

Frost burst into the hallway with bated breath. It was uncertain if they would even make it to the City of Clubs with only hours left on the clock.

Her skirt suddenly seized around her ankles. They were far too restrictive to allow long strides. She could have easily torn it apart with the smallest effort, so she did everything in her power to catch herself before she tripped.

A small yelp inadvertently left her as she shuffled clumsily. Like her body, her mind had lost all semblance of control. Only images of Jury filled her mind and when it seemed like she'd fall over –

“Frost!”

– A pair of powerful arms caught her just in time.

“Thank you! Thank you... Jury?” She was certain this was Jury, but her voice said otherwise. “That’s you, right?”

Her face remained facing downwards where the long legs of her lover patiently stood. Frost’s face burned under Jury’s intense stare. She could see it all. Her omnidirectional vision revealed a Jury from beyond her wildest dreams.

“What kind of a question is that? Don’t tell me this isn’t the first time you’ve tripped over in that.” Jury quietly laughed.

She glowed like a gemstone under the brilliance of the warm moonlight. It shone through the parted curtains, illuminating the long halls with a blue glow. The chaos from just seconds ago died as silence danced around them. Frost could almost see it urging her to swallow her disquiet.

Her eyes climbed Jury’s dress, taking in her figure in all its glory as her rosy scent perfumed the air. She wore an identical dress to hers, only that it was white.

“It hasn’t happened yet. Sorry. Jury... does this...”

Her voice suddenly trailed off when they finally reached her face. Their eyes simultaneously widened, their cheeks flushing a rosy red. Her hair was tied into a giant bun where a giant white lily held it together like a hair pin. She didn’t know if it was the moonlight or if Jury had put make-up on, because she was far more attractive than she remembered in this moment.

Frost was taken aback to the point where words struggled to form in her throat. But even so, she never broke eye contact and finished her sentence in a faint, breathless whisper.

“... Suit me?”

It was embarrassing for her to say this out loud, but she wanted nothing more than for Jury to complement her. Suddenly, Jury broke eye contact and brought a hand to cover her mouth where a smile formed.

“You don’t know how much it’s killing me right now to not just...”

Her eyes became delirious. A predatory glimmer filled her eyes as a sea of affection flooded her. Seeing Jury like this made her realize that she wasn't the only one that was struggling with themselves. For Jury it was clear that she felt twice as much as what she did, and for that reason, confidence returned to her.

Frost's shoulders fell as she raised a hand to cup her lover's face, inviting Jury to return her loving gaze.

"We'll have lots of time afterwards. Geez Jury... what are you thinking about right now of all times?" Frost couldn't help but laugh.

Jury replaced her hand with Frost's, kissing the back of her palm.

"So many things. But I'll keep it in. We'll be late otherwise~ Even Snap isn't sure if it'll make it to the City of Clubs at this rate. Mhm. It's fine if we stay here. In the Nexus with everyone. But the gluttonous part of me wants to keep this side of you all to myself."

"We'll definitely make it. So you'll get all of this~" Frost beamed, making Jury avert her eyes again to refrain from pouncing on her. "I wanted to make tonight special. I could go on and on but we'll be in the next year by the time I'm done. C'mon. Let's put it all aside and enjoy the moment."

Frost brought her other hand to clasp onto Jury's claw. There was not a single part of Jury she disliked, and this gesture only further cemented their love.

"Mhm. You get too sentimental easily Frost~ I know a better way to cut it out! Food! I bet there's lots of food there~"

Jury's tail wrapped around her waist, both in affection and support in case she tripped over again. Then, the two walked side by the side, shoulder to shoulder as they held hands.

"Are you hungry for skewers?"

The footwear they wore were wooden slippers that clacked with each small readjustment. They were far from easy to walk in.

"Always! Skewers and apples. And Frost."

"Me?"

"I was going to continue, but that's true too." Jury cheekily added. "I wanted to say thank you. For wearing that."

"It's nothing. I just had to get over my irrational fear of girly stuff. It's like getting on a rollercoaster. It feels daunting at first but once you're on it, you realize that it's not so bad."

"You're doing it again Frost."

"Oh – Sorry, my bad. I mean... No problem." Frost sighed, shaking her head lightly. "I can't get my head around how weird it gets when it's just us two. Not in a bad way. I mean like..."

“Don’t worry. I feel that way too. And I think it’s a good thing~ Because it feels like I’m falling over for you all over again. The last times we went out didn’t feel like this.”

“Because tonight’s different.” Frost nodded to herself as she looked up at Jury.

Her lips curled into a loving smile.

“Mhm. More than special...”

Jury didn’t elaborate on why she felt this way. As a matter of fact, Jury was looking forward to this far more than Frost. She never explained why either as they descended from the Nexus and met up with Snap just outside of the 6th Branch.

They both intimately sat side by side on their magic carpet ride to C5. The wind carried their voices as they shared their experiences over the last two months in the Nexus. In between those they mused on the smaller things, breaking away the ice that seized them on this fateful night.

The lovestruck spell disappeared somewhere along the way and they were able to freely look at one another’s eyes without issue now. The abnormality of love was as strange as the Corrupted. But Frost considered herself to be blessed for being able to experience these emotions repeatedly like it was her first time.

The Nex Megalopolis served as their backdrop on one side as they rode the walls, and Brandar’s expanse on the other. Fireworks were already being fired into the skies as she wondered why there weren’t any firearms – even primitive ones – anywhere.

Justica Arms was the reason for the banning and the Guilds enforced it. They saw firearms as weapons that trivialized murder which was ironic coming from an Atelier. It was not the only reason, and of course this was enforceable only within their jurisdiction.

This was but one of the many topics that arose as they eventually reached the City of Clubs at record pace. Snap’s maximum speed would have snapped their necks months ago. It took only five hours to reach C5 from H10.

Snap finally arrived at the border of the festive city, letting Frost and Jury go on without it. But they didn’t leave without expressing their heartfelt thanks and promised to return with all manners of treats.

“We won’t be long, Snap~!” Frost patted its head tenderly. “I wish you were smaller so we could bring along too.”

“You can come along with us if you want.”

Snap shook its head.

“Bzzzt~ Brrrr~!”

“You’re really one of a kind, you know that Snap? Fine. We’ll be back soon.” Frost embraced its head. “Happy new years, Snap. Thank you for sticking around.”

“Snap’s always been with us.” Jury hummed, giving Snap her fair share of love. “Don’t stray off too far or people will get suspicious of you. And don’t eat the wildlife too! They could be pets!”

“I think Snap knows better than to do that. Snap’s Snap after all. Cya buddy. Keep your eyes in the sky. It’s going to be bright but knowing you, you’ll probably be focused on the people here, huh?”

It raised both hands and performed a small dance, waving at them as they disappeared into the crowd hand in hand with earnest smiles.

*\*Snap\**

A polaroid was swallowed into its fur, capturing yet another precious memory.