mother did as she continued to fly to the platform.

Upon reaching the platform, the fairy was taken aback by the spirit's appearance. The woman had curly snow white hair that had black highlights, dark blue eyes that looked cold and menacing, and fair pale skin. The woman wore a beautiful light blue gown that sparkled like the snow she created. The woman was beautiful. But that didn't mean she would put her guard down. The woman was dangerous.

"Well, what do we have here?" The woman's voice was as cold as the sharp jagged ice shards that
were formed and tossed around; they were deadly and frightening. The young fairy tried to be brave, but she felt it faltering further when she heard a familiar voice.

"It seems one of my sisters have the nerve to confront you, my Queen."

She bristled when she saw her older sister, at least she used to be. The fairy's once beautiful feathers were now a dark black and gray, her beak and feet were a light gray, and her once bright pink eyes were a sickly haunting yellow.

"I see." She stiffened as cold blue eyes gazed at her coldly. "Tell me little one," the Winter Spirit said with a hint of anger in her voice. "Would your mother even care if you froze to your death?"

The hatred in her voice as she snarled the question about their mother made her eyes widen in horror. Mother, what have you done?

The temperature soon plummeted. The winds grew harsher, the snow and ice grew and solidified into balls of ice that were jagged and pointy. The little fairy shivered violently as ice began to form on her wings and beak, to the point of hurting.

"Please," she chirped fearfully. She did not care for her safety too much, but she did fear for the others. "Do whatever you want to me, but please leave the others alone!"

She watched as her 'sister' translated what she said. The woman frowned in response. There also seemed to be a hint of pain in her eyes. "So self-sacrificing...just like my son..." Her voice sounded soft, distant even, and her dark blue eyes seemed to soften to a soft blue, like the one of the sky. She wondered who this person was. It wasn't new for spirits to have children. It was rare, but it wasn't impossible. They were immortal after all.

"He wouldn't want you to do this," she said softly, trying very hard to ignore the numbness caused by the ice that was beginning to spread up her small body.

The soft distant look soon turned into anger and rage. "How would you know?!" The winds grew violent. The ice grew larger and thicker, breaking the fine gold and strong metal of the palace. Jagged ice seemed to pierce through the walls and metal, destroy all in its path. The palace was becoming a huge block of ice.

"Why are you doing this?" she chirped frantically. "We haven't done anything to anger you!"

The woman laughed. It was hollow. The scary type of hollowness that was filled with pain and anger and...despair. The fairy could not understand what could have caused this type of pain. She could feel that the woman was remembering a memory, a bad one. "Is that so?" the woman asked. "Let me tell you something little fairy." She shivered at the hiss. "My son is dead because of your mother!"
Toothiana finds herself doubting herself as she thinks about Pitch and his brother. More problems arrive for the Guardians when Pitch's Nightmares attack the North Pole, followed by the pain of her fairies being attacked. Meanwhile, Jack talks to some Winter Sprites and learns a little bit about the Winter Seasonal before him.

Toothiana couldn't ignore the pain and guilt she felt whenever she thought about the child that died in the lake. *Our fault.* She could not stop thinking about the boy's sister who walked through her. She had yelled at them for being stupid and said so many other things…

Where they really that bad? It was their job to protect children. But right now…she felt like she failed.

*Our fault we lost them.*

Her belief (much like her brothers) was one of their strongest and now…it was gone. She no longer believed in them.

Toothiana never felt so empty before. The loss of two believers was one thing, but to be yelled at by a child they promised to protect and to see their enemy in agony was something totally different and nervewracking.

She had never seen Pitch cry before. Despite how Bunny felt, she could not shake the fear she felt when Pitch screamed. He seemed broken and hollow…and then the Fealings returned. But what shocked her the most was what Pitch yelled before the Fealings attacked them.

"LITTLE BROTHER!"

Toothiana stared at the barrier, silently watching the Nightmares as they tried to break through.

"Where the bloody hell is Sandy?"

"I don't know!"

Toothiana ignored Bunny and North as they tried to summon Sandy again. The Nightmares had been attacking for two hours now. They were relentless in their attacks. North thankfully had the barrier up, but she wasn't sure if it would hold. Not that it mattered anyway. They were no match for them.

Toothiana sighed as her thoughts swirled around Pitch's words.

"Jackson! Don't go!"

*Don't leave me!*

*Please, come back! We just found each other!*
We were going to be a family again!

"LITTLE BROTHER!"

Toothiana closed her eyes as she rested her head on her folded arms. She didn't know Pitch had a brother. Why hadn't Manny told them? They could have protected him. Toothiana felt her eyes water with tears as North and Bunny began to panic. The Nightmare Horses seemed to be getting through.

What have we done? Toothiana couldn't help but wonder. Mom and Dad would be so disappointed in me. Toothiana remembered the time before her parents were killed. They were loving people. Her mother was the ex-queen of the Sister of Flight and her father was the kindest soul there ever was. They would not be happy to see her now. I had been angry when they were killed in front of me. I had wanted vengeance. I had moaned their loss. Toothiana ignored the tears that leaked from her eyes. We deserve this. What have we...

And then she felt a sharp pain in the center of her chest. The pain was agonizing. She fell out of the seat that she was seated on and landed on the warm floor of the Globe Room. She barely heard the concern shouts of her friends as she began crying out in pain. She felt like she was being torn from the inside. Toothiana gasped as her head snapped up, staring passed her friends as they knelt in front of her, trying to get her attention, as the pain and fear settled in.

"My fairies!"

Finding his siblings wasn't as hard as he thought. Somehow he just knew that Blaze, Flora, and Autumn were currently at the dining room that they ate at last night. He wasn't sure how he knew this, however. Maybe it had something to do with them being connected to each other. Mother Nature and Autumn did say something about that.

"Good morning, Master Frost," a group of female Winter Sprite greeted when they spotted him walking down the hall. Jack noticed that they were cleaning the huge windows and then dusting them with a light layer of snow. "Did you sleep well?"

Jack found himself smiling at them. "Good morning. I slept very well, thank you." He paused for a moment before asking, "If you don't mind me asking, what are your names?"

The three Sprites blinked at the question. "You don't know, Master Frost?" This Sprite had light blue eyes and medium length white hair. She wore a pretty blue dress that sparkled like freshly dusted snow.

"I guess no one told you yet." This Sprite had long white hair that reached her waist and short bangs. She wore a blue dress with small ruffles on the bottom.

The Sprite next to her had her white hair tied into a bun. She wore a blue dress that had swirl patterns on it. She also seemed older than the other two. "I'm sure they meant to tell you today during training. It's easy once you get the hang of it."

"Training?" Jack asked in confusion. "You mean like understand my powers and how to fly?"

They nodded. "Yes, that's part of it," the Sprite with the long white hair said. "As a Seasonal, it's your job to direct winter as Mistress Nature's instructs. Winter is one of the harsher seasons, but with some guidance, you will pick it up fairly easily."

"I'm not sure if you've noticed, but you should be able to sense where Master Heat, Mistress Leaf,
and Mistress Fall are at and should be able to tell if they were in a danger or not."

Jack's eyes widened at that. "Actually I kinda do," Jack admitted, getting soft smiles from the three Sprites. "Is this normal?"

"Yes, it is, Master Frost," the Sprite with medium length hair said with a soft laugh. "You are connected to the very fabric of the season, much like the other Seasonals are. It is also that same reason that you would know every Winter Sprites and animals name."

Jack blinked as he tried to absorb that information. There seemed to be a lot he needed to know about being a Seasonal. He didn't doubt that his siblings would give him a very thorough (and hopefully not boring) explanation. Oh, what joy that would be.

"In the meantime, my name is Chrystal," the oldest Sprite introduced herself.

"I'm Eira," the Sprite with medium length hair said.

"And I'm Neva," the Sprite with the long hair said with a warm smile.

"It's nice to meet you," Jack said with a smile. The three Winter Sprites reminded him of children. It made his chest warm inside. "So, are you all Mother Nature's Sprites?"

The three Sprites laughed. "Oh, winters, no!"

Jack's brows arched in confusion. "We might not look it, but we have been around before Mistress Nature stepped foot on his planet. We were originally Master Winter's Sprites," Chrystal explained.

"Who?" Jack asked.

"Master Winter," Chrystal repeated. "He was the original Winter Seasonal before you."

"He was commonly known as Old Man Winter, Father Winter, or Father Frost. Though, he preferred to be called Master Winter," Eira added.

Jack tilted his head at that. Why did he get the sense that this Old Man Winter was not a good spirit? "He wasn't the nicest, but no one deserves to fade away."

"Fade...away?" Jack felt like he heard about this before. But from where? Jack frowned as he heard a male voice (though, he had no idea who the owner of said voice was) in his head telling him the same thing.

"Many spirits fade over time when people stop believing in us. It's a very painful process. When spirits fade (like Old Man Winter for example) it's like never existing. It's not the same as dying when we are human.

When a spirit fades it's because they were destroyed from the inside out. When that happens there is no way to be reborn."

"That's right," Neva said with a nod. Jack mentally pushed the voice away, deciding to not think about the dizziness when he tried to force himself to see who this person was. "Master Winter was too harsh with his magic. His magic became imbalance and as a result, he ended up fading away."

"It had not been very pretty," Eira murmured.

"What you mean?"
They glanced at each other, a silent question passing between them for several seconds before Chrystal took up the explanation. "Well, you see, several months before Master Winter started fading, he became very violent and cruel." The Sprites had sad frowns on their delicate features. The memory must not be very pleasant. "He started making the weather far too cold for the animals to live. He started fighting with the other Seasonals more and more. It had gotten so bad that he started killing his own Sprites."

The gasped that left his lips and his hand tightening around the delicate wood of his staff must have been the response they were expecting. They just nodded and looked at him sadly with their delicate wings and fingers twitching ever so slightly. "There are not many of us left, Master Frost," Neva said softly.

"Mistress Nature managed to save those who were left and gave us shelter in her home," Chrystal picked up the explanation. "Unlike the others, we only help her out as thanks for saving us and because of her kindness. However, we do not serve her. The Winter Sprites would and also will be loyal to the Winter Seasonal only."

Jack was taken aback by the comment. If the Winter Sprites weren't loyal to Mother Nature and if they weren't her Sprites then did that mean that they were his? "Is that's why you call me master?" He was the new Winter Seasonal now after all.

They nodded. "It is our way, Master Frost. As the new Winter Seasonal, in centuries, we serve only you," Chrystal said with a smile. Jack's heart warmed at the statement. He didn't know what to say to that.

"I don't know what to say," he admitted. "I don't know a thing about being a Winter Seasonal, let alone taking care of Sprites, but I promise I will try my best," he added quickly.

The three Sprites just smile at him. "We believe in you, Master Frost," Chrystal said warmly. "And, please, do not worry. I know you will be a better Seasonal then Master Winter. You are far kinder than him and we appreciate that."

Jack smiled at them. He didn't know why, but the comment reassured him in a way. If they believed in him then he would make sure he did his job right. Looks like he had some learning to do.

The four winds echoed their distress at how huge the blizzard was getting as it got more harsher, more wilder, more deadly. This information shocked her to her core. This blizzard was more massive than she had expected. Who would have thought that Susanna would create a blizzard this big? She dreaded the outcome of the balance and the extra work the Spirits and Sprites would have to do to fix this mess.

Mother Nature felt the balance shift; the snow and cold were spreading. The Earth was crying. The Earth was confused on why it was snowing in Asia and why it was so cold when it was supposed to be spring? Mother Nature had no answer for her. All she could do was sent calm to the Earth, telling her of a new Winter Spirit losing her child to the Guardians and lashing out in a fit of rage. The Earth understood. A mother's wrath was a scary one. The Earth pitied the mother and wished for her to help the woman ease her pain. Mother Nature intended on doing just that, but first, she would have to caught up to her, first, and ease the blizzard that was growing by the minute.

The temperate suddenly dropped and then the winds roared Susanna's wishes. **Destroy! Destroy! Destroy! The blizzard must be bigger! Ice be formed! The Guardians will pay! Pay! Pay!**
This was not good. She had to hurry.

Night galloped through the shadows, checking out every inch of the castle. The castle was pretty impressive. There were many rooms, each one different from the others. There was a study, a library, a kitchen and dining room, other bedrooms, a ballroom, the weather room, an infirmary, an impressive training room, and many, many others.

Night was very impressed. Night flicked her tail when she sensed her master had left his room. She only left just to memorize every inch of the castle. She had to make sure there were no surprises she might encounter if Master ever got lost.

Night exited out of the shadow and materialized in front of Master. She noticed he was wearing a new outfit. It suited him.

Blue eyes looked startled for a moment at her sudden appearance before they were replaced with amusement. "Morning Night," Master greeted with a smile. "Where have you been and how did you do that?"

"I was exploring the castle. It is quite impressive." Master nodded as if he expected that. "And I was shadowing."

"What's that?" Master asked curiously.

Night blinked. It hurt that he did not remember. "It's an ability I have. I can travel through the shadows. You have that ability as well."

"I do?" Master asked, looking excited.

"Yes, I will show you later. Right now I believe we have breakfast to eat."

Master nodded before they made way to the dining room.

The words made her small heart ship beat as she took in what the Winter Spirit said, this Snow Queen. Mother killed a child? No! That had to be a lie! Mother loved children. She would never harm one.

She wanted to yell at the Winter Spirit, to tell her that she was wrong. But the rage and pain in the woman's eyes stopped those defensive thoughts. The emotions seemed too raw, too real, to be a lie.

The young Tooth Fairy shivered violently at the freezing temperature. Thick clumps of ice clung to the feathers on her wings and began spreading to her chest and feet. She chirped in surprise as the ice grew too heavy for her to stay in the air, forcing her wings to gave out. Fear filled the young Tooth Fairy as she fell away from the platform and towards the ground below as the winds picked up.

This is the end, she thought, moments before a familiar, yet powerful, voice (that she had only heard in passing) yelled disbelievingly: "What are you doing Susanna?!"

Jack shifted from foot to foot nervously as his siblings just stared at him. "Is something wrong?"

It took a moment for the other three Spirits to realize that they were just staring at him for a little too long. And it took another moment for them to snap out of whatever trance they were in.
Hopefully, this wasn't anything bad. All he did was put on the new clothes.

"No, not at all," Autumn said with a smile. "It's just that the traditional outfit looks nice on you."

Jack's brow arched. "It's traditional?"

Autumn nodded as she gestured for him to sit down at the table. Blaze and Flora sipped on some coffee as they waited for the Sprites in charge of cooking to finish preparing the food.

"You see, Jack, that outfit is the traditional clothing of the Winter Seasonal." Jack blinked. Wasn't Old Man Winter the Winter Seasonal before him? "When this earth was very young, the original Winter Seasonal, Old Man Winter, ruled this land. The different seasons did not exist at the time, so it was an eternal winter."

"It was also unbalanced," Blaze commented just as the Spites exited the doors to bring in their breakfast.

"It took several centuries for that to happen, but that's not the point at the moment," Autumn said as she thanked a Spring Sprite when he placed a plate of eggs, ham, bacon, and a baked potato in front of her. "You see, the Winter Sprite made that outfit for Old Man Winter when he was a young Spirit. When Mother crashed onto this planet, she loved the outfit. The Winter Sprites were more than happy to restore the originals for the next Winter Spirit and even taught the other Seasonal Sprites how to create similar outfits for us as well."

"You have one too?" Jack asked, finding his curious mind wanting to know more as he absorbed the information.

"Of course," Flora said chirpily. "Though, we only wear it on special occasions."

"Like?" Jack asked.

"The Solstice and the Equinox ritual," Blaze answered as he ate his eggs.

"The what?" Jack remembered Mother Nature yelling that at Blaze and something about a war.

Autumn placed her fork back on the table after finishing a piece of the baked potato she had cut up moments ago. "They are rituals we perform for the passing of the seasons. Mother will explain this to you when the time comes for the ritual."

"Speaking of Mother," Jack said as he nibbled on some toast that a Fall Sprite placed on the table for them. "Where is she?"

"There was a rogue Winter Spirit creating a freak blizzard in Asia," Blaze said as he spread strawberry jam on his toast. "Mother went to stop it."

"Oh." He really wanted to thank her for the clothes and to ask her about his Winter Sprites.

"But don't worry!" Jack looked at Blaze. Blaze had a huge smile on his face and a glint in his eyes that Jack could not decipher. "Mother put us in charge of your training until she gets back."

Jack looked at his three siblings curiously. Blaze and Flora looked excited, while Autumn looked exasperated. "What type of training?"

"Well, you need to learn how to fly with Wind," Blaze said.

"And how to control your powers and what to use them for," Flora added.
"Mother would want you to know the history of the Spirit World, how we conduct the weather, how to work with other Seasonal animals and Sprites, and about Mother's rules for Elementals and Nature Spirits." Jack blinked as he looked at Autumn.

"Rules?"

"It's nothing serious," Autumn said with a reassuring smile. "Not all Spirits are nice, Jack."

"Especially those who are not Elementals or Nature Spirits," Blaze mumbled between bites. Flora scrunched up her nose in response.

