

Celeste - Winter In An Undersea City

[WOOL-208] - WORD COUNT: 682

+600 words - 6 shards
Prompt Entry - 4 shards
NPC Woolyne [Lycra] - 2 shards
Monthly Prompt - 1 ethereal shard
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Total: 12 shards + 1 ethereal shard

Celeste wasn't exactly sure what she expecting when she followed Lycra and their team hauling the winter's bounty... but it definitely wasn't what they found. From quietly swimming about and listening in on passive conversations Celeste learned she was in the southern most city of the Merwools, Soullera. It was situated at the bottom of a small underwater canyon, surrounded by steep walls formed of corals and sandstone. Drifting through the water Celeste couldn't help but admire the way the woolyne seemed to not only live *in* their environment but also *with* their environment.

Celeste wasn't exactly sure how long she drifted about the city just looking- the homes were fashioned out of living coral. A few half-finished structures hinted at how they were roughly constructed; boughs from wrecked ships, long strips of metal or wood brought from the shores were all roughly built near the coral, then it appeared that they were slowly covered in something between sand and cement. At least, based on the finished homes it appeared the coral and other shellfish seemed to slowly started to grow on the homes with time.

"*So strange... so fascinating...*" Celeste marvelled as she slowly swam towards the heart of the smaller city. The closer she got, the warmer the water felt, oddly enough, and in fact there were many creatures that seemed to be joining her- lazily drifting about. The merwool seemed just as enthusiastic as the woolyne about winter and all of Amirlyn's blessings strange glowing rocks illuminated the rounded center of the city. Colorful sea grasses had been woven together and decorated with shells- as if very little went unused by the residents. She was so busy taking it all in that before she knew it she bumped into Lycra themselves.

"Oof-" Celeste flinched at the unexpected contact.

"Hey! Watch where you're going," The orange merwooly huffed a bit crossly before adding "Are you alright?"

"Y-yeah, sorry-" Celeste hurriedly apologized. Lycra was the last merwool that she wanted extended contact with. Given that her original plan had been to steal whatever was in the chests they had been hauling she didn't really want to be seen or make extended contact with them. "When we made contact with the land woolyne, my family went ashore so I just got a little lost in my thoughts." she added quickly. It was a lie, but Lycra had no way of knowing that.

"Oh? Is that so?"

"Yeah, we lived outside of the larger cities- so I never really got to see any of the really fun stuff they did in the cities for the holidays, always followed where the food went and that sort of stuff."

"That was too much detail." The more details you added to a lie the more about it you were required to remember. It wasn't as if the thieves guild hadn't harped on its members to always remember *Simple Lies Save Hides*, afterall- one never knew when their paths would cross with some errant stranger over the course of several assignments, and even a single slipup could often be costly.

Celeste internally chastised herself as noted the pieces of information that she would now be *required* to remember in case she happened to cross Lycra's path again.

"How inconvenient- Nomadic family, didnt live in one of the cities, went to land when Lathule made contact with the landlocked woolyne."

"I see, well then let me show you the good stuff. Soullera went a little wild this year- the last few winters were a bit harsh and so there weren't as many creatures even in these warmer parts. Since it's your first christmas in a town- why dont I show you how we like to celebrate?" Lycra offered

"Oh I couldn't possibly- afterall its your holiday to and I wouldn't want to be a bother." Celeste started to gently decline.

"Nonesense!" Lycra replied with a kind smile "Besides, most of these games are much more enjoyable with good company."

"Well then how could I possibly refuse!" Celeste replied with a forced smile, following reluctantly after her previous mark.