Are you who I dreamed or just a memory?

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Are you who I dreamed or just a memory?

by Vanillama

Summary

Jae, a dream of the past and what used to be, and the reality that it’s all gone.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Sunlight streamed into the room through the cracks in the window and illuminating their bedroom with soft, morning light.

Jae grunted when light hit his face and buried his face in a familiar broad chest. He needs to get up, to have enough time to do his morning stretches and eat before leaving, but he was just so comfortable right now. Strong arms that held him gently and a body to keep him warm in their soft bed… Jae really doesn't want to get up right now.

The arms around him tightened as his personal cuddly toy sighed deeply, waking up with the sunlight just as Jae is right now. Datu nuzzled his cheek against Jae's head, like an affectionate hamster-puppy and mussing up some of his already atrocious bed hair.

"G'd mornin'" Datu says, words slurring together from sleep.

Jae grunts out his own intelligible greeting, mental faculties still very much asleep, and presses closer. He doesn't want to get up. He knows he should, he and Datu both have responsibilities they need to get to, but Jae doesn't want to go. He wants to stay here, in bed, with Datu. Just the two of them in their own world in this sunlit bedroom.

A calloused hand runs gentle fingers through the strands of his hair, beginning to gently work through any knots that may have formed in the night. Datu pressed a lingering kiss on top of his head and Jae's content smile is hidden against Datu's chest. His own fingers twirl and tease the ends of Datu's hair.

"Good morning," Jae says again, much more coherent this time than he was moments ago.

A chuckle reverberates through Datu's chest. "Good morning, my sweet breeze."

Jae's ears warmed at the pet name. He pulled away from his hiding spot in Datu's chest to glance up at him. His eyes were green, still half-lidded with sleep, but shining with adoration and the sunlight warmed and shone off his brown skin. His hair was messy, though not as bad as Jae's sure his own is, and framed his face perfectly. Jae gently traced the outline of his jaw, swiped his thumb across the apple of his cheek before tracing the outline of his lips. He did all this without looking away, eyes intently memorizing each detail so they'd be so engraved in his mind that he could never forget.

Datu pressed a quick kiss against his hand and looked at him with a raised brow, amused. "What are you staring at?

"Nothing. I just want to remember your face," Jae said, though it felt a little embarrassing to say out loud.

Datu chuckled again, lips curling up in a fond smile. He moved his arm, Jae briefly mourning the weight of it, before his warm hand brushed some hair out of his face before cupping his cheek.

"We'll see each other again soon," Datu assures. "But, for the record, I'll miss you too."

Jae moves, tilting his head up to kiss his boyfriend and smiles against his lips when Datu meets him halfway. His arms wrap securely around Jae's waist, holding him tight against him as if he were something precious, and Jae's arms snaked around to curl around Datu's neck and holds on just as tightly. Their lips glided against each other, soft and unhurried as if they had all the time in the world. Jae wanted to stay in this moment forever. Here, in their dreamy, sunlit bedroom, where they have no responsibilities dogging at their heels. No squad to lead, no guard duties, just Jae and Datu in their soft bed and the warmth of their love.

They do need to breath eventually, so when they separate they don't go far. Datu still holds him close and Jae isn't inclined to remove his own arms either.

Datu breaks the silence first. "We should probably get up," he says, but still doesn't make any effort to release his hold on Jae.

Jae grumbles in displeasure. "Can't we just stay here?" He doesn't want to get up. He doesn't want this moment to end. He wants to stay here with Datu.

"I know you want to stay, so do I trust me, but you have responsibilities Jae." Datu answered. Jae's arms tightened around Datu's neck when he tried to move from the bed.

"But can't you stay with me? I don't want to let you go," Jae says. It's unlike him, to be so honest and so clingy, but it's true. He doesn't want to let Datu go. He wants to him to stay by Jae's side, holding him, kissing him, calling him affectionate names that always makes his ears warm with affection.

Datu must be able to read his mind because he leans back down to press a kiss on his forehead. "I know, but I can't follow you and you can't follow me." A kiss on his cheek. "But don't worry," a kiss on the other cheek. "We'll see each other again." A kiss on the tip of his nose. "Besides, we still have this morning, right?"

Finally another kiss on his lips. Jae's hands had loosened and so Datu held them in his own as he leaned back. He kissed each knuckle with reverence.

"Okay, okay. You've made your point," Jae said, smiling as his cheeks warmed from the utter adoration that Datu bestowed him with. "I'll get up."

"There's my Jae. And besides, you've stared at me plenty to not forget what I look like." The force of his smile always made Datu's nose scrunch up in a way Jae thought was adorable. Jae still playfully smacked his shoulder for that comment though.

Still, Datu was right. He has things he needs to do, that can't be put off. With Datu's gentle, coaxing hands he finally allows himself to leave the warmth and safety of their bed.

Warm, bright sunlight streams in through the the entrance of the cave and Jae groans. He expects a warm chest, but when he goes to bury his face away from the sunlight he instead feels fur tickling his face.

It was enough to startle Jae from his sleep and into reality. Instead of a soft bed and warm covers, there was only the rough earth. There was a body curled against him, but it wasn't Datu's. Pavi was pressed against his side in her sleep. Jae gently caressed her hair, noting it'll need to be brushed out so it doesn't tangle, but his dream weighed heavy in his heart and mind.

A lump was caught in his throat and he bit his lips to muffle the cry that wanted to break free. He sniffled and stood up. Pavi needs sleep. He shouldn't wake her.

"Mmrow."

"Ah, it's- I'm alright, Geet. Stay with Pavi, okay? I won't be far." Jae gave the cat-monkey a scratch behind the ear, who purred and curled tighter around Pavi.

The morning sun has barely risen over the horizon, illuminating the Harshlands and starting a new day. It's beautiful and peaceful and Jae kind of hates it. He's not home anymore, in Ellora, in the home he shared with Datu. There aren't anymore soft beds and morning kisses and being held by strong, yet gentle arms.

Jae shut his eyes tightly, to try and stave off the tears building in them. It didn't help. All he could see was Datu's face. The way he always lit up when he saw Jae, the way his nose scrunches when he smiles and laughs… the way his face had scowled and those eyes that Jae loved so much had looked at him with such hatred and betrayal. He choked on a sob.

He wonders when the love and adoration they had, had disappeared? Was it when Jae started keeping secrets from Datu? Or was it when he began to doubt his character? If Jae was just honest with Datu from the start, trusted him to hear Jae out, would that have made any difference? He doesn't know and it's too late to think about "what-if's".

Jae knows he would always make the same choice to protect the girls. It's not something he regrets, not ever. He loves and Pavi and Nisha like they're his own and he'd do anything to protect them. He meant it when he said he would always be Team Avatar.

But, spirit's above, it doesn't make it hurt any less.

Tears slipped down his cheeks as he cried and cried and cried. "I'm sorry, Datu. I'm sorry…"

His apologies were said to no one and Datu was too far away to hear them, but he hoped that the winds would carry them to him anyway.

There would be no more silly, affectionate pet names. No more gentle hands carding through his hair to tie it off with a blue ribbon and letting Jae do the same with its matching pair. Jae shouldn't still love him, not after everything that's happened, but he does. He still does and he misses what they used to be before it all got corrupted with secrets and lies.

Jae wrapped his arms around himself as he sobbed. Yet, the world was indifferent to his sorrow and the morning sun continued to rise on a new day.

End Notes

Posting, yet again, another Jaetu fic to cope with The Breakup™

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