"Blaze don't talk with your mouth full!" Flora tried to reprimand her brother, but he just stuck out his tongue in retaliation.

"Mother had certain rules to protect us from certain Spirits, especially those that are at war." Autumn ignored the other two and continued talking as if they hadn't spoken at all. "Mother might seem harsh at times, but believe me she does it because she fears of losing us."

Jack frowned. Jack knew he normally didn't like rules. He felt rules were too constraining. He would following them, to an extent anyway. However, Mother Nature's rules must be for a reason and should be followed. Jack didn't know what these rules were or what happened, but it must have been bad.

"What happened?"

Autumn smiled at him sadly. "War, Jack. At the last war, more than half of the Elementals, Nature Spirits, and Sprites were killed. That war almost destroyed this planet."

Jack's eyes widened. "Are you serious?" That would cause anyone to place rules down. He wondered what the rules were.
Promise of Revenge

Chapter Summary

Mother Nature arrives at the Tooth Palace and confronts Susanna. But, of course, the Guardians always ruin everything.

The annoying Guardian fluttered nervously around as they tried to stop the blizzard from spreading further. The entire mountain front that the Tooth Palace resided in was now covered in snow and ice. Sharp spikes of ice stuck out of the ground and mountainsides, covering every entryway with solid black ice. The fearsome looking ice and the below freezing cold front had already covered thirty or so miles, freezing several small tribes and villages, and killing thousands of adults and children.

Jarek had to hold back an eye roll when the Guardian began ranting again. "Can't you do anything to stop the blizzard?"

"I've already told you, Queen Toothiana," he said through gritted teeth. "This blizzard is far too strong for us. We can only hold it back."

And even that was very difficult with over sixty Summer, Spring, Winter Sprites trying to control the temperature, and with him and Pearl trying to melt the ice and hold back the harsh winds. Despite their best effects, the blizzard continued to spread. Many tribes and villages have been turned into an icebox, with several humans being impelled with ice shards. Many of deceased humans looked as if they were struck by a shattered mirror.

"BUT IT'S SPREADING!" Jarek's right eye twitched. He really didn't like the Guardians. Jarek normally got along with other spirits. But there were a few that he could not stand to be in the same space with. The Guardians just happened to be those he couldn't stand.

The Guardians, unlike the rest of the spirits in the Spirit World, lived in their own little world. The Guardians were spirits that didn't like change. They stayed in their palaces, unaware of the chaos and changes outside their little world. The Guardians were oblivious to the effects their little war was causing to the rest of them. The fact that they were trying to stop Pitch from doing his job was just plain ridiculous.

Jarek didn't blame the Groundhog for hating Aster. The Guardians thought that just because it's their holiday, they needed to have the perfect weather. No — they demanded it! Who did they think they were anyway? All they talked about was children this and children that and 'oh we must protect the children from things that go dark in the night' and 'Pitch Black is evil! He's a monster! We must stop him!' blah, blah, blah.

Jarek could not stand them!

"Oh, the poor children!"

The Guardians only seemed to care about the children, while there were thousands of mortals out there that were scared, or needed memories, or needed dreams and hope. It irritated him to no end on how narrowed minded they were. Did they really think they were that important just because
they were MiM's Guardians? To attack anyone that didn't fit their perfect little image? To think they deserve special treatment just because they have the belief of the Humans?

"WE KNOW IT'S SPREADING!" Pearl snapped back. Pearl's tan face brightened as her light red hair engulfed into flames at her growing temper. "WE ARE DOING THE BEST WE CAN GUARDIAN!" Pearl's light brown-reddish orbs narrowed as she glared at the woman. Jarek could tell that she was tired. Pearl was very known to be a stubborn Summer Spirit, but she rarely snapped at others. She would talk back sarcastically, yes, but rarely allowed herself to get angered easily.

The Guardian fluttered nervously as the wind whipped around them. It was absolutely freezing. "I'm sorry…I didn't…"

"I DON'T WANT YOUR APOLOGY! I DON'T TELL YOU HOW TO DO YOUR JOB! DON'T TELL US HOW TO DO OURS!"

The Guardian didn't say anything as Pearl returned her attention to the blizzard. Jarek could only sigh tiredly. They all were using a lot of energy to push the blizzard back. It was exhausting and frustrating work.

Jarek looked at the Guardian of Memories. As much as the Guardian irritated him, he couldn't blame her for being worried. This was her home and her helpers that were in danger, along with the humans that got killed in the crossfire. However, he just wished the Guardians would just understand that not everything was as black and white as they believe.

"Queen Toothiana, we do not have the power to stop this blizzard. Only Mother Nature has that power."

The Guardian frowned nervously at the mention of Mother Nature. That didn't surprise him. The Guardians were not Mother Nature's favorite spirits. "Where is she then?"

Jarek didn't respond to the Guardian right away. He took a deep breath as he tried to sense where Mother Nature was. She would have left her palace several hours ago and should be here any minute now. Mother had already used her connection to the planet to inform them of her arrival.

Jarek blinked as he sensed that Mother Nature was almost directly above them.

"She's right above us." The Guardian looked startled when he suddenly looked up. He felt the rise of power before Mother Nature came into view. She hovered in the air as she stared at the damaged that the blizzard was caused.

Mother did not look happy, not in the slightest.

She never imagined that Susanna would cause this much damage. Snow and ice were spreading thousands of miles, engulfing the villages nearby. Many of the ice that engulfed several villages looked like shattered mirrors, maybe a reflection of Susanna's inner pain. Their powers were tied to their emotions, so it would make sense that Susanna's were going out of control because of her anger and pain. It was sad really.

Mother Nature knew Susanna was still within the Guardian's palace. She could feel it. She turned towards Jarek and Pearl and wasn't that surprised to see the Guardian of Memories. She didn't have time to deal with her right now.

She hovered down in front of the three with a grim expression on her face. "The blizzard is
concentrated from within the palace. I would need to go in there and find the Winter Spirit to put a stop to this blizzard. I need you to keep up what you are doing out here. Once the blizzard is gone, we will proceed with clean up and restore spring to this area." Jarek and Pearl nodded. "I shall return."

Mother Nature turned around, not giving the Guardian a glance, as she returned her attention to the roaring blizzard. The Wind picked her up and prepared to send her to where she knew Susanna would be, but was halted when the female Guardian flew in front of her. "Wait! Let me go with you!"

Mother Nature frowned. The shiver that passed through the woman as the cold winds touched her did not go unnoticed. "Toothiana, you would not be able to tolerate the cold temperature without proper clothing. The temperature would be below zero and I doubt you would be able to withstand it with the way you are now. Believe me, it is far colder in there than it is out here."

The Guardian's shoulders drooped as she continued to shiver. The woman was worried for her fairies. Mother Nature knew that very well. "All right," she said softly. "But I will come in to help when the blizzard is cleared." She paused, her eyes shimmering with worry. "And save my fairies. I can feel them calling for me. Many have died already."

Mother Nature did not argue with the woman. "Do as you wish," she told the Guardian before the Wind took her to the center of the storm.

The storm was far worse inside than she had expected. The walls and platforms were covered in ice, several were broken and cracked by the ice shards that grew and grew. Mother Nature could understand why the Guardian was worried. Several of the Guardian's fairies were frozen solid. She could feel that many of the small lives had extinguished already, but there was a good amount that was still alive. One, in particular, had caught her attention.

Mother Nature had sensed this small fairy's stubbornness to live. She was fighting against something or someone to be more actuate. Mother Nature flew to the platform that she knew was the center of the storm. The winds were more violent in this part of the palace. The ice was thicker, deadly even. She could see black ice and spikes everywhere.

Mother Nature continued further and was shocked to see Susanna in her new form. She always knew she would be a beautiful Winter Spirit, but to be this harsh and angry and aiming to harm others was something she never expected. Next to Susanna was a Fearling Tooth Fairy, one her father changed no doubt. Several inches away from the platform, falling, was a tooth fairy, slightly covered in ice. She was the life she sensed earlier.

Mother Nature sprung forward to caught the fallen fairy. "What are you doing Susanna?!" The woman froze. The winds stop swirling violently for several seconds and the ice seemed to stop growing as well. This gave Mother Nature the time to catch the small fairy and to return to the platform.

Mother Nature's greenish-gray eyes bore into dark blue. Several emotions swirled in those eyes: anger, hatred, sadness, and pain.

"Emily," she said softly. "Why are you here?" she asked as she studied her with cold blue eyes. "Are you here to stop me, perhaps?"

"Susanna," Mother Nature said as her lip curved down into a concerned frown. "You can't be doing this. I know you are mad for what the Guardians did, but-"
"Why not?!" The winds picked up again and tried to push her back. Mother Nature blocked the cold air from the small fairy and made sure the air around them rose, just enough to melt the ice around the small fairy and to keep her alive. "Jackson is dead because of them! Pitch is completely heartbroken. He can't even stand to look at his picture without crying." Susanna's eyes glistened with tears.

"Susanna, please!" Mother Nature voice broke slightly as she tried to get Susanna to calm down. "You have to stop! Don't you realize what your lack of control on your emotions is doing to the villages outside these mountains?"

Susanna frowned as she studied her. "What do you mean?" Susanna spoke slowly as she looked at her, allowing the winds to calm just a bit.

Mother Nature sighed. "It's your powers dear."

"What about them?" Susanna asked with a frown now forming on her face.

"Like all Elementals," Mother Nature began. "Your powers are tied to your emotions."

Susanna's eyes widened at that. "You mean that…" Horror and sadness were reflected in her eyes as the realization of what Mother Nature was trying to tell her finally clicked.

"Your anger allowed your power to run out of control, I'm afraid," she said sadly. "The blizzard has grown bigger outside and traveled several miles down the mountains."

"No…" Susanna's voice was soft and filled with guilt. "You…mean…I…"

Mother Nature nodded. "Many villages have been encased in ice and snow, Susanna."

Susanna staggered back as a startled gasp left her lips. Her eyes widened in shock and horror. "I…killed…children…?" Her voice trembled as her eyes filled up with tears. Mother Nature nodded sadly, which just caused the tears to fall over. "No…no…no…no…"

Mother Nature's heart broke as Susanna fell to her knees and sobbed. The Fearling Fairy chirped in distress as she tried to comfort Susanna. Mother Nature glanced at the fairy in her hand and saw her chirping weakly at her. The fairy's eyes were filled with sadness. She obviously felt bad for the sobbing Winter Spirit.

Mother Nature sighed as she summoned some vines and made a nest of vines for the fairy. After she placed the fairy in the nest, she walked towards the sobbing Winter Spirit.

"It's okay," she told Susanna as she placed her hand on the woman's shoulder.

"But…I killed children," she sobbed.

"It wasn't your fault. You didn't know your powers would get this out of control."

Susanna's teary dark blue eyes looked up to hers. "What have I done, Emily?" Her bottom lip trembled slightly. "How can I kill children?" she sobbed. "Just like my little baby! He must be turning in his grave right now! Oh, Jackson…I'm so sorry!"

Mother Nature felt herself smiling slightly as she stared at the woman. Maybe she could still fix this mess. "Susanna, there's something I need to tell you." Susanna focused her teary eyes at her. "It's about Jackson."
"He's dead!" Susanna interrupted, wailing. "What more is there to tell?"

Mother Nature was about to tell her that Jackson was not dead anymore, that he was alive and healthy again. But, of course, the Guardians ruin everything.

"HOW DARE YOU HARM MY FAIRIES YOU MONSTER? GET HER GIRLS!" Mother Nature barely had a moment to realize what was going on before a small swarm of miniature Tooth Fairies, along with the stupid Guardian herself attacked. Mother Nature found herself knocked away from the Winter Spirit and towards the edge of the platform, while the fairies pushed Susanna off the platform.

"NO!"

She didn't move when the stupid Guardian landed next to her. "Are you all right?" Mother Nature didn't respond to the Guardian. She was too stun to say anything. The Guardians had once again messed everything up for the violent icy winds returned.

The miniature Tooth Fairies scattered as Susanna floated in the air with winds carrying ice and snow. Cold blue eyes stared at them in fury.

"You dare call me a monster, Guardian?" Susanna asked with a snare. "You and your friends with pay for your crimes against me and my lover!" Her eyes narrowed as the shadows and ice grow and surround her, shielding her from them. "I will destroy you for killing the child you swore to protect!" The Guardian flinched at the icy tone. The miniature fairies looked at their mother in horror and disbelief. They were chirping frantically, most likely asking if Susanna was telling the truth or not.

The Guardian did not say a word. And how could she? She was literally frozen in terror and guilt.

"Susanna!" Mother Nature got to her feet, ignoring the Guardian and her mini clones and tried to get closer to the distressed Winter Spirit. But it was near impossible. The winds kept pushing her back and she had to dodge ice spikes that were formed by the mini blizzard that surrounded the Winter Spirit. "Wait!"

"You will pay!" The mini-blizzard of ice, snow, and shadow swirled faster and faster around her. Mother Nature could barely see Susanna now with the blizzard surrounding the Winter Spirit, but her threat could be heard despite the roaring blizzard. "You all will pay!"

"Girls get to cover!"

Mother Nature ignored the Guardian as her and her fairies moved away from the blizzard. Ice once again resumed their traveling, attempting to destroy the platform and the rest of the palace. Mother Nature ignored the screams as she stared at the blizzard. Susanna was still in inside screaming and raging her anger and frustration and her pain.

She tried to get closer, but every time she moved an inch, she found herself thrust back several feet. Why was Susanna pushing her away? Susanna was in pain; she shouldn't be pushing her away like this. She should be pushing the Guardians away, but not her, so why?

And then she saw it.

A shadow.

Mother Nature's eyes widened as the shadow appeared from within the blizzard. She knew who this was.
"Father, wait!"

She managed to catch a glimpse of her father as he pulled Susanna into a hug. Mother Nature found her voice caught in her throat as her father looked at her. His golden-gray eyes seemed haunted and old beyond his eyes. He was devastated and very, very anger. He was completely heartbroken. Tears formed in her eyes. No, please don't tell her she lost her father too. Not like this. Her father was strong. He shouldn't be looking like this.

"I'm sorry, Emily." She fell to her knees as the Wind brought her father's tired voice to her before he and Susanna disappeared along with the blizzard.

Upon their departure, the ice and snow began to melt as her Spirits and Sprites rushed to clean up the area.

Mother Nature continued to stare at the spot she last saw her father and the Snow Queen before they retreated. "But father," her voice trembled as she spoke barely above a whisper. "Jackson is alive."
Tooth Box

Chapter Summary

With the departure of Pitch and the Snow Queen, the cleanup and damage control can finally begin. But the news of the Guardians actions will not stay quiet, especially not from one particular fairy.

Chapter Notes

I truly apologize for taking so long for updating this story. I've have been so busy with my new job and classes as of lately, as well as helping my friend with the stories we write together for the big bang challenges. That sure has taken a lot of my time. Hopefully, this chapter was worth the wait. And with that, I would like to dedicate this chapter for all who asked when Mother Nature would get Jack's tooth box from Tooth. *Smiling innocently with devil horns* Although, this might not be what your expecting. Onward to the story...Enjoy!

She couldn't help but feel an overwhelming disappointed as she watched her mother and sisters fly away from the enraged Winter Spirit and the redeveloping blizzard that surrounded the spirit. The young Tooth Fairy shivered slightly as the vines moved on their own accord, protecting her the best it could.

The young Tooth Fairy knew the vines were acting on Mother Nature's wishes — to protect and shield her from the cold, to keep her alive — when it moved to cover the opening above her. She was thankful for that. She was protected and warm thanks to the Spring and Fall Magic traveling within the vines.

Despite being safe and warm, it did nothing to the dread, fear, and disappointment she'd felt. Mother Nature's words, revealing bits and pieces of what happened as she attempted to breathe reason into the spirit, confirmed that she knew of what the spirit was talking about and further confirming what the Snow Queen was saying held the truth that she wanted to deny. But it was Mother's reaction toward the grieving Winter Spirit's accusations that truly made her realize that the Snow Queen had been telling the truth and that she had every right to want vengeance. They had taken the life of a child after all.

The very thought made the fairy's heart cringe in pain. She could not believe her mother would do such a thing. But Mother had. She had taken the life of a child, rather she meant to do it or not and had made another enemy in the process.

The young Tooth Fairy removed her eyes from the small gap between the vines, sighing sadly as the truth settled firmly in her mind. Mother, what have you done? The young Tooth Fairy shook her head sadly. She knew exactly what happened. Mother had become too blind to see the consequences of this unneeded war. She had allowed her anger to cloud her judgment and had allowed her hatred and misguided beliefs to distract her from her duties.
Mother might have thought that she was protecting the children by constantly attacking Pitch, instead of joining them when they collected the children's teeth, but she wasn't. When she stopped collecting teeth, opting to stay at the palace for hours on end or joining the other Guardians in their efforts to destroy Pitch, she stopped seeing the children and the ever changing world they lived in. Mother didn't see the children that were orphans. Or the children that were dying due to an unknown disease spreading throughout the country or as a result of all the fighting and killing among the morals. She didn't see the children that were cold and hungry and only dreamed of a day where their parents would return home from a hunt or with enough money for food. Mother did not see what she and the others saw.

