

TALE

Single-minded: Stubborn Child

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Characters: Celsius, Gelidius

Mentioned Only: Fjolli, Oxalis, Scylis, and Infernus

Content Warnings: None

1st Moon, 3012

Warfang City, District 10

The moons begin to dance across the sky as the sun sets on an uneventful day in Warfang City. The once bustling streets lined with dragons grow quieter as the last bits of light fade away. The usual noise one would get from gliding over the city are reduced to near non-existence. Only the occasional flap of wings draws any attention during this evening.

While not the only dragon in the sky this night, a blue ice dragon slowly makes his way into the thirteenth district on outstretched, tired wings. His body asked for reprieve from that large amount of travel he had to do this day. Multiple deliveries, carrying large animal carcasses himself. On top of that, he had to spend the effort to break them into smaller, more usable pieces. It is rare he manages to finish early and get back home before the sun is completely gone.

The light blue dragon drifts closer to the ground as he nears his destination. A flap of his wings slows the descent and large paws finally meet the ground with as gentle a landing as his tired body allows. Finally, back at his home, he moves closer to the entrance. After unlocking the door, it creaks open exposing the dark interior of the building.

His half-lidded eyes take in the surroundings of the entrance. Very little in the way of furnishings fill the room as only a table, two cushions, and nearly empty shelves fill the otherwise empty space. He drags himself over to the shelf before sitting down and undoing the claps of his satchel. He places the entire bag behind one of the spots with a hinge for cover.

Closing up the shelf, he looks back toward the table and notices a scroll lying in the center. He tilts his head and moves over to the out of place parchment. To most, it would mean nothing to see a scroll, but to Gelidius, it is a sign that another dragon arrived in the house. He wraps the scroll back up before wandering over to the shelf. Returning the item to its own home, he decides to head into the next room.

A larger table rests in the center of this room, surrounded by cupboards and containers. Gelidius methodically checks each of the shelves. One contains a few grains. Another contains some fruit. A few dried meats. Some different spices. After getting a good look at everything, he pauses to think.

He racks his mind to remember what they had earlier that day. He grabbed some of the fruit and dried meat for himself while his unified cooked some meat for herself and their son. He looks back to the shelf he stored his own bag. It was alone in the compartment, showing Fjolli hasn't

returned yet. The scroll indicates his son is. Yet the amount of food has not gone down.

The boy forgot to eat again.

“Damn it Celsius...” Gelidius swears quietly. He lets out a sigh as he stands up and heads out of the kitchen to go find his child. There really is only one option considering who he is dealing with. The boy is fixated on his studies. Most would say that is a good thing. He certainly hears praise when his companions at work speak of him. How diligent he is to be so dedicated to his work. Gelidius can only hope the child never hears those words. He already seems to think he is right; he doesn’t need people confirming it.

Finally reaching his son’s room, Gelidius lifts a paw and knocks on the wall to get the young dragons attention. “Celsius.” He calls through the curtain. He knows the dragon is in there, he can see the faint light from underneath the drapes. Even at his worst, he wouldn’t go out this late in the evening alone. Gelidius waits for a response.

Rhythmic sounds of a quill gliding along paper is paired with the slight cracking of a candle in this small room in an unremarkable house located in district thirteen of Warfang. The light illuminates the desk upon which it sits showing a few parchments spread out. All of which pulled from the shelf containing more scrolls of varying topics.

A vague outline of a draconic shadow outlines the back wall, blocking the light from resting on the nest with a small blanket. An open satchel sits

beside the nest with an old white cloak that appears to have had extra material sewn onto it a few times in its life. The room is filled much more than any other in the house even though only a single small dragon resides within it.

The ice dragon in question is currently copying from the newest addition to his collection. While this scroll was borrowed from the temple and must be returned, the young dragon decides to copy as much as he can from it to study for later. He has done so with more than one of the items occupying his bookshelf.

