



Tea Trouble

1129 words

Valerian had stepped into the Wayseeker's residence early that morning, his scarf tucked tightly around his neck as a chilly air overtook New Star Cities morning. Truthfully the herbalist wasn't all that surprised anymore with how cold the city got. It's only been a few weeks since the guild decided to settle down and restock for their next expedition, but just that short amount of time was all it took for Valerian to rue the cold. Perhaps it's so cold because of all the taller buildings? It practically felt like he was in a wind tunnel whenever he was in a larger part of town.

He's decided to stop at the Wayseeker's guild for one particular reason: restocking.

With how big New Star City was it made it nearly impossible to find the typical herbs he uses, there's so many stores and even if he did end up finding a store the stock was never to his liking. Perhaps it's because he's particular about his plants, but the cold really did a number on the medicinal effects over here. Not to mention the bigger end stores always hiked up their prices.

That's why he was looking for the Doctor that was taking care of Agnes. Surely she knew where all the hidden gems were located.

However, just as he entered the building, slowly scoping out the area, there was a loud grunt as the main door slammed closed. Valerian whipped around and was met with a pile of extra supplies, and behind the supplies was the Doctor who took care of Agnes. The two cats only make eye contact for a second before she trudges up to Valerian with an impatient look.

"You're with the Wayseekers, yes?"

"Yeah I am— hey listen I wanted to ask you a qu—"

"Good." She drops a book onto his paws and opens it to a specific illustration. The pace that she was running quickly shut Valerian up. **"This is Ginger root, and this here is what the rest of the plant looks like. It's an honor serving the Guild and yada yada, pays great, but you lot have burned through all my stores. And Janet's on Third Street."** she shifted some supplies in her hand to point at the illustration.

“That’s fuckin’ great but hold on a sec–”

“You’ll have to get it from the greenhouse bulbs that line the road into the city. Bring weapons, because the Boundless love breaking those. And don’t get hurt! You’ll make the shortage worse!” and just like that she was gone.

Valerian looked frazzled. Like a whirlwind just passed him, his eyes blown wide as he was stunned with shock. *What... just happened?* He looked down at the book, staring blankly at the Ginger root drawing, before dumbly looking back up.

“...I fucking know what Ginger root looks like.”

Braving the cold wasn’t something Valerian expected to do so soon, but he wasn’t one to leave a sick patient to die– even if he did act like he didn’t care. Agnes needed the root and so he’d do what he can, besides. It’s not like his quest was completely ruined. This Janet person's street may have some plants leftover, and Ginger root was something he’d gladly take. Especially if there was an abundance of it growing at these greenhouses.

As Valerian arrived at the paths that lead to the Greenhouses, he felt his fur begin to fluff out as if he was being watched. *She did say there were Boundless around here.* To think, the first time he saw a Boundless was when he joined the Guild. Even despite traveling back and forth to nearby towns when he was young he never saw any. *I really was lucky back then, huh?*

Narrowed eyes scanned the area, taking in the tiniest of details as best he could. Nothing stirred. The only noise was the wind whistling through the air, batting his face with a cool sensation.

The herbalist took a breath and quickly located the Ginger root. The stems stood up boldly as the greenhouse protected it from the worst of the frost and snow. Valerian opened his bag and quickly grabbed an empty cloth pouch from inside. He reached into the dirt and with casual expertise, plucked a few stems of Ginger root out of the pot.

He made sure to grab a few extra stems for himself, if he needs to pay for it later than he will, but he’s not making another trip back here just because that other Doctor was too impatient to answer his question.

Cruunch-

Valerian jolts as the sound of snow crunches from just outside the Greenhouse. With an awkward movement, his eyes flash as magic races through his veins. He uses a paw and from his tooth he swipes downwards as a venom-formed blade appears. It was awkwardly jagged, Valerian hasn't had much time to practice his Mattershift magic and it showed. Still, a blade was a blade.

Grrrr—

The rumbling of a threat echoes around the greenhouse and Valerian narrows his eyes as a shaded blob is vaguely noticeable through the fabric of the greenhouse. The figure comes to a halt and for a moment time stops...

Valerian lets out a breath...

And the figure crashes through the greenhouse fabric. The horn on its nose rips open the fabric and sends a chilling blast at Valerian alongside the assault. The herbalist hisses, and with fake determination he lunges into the attack and thrusts his blade upwards.

The two of them met with a bang, and just as quickly as they met, they separated.

Valerian could feel the cool air nip at a fresh cut alongside his cheek, but that seemed to be the extent of his injuries. Meanwhile... The Boundless lies there dead, slowly fading away. He only vaguely sees what the creature actually looks like; a rabbit-shaped thing with a large horn atop its nose, small sharp spines running across its back. Just as quickly as it appeared, it was gone.

“Holy shit...” he breathed out a sigh of relief as the venom blade lost its form and dripped into the snow. He may be use to killing Boundless now, but Valerian still feels like his naive self back in that Boundless-filled cave whenever he sees them.

Just like this morning, Valerian slams through the door and stomps into the building. However this time, he clutches a bag of Ginger root firmly in his hand as a small cut neatly lines his cheek.

Valerian finds the Doctor just outside Agnes' room and shoves the herbs into her chest with an irritated hiss. His toothy smile was the opposite of kind, **“Here’s your damn root. Now... I believe it’s *my* turn to get a request from *you*.”**



