Aurora Borealis

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Aurora Borealis

by mogupopcorn

Summary

Before the beginning of a new era, the world is thrown into chaos. And there is a girl who merely dreamed of seeing the northern lights again.

Notes

This is an old one-shot back in late 2024-early 2025 so pretty much the info here is outdated. Regardless, it's still an AU with Void Hunter headcanons. the names as well are semi-OC so yes. Anyways, enjoy!

Telephone calls are endless. The news is not helping either. The threat of the Hollows is narrowing the whole world. Centuries have passed since it engulfed the world as people are losing faith if they can truly fight against it. Aurora Marcel, who is just watching the latest events from a small TV inside her office in the Meridian Hall, lets out a sigh and cannot help but also get overwhelmed.

She picks up the remote control and turns the television off. Everyone knows what a Hollow is. There is no point in beating an already dead horse.

Except that horse continues to haunt the living beings.

Aurora forgets that the telephone on her desk cannot stop ringing. To end the noise, she picks it up—only to get a furious yell from the other line.

"I thought you'd just daydream all day again, thanks for picking it up sooner!"

Aurora sighs.

"I also want to let you know, I'm a busy person, grumpy. Heh, grumpy…"

"I doubt you're all that busy that you can still jab me, two-horned idiot."

Aurora feels a vein twitch in her head and lets out a sigh, trying to rein in her emotions.

"Even I hate you to the core, what's with the sudden call?" Aurora says. "Is the prototype not working well?"

"Well, to give you good news, it's been helping a lot, but of course, like any prototype, it is bound to have some issues."

"Go on."

"It couldn't hold long in the Dion Hollow. We know that place is cracked with high pressure," Arthur replies. "Erika suggested however if we need to test a new material to provide more resistance with your fat robot."

"At this point, I'll throw you to the Hollow."

Aurora opens a tickler and notes things down. She has to talk with the Marcel engineers to see if they can provide some insightful recommendations.

"Also, the freaking Mayor wants to hold a meeting with us," Arthur informs. "I just told him to wait until Dan is finished with their campaign in the northern plains."

Aurora slows down her writing.

"Huh, when did Dan go north?" Aurora asks.

"Are you serious?"

"I won't ask if I don't."

"What an airhead," Arthur jabs. "Since last week. Well, it's gonna take days before he returns, so that's a plus for us. I still need to talk with Marta in the guild about the computations."

"I see. Just send me the prototype back so I can examine it."

"No, I still need the fat robot," Arthur says. "You should be the one visiting us in the guild."

"You just want me to leave my office, don't you?"

"Everyone wants to see you."

Aurora clenches her fists.

"Alright, I'll make time."

"Good."

Aurora Marcel tends to always look at the horizon. She often ponders what the old world looks like and it seems they are only at the mercy of this volatile catastrophe. No one knows when another will pop up, and the military has been salvaging old weapons to be used instead in fighting the Hollows.

While she is just a street away from the Investigation Guild, she remains still at her spot.

"You're spacing out again, Rora!"

Aurora sees Erika Falkenhayn standing before her, smiling, and slowly approaching even closer…

The taller lady with horns decides to sidestep—making Erika almost fall.

"Rora!" Erika pouts. "I just want to greet you."

"Yeah, you already did. No closing in, however," Aurora says. "You won't let me breathe again."

"I just want to be affectionate to my friends!" Erika says. "Also, I'm jealous that Arthur is the only one who can push you out of your office—"

"Lies," Aurora cuts in. "Arthur is the only one who is brave enough to tick my nerves and you guys are too considerate about me when I'm working… I appreciate some call from you, to be honest."

"I didn't know Rora would actually ask some words of affirmation."

Aurora stares at Erika and sighs. There is no point in correcting Falkenhayn's leader. She starts walking again when the Falkenhayn leader follows her.

"There are developments in the equation," Erika says. "Marta said something interesting that we can use something like thread-logic."

"I think I'm too tired to extrapolate," Aurora says.

Erika chuckles. "But hey, you know…it's a big step for us." Aurora only listens. "If we just continue in the right direction, we can finally figure out how to fight the Hollows, rather than just brute forcing everything," Erika adds.

"Indeed…" Aurora looks at the sky again. "Probably if we can just push more in the northern plains, we could possibly watch the auroras, too…"

Erika stops and stares at Aurora's back.

Aurora notices and turns to her.

"Is there…something wrong?" Aurora asks.

Erika smiles and shakes her head.

"Nothing, I thought you've gotten cold-hearted, Rora."

"Ha?"

"Haha!" Erika catches up to her side. "I'm just…jesting!"

Is being a hero a name or a title? What precedes and supersedes? However, Aurora only knows it when a giant Hollow appears in the sky—and so huge that it blocks sunlight in a multitude of areas. Terror reigns. The white-haired lady also just stares in massive disbelief.

"A Hollow…in the sky?" Aurora opens the windows of her office just to get a clearer view. Chaos. Everything. The piece of hope they only have is slowly being chipped away.

The door blasts open.

"Lady Marcel! We need to evacuate! The Hollow is still expanding!"

Aurora's eyes widen even more.

"…What?"

The employee is getting more erratic. Aurora sees the life starting to lose before her and so…

She clenches her fists.

"Owain, gather everyone to safety. I need to do something."

"But Lady Marcel—"

"Trust me."

Aurora grabs something from a secret cabinet—and a long weapon is covered with a blue silky blanket. She takes it out as the cover flails down and reveals its true form.