The young fairy sighed as she heard Mother Nature yelling for her father. The young Tooth Fairy blinked her eyes before shifting her gaze to the gap between the vines. What was Pitch doing here at the palace…and why?

If Pitch Black had been here, he was long gone, which was puzzling itself. However, he wasn't the only one who was gone.

The young fairy chirped questioningly as she gazed outside. She would have assumed Pitch would have wanted to join the Snow Queen and attack them. Pitch Black was very angry right now and rightly deserved to get his revenge on them. Besides, they were down by a dozen or so miniature Tooth Fairies and the other Guardians were nowhere in sight. It was an easy win.

Whatever the reason was, Pitch didn't attack. In fact, he wasn't here and seemed to have taken the blizzard and the Snow Queen with him. Now, this was interesting. Why would he do that?

The young fairy thought back to what the Snow Queen said about Pitch, her mother, and the now dead child. She wasn't sure what Pitch's relation to this child was, but they must have been close if Pitch Black was hurting as the Snow Queen revealed. And if that was the case then what was the relation between the Snow Queen and Pitch Black? Were they working together? Were they a couple? Were they friends?

The fairy grunted at the growing headache that was starting to emerge. This war was a big mess for everyone. Many of the other spirits were becoming resentful of the Guardians. There had been talk of stripping the Guardians of their powers or destroying their holidays and jobs. The other spirits were getting fed up with this silly war that the Man on the Moon started, but chose to do nothing about it. Many were afraid of Mother Nature's wrath and chose to wait until she did something. For now, it was just talk, but she feared of the outcome this could cause. The Guardians were always the topic of discussion in the Spirit World. It was why they were never invited to Mother Nature's or the other Ancient Spirits' parties, meetings, or celebrations.

There were very few that supported the Guardians and sadly she was not one of them. The young Tooth Fairy hated to admit it, but even she was starting to have negative feelings towards her own mother. Mother was not the kind woman she once was. She had changed and it was a change she didn't like.

The young fairy sighed as the vines began to retract their protective sphere and return to the ground they came from. The fairy flapped her wings, happy that the vines melted the ice on her feathers and gave her the strength she needed to fly again.

Instead of flying back to her mother, the young fairy flew to Mother Nature, who was still near the edge of the platform. Mother Nature had not moved since the departure of the Snow Queen and Pitch Black. She remained on her knees, staring blankly at the empty space in front of her with such a saddened look on her beautiful face. The young fairy landed on the woman's shoulder, looking at her in concern.
Neither of them said anything for a long while. Mother Nature remained silent as her spirits and sprites rushed to warm up the place, melting the ice and snow, and attempting to save those that have been covered in snow and ice. She knew many of her sisters have not survived, however. Many had been the first to instantly freeze when the Snow Queen started the blizzard. The blizzard had started in the middle of the palace's courtyard, while they were heading towards the columns that would give them coins or fetch the tooth box (that belonged to the child that they have collected the tooth from) from the vault.

Green-pink eyes misted at the sad thought. Her sisters were dead. Sure, Mother had dozens of fairies and could separate herself by using the Ancient Relic (a baby tooth giving to her by her parents long ago), giving birth to more miniature Tooth Fairies. However, this was stored deep within the palace in an unbreakable vault, where they kept all the other baby teeth.

Despite this knowledge, the young fairly realized that it did nothing to rid the pain in her chest. She turned her head to the sky, watching several sprites as they warmed the area. She could feel the magic of spring and summer warming her tiny bones. The young Tooth Fairy ruffled her feathers, hoping the warm Spring and Summer Magic would dry the feathers that were still damp from the ice.

"They don't know." She had not expected Mother Nature to break the silence, though. The fairy was concerned, however. The spirit's voice was very soft, barely above a whisper. If it wasn't for the fact that she was on the spirit's shoulder, she probably wouldn't have heard her. "He's not dead anymore."

"Who?" she asked, questioningly. "Who's not dead?"

The spirit did not face her, nor answer right away. Her face was a mask of emotions as she stared tearfully in front of her. "Me and Lunar brought him back, you know. But they don't. My father is grieving the death of his brother…no thanks to the Guardians…he doesn't realize that his younger brother is alive now." Her eyes widened in surprise. Pitch had a brother? "And Susanna…she's so bent on revenge now…she doesn't know that Jackson is alive and healthy…"

Mother Nature finally shifted her greenish-gray eyes towards her. The spirit smiled weakly at her as she tried to process what she was being told, in addition to what had occurred over the last several hours. However, her mind could not process anything while she was staring into Mother Nature's eyes. Her heart cringed for the spirit as she read the mixture of emotions that was presented to her. There was so much pain and sadness there. Pain for her father, Pitch Black. Pain for the Susanna, the Snow Queen. Pain for Jackson. Pain for the dead mortals. Pain for the suffering and loneliness the war had caused everyone involved.

"I know they need to know," she continued before the fairy could form a question. "But Father keeps going off the grid. Not even I can find him anymore."

"How is that possible, Mother Nature?" she asked, startled that Pitch was now even concealing his presence from his own daughter.

Mother Nature sighed, smiling weakly at her. "I'm afraid I do not understand you." The young fairy huffed in frustration. She forgot that the miniature Tooth Fairies were one of the few creatures Mother Nature couldn't understand. They were not normal. They weren't humans that turned into spirits, nor were they animals. They were somewhere in the middle. Made from the very essence of their mother's soul. They were a direct copy of her in a sense, unnatural and different from the rest of beings in the Spirit World. "But judging by your expression, I am going to guess that you want to know what happened to Jackson after me and Lunar brought him back as a spirit and about my father."
Well, that was one of the many questions she wanted to know. It might not be the question she had wanted to know a few seconds ago, but it was something.

"My Father is constantly moving and not in the same location for very long," Mother Nature began when she jerked a nod and a tweet. "I do not have powers over shadows, so it is hard to locate him. Like Susanna, Father is on a war path for what the Guardians did to his family." Mother Nature's eyes hardened around the edges as she mentioned the Guardians. The young fairy felt her own anger for them starting to bubble inside her chest, but she held it in. "They decided to attack Pitch in the village that Jackson and his adoptive family lived. Pitch tried to fight them but your mother and the other morons were determined to destroy him. They have the nerve to believe that Father was attacking the children." The young fairy's feathers ruffled in shock. Her hands balled into fists and her face twisted in disbelief at the atrocity of it all. How could her mother think that? She couldn't be that blind! Or...maybe she was.

"Jackson and his sister were playing by a frozen pond, while my father was trying to force the Guardians back. They were getting too close to the village. They were reckless the fools." The young fairy felt a sense of dread fill the pit of her stomach. "Nicholas and the rabbit," she said with a snarl, "were fighting among each other as well as trying to destroy my father. Jackson and Flee had almost got hurt because of the rabbit. My Father was prepared before (during Easter when the rabbit attempted to attack them in broad daylight when he saw Jackson with his Nightmare Horse) and managed to fight them off. However, this time the rabbit prevented Night, the Nightmare Horse my father created for him, from protecting him when Nicholas's sword struck the ice."

Her heart dropped. This means that...Pitch's brother...drowned? How...? Why...? Why didn't Mother do something? Certainly, she must have tried to help Pitch save the child.

"And the Guardians did nothing! They just watched and insulted my father as he lost his emotions to the pain and grief...and then the Fearlings struck..."

She watched silently as the Elemental and Nature Spirits and Sprites made their way around the palace, melting ice and snow. She had long since retired to her room, leaving the cleanup to Mother Nature's Spirits and Sprites and what remained of her children. After seeing at least a dozen or so of her fairies froze solid in a block of ice...unmoving...dead, she, she just couldn't stomach it anymore. She just had to get away. Toothiana had, by some miracle, managed to avoid talking about what happened when they left the North Pole to confront Pitch. Her children had been preoccupied grieving the death of their sisters, allowing Toothiana to get away and think about what she was going to tell them when the time came.

Originally, they had every intention of finishing him off once and for all. Bunny had said it would be the only way to make sure the children would finally be safe. He was a monster that needed to be stopped before another Dark Ages occurred. Bunny had told them what Pitch did to his people. Pitch was ruthless and merciless as he slathered the Pookas and other civilizations throughout the galaxy. Pitch was a monster that needed to be stopped! But as she thought about the grief and horror that crossed Pitch's feature as the child, Jackson, fell through the ice, she began to wonder. What if it wasn't Pitch that need to be stopped? What if it was them?

Toothiana's shoulders sagged at that thought. Long ago, they had vowed to protect the children of the world. They had vowed to protect them and make sure they got the Dreams, Wonder, Hope, and Memories of their childhood before reaching adulthood. But as she thought about the last few months, she realized that she hadn't been home too often to instruct her girls where to go. In fact, she hadn't been home for weeks on end, leaving her girls to conduct her job for her. Now that she thought about it, she hadn't done her job at all in quite a while, and she wasn't the only one. She
couldn't remember the last time North created a very detailed ice sculpture for the yetis to make into toys or Bunny taking the time to carefully paint his eggs with so much detail and beauty that he was famous for.

Toothiana frowned as she stared out the window of her bedroom. They had been fighting Pitch all year round for centuries now. It was their job to protect the children from Pitch and other evil spirits, but when they lost track of their own duties. She was barely home to direct her girls to the children that lost their beautiful incisors. North barely worked on the toys, opting to help Bunny to track down Pitch's movements, supplying them with food and weapons, and to keep them up to date on what the Dark Spirit was doing. Bunny barely had a moment to go home and work on his eggs. He was needed to help North find Pitch and his Nightmares. He was the best tracker after all, even if his ego often led him to disastrous encounters with other spirits. So he was left to work on his eggs between battles and breaks when one side retreated. If she was being honest with herself, Sandy was probably the only one to keep on top of his job. Sandy barely slept for he was constantly weaving Dreamsand to the children, no matter where he was in the world. Apparently, he didn't have to be in the same location of the child to give them good dreams. He was capable of giving dreams while at the North Pole. Although, they weren't as strong or as carefully crafted as they usually were.

"It seems the Guardians have a new enemy." Toothiana blinked at the sound of a female voice. Toothiana felt a wave of uneasiness as she shifted her eyes in the direction of the flat voice. On her right were two columns (where the money for the children was stored), which were still encased in ice. On one of those columns, at least several stories above her, were two Summer Spirits. Toothiana couldn't make out any of their features, other then the spirits having reddish-orange hair and summer-like dresses, but she could tell right away that they were the lesser Elemental Spirits. They weren't nearly as powerful as the Head Seasonals or their Second in Commands, but they were stronger than the Sprites. But their powers were nowhere near the level as some of the more talented and powerful Holiday Spirits. They were weak compared to the rest of them.

"I'm really not that surprised," the other female Summer Spirit replied tightly, almost in a mocking tone. Toothiana's hands tightened on the windowsill as she watched the spirits warm the air around the column, allowing the ice to melt. "It was only a matter of time before one of the other spirits got fed up with the Guardians' stupidity and recklessness." To say Toothiana didn't feel a little hurt at the comment was an understatement. The words stun her, making her wince away from the window as if she had just been slapped in the face.

In a way, she probably had. Toothiana had never paid attention to other spirits or interacted with them in centuries. This made her wonder what was going on. Were their actions affecting the other spirits and their jobs? No, that didn't make sense. They haven't intervened on other spirits' holidays or jobs. In fact, that had all been Pitch's doing. They should be thanking them for attempting to eliminate a threat that could potently harm them all! But as that thought came and went, another came to argue that stubborn thought.

How would we know? We've been fighting all this time and not once bothered to ask how this war would affect others. How do we know attempting to rid of the Nightmare King is really the best course of action?

Toothiana couldn't come up with an answer to counter the other thought. There was truth to it. They wouldn't know. They wouldn't know anything. As that thought surfaced, Toothiana felt another wave of guilt. Because of this war, they had ignored spirits they had once been friends with. If they could still call them that.

Toothiana paused for a moment. Maybe she should visit one of her friends. Hopefully, they would
not be too mad at her for not talking or visiting in a long time.

"How could you?!” Toothiana was startled out of her thoughts as one of her girls came swooping in, yelling all the while. Toothiana stared at her daughter with a sunken heart as familiar eyes stared back at her in anger and loathing. "How could you just attack Pitch like that, knowing that children were nearby?!

"Sweetie…” For once Toothiana wished she had named her children. Toothiana never thought she needed to. They had all been created by the special tooth her parents gave her, the tooth of MiM. They were simply copies, merely an extension of herself and not their own person, at least at first. The child in front of her was the youngest of the latest batch of Tooth Fairies she brought to life, being made just a little over a century ago. Toothiana came to realize that she was exactly a direct copy of herself, from her eyes to her fiery personality. "…I'm… I'm afraid I'm not sure what you're —

"Don't tell me you don't know what I'm talking about!” she interrupted angrily, raising her fists, waving them at her in anger as she ranted. "You all attack Pitch! Fighting him while two children were playing on the frozen pond!” Toothiana froze in terror. She knows... "You all attacked without thinking of the consequences, like always!"

Toothiana frowned. What was her daughter talking about? What consequences was she talking about? She knew she and the others were the cause of the child's death, but there shouldn't be anything else… right?

"And now you are probably thinking what other consequences I'm talking about?!” Toothiana nodded, despite the angry huff, bristle, and glare her daughter shot in her direction. "Blind as always!"

The comment hurt. It really did. She never thought a simple comment could hurt so much. And what worse…

"Maybe if you actually thought about what you were doing and actually did your job, instead of listening to the old man and the stubborn rabbit every time Pitch surfaces, you wouldn't be in this position!"

The dam finally broke when her child just stared at her with loathing that accompanied each and every word. There was disappointment, anger, and disgust in those identical eyes that made the tears well up on their own accord. Toothiana couldn't stop the tears that fell and her daughter didn't even give her a second glance as she stormed out of her bedroom.

Toothiana could not stop the flow of tears from leaking from their confinements as she felt her legs gave way under her. The pain was too real and it hurt too much to fight against the sorrow that soon washed over her. She had wanted to fly after her daughter, but Toothiana found that was impossible. For as she covered her face with her hands and wept on the cold wooden floor, she realized that she had just lost another daughter. And it was all—her—fault.

The land looked so beautiful and peaceful as snow covered every inch of the land. Snow covered the land and icy platforms that he walked on, as well as the mountains that littered the region. Little blocks of spiky ice littered the ground from where snow, ice, and harsh winds collided with each other, creating a beautiful, violent work of art.

A sad smile crossed his feature as he stared at the snowflakes falling from the sky. They were so beautiful, so white and pure, barely tainted by the cruel world. They reminded him so much of his
brother. Jackson was just as innocent as the snowflakes that fluttered around. Pitch reached out a hand, allowing a snowflake to land in his palm.

"Are you playing among the snowflakes, Jackson?" Pitch asked as the snowflake melted, turning to water from the warmth of his body heat. "Are you…happy?" Pitch could barely voice the question. Jackson had always loved the snow. Before he went off to war long ago, he had always watched his little brother and his daughter playing in the snow together. Emily Jane loved everything about nature, including the changing of the seasons. But winter truly was Jackson's element. He loved the snow even as a little baby.

The memories brought tears to his eyes, but Pitch refused to allow them to escape. If he did then it would mean that Jackson truly was gone, forever out of his reach. His body deep within the icy pond and his soul free among the stars.

Pitch felt a raw bitter sob leave his throat as he thought about his brother. Jackson hated being alone and now he was. Pitch's heart clenched tightly in his chest as he fought against the sorrow and pain. Not yet. He couldn't break down yet. He had to make sure he was far away from the lair. He could not afford to lose Susanna to his pain and grief.

Susanna… Pitch felt a wave of guilt hit him as he thought about his beloved. He had been foolish to think that Susanna could control her rage. She hadn't had her powers for very long. The deaths of those humans — he would not allow her to hold the weight of the countless deaths on her shoulders. He would gladly take the blame for that. She had enough grieving to deal with. She deserved to grieve her son (his brother) anyway she wanted to. Besides, they never got a chance to properly grieve Jackson's death, now did they? They had created a shrine, but that was because they had no body to bury. Jackson needed a final resting place and the shrine in his Burgess lair was the best he could offer for his little brother, but he knew that was not enough. It would never be enough. Jackson's death affected them more than one would think. They all lost the one person they cared for the most. It would only be a matter of time before Flee joined them to avenge Jackson's death. For he was not meant to die so soon. It should have been him. He had seen everything that needed to be seen and experienced everything that was to experience throughout his travels among the galaxies and the stars; and have left his mark on the world, no matter how bad it was. But Jackson hadn't done a thing. He hadn't even begun to leave his mark on the world. Pretty soon, no one would remember his name, just like the winds and the shadows.

The thought made Pitch very sad and very angry.

"Why?" The question was barely heard over the raging winds of the forming blizzard, but he knew that he would hear him perfectly. "Why did you not stop them?" Pitch trained his heated gaze to the moon, feeling an overwhelming anger fill him. The moon was positioned high in the sky, staring mockingly at him as he walked through the snowy region of a forming blizzard, neither answering him nor acknowledging him. "Why did you let him die?"