The process is tedious and time consuming. He doesn't exactly know how long he began copying this item, but the sun was definitely up when he started. He didn't need a candle to help him either. It's not important though. It will likely take a while, but he has plenty of time. He already finished the scroll, but who knows if he will need it again later. Better safe than sorry.

The pale dragon's concentration shatters like glass when a large heavy paw is placed on his shoulder. A shrill shriek escapes his maw as he turns to face the intruder that has entered his room. He looks up at the large blue ice dragons with jagged spikes under his chin. He sees the pattern going down his neck that resembles his own. Fear starts to give way to agitation as he starts to glare at the older dragon.

"Dad! Learn to knock!" Annoyance coming from a brief flash of fear. He moves his shoulder away from the larger dragon's grip.

"I did." Gelidius responds in a deadpan voice. "Several times."

Celsius looks back to the curtain that is currently wide open to the rest of the home before turning to his father. "Well...knock louder next time." Celsius says a little deflated at hearing that he may have been the one not paying attention.

"I called your name too."

Celsius opens his mouth to respond as he looks up at his father. He sees that the older dragon is starting to get annoyed by his attitude. The smaller dragon breaks his gaze away. He exhales and pauses a few seconds. "...Sorry. I didn't mean to yell." He turns to his scroll. The unfurled paper with small droplets of ink spilled from the sudden start earlier.

"I'll be quiet. I just need to finish copying this." Celsius says before looking back to the older dragon hoping that the irritation has disappeared from his father's face. When their eyes lock, he finds that it hasn't. The younger dragon's expression shifts to a more confused one. He doesn't think he did anything wrong. "What?"

"When did you last eat?"

Once that question leaves Gelidius' mouth, Celsius realizes where this is going. He doesn't have time for that. If he stops now, he will probably pass out before getting to finish his work. There is a lot more he has to do tomorrow so wasting time will result in it not getting done. Not wanting to fall behind even a little in his studies, he says the first thing that comes to mind. "Earlier."

“What was it?”

“...Fruit...”

“What type?”

“Citrus.”

“Where did you get it?”

“The kitchen...”

Gelidius moves his head closer to the younger dragon as Celsius turns his face away. “Stop lying to me.” He says firmly. “I counted.”

Celsius makes an exasperated noise at having been caught in his deception. He can’t figure out why it is so bad missing one meal every now and then. “I’m not even hungry.” He says while ignoring his stomach’s disagreement.

Gelidius just shakes his head before looking over to the desk. He turns to the flickering flame of the candle, staring into the small flame. A puff of frost comes from Gelidius’ maw, snuffing out the tiny light and darkening the room.

“Hey! I need that to read!” Celsius complains standing up before his father. Before he can do anything else, Gelidius grabs the papers he was writing on and moves over to the shelf. “What are you doing?! I’m trying to

work!” Celsius voice gets a bit louder as Gelidius places the paper on top of the shelf, out of reach of the small flightless dragon. “Give those back, ri- “

“Celsius! Shut up!” Gelidius snaps back at the Celsius, silencing him. Celsius flinches back at the raised voice. He also hears a slight growl coming from his father whose expression has changed to a scowl. The younger dragon’s will may be shaken, but there is still fight in him. He matches his father’s expression.

Before a single word comes out of his mouth however, Gelidius suddenly reaches out and picks Celsius up with one paw. “Hey! Put me down! I! Am not! A child!” Celsius whines as his father carries him out of the room. He struggles to break free of the larger dragon’s grip to no avail.

“Stop acting like one.” The flat response causes Celsius to pout. Realizing he is stuck; he stops fighting as his father carries him into the kitchen. Gelidius places the young dragon near the table. “Wait.”

Celsius watches his father search through some of the drawers. He can’t help but feel this is wholly unnecessary. It was one meal. It’s not like he makes a habit out of it. He can’t believe his father started counting the food they have in the house just in case this happened.

Gelidius placing a plate in front of Celsius brings his attention back to the older dragon. “Eat.” Leaving will just result in being dragged back to this room. Arguing will delay his return to studying longer. There is no other option here.

