

Bingo cradled the pumpkin carefully. He'd never been good at cultivating gentleness. Unlike some seekers who compensated for their lack of sight and abundance of strength with sharp senses and careful control, Bingo wasn't quite so in tune. His enthusiasm caused him to overestimate how much pressure to apply, and the faint trilling of the elements through his fingerpads was often lost on him. The only advantage he had over the average seeker was his keen sense of smell, and yet... He sniffled in the chilly autumn air, not daring to free a hand to wipe his nose.

Farmer Maple had never minded his heavy-handedness. Even when their first harvest together had ended swiftly, with Bingo covered in pumpkin guts, they had laughed it off. It'd been years since he'd come to live on the farm; over time he'd fine-tuned his gourd handling skills so that they didn't explode instantaneously. Still, what Maple had requested of him seemed impossible. He placed the pumpkin gingerly on one of the folding tables. When they'd asked him to set out the tables and chairs earlier, he'd assumed it was for the flocks of city folks who'd soon descend upon the farm. Every Halloween, they would come to pick and decorate their pumpkins, leaving spooky Jack-o'-Lantern in tow. Instead, he'd been asked to decorate his own.

Bingo sat on the chair and swept his senses over the space. In front of him were various paints, bedazzlements, and carving tools. A lot of ways for him to ruin the delicate fruit. He rubbed at his nose, before lifting his hand to touch a pumpkin blossom tucked underneath his ear sculpt. It had been an indulgence, a reminder of when he'd just arrived at the farm. He'd been browsing the pumpkin fields, trying not to crush anything underfoot, when he'd smelt a floral fragrance. As Bingo traced the flower's shape, he'd recognised it as a gigantic version of those growing upon Maple's wings. He'd bounded over to Maple, blossom in hand, and they'd laughed and taken it from him. He remembered thinking that the star-like flower spanned half the width of their torso, before they'd floated back into his line of "sight." He had reached up to feel those velvety petals then, just as he did now.

"Bingo... What are you doing?"

A voice broke him out of his reverie, but the tug at their bond meant it was just Banri. The guide had alighted upon the table and was examining the large pumpkin, level with his knees. Bingo was worried for a moment—it was foggy, but that didn't mean the sun was hiding—but when he brushed his hand across Banri he found that he'd cocooned himself in Bingo's blanket.

"Maple asked me to decorate a pumpkin, but I dunno how."

"You're always so eager to please when it comes to Maple. Your best effort would be fine," there was an edge of frustration to Banri's voice. Bingo didn't really understand why, so he put it out of his mind.

"I'm no good at this kind of thing though, Banri," he whined. His tail would have been between his legs were it not for the chair.

There was a long moment of silence, before Banri murmured, “I could help, maybe.”

Bingo visibly perked up, reaching out to roughly pull Banri onto his lap and hug him, “thank you!”

Banri squirmed in Bingo’s grip and was released after a warning bite. He took a deep breath before placing his small hand on Bingo’s bare knee. Bingo’s eyes flashed a brighter red and he blinked rapidly, adjusting to the sudden sights in front of him.

For someone like Bingo, adjustment didn’t take long. He pulled the pumpkin and a carving knife closer. Now that his bondmate was here, he suddenly knew what he wanted to do. First, he took off the top and made quick work of those pumpkin guts. Banri ended up wrapping his face, mummy style, so that he wouldn’t fall victim to Bingo’s mess—only his hand stuck out now. Next, Bingo set to work carving a selection of miniature moths, like the ones that followed Banri around and would occasionally fly from his mouth and eyes. He pursed his lips at the last free quadrant. The moths needed a light source to flock around. He could carve a big circle for the moon and let the candle do its work, but that didn’t seem right.

Bingo took the blossom from underneath his ear. He carefully made a small hole for the stem and slid it in. After consideration he carved a few more holes, hidden behind the petals, to let the light shine through. The bright yellow flower would seemingly glow gently once he put the candle in. He rested his chin gently upon Banri’s head and his tail wagged. “That’s a fire hazard,” Banri pointed out, having uncovered his face to see why Bingo was bothering him. Bingo could tell he was happy though, tracing one of the moths with his spare hand. Bingo, for his part, was also pleased. This pumpkin represented two of his favourite people, after all! He hoped it would make Maple just as happy, and maybe Chessa too...