Little Tsar did not respond, not that he expected him to. Tsar always cowered and hid when things got bad. Pitch scowled at him, his voice rising as his anger for the man grew. "What? Have nothing to say?" Only silence answered him. Agitated, Pitch lashed out. The shadows quivered as they separated from his body and did his bidding. "It's your fault he's dead!" Black sand and tendrils of darkness formed into spikes as they collided with ice and rocks. Huge chunks detached from the snow covered mountains, falling into the icy ocean below. "Bring him back!" Pitch ignored the ache in his throat as he screamed. "Bring Jackson back, Lunar!" He ignored the warm, red liquid dripping from his hands as the sand and shadows began mixing with ice shards from the raging blizzard as he walked closer and closer to the center.
As he lashed out over and over again, Pitch thought about his brother. Jackson had been his light, his purpose to continue fighting, to live. He was the reason he chose to protect and defend again. Jackson had always made him feel loved and wanted. Jackson had always made him laugh and feel joy, overwhelming joy. He was the reason he loved and lived again. And now...Jackson was...gone...

"Jackson..."

Pitch's choked on a sob as he remembered the reassuring smile Jackson gave him as he slowly drowned in his icy grave. He remembered his final wishes for his family to stay together, to be protected. Jackson had no regrets, had no ill will. He blamed no one for his untimely death.

Pitch could not stop the tears that finally leaked from his eyes and fell down his cheeks. Once they began, he found he could not stop them. Pitch sobbed sorrowfully, his anger now replaced with an overwhelming guilt and grief. Pitch collapsed to his knees, ignoring the numbness caused by the snow, as he sobbed. Pitch couldn't stop the tears, nor the pain in his chest. Pitch's right hand gripped the fabric of his robe tightly as his chest ached in pain.

Why? Why am I always left to be alone? Pitch was barely aware of his sand mixing with the blizzard. He was barely aware of the tendrils freezing over and forming into a black, spiky sculpture that was both beautiful and threatening. Pitch was barely aware of anything anymore, not after Jackson's death. "I'm sorry..." What he was sorry for, he wasn't really sure. He was sorry for not being there for his brother when he needed him. He was sorry for the mortals that had died as a result of Susanna's anger and pain. He was sorry for not being able to prevent Susanna from falling into a temporary hibernation. He was sorry for leaving Flee without her mother. And he was sorry for not being able to comfort Night or to remove her pain as she grieved. He was sorry for so many things, so many things. "I'm so sorry..."

Pitch's vision blurred as tears leaked faster and faster. He did not move as the winds brushed against him, nor did he move when his tears began to freeze into little ice droplets before hitting the snow. There was something beautiful about that. The ice, just like this land, was beautiful, a paradise for the animals that lived here; but it was also a lonely continent, a place for one who was alone in the world.

Alone.

The word sounded so fitting. He had been alone for quite some time before reuniting with his brother. He had been alone when he was guarding the Feelings, Nightmare Men, and the Dream Pirates' prison back when he was human. He had been so very alone. And when he was taken over by those very evils, he had believed he lost everything. His daughter was gone, his brother was gone, his people and his world, gone. But when he had found his daughter again and the survivors, he truly believed that he wouldn't be alone anymore. Fate sure had a way of breaking him down. She had allowed the Guardians to kill his people and to drive his daughter away from him. He barely saw his daughter now, especially with her laws to keep her kind away from other spirits wars.

Pitch's heart ached as he realized this was meant to be. Fate did not want him to be happy. For what purpose, he wasn't sure. But he just couldn't understand why she would take his brother away from him and to tear his family apart. Jackson was forever gone and Susana would be in a hibernation state for at least three months. He barely heard the hollow laugh that tore from his lips. How fitting? He was alone. Forever alone. No Susanna. No Flee. No Jackson. No Nightmares, though that was due to the fact that he told them to stay and guard Susanna. And surprisingly, no Fearlings...

"How ironic? The ones that wanted to be a family and to stick together are the ones that get torn
apart. While they continue to prosper and live another day." Pitch couldn't help but find Fate to be so cruel. All he ever wanted was his brother to be returned to him. He didn't want this war. He wanted to peacefully live with his brother and maybe start a family. But, of course, the Guardians persistence to destroy him and his Nightmares got in the way. *And you paid the price for it.*

Pitch sighed tiredly as he felt the shadows return to his body. His body shuddered in response, leaving his body very, very numb. But this was not due to the cold. The cold never bothered him. How could he when winter was Jackson's favorite season? Pitch smiled sadly as he wiped away his tears with the back of his hand. Pitch ignored the dark red liquid that dripped to the snow. He ignored the cuts that littered his face and arms. He ignored all of that.

But as he began to regain his composure and as his vision cleared, Pitch found himself gazing at the object in his hand.

"Where are you taking me, little one?" Normally Emily Jane wouldn't want to do anything that involved the Guardians. The Guardians were not her favorite spirits. That was obvious. They were reckless, arrogant fools that only cared about themselves. They have proved this time and time again, that they only care about their pride and their naive, ridiculous views of the world. This of course had caused many of the old to grow angry of the Guardians. Their actions have caused many of the animals to cower in fear and have even interfered with many of their jobs. One of the recent complaints were from the Spirits of Halloween, Hollow and her brother, Eve. Hollow had been furious at the last Spirit Gathering and rightly so. The Guardians had attacked her and her brother when they were preparing for their holiday. The Guardians treated her and her brother like they were nobody, a nuisance, and a possible threat to their selfish views. They saw them as an enemy and even threatened them not to harm or be near the children or else they will face the consequences. The Guardians had some nerve! They might be powerful spirits, appointed by MiM himself, but this didn't mean they were better than the rest of them or that they had the right to judge other holiday spirits.

Emily mentally scoffed at that. It was amazing how no one decided to take their rage on the Guardians yet. Noted, they didn't want to anger her, but she wouldn't have minded as long as the balance of the planet or her children were not harmed. The Guardians deserved to be taught a lesson in respect and to have their egos taken down a peg or two. Mother Nature wouldn't get involved herself, but if the Guardians got any ideas and attack her children or threatened the very fabric of the planet, she would not show mercy.

So it was very amusing that she was following the female Guardian's fairy to who knows where. Her eyes gazed at the structure of the hallway they were walking down. "This place is beautiful." Emily admired the structure of the walls. The walls were made from sparkling gold and decorated with colorful jewels of the old that sparkled beautifully. The fairy chipped at the comment from what Emily assumed was a "thank you!"

Mother Nature returned her gaze to the fairy curiously. The fairy seemed a lot calmer than she had been before. She had expected the fairy to be angry at her mother when she told her what happened. She had expected the fairy's reaction when she flew off in a fit a rage. Emily wasn't sure where she went, but she assumed it was to confront the Guardian, wherever she was.

Although, she had not expected the fairy to stare at her in determination as she chipped and pulled at her dress in the direction of the palace. Emily had realized pretty quickly that the fairy wanted her to follow her. But as they walked, Emily realized that they were walking further and further into the palace. This part of the palace was different from the rest. The mere turns and hidden entryways it took to reached this hall made her realize that this hall was restricted. So it was a place
only the female Guardian and her helpers knew about.

Emily hummed in thought. What could be so important that they would go to the trouble to hide his hall? Mother Nature didn't realize that she would get the answer to her question so soon. For the moment the questioned formed, the fairy stopped in front of a huge golden door. Emily stared at the door in amazement. The door was at least five times bigger than her, barely touching the jewels that decorated the board. No jewels decorated the door, but it didn't need it. In the center of the door was a huge pearly white molar tooth. Surrounding the huge molar were smaller teeth, consisting of molars, incisors, canines, premolars, and wisdom teeth.

Intrigued, Mother Nature trained her eyes towards the young fairy. Watching with curiosity as she touched the huge molar. The huge molar glowed at the touch and it wasn't long before the others glowed along with it. Mother Nature found herself covering her eyes, slightly, as the teeth's glow reflected off the jewels. The glowing lasted only a second or two before the sound of a door unlocking was heard. She blinked her eyes and stared in amazement to see that the door was now open. Emily gazed at the fairy as she chipped at her, motioning for her to follow, before disappearing between the open crack of the door.

Emily gazed at the door before closing the distance between her and the door. She placed her palms on the door. It seemed she was going to find out what the fairy wanted to show her. Whatever it was, Emily had a feeling that the answer to all her questions resided on the other side. With a deep breath and with the squaring of her shoulders, Mother Nature pushed the door fully open.

The door made a loud squeak as it was forced open. Emily silently hoped they wouldn't get caught by the Guardian or her little helpers, but the thought soon disappeared as she entered the room. On the other side of the door were tall golden shelves that reached all the way to the ceiling to the other side of the wall. Resting on each and every shelf were golden canisters. "The Tooth Boxes." Mother Nature's eyes lingered on the golden boxes that depicted a picture of every single child from the present to the very past. Emily found her eyes beginning to water. Jackson's tooth box was here, somewhere. She just had to find it and with that — his memories!

Mother Nature smiled as she walked further into the room. It didn't take long to realize that this place was like a huge maze. There were more than a couple thousand shelves, holding more than a billion golden canisters. There was so many tooth boxes, so many shelves, so many turns she could make…where was she supposed to start?

"!” The sound of a frantic chirp caught her attention. Mother Nature frowned as she made a right at the end of the first shelving and walked down the path, following the sound of the frantic chirp.

"Little one!" Mother Nature walked faster. A sense of dread filled her as the chirping got louder and louder. Was there an intruder at the palace? Was the little fairy hurt? Was it her father? Or his Nightmares?

Emily should have realized the that her last thought was the correct answer. When she finally found the fairy, her father, nor his Nightmare Horses, nor an intruder was found. Emily's heart dropped, however, as she gazed at the black sand that littered the floor, followed by several tooth boxes scattered on the floor as if they had been tossed in a rush. Emily trained her eyes to the small fairy and saw her standing on an empty space between two other tooth boxes on one of the shelves. The young fairy stared back at her with pink and green eyes simmering with sadness.

"No…” Mother Nature ran her hand through her long black hair in distress. Her eyes lingered on the empty space where a tooth box was supposed to be. "It's…gone…” Why…? Why did Father take Jackson's teeth?
The golden canister seemed to glisten as it reflected off the pure white snow. Gray fingers gently caressed the engravings that decorated the sides of the cylinder-shaped canister. The swirls on the tooth box were magnificent and truly fine craftsmanship. Of course, Pitch would never say that to the Guardian or admit it out loud. The Guardians did not deserve his praise, just his rage and disgust.

Pitch shifted his gaze to the diamond pattern of Jackson's tooth box. He knew from what the Fearing miniature Tooth Fairy told him, the tooth box held the precious memories of Jackson's childhood. This made him wonder if that included the memories from the day he was born to the day he was forced to leave his family to guard the prison of the Fearlings, Nightmare Man, and Dream Pirates; and the memories of their time together before his death.

Pitch's heart ached painfully in his chest as the memory of his brother falling into the ice flashed in his mind. Pitch violently pushed it away before he lost control again. He tilted the box up, so he could stare at the picture engraved on the front. Pitch felt his lips turn into a watery smile as familiar brown orbs stared back at him. Pitch had to admit that the damn Guardian captured Jackson's essence perfectly. There was a compassionate and joyful expressed reflected on his brother's feature and in those brown orbs was a twinkle of mischief and concern. It was the trait Pitch would miss dearly. Jackson was always smiling and showing such compassion and kindness to everyone he met. He would always know when one needed cheering up, even if it was just by giving a simple smile or to offer advice or a simple joke or two to lighten the mood. It was who his brother was. Something he wished with all his being to return to him.

Pitch's eyes began to mist again as he stared at the box. He gently touched the box, knowing that only a Tooth Fairy could activate the memories. He could always ask his little Fearling to activate the canister for him, but it didn't feel right. He wasn't sure if he could watch his brother's memories without crying or breaking down. Maybe in a couple decades, centuries even, but just not now.

Pitch closed his eyes as the colors began to blur once again. Pitch's body shuddered in despair as he pulled the tooth box to his chest. He ignored the tears that managed to escape his closed eyes lids; but he could not ignore the overwhelming pain of knowing that this small tooth box, filled with all of Jackson's teeth, was the only thing left of his brother.

"I'm...sorry..." Pitch could not stop the sobs that left his lips as he struggled to keep his emotions under control. "I'm so sorry..." Pitch's voice broke as he opened his eyes. The blizzard had somehow slowed down from its destructive course and have begun to lose its shape. Pitch stared at the distorted blizzard with longing. Was this Jackson trying to tell him something? "J-Jackson...?"

He realized that this was a foolish thought. Death would have taken him to his realm days ago, where he would be free from the ties of this miserable plain. There was no way Jackson would choose to stay here as an invisible spirit. "Jackson...I'm so sorry..." But Pitch ignored the logical side of his mind and chose to hope it was his brother coming to his aid. "I failed you...I'm so sorry..."

Pitch begged for forgiveness, despite the knowledge that he had done nothing wrong. It was the Guardians who had been the cause of his brother's death. But it had been because of him for not stopping the Guardians in time. He had been too slow to save his brother. Maybe if he was a little fast. Maybe if he had more Nightmares to guard the children. Maybe if he had attacked the Guardians while they were weakened, then maybe Jackson would still be alive.

The wind gently caressed his cheek and ruffled his hair in affection. Pitch's eyes snapped open then — when had he closed them? — looking completely baffled and overwhelmed. It couldn't be. There was no way...no way this was his brother. It could just be the wind messing with him. "Ja-Jackson?" But the more selfish part of him wanted to believe, wanted to hope that his brother was
speaking to him through the winds. That, for whatever reason, he had refused to move on and joined the ranks of the Ancient Winds. "Is that you?"

Pitch waited patiently for a response. A part of him prayed that it wasn't his brother and that he was imagining things, while the other half hoped it was. To his utter shock, Pitch was rewarded with a dusting of snow on his hair and shoulders, followed by a cold breeze ruffling his hair before caressing his face. Pitch's voice cracked as he laughed both in relief and sorrow. He couldn't believe it. It was him! Pitch wasn't sure if he should be upset or relieved. "Jackson…"

Pitch closed his eyes, not knowing how long his brother would stay with him before leaving him again. Jackson no longer had a body and would get tired easily. And who knew when the next time he would be able to speak to him again. "I'm sorry, Jackson…for everything…I failed you…" A soft gust gently blasted his face in argument. "Yes, I have!" Pitch shook his head as he argued with his brother's spirit. "I should have protected you better! I should have stopped the Guardians from entering Burgess! I should have been faster and gotten you and Flee away from the lake the moment I heard your fears!" Pitch choked on a sob, silently smiling as his brother attempted to wipe away the tears, only to make it freeze on his face. Pitch moved his hand to remove the frozen teardrop on his face. "I'm sorry," Pitch whispered softly, smiling slightly despite the hollow pain in his chest. "Can you forgive me?"

Pitch, however, did not get a response right away. Pitch for that long agonizing moment thought that Jackson would not forgive him. The knowledge that his brother hated him was beyond painful and only made the tears to fall faster. This, surprisingly, just made his brother grow frantic with worry as he whipped around him, attempting to comfort him and drive away the tears all at the same time. Pitch bowed his head, realizing that he had been stupid to believe that his brother would not forgive him. Jackson would always forgive him.

Pitch closed his eyes and hugged his brother's tooth box tightly, relieved that his brother forgave him for his sins and mistakes. Pitch found himself smiling, soaking up the love and comfort of his brother before it started to slowly disappear. "No!" Pitch's eyes snapped open in horror, realizing that his brother was leaving. "No, please, don't go!" But it was too late. The gentle wind had left him. Pitch sucked in some air painfully. "DON'T LEAVE!" He was alone once again. "JACKSON!"
The North Wind attempts to comfort Pitch when she is told he is in the middle of a Blizzard.

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Long, long, long ago, when the universe was still new and young, there was nothing but darkness. No life existed, for there was nothing but the endless darkness of space and time. No beings existed for there were no worlds for them to live. No worlds existed for there were no realms. And with no realms there was nothing. Absolutely nothing.

The universe was an empty place, void of any life beyond the cosmos. But the cosmos was not completely void of life, for within the darkness were shadows. Now the Shadows were not bad as some may think. The Shadows were, in fact, neither good nor bad. They did not feel, for they had no emotions to feel. They did not have a body in order to feel hungry, or cold, or warmth. Nor did they have a mind to feel emotions or even to think. The Shadows just simply existed. And with that existence, a purpose.

The Shadows purpose was to just expand. To spread their darkness among the vast emptiness of space and time. But much like the vast universe of space and time, the Shadows were not alone. Alongside the Shadows, simply existing, simply spreading, was energy. Raw energy. Destructive energy. Ever changing energy.

The two simply existed. Moving. Spreading. Waiting.

Unlike the Shadows, the energy had a greater purpose than just existing and spreading. For within the energy was a spark. A spark that the Shadows were not aware of. The spark of creation. The beginning of life.