“Fine...” Resignation fills the young dragon's voice as he tries to quickly eat. His father sits across the table from him with some food of his own.

“You’ll choke.” His father says while watching him.

“Will not.” Celsius retorts with his mouth full.

“Swallow before talking.” Celsius moves to grab the meat that was placed on the plate. Gelidius sees this and pulls the plate away. The young ice dragon is getting increasingly annoyed at his father’s antics. He slows down his chewing for a moment as his eyes narrow at the adult dragon sitting across the table. His father stares back at him silently eating his own meal, waiting for Celsius to act as instructed.

A tense few seconds pass before Celsius swallows. He then opens his mouth to show there is nothing in there before Gelidius slides the plate back to him. Celsius grabs the piece of fruit and turns away before eating it a bit more slowly. The smaller dragon would not admit it, but once he was placed at the end of the table, he realized how hungry he was. Still, he needed to finish this meal so he could get back to work.

“Learn anything at school?” Gelidius asks, drawing Celsius attention again. After a brief look, he turns back away.

“History.” Celsius says quickly as he tries to avoid conversation. That will simply slow him down since he needs to pause his meal to talk.

“Oh.” Gelidius responds shortly. A few awkward moments of silence pass between the two ice dragons. “Of what...?”

“Warfang.” Another quick response from Celsius as he continues being evasive.

“Ah...” Celsius pauses at that response. He looks back to his father and sees him looking away. He seems disappointed. Guilt starts to claw at the young dragon. His food starts to taste a bit more sour as he looks to the ground.

“Well...” Celsius starts as he thinks back to the lesson he was taught today. “It was mainly about some of the trade deals Warfang had with the Ocean Domain. You know, like, how we get supplies from them every now and then.” He explains pieces of what was explained. Most of it may be interesting to someone going into the merchant trade, but for Celsius, this is rather useful information.

“So...fish?”

“That’s one thing we get, but some minerals they have are more valuable.” Celsius runs through a list of different items they get from the ocean that are unavailable to surface dwelling dragons, as well as what they are useful for. He stops when he notices his father’s eyes start to glaze over. “Yeah, it was kind of boring.” He admits to not really caring for the lesson that much.

Gelidius blinks a few times as the subject gets dropped. He had already finished his meal so he moved the plate to the side so it could be cleaned later. When he looks back, Celsius is almost done with his food as well. “See your friends?” He asks tentatively.

Celsius cocks an eyebrow at that question. Most of the people he is friends with are part of his flight. It would be surprising if he didn't see them. "Well, most of them are in the same flight as me so...yeah?"

Gelidius tilts his head awkwardly. "Talk to them?"

"A bit." Celsius replies. "Most of them had to head home quickly today." Most of his flight got picked up to head home by their parents so he couldn't speak to most of them. "I did talk to Oxalis though."

"About what?" Gelidius rolls his head around, trying to stretch his neck as Celsius responds.

"Mostly plants as usual." Typically, the conversation Celsius has with the earth dragon heads in the direction of plant cultivation. "They can be very useful if used right. She asked if I want to help her gather some so I will be doing that in a few weeks." Celsius finished the fruit he was eating before setting the core on the plate. "Her sister will be there too."

When Celsius looks back to Gelidius, he sees him nodding along with the conversation. A small yawn comes from the young dragon as his own exhaustion is starting to catch up with him.

"Also talked with Scyllis a bit." Celsius' water dragon companion frequently tries to talk to him. "She talks about Infernus a lot." In some way or another, each conversation he has with her drifts to the fire dragon. Been happening more than it used too. "Usually she is trying to get him to stop trying to fight everyone. He thinks about that a lot."

Celsius stares at the plate for a few moments as he tries to think of something else that happened. He notices his head starting to dip. He pulls himself back into a proper sitting position. "You should go to bed." His father's words reach him as the older dragon takes the plate away.

"After I finish copying my notes." Celsius stands up and starts to head out of the kitchen.

"Celsius." His father calls after him, making him stop in his tracks. He turns to look at his father as if to question what he wants now. He ate and now he just wants to get back to work.

