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Gemini

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GEMINI

KAT ELLIOTT

He was a star, who had fallen to protect the sky. It had been the hardest decision he had ever made, but he never had any regrets. But he misses the sky every day, and from the planes of earth he stares yearningly up at those broad expanses of blue.

The first night he had been on earth he had screamed and cried with frustration. Since his fall, he was confined by the weight of gravity, and now his feet would forever be rooted to the ground.

No longer would he be able to float weightlessly, watching the world below.

And with that realization, he had fallen onto his back, lying in the soft, half-dried grass and watching as the indigo of the night sky was touched with the pink of dusk.

As the dark of night had faded, so too had the luminescence of his skin, the warm, radiant glow that seemed to come from beneath his flesh becoming muted and soft. Without his light, his skin had taken on the earthy hues of the humans he had once watched from his place in the sky.

It's been a year, now, since he fell, and he's spent the majority of that time in the wild, living in the forest. Because he still hasn't quite gotten used to the restraints of gravity, he can't bring himself to be further restricted by living in a permanent home.

So he roams, experiencing the vibrancy and wonder of the world that before he had only been able to watch. He rests in the dense foliage, climbs trees, and plays tag with the wildlife. And, on the rare occasion that humans

enter his forest, he studies them with curiosity, but never does he approach. And each night he watches the sky, his eyes finding the other stars, observing their dimmed lights and their half-hearted, weak twinkling. The only star who remains strong and steady in his luminous glow is Polaris, the Star of the North.

And he remembers that time a year ago when Polaris approached him and told him to fall to Earth. Polaris had said it was for the safety of the sky, and Castor, ever dutiful, had followed Polaris's order without hesitation. Certainly with some sadness, though.

He is in a tree now, clinging to the broad trunk with his arms and legs, watching as the sun begins to sink beneath the tree line to rest on the horizon. As the darkness of night chases away the sun's rays, he turns his face up to the stars, who are just beginning to wake.

It is as it has always been for the last year. Except... near the patch of empty blackness where he used to perch, a white tail is forming. It becomes a blaze, as it drops from its place, down, down, rapidly down towards the Earth.

Another star is falling.

He realizes this with surprise and wonder, and then he swiftly begins climbing down from his tree, because the falling star is dropping directly towards him. The atmospheric heat makes his face feel hot as it passes directly overhead, only to crash to the earth some yards away.

When his bare feet touch the ground, he takes off sprinting towards his fallen brother or sister, concern and excitement warring in his heart and head.

Did this mean he will no longer be alone? He doesn't dare hope, he doesn't dare think.

Not until he finds the other star.

There is a massive crater where the other star has fallen, the foliage around it smoking, the earth scorched black. Lying limply in the center of the crater is the last star he expected to see.

The other star's skin is still glowing with that intense light that he used to have, and when the eyes blink open, they shine with an unearthly radiance.

"Pollux?" His voice is a dry croak; he hasn't used it in a year.

"Castor?" the other star asks, marveling at the sight of him.

"I haven't been called that in a long time," he says quietly. "Not since landing on Earth."

Pollux shakes his head, the expression on his face becoming melancholy. A small shower of stardust shakes free from his hair with the movement, but his brother doesn't pay it the slightest attention. Pollux's gaze is locked on him, as though Castor would vanish if he were to look away.

"Do you still not know the true reason you were sent here? Polaris informed us that he told you it was for the sky's protection."

Castor can feel his face shutting down at his brother's words, but he doesn't know how else to react. There's a pit in his chest; granted, it is a pit that has been there since he fell to Earth, but now it feels as if it is growing deeper and stretching wider.

"Polaris did it for you, you know. He told us, after you fell."

Castor has the sudden urge to cover his ears. He does not want to hear more, because it means that he may again suffer from what he had thought he had adapted to.

"You were at your life's end, Castor," Pollux says. Pollux doesn't seem to pay any attention to the fact that Castor feels as if he's about to crumple— but then again, he never did. "You wouldn't have followed the normal life cycle. You would have become a supernova, and then a black hole, and then you would have destroyed everything around you. Polaris sent you here not just to protect the sky, but for your own safety as well."

Castor blinks slowly at his brother, studying the other star's expressive face. He can read Pollux like an open book, just as he always has. Reading Pollux is easier than trying to read what he is feeling himself.

"Why are you here, then?" he asks with a sniff. His brother's glow is already starting to dim; the light that manages to shine through is not the pure white of a normal star.

Pollux smiles slowly, his smile bright where his skin no longer is. "Couldn't let you have all the fun on Earth now, could I?"

Feeling his own face split with a grin, Castor reaches down with one hand to help his brother out of the crater. When Pollux stands next to him, at the lip of the crater, they embrace.

"Besides, since I'm your brother, I could've become a black hole too, and I don't think anyone's ready for this pretty face to explode yet," Pollux says thoughtfully.

With an abrupt but well-placed shove, Pollux is suddenly sent careening back down into the crater, where he crashes into the earth for the second time that night.

Castor crouches down at the crater's edge, and his gaze flicks up to the sky, where he can see Polaris's resolute radiance. He gives the smallest of salutes in the direction of the North Star, and then turns his eyes back down to the Earth, back to Pollux, who is reciting a steady stream of curses as he tries to climb out of the crater.

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