As the two existed and waited, the energy grew in power. It grew in size as it expanded with the Shadows. Waiting. Watching. And then when the time was just right the energy exploded.

The universe was soon covered in light and magic. And from that magic formed a being of light — a woman. The woman knew her purpose was to create the first realm and only the first realm. For her body was lucid, tangible, and would eventually return to the cosmos.

Despite this knowledge, the being created and with that, she created the first Fae — a teenager and a child. The teenager would grow to be a brave warrior. Always guarding. Always watching. He was a protector, but not for the universe. He was created to protect and watch his brother as he grew and created. The child would grow to be the true creator of the universe. A king. A Wise King. A Gentle King. A Kind King. The King of the Faes and of every living thing throughout the cosmos/ From that moment came the beginning of creation. And with that the beginning of life. From that life came the creation of the Faes and the beginning of the Age of the Gods. But like all things, the
good must have their evils. From the moment the energy exploded, the Shadows began to think. To form. To feel. But unlike the woman, who wanted to create, the Shadows wanted nothing but destruction.

As the Faes created, the Shadows corrupted.

As the Faes gave life, the Shadows brought death.

And from that destruction and death, came greed. The Shadows wanted the power the King had. They wanted everything. Everything the King held so dear. They had corrupted one of his Faes, making the Fae want to kill its King and everything he stood for. But the King had his brother for protection. It wasn't long before the two stopped the Fae, banishing him to another realm, and managed to find out that he had been tainted by the Shadows.

The King, upset, placed a protective barrier of light around his realm. Chasing all the Shadows from it and making them lose the bodies they have been given. Angered, the Shadows would wonder the cosmos, destroying worlds and creating fear. As the years gone by, the Shadows and the King would constantly fight as one attempted to overpower the other.

The Shadows would always grow furious when they didn't get their way. They had attacked worlds and as a result, the King would create those who would fight them. The war among the universe was only the start. The King had created intellectual beings that were both strong warriors and magical beings. These beings had fought them for decades. Many of the King's children fell to their possession, but that was only the beginning of their Fearlings' destruction. The beings were smart and then one day a man in gold managed to capture them and seal them away. Thus the beginning of the Golden Age.

But the King knew it would not last. For he had seen his child becoming the evil he fought to stop. And with that, he had gifted four of his oldest Faes with the power to protect the universe from the Fearlings (the Power of Wonder, the Power of Memories, the Power of Fun, and the Power of Hope) and from what was soon to come.

The Nightmare King was a frightening being. Always destroying. Always killing. The death of the Pookas had been the first. Followed by the death of the World of Lunar. At that moment, the Fealings believed they had finally won. They were powerful enough to destroy all and to finally bring the King to his knees. But they had misjudged the King's kind will, love, and cleverness.

The King loved all things, even the Fearlings. In their final attempt to stop them, the beings gave up their bodies, giving their powers to a select few, preventing the Nightmare King's destructive path. But they had not expected the beings they gave their powers to to not see the love the King gave them. While one laid dormant for many years, the others allowed the darkness within themselves to take over, causing a new war time and time again.

The ancient beings knew they could do nothing, for they were now invisible spirits. And they knew the King could do nothing for he gave all free will. The only thing he could do was guide them from afar, in hopes they would listen and make the right choice.

As the Age of the Gods shifted to the Age of Man, and slowly shifted to more troubling times, they could only watch as the Guardians caused conflict throughout the Spirit World. They started by seeking the destruction of the Nightmare King and his Nightmare, followed by convincing one of the Sandwielders to join their cause. The chosen ones were only a disappointment. They continue to ignore the King's whispers, only the Sandwielders seemed to listen once and awhile, but they knew the King still believed. They were not completely gone, at least for three of them anyway.
The King had high hopes. He continued to whisper. And much to their surprise, the Nightmare
King finally listened. The Nightmare King listened and found what the King wanted him to find.
Watching Pitch Black (formally Kozmotis Pitchiner) reunited with his brother was a sight to see.
Seeing the spirit smiling and happy was what the King wanted, so it was very distressing when the
King informed them of the Nightmare King grieving in Antarctica.

The North Wind specifically had been most concerned. Antarctica was scheduled to have a fierce
blizzard lasting three whole days and today was only the second day. Concerned, Wind personally
decided to find out what was wrong with the spirit, that made the King very concerned. She had
left Mother Nature's palace while the other Seasonals were explaining to her charge the importance
of his conduct.

Wind had been around for a very long time, she wasn't older than the King or his brother, but she
had seen many things in her life. She had seen war and the sadness it brings the moment she had
been created. She had seen death and destruction and the grief it brings. She had seen many things
in the last several eons. But none of this prepared her for the scene she come upon when she
reached the location of the blizzard.

The spirit had looked so broken as he yelled and sobbed brokenly. The spirit hadn't seemed to
notice the way the blizzard was cutting his skin or they way his blood was dripping to the snow. It
was heartbreaking to watch. But what really concerned her was the fact that Pitch Black still
believed that the child was dead.

She knew things would only get worse from here on out. The King had warned her of what would
happen if Pitch was to truly allow the Fearlings to take over his soul. The Fearlings could kill what
was left of the man and return to the death of all living creatures. She didn't want that to happen.
This was why she decided to stop the blizzard. But there was another reason for her actions. She
knew that the child would not want his brother to grieve and blame himself like he was doing now.

The North Wind tried her best to comfort the spirit, even if it meant lying to him. It was sad he
couldn't hear or understand her. He was not a Seasonal or Mother Nature or the Fae, making
communication very difficult.

The North Wind wanted to tell him that the child was alive and at the palace, but she couldn't. And
it only got annoying when Pitch thought she was Jackson.

She got annoyed very quickly. But the gust in the face seemed to knock some sense into him in the
end. She was thankful for that.

The North Wind wished she could have stayed with the grieving spirit, but it was in that moment
when she heard her charge calling her. The Seasonals were calling them all. With a silent sigh,
knowing that she would be leaving Pitch, for now, she left. The pain in Pitch's voice would forever
haunt her.

"He will be fine, my dear," a gentle male voice reassured her. The voice, the Wind realized, was
the King. She sensed that he was on Earth, working on creating new animals for the mortals.
Somewhere in Europe, if the current from her siblings was anything to go by.

"I hope you are right, your Highness. The child has no memories and Pitch Black is heartbroken."

The King laughed. "My child, young Jackson and Kozmotis will meet again. I have foreseen it." Wind
felt her spirit lift at this, swirling around the trees in her excitement. If the King had foreseen
it, then the meeting will come to pass. The child will be happy! So very happy! There will be no
more war! No more hatred among this immortal family!"It will be a long time before they meet
"Again, however." The toner in King's voice brought a depressing sense of dread. The King sounded so very sad. She hated hearing her King sounding anything but the happy, wise, kindhearted King that he was (they all did actually). When the King was sad it would rain. Water would come faster, coming in short bursts as it traveled along the land and sea. Snow would fall faster, creating unexpected snow falls. The ground would shake. The mountain would quake. And the last of the Greek Gods, the Earth, would cry for she knew the being that created her and the entire universe was hurting inside.

In a way, the King sounded like Mother Nature when he was upset. But that was because before the expansion of the universe and before the wide scale attack from the Dark Faes and the Fearlings, the King and the other Faes used to attend to every planet without worry. It was for this reason that the King gifted a select few to have control over the weather and elements. It was he who created the original Seasonals of Earth and it was he who gifted Mother Nature, Father Time, and all the other Ancient Spirits their powers. The Fae trusted the protection of Earth to their care while he fought the corruption sprung forth by the Dark Fae.

"Your majority?"

"Yes, Eira." If Wind still had her body, she would have smiled. No one but the King ever addressed her by her birth name. And it had been several years since she and the King had a nice conversation. Shame he didn't spend that much time on Earth. The King had other worlds to attend to, especially those that were at war and close to destruction.

"When?"

From the currents, Wind could senses that the King was sighing softly, staring at the light blue sky. "That is very hard to say." He paused for a brief when another voice called out to him. It was his brother, she realized. Once Agamemnon spoke what needed to be said, the King returned his attention to her. "Nothing is for certain my dear. It can be tomorrow. Next week. Next year. Or even in the next century. Their meeting will come to pass. When that time comes and what they do will be completely up to them."

Chapter End Notes

I hope you all liked this chapter. This chapter is to explain what was happening to Pitch in the last chapter with the Wind. Of course, this actually was a good time to give a little background for the four winds. Now for all that might be wondering, the King and Agamemnon are OC from a novel I'm currently working on. The background was just changed just a bit to fit this universe. The two will make brief appearances throughout the story and maybe even meet Jack later on.
Winter Temple

Chapter Summary

While training to control his magic, Jack found himself witnessing a memory. However, the memory is too much for him to handle. When Jack slips into a panic attack Autumn takes him to the Winter Temple.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Jack stared at the shepherd staff in his hand. So if he was understanding this right, the staff was just a way to help him control his powers. It was something to help him focus. But the staff was also something that tied him to the Wind, for now. According to Autumn, it would take, at least, three to four centuries before he could use his powers or even fly without his conduct.

This made Jack wonder just how old his siblings were. They clearly didn't have a conduct from what he could see. And they could summon plants, change the colors of the leaves, or cause a fire without even trying.

It would be so nice to have that amount of control over his powers, especially if it prevented him from…well…accidentally freezing his brother into the wall of the training room. Jack couldn't help but wince as Flora and several Sprites attempted to melt the ice from the very annoyed Summer Spirit.

"Βιαστείτε και με ελευθερώστε πριν πάγωμα μέχρι θανάτου!"

They had been going at it for forty-five minutes now and have only managed to melt his hands, head, a little bit of his upper chest. Jack shifted from foot to foot nervously as Blaze continued to snap at the Sprites that were snickering at his expense. This, of course, resulted in Blaze saying something in Greek.

"Don't worry, Jack. He's not mad at you." Jack bit his bottom lower lip as he held his staff close to him. He was unaware of Autumn's soften gaze, nor was he aware of how young he must have looked, holding his staff like a small frightened child.

"You sure?" Jack asked as he gazed at his sister. They had wanted to see if he was capable of summoning his magic without his staff and if he had any control. "He seems pretty mad to me." That didn't turn out too well. Jack had zero control over it and had ended up freezing his brother to the wall. Blaze had been a block of ice before. Now he was partly free of his prison. However, he was now annoyed and mad if him snapping and glaring at the Sprites and Flora was anything to go by.

"Blaze, will you stop yelling?" Flora asked with a frown. "You are not making this any easier."

Blaze only glared at her but did his best to stay somewhat calm. However, the snickering of the Sprites did not help with his current mood very much.

"If you four don't stop laughing at me, I promise you, you will be spending the night in the Arctic
with vicious wolves and penguins that will tear you limb from limb!” Blaze's voice was low and
dangerous as he glared at his four Sprites. His normally calm fiery red and orange hair was blazing
like someone had turned up the furnace all the way up. Jack really felt bad for the four Sprites that
had paled at the threat. The threat stopped them from laughing at their Head of Summer, which
made Blaze very pleased. However, this wasn't their fault, it was his. Blaze wouldn't be stuck if it
wasn't for him. So why wasn't his brother made at him?

"Ignore him, Jack," Autumn said with an exasperated sigh. "He's just being a drama queen."

At this Blaze turned his gaze to them and gave them an offended look. "I am the best damn drama
queen there is and don't you forget it!" While Autumn shook her head at her brother comment and
while Flora and the Sprites laughed behind their smiles, Jack found himself being dragged away by
another memory.

"All hail the Nightmare King!"

Jack's eyes became unfocused as he heard a male voice, followed by the same female voice. The
female voice like that little girl, the one that he saw in his dream. Who was she anyway and who
was that male voice? "Run, oh, brave knight! The Flower King is after you!"

Jack was unaware of Autumn trying to gain his attention as he stared blankly over her shoulder. He
was unaware of her calling out his name (gaining the attention of his other siblings) as he fell
unsteady to his knees, his face turning pale as if he was burning with a start of a fever, his staff
falling out of his hand and landing on the ground in front of him. Jack was unaware of anything
around him. Autumn's concerned voice barely registered in his mind as he focused on the voices
that seemed so familiar, yet he had no idea why.

"Flower King?!"

Jack turned his attention to the voices, realizing that he was in some kind of flower field. There was
a river not far from them. The water flowed gently along the rocks that got in its way, swirling and
shifting ever so slightly. Jack could smell the scent of different flowers. Possibly carnations,
daisies, and marigolds, but he wasn't sure how he knew that, considering he wasn't a Spring or Fall
Spirit. Jack turned his gaze in the direction of the three laughing females, who were sitting on the
ground near a patch of flowers.

Jack frowned as he tried to focus on their faces. But the more he tried to focus, the more their
feature blurred and blended together. He couldn't help but sigh in frustration. All he could really
make out was that the two younger girls were either between the ages of 10 and 17, while the
grown adult was possibly in her twenties or thirties. It was hard to say.

The three females continue to laugh as a grown male chased a young boy on a horse. Jack turned to
the other two, hoping to get some sense of what he was seeing. Jack, not sure why he felt a sense of
dread in the pit of his stomach as he gazed at the happy scene.

"Oh, yes, great and power Flower King! What is to fear when he is so pretty and powerful!” Jack
felt like he was looking through a fog. The beautiful scenery was very vivid and clear to him. He
could make out the river, the sun, the way the trees were moving from side to side. He could even
smell the flowers and the burning of wood in the distance. But when he tried to look at the people,
Jack could not make out a single detail.

Well, that was not exactly true. Jack could make out someone.

"Just you wait, you conniving little brat!” Jack could not make out any details on the grown adult.
But his words told him a different story. "When I get my hands on you, you won't be sleeping peacefully for a good week! I will torment you night and day!" His words might have sounded threatening and angry and odd, but Jack had a feeling this guy was not being very serious. He was being playful in his own way, he guessed anyway, if the full-blown laugh the young boy was doing was anything to go by.

"Oh, I'm so scared..." The young boy's sarcasm and laughter brought a strong sense of déjà vu that made him feel very nauseous. Jack wasn't sure how it was possible, but he knew this boy. Jack gazed at the boy and was surprised at how clear his features were. The boy had brown hair, instead of white. He had brown eyes, instead of blue. He wore a familiar outfit that he used to wear before they got ruined. He wore brown shoes, unlike him who was bare. And to top it off, he had fair skin, compared to his pale skin tone. Despite the difference, the boy generally looked like; he could be his twin. It also didn't help that the boy sounded like him, but that wasn't possible. The boy was a Human, while he was a spirit. Maybe he saw the boy at one point before emerging from the ice. But, that didn't make any sense either. He had no memories of his life before that.

*What could this all mean?* Jack silently wondered before he felt a warm hand on his cheek. Jack had only a minute to blink in confusion at the odd sensation before his vision blurred, followed by the familiar voices and scenery becoming less clear and distant. Jack wasn't sure when he closed his eyes, but when he reopened them he found himself staring into concerned blue eyes.

"Jack, are you with me?" she asked softly as she wiped away the tears that had been slowly falling down his cheeks.

Jack took in a shaky breath as he tried to calm the raw, raging emotions that flooded him. Jack had no idea why he was hurting to the point of crying. But the memory felt *so* familiar and *so* raw, creating a deep wound in the very center of his chest. "I-I..." Jack's voice shuttered as he tried to speak, but he found it to be increasingly difficult. His lungs were burning from his rapid breathing, but nothing seemed to soothe it.

He felt like he was suffocating.

He couldn't breathe.

"Jack?!" Jack was unaware when his sister placed her arm on the square of his back, followed by the grabbing his staff, pulling him close to her cool body as the huge windows in the training room slammed open as his sister called her wind to her. "Wind!"

The fierce strength of the West Wind as she entered the room, engulfing them in loving, protective embrace.

"Autumn?!"

Autumn glanced at her sister as she held Jack in her arms. She wasn't sure what was going on, but she had a horrible feeling that one of Jack's memories were trying to force its way to the surface.

Technically, that should be a good thing. Jack didn't deserve to not remember his family. But the fact that he had been crying and going into a panic attack was not okay.

"Flora, continue to free Blaze from the ice," Autumn told her sister as the Wind began to lift them into the air. "I'll wait for you at the temple." Flora and Blaze looked at her with concern but gave her a small nod before the Wind carried them away.

Autumn held onto her brother as the Wind carried them out of Mother Nature's Palace and towards
the snowy grounds of winter. Autumn shivered slightly as snow nipped at her arms, but ignored it. This was Jack's element. Only he could be in almost sub-zero temperatures, or in a middle of a freezing blizzard, and not be affected by it. However, being a Spirit of Fall, she had a high tolerance to the freezing temperatures of winter. Though, she would eventually need a light jacket, gloves, and maybe a hat to keep her from freezing like a popsicle.

Autumn silently sighed as she flew past several snowy covered. Blue orbs gazed at it for a moment. The trees looked very pretty as it was coated with snow and frost. As they flew past the tree, took notice of the Winter Sprites feeding the animals lived there. Many of the animals that lived on the island had long been extinct on earth. It was nice to know that Mother loved caring for those that were old and exotic.