"Don't worry, I won't be up to much longer." He replies knowing full well that it could take him most of the night as he turns back and starts walking to his room again. When the young dragon makes it back to his room, his gaze turns to the shelf his scrolls are perched on. He moves to the side as he thinks about how to get them down. His head swivels to the desk he was writing on and gets the idea to use that. He latches his paw around the legs and begins to drag the desk over.

Heavy footfalls echo through the room. Celsius turns and sees his father entering the room behind him. He moves over to the desk, placing a paw on it to stop its movement. "Enough. Not tonight." The older dragon pushes the desk back into place as Celsius loses his grip on it.

"Why can't I do it now?" Annoyance coming back at being stopped again.

Gelidius points to the window. The curtains are closed but Celsius can plainly see night has fallen in full as a few stars twinkle in the sky. "It's dark."

"I will light a candle then. That is what they are for." Celsius argues back, not seeing any issue with working by dim light. As long as he can see, it won't be any problem.

Without saying a word, Gelidius lifts his child once again. Another exasperated noise escapes Celsius, but he doesn't fight against him this time. His father places him in the nest before sitting down outside of it and watching him. "You need sleep."

"Shouldn't you go to sleep too?" Celsius retorts. "You have been working all day. You should go to sleep too." Celsius smirks as he tries to use his father's words against him. Once Gelidius goes back to his own nest, he can go back to studying.

"...Your right." Gelidius responds. A brief flash of pride fills Celsius as his plan seems to have worked that vanishes when his father decides to lie down on the floor in front of him. His head rests between his paws as he continues watching the smaller dragon.

With his not so smart plan gone up in smoke, Celsius decides on another plan. He puts on a pout and turns around to get under his blanket. He smirks to himself at the idea he had. Pretend to sleep, then get the notes when Gelidius actually falls asleep.

With the blankets covering him, Celsius waits for the larger dragon to leave or fall asleep. One major flaw appears in the plan shortly after it

begins. He starts to feel more tired the longer he spends under the blanket. He starts having to force his eyes to stay open. A few minutes pass and he lifts his head from under the blanket to check his father.

Gelidius is breathing softly with his eyes closed. The rise and fall of his chest show that his breathing has slowed a bit. Celsius smiles and starts to get up. Before even leaving the bed, his father's eye cracks open to look at him. "Just go to sleep." Gelidius says firmly.

"I need to study." Celsius responds back.

"No you don't."

"Yes I do!" Celsius's voice raises in pitch as she sits up from his position. His eyelids are getting heavier, but he is still trying to push himself.

"Why?" Gelidius asks with frustration becoming apparent.

"Because I need to make it worth it!" Celsius nearly shouts at his father.

Gelidius pauses as his irritation changes to confusion. "Make what worth it?"

Celsius stares at his father for a few seconds before replying. "Me going to school." He says with a slight amount of hesitance. "You work hard so I can stay there. Mom, too." He turns his head toward the window. His mother is still out there working. She might not be back until halfway through the night.

Gelidius keeps his eyes on Celsius as he speaks. No words are said by the dragon as he listens to the younger ice dragon. Celsius turns back before speaking again.

“I don’t want you to waste your time.” Celsius says with his voice getting quieter. An annoyed growl starts up as he looks to his father. “Why do you work so hard?”

“So, you don’t have too.”

The response dashes whatever agitation Celsius was feeling in an instant. He looks away as he tries to think of something to say. “Is that...” Words fail the young dragon as he can’t think of something to say to counter his fathers opinion. “Is that...I mean...That can’t be all...right?”

“You like school?” Gelidius interrupts Celsius’ thought process with a question of his own.

Celsius nods his head. “I love being there.” He knows Gelidius is aware of that. He begged them to let him stay. It means everything to him that they did. And now they work themselves to the bone just to give him the chance to be there.

“That’s enough reason.” A flat response from Gelidius as he shifts his position while laying down.

