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Forever in the Past and Forever in the Future chapter 101

“C’est de la folie! [This is lunacy] Kas, no. You’ve gone insane,” Delilah cries and stands up from her seat when I finish telling her and Marco my plan about three hours into our flight to Paris. She paces with her hands over her mouth. Her eyes are midnight blue when she finally stops and looks at me, “No. I can’t let you do this to your soul. I won’t allow it.”

“Delilah, I’m not asking your permission. I started this centuries ago and I have to finish it. I’m telling you because you and Marco are my best friends and I love you,” I explain as calmly as possible, “I’m asking for your support and understanding. If the worst happens, I would like you two to take care of Cora until she finds Dante and is ready to leave the pack.”

“We’ll take care of your daughter...err... sister, Kas. Don’t worry about that. But you’re sure Bronx don’t know nothin’?” Marco leans forward and puts his elbows on his knees, wringing his hands together.

“As far as I can tell, he knows something’s wrong, and he’s worried about me, but he doesn’t know any of what I just told you. And it’s going to stay that way. Do I make myself clear? I can’t let him try to stop me. This needs to end. I need to see it through. Don’t make me use my Luna voice to order you to keep this a secret and definitely don’t make me use my goddess voice because for all I know, something bad could come of that,” I cross my arms in front of myself and swipe them down in an X motion.

Delilah sits down across from me with her hands on her cheeks. Tears are threatening to spill from her eyes, “Oh Kas. Just like Bronx says to you, I-I can’t lose you. Not like this.”

“You haven’t lost me, Delilah. Not yet anyway. But I have one more favor to ask,” I take her hands in mine.

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"Of course, Kas, anything," I watch her lip tremble as her voice jingles in the air.

"If you think the influence of the Mavri Magea has corrupted me and I'm too far gone, don't try to save me. Just protect Cora. Whatever white magic it takes to keep her safe. Whatever realm you need to take her to, even if it is a matter of keeping her safe from me, do it. Okay?" I watch as she nods her head and puts her hand over her mouth again, stifling a sob before she makes her way to the bathroom for some privacy.

"Kas, I got you," Marco says plainly, "I get what you're tryin' to do. If people know they're gonna try an stop you or they're gonna get in the way. I got your back."

"I'm scared I could hurt someone, Marco. Sometimes I can already feel it. Like a storm cloud that gets stronger when my mood changes and the dark wants attention," I twist my mouth up trying to figure out how to describe it, but I can't, "Even now, I'm worried I can't always control it. It just feels, I don't know, right?"

"If you really go through with this, like, all the way to the end like you sayin. It's gonna start a war. There's gonna be consequences, Kas. People are gonna get hurt or worse," Marco's eyes look out the window as if he is remembering something from his past, "and you're right. Ain't no way Bronx would let you go through with it if he found out. But in my mind, you're doin the right thing. Like you said, you started it, you gotta finish it. They need to be stopped."

"Thank you, Marco," I put my hand on top of his and give him a grateful smile,

"I Knew I could count on you."

"I'm gonna fight alongside you until I can't fight no more. Just remember, I got pups on the way. And if Amari is right, and there's any chance my little girl could be a goddess like you, she's gonna need her daddy, Kas. Or if my little boy could be a Guardian like Bronx, I gotta be there to raise him right. Don't make me regret this. If I'm goin all in, you are too," his light brown eyes bore into me.

"I'm all in, Marco. Honestly, I don't have a choice," I lean back in my seat and let the conversation fall silent as we both let our minds absorb the situation. '

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Delilah finally comes out of the bathroom and sits next to me. Her back is stiff, and she has trouble looking at me directly.

“Luna Regent, Goddess Iokaste Mason, give me your hands,” she says curtly and holds her hands out for me to take hold of.

“What?” I look at her, confused. We had not discussed her using magic on me. We talked about keeping Cora safe, but I’m not even pregnant yet.

“I may be a pacifist, but you are not. I will not let you go down without a fight. This is going to be the strongest protection spell I can on you before it’s too late. It won’t stop the inevitable, but it will at least give you more time,” Delilah explains as she taps the tops of my hand to get me to put them into hers. Her voice still cracks, but she looks resolute in her decision, “Now give me your hands.” °

I put my hands in hers obediently, surprised by her strict tone.