It wasn't long before the Winter Temple came into view. The Winter Temple was almost a direct replica of Roman temple, Maison Carrée. The temple was made of pure white marble. It had thirty-two columns (six for the front and back and ten for the two long sides) resting on a podium that was at least 2.85 meters high. The columns held up a hexastyle roof that was also made of pure white marble. Decorating roof and walls where carvings of snowflakes and swirls.

The temple emanated a soft bluish glow as she landed on the podium, right in front of the bluish white door that had a huge bluish tinge snowflake on it. Autumn adjusted Jack in her arms as he seemed to calm a bit, knowing that the raw magic from the temple was helping him. Each of the Head Seasonals had their own temple. Resting within the temple was a magical crystal ball, the true source of the season. The magic crystal held the raw powers of the season, allowing them to tap into it whenever they wanted when they were spreading the season. The crystal itself had many properties as well. Not only was it the source of their magic, but it had healing properties. If one of them were badly injured and were unable to heal themselves naturally, they would go to their temple. It would heal them since they would be surrounded by their element.

The crystals were very powerful and had properties that she wasn't even aware. The crystals were as old as time itself. They were that kept the balance between the four seasons from clashing and ripping the earth in two. It was for this reason that only a select few knew of its existence. Because in the wrong hands, it could mean the end of the world.

The Fall Seasonal shivered slightly at the strong winter magic that washed over her and Jack as she opened the door to the temple. Now she kinda wished she had a jacket or something. She felt like she was in the Arctic. Autumn let out a small sigh as she closed the door behind and began walking down the long hall. Frost coated the walls and ceiling, creating different swirls and patterns. Small icicles floated innocently on the walls, glowing faintly, giving light to the otherwise dimly lit room.

As the elder Seasonal made her way to the end of the hall, where another set of doors resided. As she opened the door, she sucked in an awed breath as the hallway opened to a spacious room. Like her own temple, Jack's was meant to represent his element. Beautiful trials of frost coated the walls and ceilings, creating intricate designs. Huge ice sculptures of dragons, penguins, wolves, and polar bears were resting on pedestals near the walls. On the ceiling, Autumn stared in awe at the huge crystal chandelier that gave off natural light to the room. And finally resting in the middle of the room, resting on a marble roman style pedestal was a white crystal ball.

Jack shifted in her arms, his breath hitching slightly as he struggled with his panic attack. Autumn silently stood in front of the Winter Crystal, taking note of the innocent look blue snowflake that floated within. Autumn knew it was more than innocent though. She could feel the winter magic pulsing through it, washing over them as if sensing the distress of it's seasonal.

As the crystal twinkled and glowed with power, the sculptures began to glow as well. The Fall
Seasonal was only slightly aware of this though. She was too busy gazing at her younger brother, smiling softly as he began to glow in a soft blue light. It wasn't long before Jack's breathing returned to normal, followed by the glowing ceasing and everything returning to normal.

It was another moment before Jack opened his eyes and took a deep, calming breath. But when he did, he looked absolutely confused as he stared at his sister, who was still holding him in her arms. "A-Autumn?"

Autumn let out a relieved sigh. "Thank goods. You gave us quite a scare, you know that?"

"Sorry." A faint violet began to dust Jack's cheeks. Autumn smiled reassuringly as she placed him on his feet and handed him his staff. "Thanks," he mumbled as he took notice of the room that they were in.

When curious blue eyes returned to her, he asked with a frown, "Autumn, what's going on? What is this place?"

"This is the Winter Temple," Autumn said with a smile. "This is the true source of the season."

Jack blinked in surprise as he gazed at the room in awe. "Wow. Really?"

She nodded. "We all have a temple," she explained as she gestured to the crystals ball. "These crystals balls are the source of our power. Not only does it heal us or give us more power to tap into when we need it, but they are also what keeps the four seasons balanced. If these crystals balls were to ever go into the wrong hands, it would mean the end of the world."

Jack blinked in surprise as he returned his attention to her. He looked slightly nervous. "Can anyone enter these temples?"

She shook her head. "Only a Head Seasonal can enter the temples, not even Mother Nature can enter."

"She used to." Autumn and Jack turned towards the open door to see Blaze and Flora walking in. Autumn wasn't really surprised when she saw them wear heavy winter coats, hats, and gloves. Though, she was grateful when Flora handed her a brown jacket decorated with colorful leaves and patterns. Autumn smiled at her sister as she put it on, grateful for the warmth it offered from the bitter cold of winter. "Though, that was when she ruled summer, fall, and spring by herself."

Blaze nodded, continuing from where Flora left off. "When Mother made us the head of the seasons, she lost the ability to enter the temples."

"Why is that?" Jack asked.

"You can only have one Seasonal per season," Autumn told him, smiling faintly. "How are you feeling?" It wasn't just Jack she was referring her question too.

"I've been better," Blaze said as he raised the temperature around himself to keep himself from freezing. "Man, it's cold in here."

"I'm okay," Jack mumbled, unsure.

"Are you sure?" Flora asked with a concerned smile. "You just suddenly stared into space before going into a panic attack."

Jack frowned at his sibling as he held his staff close to his chest. Jack looked so confused and so
unsure. It was moments like this that it reminded them of how young Jack truly was.

"You don't have to tell us, Jack," Autumn said as she placed a hand on his shoulder, reassuringly. She didn't want to pressure him. She was sure he would tell them when he was ready.

Jack smiled slightly at the words but shook his head nonetheless. "I think I saw a memory," he said hesitantly. This caused the three elder Seasonals to blink in surprise.

"Really?" Blaze was the first one to shake his shock. "That's great! What did you see?"

Jack frowned at the question, puzzling the three spirits. "I'm not sure," he said slowly as if trying to put together a puzzle. And he probably was. "I was in some kind of flowery field near a river or lake." Autumn pondered that for a moment. \textit{Sounds like this memory took place in spring. I wonder if it was that day.} "I saw a few people there. There was a boy and a girl, around my age, a young girl, a woman, and a man." Jack paused, his eyes narrowing slightly in thought. "I couldn't make out their features, but it looked like they were making flower crowns and they were saying something about a Flower King."

Autumn and Blaze immediately turned to gaze at Flora, whose eyes were wide in shock. Flora had told them when she visited Jackson and his sister Flee with a native American girl. They had been making clowns for their mother. Mother even said something about Jackson making a crown of flowers, placing it on top of Pitch's head and then galloping away with Night when Pitch began shadowing after them, threaten that he would give them nightmares.

"Flower King?" Blaze soon snorted with a stifled laugh. Blaze still teased Pitch about the name, much to the elder spirit's great annoyance. "I wish I had been there to seen that. It would have been hilarious to see him covered in innocent pretty flowers." Jack soon smiled at the comment, completely unaware they were talking about Pitch Black, Jackson's older brother, and it wasn't long before the two were fighting giggles of childish laughter.

"Flower King?" Blaze soon snorted with a stifled laugh. Blaze still teased Pitch about the name, much to the elder spirit's great annoyance. "I wish I had been there to seen that. It would have been hilarious to see him covered in innocent pretty flowers." Jack soon smiled at the comment, completely unaware they were talking about Pitch Black, Jackson's older brother, and it wasn't long before the two were fighting giggles of childish laughter.

Autumn shook her head at that, wondering how a peaceful training session turned into this. "Oh-my-god," Jack wheezed through bits of laughter as Blaze continued to make comments about what the guy would look like covered in flowers. "I wish I knew who that kid was. He's a genius!" As Blaze and Jack continued to laugh, Flora turned towards her, frowning slightly. Autumn knew what she was thinking; she was thinking the same thing.

\textit{Should we tell him about Pitch and his past life before he died?} Autumn's frown deepened in worry. If they did tell Jack that Pitch Black was his brother and that Flee was his sister and that the Snow Queen was his mother, would he believe them? He had no memories of them. His mind was trying to help him remember, but without the Tooth Box to fill in the gaps, what more could they do? \textit{We would just confuse him even more, more than he already is and then what? Cause him pain?} She remembered the tears and the pained look on his face. \textit{And it seems the memories alone are starting to cause him pain.}

Autumn had to shake the thought, knowing that Flora had come to the same conclusion as well. She was frown sadly, but what more could they do in this situation without causing him pain.

"Flora, Autumn!" The two girls blinked, unaware that Blaze had managed to sober up from his laughing fit and had been trying to get their attention to more pressing matters.

"Yeah?" Flora asked.

"Sorry, what did you say?"
"I was asking if you wanted to return to the castle," Blaze said with a pout. "Sheesh, way to ignore a guy when he's freezing to death." Autumn snorted.

"You are not freezing to death, Blaze." Blaze was, in fact, pretty well bundled up and smiling cheekily at her, while Jack was next to him, snickering softly. Oh, no. She knew that look. What on earth was he planning on doing now?

"Blaze," Autumn said, her voice low in warning, "Don't. You. Dare."

Blaze smiled at her innocently, making Jack's shoulder shake in unsuppressed laughter. "Why sis, you wound me," Blaze placed his hand over his heart with a hurt expression on his face. "How could you possibly think that I would torture and cause mischief to the Sprites while Mother is not even here? I would never do such a thing."

"Not true. You've done it before," Flora deadpanned as Autumn narrowed her eyes slightly in disapproval.

"And besides, we all know what you are capable of. You would mess with the Sprites in a heartbeat." Seriously Blaze could not behave for one day.

"You're right," Blaze smiled and it was then when they realized that Blaze had called the South Wind. "That does sound like something I would do." A warm breeze (that smelled of sand and seawater) filled the room as it swirled around Blaze and Jack, attempting to pull them into the air. Jack shivered at the touch of warm air licking his cool skin, but it wasn't long before the North Wind entered the room, caressing him ever so gently with her cool air and gentle touch.

Blaze laughed as the smell of sand, sea water, pine trees and frost reached his nose. They were all together, all together at last. It was a wonderful feeling, especially since he never liked Old Man Winters. Blaze's grinned widened as he gazed at his sisters. "Meet you back at the castle!" he said before he and Jack were off.

Blaze made sure he held a gloved hand on Jack's arm, steadying him when it seemed he was about to lose balance while riding the North Wind. Looks like those two were going to need more practice, but Jack seemed to be getting the hang of it for the most part. That actually surprised him, considering it had taken him five months before he could even be lifted up by the South Wind. Jack was truly amazing.

"Blaze!"

"Let's hurry," Jack said through bursts of laughter as he felt the West and East Wind answering the calls of their charges. It wasn't long before their sisters were out in the open sky chasing after them.

Blaze could only laugh as he and Jack made their way back to the castle with hot cocoa and mischief planned in their minds.

Chapter End Notes

Blaze is saying, "Hurry up and free me before I freeze to death!"
As he falls into the pit of despair, Pitch finds himself truly wishing for death. Shame, Krampus would hunt him down before that happened. Meanwhile, Emily Jane and the Tooth Fairy search for the King of the Faes.

Grief. Loneliness. Despair. Hopelessness. Fear. Those were feelings Pitch knew well. Not because he was the Nightmare King, but because he had witnessed it and experienced it throughout his life. Long ago when he had been Kozmotis Pitchiner, Lord High General of the Galaxies, he had seen many gruesome deaths, deaths that left an empty, hollow feeling in his chest. During that time, Pitch had thought about taking his own life like so many of his men had after spending years witnessing one terrifying sight after another. But then a certain Fae would whisper tiny reminders of what he was fighting for. When his spirits were lifted he would then be reminded that death was not the end, it was not the end of life, it was merely the beginning.

But if that was the case, then why did it still hurt knowing that he would no longer get to hug his brother, to talk to him freely, to see him smile, to see him cry, to see him love? Jackson was now part of the winds, the ancient ones. It truly was an honor. No spirit or human had ever been given the gift of being in the King's service. But…

Pitch gazed at the sky, despair filling his eyes. Jackson would never be able to be seen by anyone. No one could see the winds, they were more invisible than he and the other spirits that live on the human plain. No one even knew they were living, breathing spirits. If Jackson had chosen to have gone to the Land of the Dead with Death, Pitch would have been slightly less pained. Pitch would have been able to visit him in Death's corner of the realm, but he knew Jackson would one day be reborn. They would have had the chance to be reunited again, even if Jackson would not remember him in his new life. Although, Pitch would have preferred his brother living on this plain with him, as a spirit, just as they'd planned. At least, this way, they would always be together. But destiny was cruel that way.

"Pitch!"

Pitch stared at the snow that continued to fall around him in some sort of detached state. Hours after his brother's presence had left, the blizzard had begun to recommence with Pitch at its mercy. Pitch should have returned to the gigantic German Palace located in the heart of the South Pole. His longtime friend would have certainly figured out by now that he had sneaked out of the palace, while he and his elves were distracted caring for Susanna, making sure she was stable as she slipped into her hibernation state. But he didn't. For the first time in a long time, Pitch wanted to die, to fade away, just like everyone wanted.

Pitch closed his eyes, vaguely feeling the shadows moving closer to his cold, numb body in an attempt to protect and heal the wounds caused by the blizzard. The cold was making their efforts difficult. When they realized they would be unable to heal him like this, they attempted to use their wispy words. Their words were almost faint to his ears as they spoke, a sign that should have alerted him that something was wrong. "You shall not fall asleep," several said, almost worriedly. Sleep actually sounded pretty good right now.
"Return to the lair." Why? There was nothing there for him. "Darkness is your friend."

"Darkness will comfort you."

"Heal you."

Pitch shivered, not because of the coldness of the snow, but of the fear he felt, fear of those memories and fear of the truth he would be forced to face. For the first time in centuries, Pitch was afraid of his own lair. It did not feel like home, not anymore. It felt like a prison covered in acid.

"Pitch, you idiot!" The distinct sound of bells could be heard over the whooshing of the winds. Pitch opened his eyes a bit. His vision was blurry as he tried to search for the sound. The sound sounded far away, but he had a feeling it was actually close, really close. "Where are you?"

At first, Pitch thought it was the dreaded Christmas Guardian, but the voice was off. The voice didn't have that jolly tone or filled with that annoying wonder the other liked to preach about. The voice was deeper, serious even. It was familiar. Something red soon flew across his blurry vision as he gazed at the open sky, followed by a voice: "Krampus down there!"

It took Pitch several long seconds to register the second voice as they made their way over to him. When six large and bulky Yule Goats pulling a red sleigh landed several feet away from him, he silently cursed under his breath. If Pitch knew his friend as well as he liked to believe he did, then he was in for a world of hurt.

The sound of hooves caused a sudden splitting headache as the other got off the sleigh and made his way over to him. Pitch winced slightly just as Krampus came into view as the other stood over him. Krampus wasn't exactly the devil he was often described as by the humans; although, he could see why many believed he was. Krampus was a tall and bulky man with long horns that curled back on his head. He had thick reddish brown eyebrows, a unique shade of red eyes, and a long white beard and mustache that's identical to the Christmas Guardian. Krampus was currently wearing his signature red robe with white fur trimming around the hood, arm cuffs, and the bottom of the robe.

Krampus gazed down at him with a snarl, which showed his obvious displeasure and slight concern. "You are an idiot, Pitch."

"I know," Pitch replied hoarsely. Something was wrong with his voice, but he couldn't figure out why, nor could he figure out why he felt so detached.

Krampus bared his white teeth at him. "Are you trying to end up in Helheim?" It was a rhetorical question, so Pitch didn't bother answering, knowing full well that Krampus didn't have a good relationship with his mother at the moment. "You are not a winter spirit. The cold doesn't affect as it does others, but we are not immune to it." Krampus didn't yell at him, but he was pretty loud to cause another sudden headache to split across his temples.

Pitch allowed himself to groan this time and ended up closing his eyes for the fourth time that day, or was it five? However, as he did so he was met with a spinning sensation. Ugg. He didn't feel so good either.

Krampus gave a long exasperated sigh, followed by a single German curse before claw-like hands wrapped around his middle and all but lifted him over the man's broad shoulder. The sudden action caused everything to spin faster and faster, so fast to the point that Pitch had to press his hand to his mouth to prevent himself from puking.
"Puke on me and I will feed you to Uncle Jörmungandr."

Pitch grimace. "I would rather face your mother."

He scowled at that. "No, you don't. She'll rip you to shreds and keep you as her prisoner until you beg for mercy. Not even Pluto will be able to help you."

"I thought you and Hel were not on speaking terms."

"We're not." The empty tone in his voice told Pitch not to bring her up anymore just as the other placed him at the back of the sleigh where two of Krampus' elves were sitting. Unlike North's elves, Krampus' elves were about two feet and often wore loose-fitting black trousers with green or red shirts. When out in public with Krampus, they wore the signature red robes. As of right now, the two elves were wearing said robes and also had a first aid kit and blankets. As Krampus got into the front of the sleigh, instructing his goats to take them back to the palace, the two elves throw the thick blanket over his shoulders, but it did nothing to chase the chill that filled his entire being, nor did it stop the intense shivering.

As the elves tended to his various wounds, Pitch was only vaguely aware of the three conversing about his condition. "Krampus, he's burning up!"

"He…a fever?"