Celsius just stares at his father for those words. All the effort they put into getting him there. Just because he enjoys it. “What if I end up doing

badly? Or is it useless? What if I don't help as many people as I could if I just tried harder?" Celsius looks for any reason to prove that he still needs to work harder. "Do you really think it would all be worth it just because I enjoy going, even if this whole thing doesn't help?"

Gelidius continues lying on the floor with his eyes barely open. His attention is still locked on Celsius as he speaks. When the shorter dragon finishes speaking, Gelidius responds with one word. "Yes."

Celsius hears the finality in Gelidius' tone. He is done talking about it. He watches the older dragon shut his eyes as Celsius lays his own head down and pulls the blanket over himself. While that may have been the final word from his father, he does not agree at all.

Celsius doubts he could be happy if he gave anything less than his best. No, unless he succeeded. All the time, all the effort, all the hard work, it has to be worth it. The past few months, he has seen his parents less and less. They always come home tired and have barely any time to spend with him. All because he wants to go to school.

They try so hard that Celsius must return the favor. He wants to prove to them that he is worth this effort. That it really means something. Celsius pulls his head from under the blankets to look at his father. He sees the older dragon has completely relaxed and his breathing slowed. He is asleep for certain this time.

Celsius forces himself to stand as his own body doesn't want to move. He looks to the top shelf and tries to figure out how to get up there without waking his father. He considers the desk again, but that would make too

much noise. He decides to figure it out as he goes. First, he must leave his nest.

With a few cautious steps out, Celsius finds his legs are not supporting him as well as they did earlier. He tries to ignore it as he considers anyway to get the scrolls down without waking his father. He looks back to Gelidius to notice the uncomfortable sleeping position he is in.

Celsius turns back to his nest to grab the blanket from it. He moves closer to his father, stepping as silently as he can. He places one paw against the adult dragon and moves to place one end of the blanket over top of him to keep the older dragon warm. He is already sleeping on the ground; he could use a small amount of comfort.

That action ends up being a mistake on Celsius' part. He feels his father shift in his sleep and a large wing ends up covering him. Celsius loses his balance as the appendage pulls him close to Gelidus. He freezes in place, hoping he didn't wake his father up. Pressed against the warm surface by a large wing, he notices his father is still asleep, but he is a bit stuck.

A soft sigh escapes Celsius at his new problem. He closes his eyes to think of a way out without disturbing his father more than he already has. It shouldn't take much. Just need to carefully move the wing. It will be easy. Then he can finally get back to work.

Gelidius winces as light hits his eye suddenly. It opens to a bright light shining between the curtains and wall. He lifts a wing to block out the light

of the morning sun. A large yawn escapes his mouth, and he is about to move when he notices something pressed against his side.

Turning his head to look at his left, Gelidius lifts his wing to find a pale blue dragon sound asleep against his side. The young dragon's chin resting just under his shoulder. Gelidius blinks a few times before noticing the blanket also placed over top of him.

Seeing that Celsius got up after he fell asleep, Gelidius looks over to the desk that Celsius tends to study at. No materials are on it that weren't there when he stopped the young dragon from moving it. He then looks up to the shelf that has the scrolls stored at the top to find they are still there.

Piecing together that Celsius had likely fallen asleep shortly after he did, Gelidius places his head back down and looks at the young dragon. His own job would be starting soon. He should get up now so he can get food before heading to work. They do need the money after all.

Gelidius also considers Celsius' schedule. His half-asleep mind takes a minute to consider what day it is. He realizes that today is one of Celsius' days off from school and he would not have any obligation to fulfill. The child will likely spend the entire day studying magic. Either that or the library.

Right now, though, Celsius looks completely peaceful now that he is finally resting. It is tricky getting him to sleep properly most of the time. Now that he finally is, Gelidius doesn't really want to wake him.

“I can be late.” Gelidius mutters under his breath before draping his wing back over his son. Covering his own face with the other. He closes his eyes, content to drift off to sleep once again. He isn’t sure when he will wake up, but he is sure Celsius will be the cause of it.

The End.