

Today was the last day of the festivities. As much as Troph didn't want to go, Flit convinced him to at least try enjoying himself. Troph would rather be at home, but he couldn't find it in himself to say no.

So, there he was. The sun hung somewhat low in the sky and was becoming obscured by the treeline, but it was still warm out. As much as he hated to admit it, Troph was enjoying himself. The sky slowly grew darker and the lanterns truly began to shine as Sulow Grove quieted down a bit... It wasn't so bad after all.

Flit laid his head on Troph's lap as they watched the festival together from a worn bench. It was serene now that there wasn't as much shouting. The pup tugged at Troph's bag and looked at him, so he opened it. Flit dove in and returned with a cookie that they bought earlier. Troph smiled and patted his head.

"Is this why you wanted me to come here? So you could get sweets?" Troph teased, although Flit was busy gnawing on the cookie. "That thing's the size of your head." He continued to pet Flit as he looked out again. Now there was no sign of the sun, save for a few orange streaks.

They stayed like that for a while, Flit working on the cookie, and Troph getting lost in his thoughts. He reached into his bag and pulled out a small, wooden figurine. It wasn't entirely clear what it was supposed to be, but it reminded Troph of a flamake. The craftsmanship was so-so, and the carvings were abrupt and sharp, but it had a sort of charm.

The carving came from a young willow who seemed to be struggling to sell her work— Troph could tell why— but, something about her enthusiasm despite entire shelves of unbought figurines made him pause. He stayed still for a moment before Flit suddenly pushed him toward the stall.

"Wh— Hey!" He protested.

"Oh, hi!" the girl welcomed him with a huge smile.

"Hi..." He waved awkwardly. He gave Flit a side-eye.

"See anything you're interested in?" Her eyes were wide as she looked up at him expectantly.

"I... Uhm..." It was too late to walk away now. "I'll take... This one." He reached for a small one near the front of the stall.

"Of course!" Her small tail wagged. "That'll be ten amcorns!"

*Only ten? I suppose it is small.* Troph looked at the masses of unsold figurines. He reached into his bag and grabbed thirty amcorns, setting them into the girl's hands.

"Huh?"

"Okay, thanks, bye!" Troph said awkwardly as he walked away as quickly as possible. Flit was quick to follow with what Troph would call an evil smile.

After a few seconds, he heard the girl's voice call out over all the others. "Thank you!"

He pinched the bridge of his nose and kept pushing through the crowds looking for some other waste of time.

Troph ran his claws over the figurine and turned it around in his paws. He thought of the girl again, so excited and yet failing miserably. For once he found himself feeling sorry for somebody else. He wondered where her parents were. Or her guide?

He flipped the figurine over, and on the bottom of the base, a set of initials was roughly carved. He couldn't make them out though. Troph looked up again at all of the willows talking with each other and messing around, and a strange pit formed in his stomach when he realized he might never see that girl again. That she was only one of many. Just like him.

He placed a hand on Flit's head and closed his eyes, glad he wasn't alone. Flit looked up at him and blinked. Somehow he seemed to know. He nuzzled into Troph's hand and licked it.

"Hey now, you've still got crumbs and grease and whatnot on your face," Troph protested, although he was smiling and didn't pull away.

When they got home, Troph placed the figurine on his desk. The only other things on it were a few books and a penholder. He thought the figurine looked nice there.