“Okay, do your best. Just be careful, don’t do anything to put Alexander at risk, okay?” I say to give her permission.

“Pshh, he strengthens me,” she dismisses my concern. She takes a deep, ragged breath and closes her eyes. I do the same and feel her warm, comforting energy build in me.

It feels like a layer of pure white filament surrounding me, gently winding itself around and placing a layer of white light around the little storm cloud that has been tagging along with me everywhere I go. I can feel it fighting against the light, wanting to be set free. I know it’s only a matter of time before it breaks free and comes back with a vengeance, but there

is relief from it for a little while at least. I feel the warmth dissipate and a sense of calm comes over me. I open my eyes and look at Delilah. When she opens her eyes, they are a light sky blue. She looks much calmer.

“Thank you, Delilah,” I give her a strong hug and rub her back. I feel her nod against my shoulder. When I’m sure she will not start crying again, I let her go. “Well, I guess there’s one thing left to do,” I say, slapping my hands on my knees with an exaggerated sigh.

“Go unfreeze Tyree and Freddie?” Marco says with a smirk.

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“Go unfreeze Tyree and Freddie,” I nod and head to the galley where Tyree went to talk to the steward, Freddie, to get us drinks an hour ago.

kkE

“Okay, tell her now. Tell her now!” Lex urges in my mind, “I can’t wait to see her reaction. This is going to be epic!”

“Alright Lex, calm down. Calm down,” I try to settle her. Her excitement is making me more excited as I tiptoe down the hall. I stand in front of the door and take a breath to control my emotions.

“I have a surprise for you!” I step into Delilah’s room and flump onto the bed next to her, letting myself fall back.

“Does it involve croissants? I could really go for food that is not so healthy for me for a change. Growing a baby is hard work, but I could use a break from the heavy foods James insists on,” she groans as she rolls over and removes her eye mask to look at me with a pout.

“It doesn’t involve croissants, unfortunately, but we can go out and find ones with ham and cheese baked into them later,” I look at her slyly.

“You have a deal,” she smiles gratefully, “So, what is this surprise that has you waking me so early?”

“Well, you know Carly got me the appointment, so Matthew Williams from Givenchy can style me for the charity event?” I bat my eyelashes at her while I mimic her French accent. “Yes? What about it? You woke me early to remind me of that? We are on vacation, mon ami. Please let me sleep,” she puts her eye mask back on and rolls over.

“No, silly,” I throw my arms around the duvet and trap her in a hug through the blanket, “I pulled a favor and also got you an appointment to get styled for the event as well, but not with Givenchy.”

“Carly confirmed it right before we took off yesterday,” I pull the eye mask off of her face and give a sly grin, “She got you an appointment with Maria at Christian Dior. Today. Three p.m.”

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Delilah looks at me blankly for a moment, but her eyes changing from ocean blue to baby blue in a single blink betray her calm outer shell, "Dior? Maria? As in Maria Grazia Chiuri? I'm going to get to meet her? In person? When? Today?" '

"Uh huh. And afterwards, they are closing the storefront downstairs for two hours so we can shop in private.

Bronx arranged it for us," I let my eyes go big and open my mouth wide with exaggerated excitement, hoping she will be excited too. I know it's her favorite designer. Delilah has the Dior logo as the background on her phone.

She also has a handbag and matching pair of heels that she saved up for months to buy.

She continues to blink at me for another few seconds before the happiest, most excited scream i have ever heard erupts from her. It sounds like church bells ringing at noon on a

Sunday. She hugs me back through the blanket and kicks her legs in excitement, "Thank you, Kas. Thank you so much"

"Are you ladies alright in there?" Tyree calls from the hallway

"Better than okay!" Delilah screams, " We're going to rue du Faubourg Saint- Honoré!"

kkk

I have never seen Delilah's face light up so quickly as when Maria greets her by name. I watch her squint her eyes, trying to control them from changing color. Once I make sure she is okay, I sit back in a chair off to the side to give my best friend her moment in the spotlight.