A full round of curses was heard as the sleigh was swayed a bit. "Pitch don't fall asleep! Pitch!"

The world soon grew dark as the Boogieman fell into a feverish sleep.

The room was dark as he awoke, gasping for air. The nightmare had been too vivid, too real. Grayish eyes traveled around the room, searching for the Fearlings that had appeared in his dream. His eyes traveled along the desk, where unfinished letters to his wife and parents rested, his small closet, his nightstand, where he kept a few of his books and journals, the doorway that led to his office, and finally his cot.

Kozmotis let out a small sigh, but he could not push the uneasiness away. Something had happened, something terrible. As the uneasiness grew in its intensely, the General got out of bed, automatically reaching for one of his twin swords. The swords glistened brightly under the green glow as they rested against the wall near his cot.

Kozmotis looked up at the door quickly as that thought sank in. The door was indeed glowing slightly. On instinct, Kozmotis walk to the door, sword ready, and slowly opened the door. No one was on the other side, only the faint glow. The strange green glow was seen on every wall and door he could see.

He frowned, puzzled. What is this?

On his own door, Kozmotis could see strange symbols forming in the strange glow as he gazed at it. He touched it a second later, realizing he could read the strange symbols.

"No evil shall pass for as long as I decree. Love always love with force the tainted darkness to flee. Nature will thrive. Life will continue on, for with love in every being Light will never fall." As he read the strange language, he found himself startled by the power radiating from it, realizing that it felt familiar. This magic was powerful, more powerful than himself, Sanderson and the other Dream Weavers, the Lunanoff, and the Pookas combined. It was almost otherworldly, ancient even, and so very familiar.
Kozmotis gazed at the strange magic under his fingertips, he felt as if he had heard these words before from an old childhood friend. He frowned as he thought about the dream. There had been a figure in his dream. The one his parents had been caring for after finding him injured in the forest. The one his parents had given Jackson to as the Fearlings attacked from somewhere beyond the forest. This being felt so familiar. Almost as if they had met at some point, not as acquaintances, but as friends.

After a few moments of silent puzzlement, his hand fell to his side and just gazed at the strong protective magic. Regardless of who this being was, this being was going to great lengths to place such a powerful spell around his ship. But what could be happening to cause this being to cast this type of old spell? And then he heard it: the screams of his men as they prepared for a bloody battle, the clashing of swords as they collided with dead flesh and wispy forms, and the distant sounds of the Fearlings.

An overwhelming fear filled Kozmotis entire being as he recalled the dream. No not a dream. A vision. Someone had been trying to warn him and if what he saw in his dream were true then his parents and his baby brother were in grave danger.

The overwhelming fear was soon replaced with rage as he snatched his armor and other sword and ran down the hall and towards the deck above. There wasn't a spot where the protective magical glow wasn't touching. It stretched down every hall, every corner of the ship, and even down to the low levels of the ship. As he got closer to the desk, the glow got brighter and brighter until it was almost a protective bubble around the entire ship. When he got above ground, the fear for his family and crew returned upon seeing millions of Fearlings covering the village in a blanket of darkness.

The Fearlings screamed and roared as the green bubble surrounding the ship burn them upon touching it. They could not get through. This only seemed to anger them as thousands, millions of them came charging at the massive galleon ship, in hopes of breaking the protective barrier surrounding them.

"General Pitchiner!" Kozmotis turned his gaze towards his men. Many of them were wearing their night clothes, while the rest of them had hastily put on their armor upon hearing the Fearlings approach. Many of his men were on the edges of the ship, slices and cutting every Fearling that got within their reach or blasting them with their muskets or cannons. In the middle of the main deck, where the rest of his men who were in charge of getting the sails ready, raising the anchor, and wiping the deck, was a small oval green stone encased in a box made of ice.

Kozmotis briskly walked over to them, while keeping a watchful eye on the Fearlings. The dark creatures hissed at him as they attempted to rip him to shreds with their sharp bloodstained claws, but the protective barriers got in their way. No one dared touch the ice, for fear it could make the barrier protecting them disappear. But as he got closer, he realized he had seen this stone before, but he couldn't figure out where.

"General, thank god, we were afraid the Fearlings may have gotten to you." Kozmotis gazed at the red-eyed teenage boy, puzzled. Jacob was one of the newest members of his crew, having been abandoned by his parents at the age of eight. The boy had been the small village's thief and had only gotten caught when he attempted to steal from him. Instead of punishing the boy, like the rest of the upperclassman and women, would have done, Kozmotis took the boy in as part of his crew. The boy had changed his ways for the better and had looked up to him as a father and mentor ever since.

"Why you say that Jacob? The Fearlings can't get through the protective barrier," he pointed out.
"Your quarters were blocked off by the strange glow, General. No one could get close. We feared
the worst," Fergus Bishop said, his brass spyglass telescope held firmly in his hand. Fergus was a
tall man of six feet five inches. He had long red untamed hair tied into a braid and a scruffy
appearance. Normally, Fergus was laidback, even when they fought the Fearlings throughout other
worlds and across space. However, a firm frown was on his features and a hint of despair was in
his eyes.

"How bad is it?" Kozmotis already knew the answer, but he still had to ask.

"The Fearlings have already covered the entire village," Fergus said gravely. "I had sent a team out
earlier, but they couldn't find any survivors. There's nothing but blood and corpses everywhere."
Kozmotis gazed out into the horizon, a sickening feeling developing in his chest as he teat about
his parents and his little baby brother. Where they dead too? Had they been devoured by the
Fearlings as well? He couldn't stomach the thought of losing his family like this. He was hopeful
that they were well and alive, his parents were more than capable of protecting themselves and
Jackson from the Fearlings. But his heart ached as the dream replayed in his mind. *What if they are
dead...?*

"General, there's something you need to see." Kozmotis forced himself out of his dark thoughts and
returned his attention to his right-hand man.

"Other than the Fearlings?"

Fergus nodded as he directed him towards the poop deck. "I believe the being that is protecting us
is still on this planet."

This caught his attention. "Really?" He nodded as they reached the poop deck, where Edgar Arias,
the helmsman, was glaring at the Fearlings with his single brown eye. Edgar was an older man in
his early eighties, who had battled thousands of monsters and villains in his day. It was an honor to
have him as part of his crew.

"This strange barrier is keeping them away from the sails, the generator, and the back of the ship.
It seems they don't want us interfering."

*Over my dead body,* Kozmotis thought darkly as Fergus handed him the spyglass.

"Look in that direction. There a strange light up ahead." Fergus pointed towards the forest just
beyond the village, where a strange light, similar to the one surrounding his ship, resided.
Kozmotis did as he was told and gasped. Fearlings, all different types of them, were going in the
direction of the forest, where Kozmotis knew a small cottage of his childhood resided and where
the light was coming from. Kozmotis lowered the spyglass as he continued to gaze at the Fearlings
that were going into the forest.

They were merely a distraction. Their true goal was the beings hiding within the forest, the one his
parents were helping.

"General? What's wrong?" Fergus asked, trying to make out what he saw. "My parent's cottage is
there."

"Shit. We were just the distraction," Edgar swore under his breath before yelling out, "Raise the
anchor!"

Kozmotis closed his eyes for a brief moment. *Mother. Father. Jackson. Hang on, please.* When he
opened his eyes a newfound determination filled them. There was soon a flurry of motion as the
crew prepared the ship just as Kozmotis barked out commands to his crew. There was still time. He could still save them. He just had to hurry.

When she was a little girl, she had always dreamed of wanting a younger brother or sister, growing into her powers, and one day aiding her brave father in battle against the Fearlings and Nightmare Pirates. It had been a childish dream to think that things would be all peaches and rainbows the day her father had brought Jackson home, unharmed. Unlike this plant's humans, her kind could grow up to be almost five hundred years old without looking a day over twenty. Her father's parents weren't exactly old. They had him when they were young, way before they got married. When she was born, her grandparents seemed to be in their thirties, physically. It was no surprise that they eventually had a second child, but it was so sad they had never gotten the chance to meet him or to watch him grow.

Her father had been stationed near his parent's village to gather supplies and rest for the night. Claira and Eugine Pitchiner had been very successful leaders and advance magic users. It wasn't uncommon for news to travel fast during this time, especially when it came to the leaders giving birth to a second son. When Emily Jane and her parents learned of her grandparents giving birth to their second child, her father had decided to visit his parents and see his baby brother before continuing on to his next destination the following day.

No one had expected the Fearlings to invade overnight and so suddenly. The Fearlings came in from the shadows, killing off people in the dead of night. Their screams were silent as the villagers were killed one by one. Why her father and his crew hadn't been killed that night? She wasn't sure, but she knew he had a guardian angel or should she say Fae? When her father searched his ship that day, The Lady, he found an odd enchanted green stone with an odd symbol engraved on it, resting on the main deck of his ship. He sworn to her he had never seen the stone before. Her father had always been a horrible liar.

Her fingers gently touched the smooth stone that rested within the mesh-like pouch around her neck. The stories of the Faes were mixed among her people. Some thought the leader of the Faes was a woman with long flowing blond or brown hair, green eyes, thin figure, and wore a beautiful long gown, while others thought it was a male. The history of the Faes was so all over the place and vague that it had to be a story made up by someone just to get attention or their moment of fame. Emily Jane assumed that was on purpose. This was why her father never believed in the stories his parents told him as a child. He had not believed in the Faes until he met the King on that fateful day.

The sound of her little comrade tweeting, obviously wondering why they had stopped moving, caused her to turn her attention to her. "He's close by." Mother Nature gazed at the small Tooth Fairy on her shoulder, who was now gazing at the forest curiously. They were currently somewhere within the Amazon Forest. She gazed at the trees hoping their guides would come soon; she had to speak to him. The old trees had guided her to this spot, somewhere within Amapa, Brazil, informing her that she must remain here until their guides arrived. She did not push in regards to the King's exact location. The trees nor the animals nor Gaea (or Gaia as some Human's refer to her as) would tell her no matter how much she begged and asked.

The Faes preferred to work out of the public eye of both Spirits and Humans, especially the King. Emily Jane didn't feel an ounce of annoyance towards those who were keeping the King's location a secret. Just as the animals and tree saw her as their nurturer, they saw the King as their creator.

Mother Nature gently traced the small green stone that rested innocently between her breasts, hoping the King would be able to help them. They had spent the last several hours searching for
one of the many tunnels that led to one of the many liars her father owned. Unfortunately, every lair she went to was either caved in or closed. The only one that was open was the one near the lake in Burgess. Getting into the underground tunnels was not the problem, it was navigating the massive maze of caverns and passageways without any help from her father or one of his Nightmares. Emily Jane and the small Tooth Fairy had spent several hours in the underground tunnels until they finally found one that led outside. Emily Jane knew her father must have sensed her presences in one of his lairs, but instead of directing her to him, wherever he was, he led them back to the entrance of the lake. Frustrated that her own father refused to see or talk to her, Emily Jane had come to the decision that she had to seek out the one person that would know how to find her father: the King of the Faes.

Emily Jane knew finding the King would be difficult, he didn't spend time on one planet for very long as he had millions of other planets to attend to. Today, however, it was as if he was expecting them, guiding them to him. She wasn't all that surprised. The King was very knowledgeable, more so than Odin, himself, and Father Time, and just knew when she was in desperate need of advice.

The last time she had been this desperate was when she first arrived on this planet when she was still young, still mourning the loss of her father, her mother, and the rest of her people. She had stumbled upon the King, his guards, and some other Faes as they gave life to various plants and animals to thrive within the continuous cold planet. All the Faes, but the King, had been startled by her sudden appearance. At the time, no one but Old Man Winter lived on the planet, who tended to control the weather from his castle somewhere in what was now called the South Pole. The King, much to her surprise and immense relief, helped her, guided her until she understood how to survive on this planet on her own. She wouldn't be the women she was now if it hadn't been for his wisdom and guidance. In a way, she saw him as a second father.

There was another twitter again, only this time it was out of shock, surprise. Emily Jane blinked, confused, before realizing that the stone was glowing. Her eyes widened, remembering her father talking about the strange stone protecting him and his men long ago with its magical glow. It was not long before the glow engulfed them, revealing a single memory, one her father had left out.

"Mother! Father!" Mother Father and the little Tooth Fairy found themselves floating within a destroyed living room. Furniture was shredded and mangled. Blood, guts, ad some type of black substance covered the walls. And the smell of the death covered the room, causing the two viewers to fall to their knees in horror as their stomachs turned from what they were seeing.

Emily Jane covered her mouth as her father rushed into the room, his swords in his hands as he killed the Fearlings that surround the small cottage. Kozmotis continued to call out his parents' names as he made his way to the middle of the room, where an injured man, holding a small baby within a small energy force field resided. Upon closer inspection, Mother Nature noticed how regal the man looked. He had colorful wings on his back, violet eyes, and purplish-blush hair. He was wearing some type of regal looking white outfit and a crown made out of golden leaves was seen on his head. He had a powerful aura, a powerful presence, one that opposed the Fearlings. He was a man of great power, a being that was older than the stars despite his youthful, gentle appearance. This man was the creator, the King of the Faes.

Outside the ball of energy was her father's parents as they fought to protect themselves, their child, and the injured Fae, they had been nursing back to health. The two viewers could only watch as the Fae told them to return within the force field, that what they were doing was suicide, but they would not listen. They continued to fight the Fearlings even as their eldest came rushing in, trying to get to them, but it had been too late.

"Kozmotis, protect your brother." Tears fell down her cheeks as Emily Jane watched the Fearlings
devour her grandmother.

"No, mother! Father!"

"Goodbye, son!" And then her grandfather was gone, the only thing left was their wedding rings as they hit the cold bloody floor.

Mother Nature gasped as the vision faded with her and her comrade gasping for air as tears fell down their cheeks. Emily Jane gazed at the stone with a mixture of emotions. What had they just witnessed? Why now all this time?

"Emily Jane Pitchiner. Tooth Fairy. Come sit with me." The two looked up, noticing they were not standing outside the Amazon Forest anymore but within a beautiful meadow. The meadow was separated by a river of some kind, which separated the island they were on from the rest of the forest. In the middle of the meadow was a man. Appearance wise, he looked to be in his mid-twenties, but he was far older than that. The man had fair skin, gentle violet eyes, and wavy shoulder-length hair that were several shades of purple and blue. The man had a lean figure that often made others misjudged his strength, but for as long as she had known the King, he was a formidable fighter and protector of his people and of all living things throughout the various universes and worlds out there. The man was currently wearing a white sleeveless tunic and pants, golden flakes embroidered the edges of his clothing and several symbols decorated the sash on his waist. On his head was a golden leaf crown and protruding his back were a pair of butterfly-shaped wings. The wings were stunning and unique. The wings were transparent, yet colorful with every color one could imagine.

Not far from the Fae were his two loyal guards: Geraldine and Baldemar. Geraldine was a fairly tall woman that looked to be in her early thirties, while Baldemar seemed to be in his early twenties and about an inch or two shorter than Geraldine. Geraldine had very dark magenta hair that rested just above her shoulders and rose-colored eyes; Baldemar had wild brown hair with a strand that refused to stay out of his eyes and the strangest amber colored eyes she had ever seen. The two Faes' wore armor made from some type of lightweight metal that was not seen on this planet. On their skin rested a symbol, which represented what type of Fae they were. The symbol of a mountain and a moon rested on both of Baldemar's arms, while a flame and three swirls rested on Geraldine's shoulders.

Despite meeting the two a couple of time over the decades, Emily Jane couldn't say she knew them very well. All she knew was that Geraldine was the former leader of the Sister of Flames and Baldemar was a blacksmith before becoming King Kendrick's personal guards. The Faes were very secretive as she had come to learn. The only one that she felt she knew best was the King himself, but then again, he could only be revealing what he wanted her to know.

Mother Nature glanced at the two Faes, noticing that they were smiling at her and waving before returning their attention to their post. Mother Nature had to take a moment to regain her composure before she and the little Tooth Fairy made their way to the King. The Fae was currently weaving his magic into the ground, giving birth to new plants this world had yet to see. It was a technique Mother Nature had learned from the Fae long ago and still used it today. The three of them sat in peaceful silence as the King created. It was not long before the King offered them a fruit when he was finished with his latest creation.

"You seem disturbed, Emily Jane. What's the matter?"

Mother Nature gazed into the Fae's warm, kind eyes, hoping he would be able to help her. If he couldn't help in finding her father, then maybe he could help Jackson. "I need your help."
To say that Krampus was livid with a certain Boogieman was a complete and utter understatement. If Pitch wasn't in a fever-induced coma, he would have been strangling the other by now. But no, he just had the spend who knows how long outside in a blizzard. The idiot!

Krampus took a bite out of his fruit salad as he glared at said spirit. "You truly are an idiot, Kozmotis. Why did you not come to me sooner? Don't you realize what would happen if you die?"

For centuries he had been watching the former General from afar. For centuries he had been helping the other as the Guardians raged war against him. Pitch had always come to him for aid when he needed help in the past. So why hadn't he when the boy died?

