Clara and His Nutcracker

by andlat

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Chapter 1

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“Wanna go another round?” Logan asked. “You're awesome as Ozai!”

“Absolutely!” Jayce said, grinning. “I could play Capricorn all night long!” Logan got the game started, but Jayce could not focus on the loading screen of Lucia winking and blowing a bubble with her gum. Something was bothering him. Logan had always said friends could never, ever sleep over at his house and Jayce could not understand why. His parents seemed normal. They let them have pizza for dinner. Even Logan's little sister Kaylee wasn't that obnoxious as far as little sisters went. His little brother had to be at least ten times worse.

“Shoot, this lobby's not active.” Logan leaned forward to reset and Jayce looked at the boy in his Capricorn onesie, a few dark blonde curls slipping out of the dark blue hood, his plump, pink lips tightened in focus…

“I'm ready for my bedtime story!” Kaylee yelled through the closed door. Jayce watched as Logan's face paled. He turned to look at Jayce, worry and concern written all over his face.

Kaylee settled against the pillows, folding her hands with a smile on her face. Mom sat beside her, though outside of the blankets, with the worn old storybook in her lap.

“Ready?”

“Ready!”

“Tonight's story is Clara and Her Nutcracker.” As Mom read the title, the titular characters came gracefully into the room. First was Clara, a vision in pink from her satiny pink ballet slippers to her pink tights to her pink leotard and broad tutu. Her dark blonde hair was long, curly, and styled up through a sparkling tiara with pink faux fur fluff. Her plump lips were naturally pink as she smiled and posed.

Close behind her was the Nutcracker, greasepaint lines painted vertically down from each side of his mouth. His tall black hat sat atop his head, held there by the chin strap and he was pretty sure hairpins as well. He wore a red soldier's tunic with white bands criss-crossing his chest and a red tutu with white tights under. His arms moved stiffly into a salute as Clara beside him curtsied.

“Why do I have a tutu too?” Jayce asked through his smile.

“Shh.” Logan hissed. Jayce did his best to look at him sympathetically. He seemed all the more pink knowing as Jayce did that he had been in that blue onesie before the magic of the storybook had grabbed them.

“It's based on ballet.” Kaylee said as if it was obvious. “Ballet means tutus.” Every single story in the storybook, Logan knew from experience, required tutus or princess dresses for every role, male or female.

“Once upon a time,” Mom began.

As she read the story, the boys began to dance. Sometimes

the dance matched the story, like when Jayce had to pantomime a battle with mice that was half slashing with his sword and half grand leaps across Kaylee's bedroom, all while Logan looked on and pirouetted. Other times, they seemed to dance in spite of the music, twirling and prancing, skipping and leaping, seeming to float more than dance. Logan got to hold Jayce's sides as he pirouetted again and again, the magic forcing his luscious lips from grimace to radiant smile just as many times. Whatever magic the storybook held allowed Jayce to lift Logan again and again and he hoped that Logan would think his adoring expression as he gazed up at his best friend was just part of whatever spell held them prisoner.

At last, the grand finale came and Jayce felt his heart skip a beat as Logan's perfect lips came toward his and they connected. Logan squealed in protest as they were frozen in mid-kiss as the lengthy conclusion was read, only being able to finally separate with the words ‘the end'. Kaylee clapped.

“Read another-” her request was interrupted by a yawn, so the storybook closed and the boys found themselves back in Logan's room.

Logan's refusal to speak about anything that had happened was the only proof Jayce got that it had actually. He took care to only drink water for the rest of the night, still remembering the taste of Logan's lips on his. When they went to bed, Jayce lay awake, trying to make sense of the night's events. He had play wrestled with Logan before, but he could never go back to that now. Listening to Logan's slow, steady breaths, he got

up off the floor and stood over him, admiring how the moonlight from the window cast him in a silvery glow. He could not resist. He leaned down and kissed him. It was nowhere near as drawn-out or passionate as the kiss they had shared during the story, but something about them both being dressed in their normal clothes made it feel all the more special. He lay down in his sleeping bag and smiled to himself. Hopefully Logan would not mind much, but he had made up his mind: all sleepovers from now on were happening at Logan's house.