While I watch the assistants help Delilah decide on a style, I feel my phone buzz in my pocket.

Bronx: Hi Baby. U @ Delilahs appointment?

Kas: yeah. She's in heaven!

Bronx: good to hear. No price tags today. For either of you.

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Kas: Bronx knock it off.

Bronx: Too late. Already gave my instructions. Have fun.

Kas: Thank you Sweetheart <3

Bronx: Love you. See you in 2 days.

I look up at Delilah standing in front of a mirrored wall in a beautiful trapeze style dress. It hides her growing belly and makes her look like a model in a magazine at the same time. The grin on her face looks like it might be permanent as Maria and her assistants fawn over Delilah's beautiful features.

Once they decide on what she will wear, they put everything in bags and boxes with instructions on how to return them. Tyree takes it to the sedan while Marco escorts us down a back staircase to the retail store.

"Kas," Delilah says under her breath as we look at a satchel style bag, "There's no price tag on any of these things."

"Yeah. Bronx sent me a message. 'No price tags today.' His treat," I look at her, trying not to feel guilty. She rolls her eyes at the notion. She sees him do it to me all the time but he has never done it to her. I think she understands how uncomfortable it is now.

The lights flicker slightly, causing us to look around. A sales girl comes up behind us to make sure we are okay. "Is everything satisfactory, Madames?" the familiar voice asks.

I turn around and see Leticia standing behind us with a big smile and a name tag that says 'Michelle'.

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“Leticia, what are you doing here?” I whisper loudly, taking her by the elbow. Out of the corner of my eye, I see Marco step forward and unholster his gun. Tyree also shifts his position. Securing the door so no one can get in or out. I put my hand up and motion for them to stand down.

“Hello, you must be the light witch,” Leticia says sweetly to Delilah, “Since you’re Kas’s friend, I will let it slide that you tried to hit me with a blasting spell.”

“Leticia,” I growl, putting my arm protectively in front of Delilah, “Why are you here? And be nice to my friend.” “I’m protecting you. And I’ll be nice, but she was the one who threw a spell at me, So maybe tell her to be nice too,” Leticia retorts in a low tone.

“I appreciate you protecting me, but my guards are on duty. You don’t need to be here, darling,” I move my hand from in front of Delilah to take Leticia’s hand. I feel our energy start to merge and comfort both of us.

I see her face turn down slightly, “Oh. Okay. I-I just wanted to help.”

“Leticia, I apologize for attacking you in the packhouse. I was trying to protect my Alpha,” Delilah speaks up, “I would like to make it up to you, if you’ll let me.” Leticia looks at Delilah suspiciously, “How do I know you won’t trick me?” “Because Kas has told me how important you are to her, Leticia. And if you’re important to Kas, you’re important to me. Even if our magic is on opposite ends of the spectrum,” Delilah reassures her.

“Okay, so how do you want to make it up to me?” Leticia clasps her hands together in front of her, trying to act as professionally as possible. Anyone walking by the window would assume she was a regular employee helping clients.

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"We are going to a Michelin rated restaurant for dinner tonight. Why don't you glamour, so people don't think you are a Kas copycat and join us? I would love to get to know more about you," Delilah uses her most diplomatic tone. She sounds so much like Lady Camille. It's uncanny. She would have made a great Mother to the Coven.

"Really? You want to eat with me?" Leticia looks surprised and confused.

"I would like to show you my respects. I want to show you I'm willing to give you a chance. Please don't make me regret it," Delilah clarifies. °

"Alright. Where are we eating? Hopefully, somewhere with chicken fingers," Leticia says innocently. Her ageless features are happy, but she also looks like she could lose her shit at any moment and start attacking people, too.

We give her the details for the restaurant and time to be there. She giggles and turns around, opening a glowing purple portal in the middle of the store, and disappears. The lights flicker again and everything around us seems to be normal again.

"Kas, why did you stop me?" Marco rushes forward, Tyree is right behind him, with his back facing us just in case Leticia comes back.

"She won't hurt me, Marco, and I need her to trust me. I need her help. Besides, I definitely didn't want her to hurt you," I explain my actions.