A guandao.

"C-Chief…" Owain mumbles. "I understand. Please return to us."

Aurora smiles. "Continue all my plans, my dear cousin."

Silence while staring at one another. Memorizing each of their features—they both know it might be the last they can see each other.

Owain nods.

Aurora faces the window again while holding the guandao's handle so tightly. She is trained by her beloved master, and now it is her time to return the favor.

She raises her foot and lands it on the window frame, assessing the buildings around. She needs the closest route to reach the Hollow and finds Arthur Nymma, Erika Falkenhayn, Beliora Vike, and Rutger Arche on the rooftop of a tall building.

Aurora jumps and runs to the buildings, speeding towards their location.

Arriving, Arthur looks at her.

"It already exceeded Level 4 alert," Arthur says, "and I'm afraid the calculations aren't still perfect. I told Marta already about taking the mantle in case something happens to us."

"I've long accepted this moment," Beliora says, "I also made letters in advance."

"For one thing, people call us crazy because we are the only ones who are brave enough to explore these blobs," Rutger adds, "and the firsts always get the worst fate."

"It's all set," Erika commences and faces the giant Hollow. "Tomoe is out for commission, so she won't be with us."

Aurora stares at each of them.

"Arche, I know you told me before that whenever the ether activity spikes like this, all routes can lead eventually towards the lord of the Hollow," Aurora asks.

"Yes, a hunch that has 60 percent probability," Rutger answers.

Aurora gives it a thought.

"I left all the blueprints to Owain, and they can continue developing the guiding robot. I believe all of you…are still more needed by humanity."

"And what do you suggest by that, Marcel?" Beliora asks.

Aurora also faces the giant Hollow.

"I wish we could have spent more time together."

Arthur realizes what Aurora means. "What?! You can't be serious! If all of us together have a low probability of stopping this stupid blob, what more of you alone?!"

"We just can't afford to lose more talents," Aurora retorts. "Everyone understands that. There would be more Hollows to appear like this one, and we're still far from the truth."

Beliora is vindicated. "You're not looking down at us don't you?!"

"Stop."

Everyone turns their heads to Erika.

Erika walks closer to Aurora and puts something on her clothing. A silver badge of Falkenhayn group.

"I've seen you many times on the battlefield and you shine like the sun for bringing us forth victory," Erika says, "I understand everything—and I'll live your dreams until we achieve it."

Aurora places her fist on her heart.

"Memento mori."

Erika clenches her fists and holds her tears away—yet still gives Aurora the brightest smile.

"…Memento mori."

"I'll bring the prototype with me," Aurora says.

Arthur raises his mask and hands the robot to Aurora. As she carries it in her arms, Aurora races in the wind once again and reaches the tallest building—and jumps so high until the Hollow barrier consumes her.

Rutger Arche is observing the Hollow, four hours after its emergence. His eyes are scrutinizing the size and notice something peculiar.

"The Hollow stops growing…" Rutger says. "…No, it's shrinking?"

"What's the matter?" Beliora asks.

Rutger grabs his notes and a pen, and he starts writing.

"It's an interesting development, Beliora," Rutger says, his tone being enthusiastic. "We're reaching something!"

Beliora looks confused but also realizes something. "Wait, Aurora…could it be?"

A loud explosion is heard, and lights start to rain down from the sky. The supposed eternal darkness…has vanished.

Beliora lifts her sight and witnesses something impossible.

A miracle.

Days have passed.

Her eyes flutter open—and Aurora sees a white ceiling. The next second, she feels her body is aching. And the next one…

"Rora!"

Aurora sees a certain pink-haired beside her, along with a certain gray-haired, and a grumpy one.

Erika. Arthur. Beliora.

"…Good morning."

"Good morning, my ass!" Arthur suddenly blurts out. "You are out for days!"

Aurora frowns and wonders why Arthur is being grumpy in the morning. Is it really morning? She questions her concept of time when she sees the wall clock at a different time.

5:35 PM.

Her memory remains hazy until…

"You returned from the Hollow," Beliora fills her in, "I wonder how it happened but…we all wanted miracles."

Aurora is still not getting it when the sequence of events has returned to her.

"The giant Hollow," Aurora says. "Wait—"

"You did it, Rora," Erika says. "You really did it."

"Also, it's marvelous the prototype is still with you…" Arthur adds. "Thank goodness, I'll need that for my research."

"Ah right…" Aurora chuckles. "Haha, I thought I was gonna die there."

Erika watches as Aurora bursts into laughter once more. It doesn't stop, her laughter spilling out freely while Beliora and Arthur look on, witnessing a side of her so unlike her usual deadpan demeanor.

"Haha… I'm happy to be alive," Aurora says. "Can we get some hotpot later?"

Silence.

Aurora feels a warm hug.

"…We're also happy that you're back," Erika says.

Aurora has no chance to speak before Beliora joins in, and even the hesitant Arthur eventually wraps them in an embrace.

"Rutger also wanted to say something," Arthur says. "He blames you for cutting his observation so soon about the Hollow."

Aurora smirks.

"Oh well."

There is a girl who dreams of the sky—vast and clear, adorned with countless lights. They shimmer and dance, painting the night like a celestial curtain draped across the galaxy.

And now, this girl still holds onto the same dream—but this time, she shares it with others. She clings to the light, a beacon of hope for the people of Eridu, determined to spread it as far as she can.

She is bestowed the title Sunbringer, the catalyst for the beginning of Void Hunters.

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