Krampus spooned another helping of fruits and stuffed it into his mouth, his mind swirling between strangling or yelling at the other when he awoke. When the alternate just didn't seem cruel enough, he gave up, for now. He couldn't do anything until the other woke up. If he woke up. Krampus shook the thought away. The alternative was not a good outcome. Rather Pitch knew it or not, he was the reason the cruelest, the most merciless of evil entities were kept at bay. They feared him and as long as he walked the world, sending his Nightmares out, they stayed put and did not dare cross his path. But if Pitch stays like this for more than a few months, the balance would certainly tip for the worse.

Krampus with a worried gazed reached for the cloth on Pitch's forehead and dipped it into a bowl of water before placing it back on his forehead. His fever was still high and had not shown any sign of going down any time soon. With an annoyed sigh, Krampus leaned back in his chair and just studied the Man of Fear with a small frown. The shadows were moving ever so often to inspect the wounds they treated several hours ago. Krampus knew about the Fearlings, or what was left of them to be more precise. They were a part of Pitch now, meaning it was their sole duty to protect and heal him and to do his bidding. So why didn't they take him back to the lair? There were at least four, maybe five of them. He could have easily gone to one of them to escape the blizzard and heal.

Unless…

Krampus' red orbs softened. "The death of your brother really broke a part of you, didn't it?"
Krampus didn't have any siblings, but he did have a very close relationship with Nicholas at one point. They had been so close, in fact, that they had considered each other brothers.

Krampus leaned back in his chair, his food, forgotten, as he remembered his old friend. Long ago, way before Nicholas had taken the oath to be a Guardian, the two of them had traveled to each and every village together, gifting the children gifts or coal and birch branches. Krampus wasn't sure how the legend started, but many children believed if they were bad, he would beat them with birch branches in front of their families or he would take them to his workshop in the South Pole to torture or eat them. Krampus grimaced at that. He wasn't sure how that legend started, considering he was a vegan, but it kept the children in line. He guessed. But that didn't explain why Nicholas had acted as if he had hurt him, had lied to him, had betrayed him in some way or form? Why had he called him a monster? A killer?

The Pooka.

Yes, it was only after Nicholas introduced him to the Pooka did things spiral so out of control. There was something about the other that had just rubbed him the wrong. This Guardian of Hope, upon their very first meeting, had gazed at him with loathing, distrust, and something else.

Krampus stood up then, the chair squeaking slightly when his weight was removed from it. Krampus didn't want to remember the way Nicholas had looked at him, had treated him. In all
honesty, he should feed the man to one of his uncles for the way he threw their friendship away like it was nothing. But he didn't. That was not who Krampus was. He may be the Shadow of Saint Nicholas, the Christmas Demon, but he was no murderer.

The demigod gently placed a hand on his friend's arm and gave him a small squeeze. "Everything will be alright. Young Jackson is in a better place now, you'll see."

Krampus then left the room, leaving the door slightly open in case the woke up. "Here, you can finish this." He handed the bowl to his elf, Ketkrokur, who had been silently guarding the door for the past hour. "Keep an eye on him and let me know when his condition changes."

"Of course, Krampus," Ketkrokur said with a small nod before entering the room to occupy the chair he had been sitting on earlier. Krampus gazed at the closed door for several seconds before walking down the hall. The hall was dark with only a few torches to light the silent hallway. He walked aimlessly down the hall for what felt like hours before he came to a stop in front of his workshop. Krampus and his elves had been very busy creating toys for the children, while Nicholas had been neglecting his duties. He didn't have the amount of help that Nicholas had, but he and his twelve elves managed to create enough toys of all the good children Nicholas did not get to and mined enough coal for all the bad children.

Silently Krampus entered the workshop and made his way to a flight of stairs that would take him to the balcony above, where his office was located. Confetti and streamers littered the floors from the elves month-long Christmas celebration. Krampus smiled as he opened his door. They all worked hard. They deserved the must need rest and celebration. But once February came, it was back to the mines, toy designs, and spying on the children of the world.

"What a day." Krampus sat heavily in his chair, exhausted from the day's events. Unlike his elves, Krampus had been busy working on new toys for the children and keeping an eye on the war. But with Pitch's sudden appearance at his workshop, he knew something bad had happened. He had not been in the right state of mind when he asked Pitch what had happened. All he would say was that Jackson was dead and that he was going to lose her too. That hadn't really helped, so when the Snow Queen was stable and when Pitch disappeared, Krampus had looked into his snow globe to see what really had happened. It had not been pretty.

Krampus gently touched the delicate snow globe on his desk. The clear snow globe was decorated with swirls of red and gold and on the inside was a miniature version of the Russian Palace. Krampus moved his hand in front of the clear orb and watched as the snow moved, creating a viewing portal. Within minutes, Krampus could see that Nicholas was currently in his office. He was slumped over his desk, his eyes gazing blankly at a photograph of the two of them when they were younger. Krampus frowned seeing his old friend looking so drained, guilty, defeated. This was not the Nicholas St. North he knew. He didn't know the person he was now and he did not like it.

"I'm so sorry," Nicholas said. To whom he was apologizing for was debated, but Krampus could not keep the disappointment out of his voice.

"What have you done, Nicholas? What have you done?"

The sun slowly rose from behind the mountains that littered the landscape, painting the sky in an array of colors of pink, orange, blue, purple, and red. In the distance, the rays of suns gently touched the ice sickles that some of the other Sprites were placing around the trees. Many of the animals looked up at the glistening light it produced. The sight was truly beautiful and Jack found himself proud to be a part of it. It was beautiful in its presentation and breathtaking as the natural
beauty of day broke in, reminding everyone of what new wonders awaits them.

This was how Jack spent his morning, gazing at the sky just before the sun made its way over the horizon, forcing the moon to return to its natural slumber as night brought forth dawn. But Jack knew the moon was there, hiding in plain sight, simply waiting for it's time to shine when day returned to night. But when the moon shines above the castle in the sky, Jack felt an odd emptiness in his chest. Someone was missing. Someone who loved the night sky just as he did. But who that person was, Jack could not say. He was one of the many mysteries that plagued his mind, almost like a nightmare wanting to take form.

But at this very moment, Jack found himself not thinking about the strange man in his dreams or the girl that calls out for him to follow or the disappointing looking ice sickle he had made. Right now Jack was entranced by the story of how Sprites were created, what they did, and more importantly how these three new Sprites had come into being.

"Wow. That amazing." Jack shifted from his spot on a snow-covered branch to gaze at the Winter Sprite. Every Winter Sprite, as Jack had come to learn, had their own unique job that contributed to the success of Winter and the continuing balance of the four seasons. There were Sprites that were in charge of creating sleet and frost. There were some in charge of crafting snowflakes and ice sickles. There were Sprites that were in charge of guiding the snow down to the ground and guiding the clouds to the right position. There were even Sprites that aided the various animals both in hibernation and those roaming the plant through the cold season. But the most important job of the Sprites was aiding the Head Seasonal in spreading winter.

Jack was grateful he would not be doing this alone, but it was also daunting knowing that he would have to learn all of this and so much more. The season hadn't had a seasonal in centuries, resulting in harsh and unpredictable snowstorms and blizzards. The sad part was that blizzards, gentle snow storms, and even dusting of snow that were supposed to be so beautiful and graceful were being feared, even by the spirits and animals that were meant to create and love them.

Jack turned his gaze to the object in his hand as his mind drifted away from the three happy Sprites. A small ice sickle that was barely formed, cracked, splinted in certain areas, and close to falling apart was held innocently in his hands. As he gazed at it, he realized that there was so little time for him to learn everything by the time the next Winter Solace came around. By the next Solace, Jack would need to have somewhat mastery over his powers. He would need to understand his position as a Head Seasonal, what he should and should not do, and how to work effectively with the Sprites and other Elemental Spirits within his own season and those from others.

Am I really expected to learn of all this within one year? That was truly an unnerving thought. Jack wasn't against responsibility, but knowing that the whole season was on his shoulders and everyone in it was unnerving. Thankfully, his personal teacher's voice cut through the never-ending fog of thoughts after several minutes of silence, diverting his attention, thankfully, to the present.

"Yes indeed," Whittaker said with a fond smile as he gazed at the three Sprites happily playing an odd form of snow tag with Night and the North Wind. The three Winter Sprites were about the size of his foot, as transparent as the ice they were born from, featureless, and female. Jack gazed at the small Sprites with newfound amazement as Whittaker returned to the lecture of his kind.

"You see, Master Frost, unlike Spirits, who are originally born as humans or as animals before choosing to live on the human plain as spirits. We, Sprites, are born from the magic of our Head Seasonal." Whittaker's azure colored eyes met his. Jack took a sudden intake of breath as he felt an intense power washing over him. It was as if he was being surrounded by a blanket of snow as his winter magic merged with Whittaker's and, at that moment, Jack could hear a familiar voice.
speaking an odd language in his head and surprisingly he could understand it. "They were born from your magic. The moment you became a Spirit, they were born," Whittaker's voice echoed in his head.

Whittaker smiled at him as the intense power that allowed Jack to feel and hear the Sprite disappear. "They are connected to you, just like the rest of us. In time you will be able to communicate without words, without your voice." He squared his shoulder, relaxing his muscles as magic swirled in his palm, completely dissolving the ice sickles they had been making into formless water. "Until that day comes, we will speak your language." With that said, the two of them went back into their lesson. They crafted ice sickles well into the mid-morning, while Night, the North Wind, and three Sprites went from playing snow tag to snow castle building to making snow angels.

As the hours passed by Jack found himself growing curious. "Will they always be like this?" Whittaker's blue eyes glanced up, allowing Jack to study him further. The Winter Sprite, unlike himself, was about the size of a small child, with azure-colored eyes and short messy white hair. He was slightly on the chubby side, yet somehow very muscular. His dress suit was a variety of shades of blue and white that sparked little snowflakes or ice sickles when they hit the light. "No," he said, reaching out his palm to inspect his ice sickle. Jack gave the other his creation, slightly pleased that it was a lot better then it was before. "They will get their final forms when you are ready." Whittaker nodded in approval. "Very good, but there's too much weight on this side. Apply a little more ice to the right side to prevent it from cracking on this side."

"What you mean when I'm ready?" Jack took his ice sickle back, his feature reflecting his puzzlement.

"Master Frost, remember, Sprites are born from the magic of our Head Seasonal." Jack nodded. "Meaning only you can give us our final shape. Our final features. Only you have the power to create new Winter Sprites, as well as destroy as."

"Destroy?" An unsettling feeling filled the pit of his stomach as Whittaker gazed at him with a sad smile. The smile did not stop the cold chill that filled his soul. "Yes, destroy," he said his face tight around the eyes as he stared grimly at his Seasonal. "Unlike Spirits, who are reborn upon dying in this plain. We, Sprites, return to the snow and ice that we were made from as a result of having our magical cores taken away from us by our Head Seasonal." He paused, a sign that he was debating if he should wisely keep his mouth shut or tell the new Winter Seasonal the grim truth. "It has happened before," he admitted. "Master Winters has done it many times when he was unpleased by our work. He would simply make new Sprites to replace the ones he destroyed." It shouldn't be possible for Jack to get paler than he was. But as the Sprite told him the grim truth, Jack literally felt what little pigment he had on his face drain completely. His distress was so severe as he shook his head slowly at first before pure anger trailed in that Night stopped what she was doing comfort him.

"Why?" That was all Jack could say without screaming. It was a shame the other was gone, Jack desperately wanted to give the other a few words about respect and then he would throw a snowball or two in the other's face for good measure. "Why would he do something so cruel?" Night hovered next to him and nuzzled him over so slightly. The anger slowly faded, turning into heart-wrenching sadness, but not fast enough to dull the anger in his voice and expression.

"It is simply how things are, Master Frost. The old must be removed for the new." Jack shook his head again. As much as he wanted to argue, he knew there was no point. The Sprites had dealt with this abuse for who knows how long when the old geezer was alive.
"It still isn't right," he stated flatly, his voice boarding anger, hatred, and sadness all at the same time.

"What happened when he faded?" Night ask, which he had to translate since only he could understand her.

"When Master Winters began to fade, it was very painful. Our cores were literally being torn apart from within as his magic disappeared from existence. Those who were not strong enough to hold a strong will, returned to Gaea or Gaia, whichever you prefer to call her as."

Jack frowned, unhappy how badly the Sprites had been affected by this elder spirit. Desperately wanting to change the subject, Jack decided to ask about the other Head Sprites. Due to it currently being winter, the sprites were guiding winter the best they could without their Seasonal. As of currently, Jack had only met two.

"Whittaker, who are the other Head Sprites? I know you're one and I met Alba the other day briefly when she returned to the castle to gather some of the Sprites to aid her, but I'm curious about the others."

"You'll meet them soon enough, once the height of the season is over, but it doesn't hurt to tell you about them," Whittaker said as he placed his ice sickle down. "There are five of as in total: Wren, Frostine, Alba, Yas, and myself. I am the Head Sprite of Ice Sickles. It is my job to craft the ice sickles we delicately place on houses and trees as well as teaching any new Sprites or Winter Spirits of our ways. Wren is the Head Sprite of Snow Direction."

"Snow direction? Doesn't snow fall on its own?"

"Yes it does, Master Frost. But without knowing how to redirect snow, it can dangerously bury houses or entire villages in ten feet of snow, or worse, covering part of the planet in nothing but snow and ice. I can't afford to have another ice age. The last one was just too great."

"That would be bad," Jack commented, allowing the other to continue.

"Next is Frostine. She's the Head Sprite of Frost and Sleet. You seem to have somewhat mastery of frost, but she will make sure to teach you some of the advanced skills you need to know. Alba, as you know, is the Head Sprite of Snowflakes and Yas is the Head Sprite of Cloud Formation."

Jack lifted up his ice sickle, inspecting it as he realized he had a long way to go. "Ice sickles, snow, frost, sleet, snowflakes, and clouds," Jack started slowly as he tried to wrap his mind around everything he had to learn before the next solstice. "That a lot to learn before next year," Jack finally admitted with a sigh. Truth be told. He was pretty nervous right now. What if he made a complete fool out of himself in front of Winter. Had the wintery season ever rejected it's Head Seasonal before?

"Master Frost, no one expects you to master everything in a year." Whittaker had a kind smile as he spoke, one that was wise beyond his ageless appearance. "Being the Head Seasonal is a very important job, as well as the most difficult. You are required to know all aspects of our wintery duties and be able to perform them when something goes wrong. But no one expects you to master everything in a year." He shook his head. "It had taken Master Winter about fifty years to master his abilities and Mother Nature a tad longer than that, even with her limited abilities of the seasons."

Whittaker paused, allowing him to take that information in. "So, what am I supposed to know by next year?" The Winter Sprite had mentioned this a couple of time throughout the week, but Jack
just wanted to be sure.

"Well, the basics mostly," he said. "You don't have to master your abilities right away; mastery comes with time and practice. But you need to know the basics of forming ice sickles, frost, sleet and snowflakes and guiding the clouds and snow with the North Wind. These small skills will help you when you have to help create and control any blizzards Mother Nature and Winter will require of you. Although," he added with an encouraging smile, "you are picking up far quicker than Master Winters when he was your age."

Jack nodded slowly in understanding and with slight pride as he returned his gaze to the sky. The sun was now fully in the sky as it neared lunchtime. But that didn't make it beauty any less pronounced. No, it just made it better as the various animals took to the sky as carefree and happy as he was. Blue eyes trailed over the landscape, noticing the little details the other Sprites had done to bring the beauty of Winter to life. One day he would be the one, out in the world, guiding the clouds to create the perfect snow day, creating frost and sleet that was both elegant and precise in its message to the Humans of an upcoming storm or blizzard. And one day, he would be the one to bring joy to the world with his snowflakes and snowballs. A swell of excitement filled him at that thought.

As the Winter Seasonal, it was his job to craft the snowflakes that were unique, special, and beautiful. Old Man Winter, as the Sprites had informed him, had once crafted every snowflake, but as his heart turned cold and his view of the world became bleak, he poured less time into them and instead left that job to the Sprites, who could only create snowflakes that were simple, basic. Their snowflakes were beautiful, but they didn't hold the magical joy of Winter.

The corners of his lips lifted up into a bright smile as the North Wind gently played with his hair. He laughed as she swirled around him, whispering words of fun time and snow time into his ears, words only he, the Sprites, Mother Nature, and the other Seasonals could hear. Jack was more than happy to play with her, their coordination was a lot better now than it was a week and a half ago.

"Come, Child," North Wind said in excitement. "Mother Nature has returned!"

"Really?" Jack asked as he stood up.

"Yes! And she brought the King! Come! Come!" Without even being told, or even looking at Whittaker to get confirmation that Mother Nature had indeed returned after being gone for so long, Jack jumped off the tree branch he had been sitting on and flew into the air. Jack did not ride Night as he usually did. He fluttered like a snowflake all on his own. It was an exhilarating experience, one he would proudly do over and over again for the rest of his life.

"Come on, Night!" Jack flew high in the air, his staff in one hand and his loyal friend at his side. The two of them squealed in joy and happiness as they flew above the trees and towards the castle in the distance.

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