"I'll call the restaurant. Ask them to update the reservations. Do you think she was serious about the chicken fingers?" Marco asks earnestly.

"Wait, wasn't that the sister we're supposed to be protecting you from?" Tyree asks, "You just invited her to dinner like it was nothing."

Delilah approaches Tyree and looks him directly in the eyes. A slight sound of tinkling bells fills the air when she speaks to him, "What are you talking about, Tyree? That's the Luna's friend. They met at a MasonCo event. They get together every time Kas is in Paris."

"Oh yeah, I-I forgot about that. Yeah. Okay, the Luna's friend," Tyree says in a bit of a daze. Delilah looks at him sympathetically, then comes back over to me.

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“Je me sens si sale [I feel so dirty],” she pouts at the thought of having just performed magic on Tyree without asking his permission, “Cleansing meditation after dinner, Kas.” ‘

Marco looks at Tyree, “We good, T?” Tyree gives a thumbs up and wanders back to his position at the front door.

“You ladies. Sometimes you scare the shit outta me in ways I don’t even get,” Marco shakes his head and goes back to his position as well. Behind us, the saleswomen, who somehow didn’t notice Leticia, come to help us. |

When we finish our shopping trip, it’s time to make our way to the restaurant. We wait in the car while Marco speaks to the maitre d’ and announces our arrival to make sure our table is ready.

One of Bronx’s biggest rules for me is to never stand around waiting where someone could approach me without warning.

I see paparazzi loitering on the sidewalk. The longer we sit, the more crowded the sidewalk gets as the crowd of people wanting to get someone’s photograph builds. Somehow, the word must have gotten out that a public figure is waiting to go inside.

In the front seat, Tyree on the phone with the local police but they won’t make it in time to make the growing crowd disperse. The privacy laws in France are much better than they are in the United States, but certain public figures still cause a stir. In the human world, I am, unfortunately, one of those people. °

I see Delilah looking out the tinted windows with a shocked look.

“Delilah, whatever you do, don’t make eye contact. Keep your head up so they can see your face, but look toward the ground. Don’t answer questions, even if they seem innocent, okay? Tyree is going to block their path. Marco will lead us in. Just don’t stop until we’re inside and at our table,” I give her the instructions I have memorized from the MasonCo PR team and Marco and James. °

“Th-there are so many more than we have in front of the bakery,” her voice is hollow with disbelief. I rummage through one of the shopping bags and hand her a pair of sunglasses she just picked out.

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"If you don't think you can control your eye color, put these on. By the time we finish eating, the police will have made them all leave."

"Pancakes or waffles, Kas?" she asks, still looking out the window. '

"Pancakes," I say, trying not to smile. It's her way of asking how she should hold my hand. Waffles means we lace our fingers together, pancakes means we keep her fingers between my thumb and forefinger. She nods, slips on the sunglasses, and slides her hand into mine without lacing our fingers, squeezing tightly, "Don't let go."

Tyree and Marco take their places outside the car and Marco opens the door. I step out first and pull Delilah with me, so she won't lose her nerve.

The number of flashes going off is insane. Photographers yell out questions in English and French. Tyree and Marco block their path and get us into the restaurant safely, but it definitely feels like more people surrounding us than I have experienced before.

The manager of the restaurant greets us and tells me that my friend is already at the table. I blink for a moment and realize it must be Leticia. When we get to the table, a tall, muscular, dark-haired woman with eyes so dark brown, they are almost black, greets us. She gets up and gives me an enormous hug.

"Kas! It's so good to see you! Delilah, you too!"

"Leticia! It's so good to see you, too. Let's sit," I grin.

"I hope you don't mind, but requested a bottle of wine. I hear they have a master sommelier who is the best around," Leticia says, raising her an eyebrow as she sits down.

"Oh, I don't mind if you ordered a bottle, but I don't drink, remember? And Delilah is pregnant, so she can't drink," I say apologetically.

"I'm certain you are going to want to at least taste what this guy is going to serve us, Kas," Leticia winks. Delilah nudges my foot under the table in some sort of warning I don't understand.

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The chef greets us and explains what the courses will be for dinner. Even with the delicious sounding menu, Leticia requests chicken fingers with honey mustard sauce, which makes Delilah and I chuckle.

“Wait wait wait. Let’s make a deal. You eat the eight-course meal that we are going to be eating, and I will try the wine the sommelier brings,” I smile warmly at Leticia. She sits up straighter and looks at me curiously. She nods in agreement and asks the chef if she can have the chicken fingers in a to go box. We fall into a somewhat comfortable conversation while we wait. Leticia and Delilah trade stories about me that are actually pretty funny. I think hearing Leticia speak so lovingly about me gives Delilah a sense of relief.

“Hello Ladies, I have a treat for you this evening! A wine truly worthy of gods and goddesses!” A familiar voice announces.

I look up to see a tall man with dark ringlets pulled back into a ponytail. His eyes are a piercing light blue, watching us all with delight, holding a bottle of red wine.

“Dionysus,” I whisper in shock.

“That’s me, Deon Nise,” he rocks on his feet slightly, shifting his eyes to make sure no one heard me before he gains his composure again, “You can call me Deon, Mrs. Mason. I will be your master sommelier for the evening. Tonight’s selection is Greek. It may as well be directly from Mount Olympus. Think of it as a gift from the God of Thunder himself.”

Leticia has a sparkle in her eye as she holds her head in her hand, admiring him.

“I see,” I look at him carefully and flip my hair in defiance, “It’s good enough for gods and goddesses, but what about a monstrosity like me or Leticia?”

“Kas,” Leticia hisses, “Don’t be rude to Deon.”

“Mrs. Mason. Kas, if I may. This wine is a gift,” Dionysus leans forward and grits his teeth with a forced smile, “from the God of Thunder, himself. I suggest you don’t make him angry and try it.”

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"Oh. I see," I nod. He isn't here on his own accord. Zeus sent him. I clear my throat and smile, correcting my previous tone, "Well, if the God of Thunder wants us to have it, then how could we possibly say no."

Dionysus gives us the best fake smile he can manage and pours three glasses of the dark red, fragrant wine.

"Oh, none for me, Deon. I am pregnant," Delilah quips, placing her hand on her baby bump.

"Well then, juice for the magissa [witch]. We wouldn't want any harm to come to you or your baby," Dionysus sneers. He picks up Delilah's glass and swirls the wine inside. The color lightens to what looks like a cross between pomegranate and cranberry juice, " There. Fermentation free. Pure as the day I squeezed it."

Delilah picks up the glass and smells it, then takes a small taste to her lips. Her eyes widen with delight, "Thank you, Deon. It's magnifique!"

I pick up my glass and smell it the way actual sommeliers taught me on a food tour during my honeymoon. The smell alone is intoxicating. I look up to see Leticia holding her glass in front of her with a huge grin on her face.

"Cheers!" I smile and hold up my glass. Leticia and Delilah clink their glasses against mine and I let myself take a little sip.

It is absolutely the most delicious thing I have ever tasted in my life. Complex flavors of dark berries, chocolate, and smokey oakiness. Smooth with a bit of spice as you swallow it.

"This is the best wine I have ever tasted," I say to Dionysus, who is watching us intently.

"I am so glad you like it. The owner of the vineyard sends his regards. This is for later, when you are in a more private setting," Dionysus places a single wrapped piece of chocolate on the table in front of me, "Compliments of the vineyard owner."

I pick up the golden wrapper and see a little lightning bolt imprinted on the side, "Than-

He's gone from his spot. I look around to see if he stepped away from our table, but he is nowhere to be seen, "Where did he go?"

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"I don't know, maybe back to Mount Olympus?" Leticia looks around as well, "How exciting, though. Our half brother is serving us an exclusive bottle of his wine?"

"Well, it's disputed if we have the same mother. Regardless, I'm suspicious, Leticia. Last time I saw him, he was not so kind to me," I explain to her.

"Kas, do you think he could have been the shadow in our pack house?" Delilah looks at the spot where Dionysus was just standing.

I hadn't thought of it previously. I suppose it could have been. We thought it was dark magic, but what if it was him trying to get me to drink some sort of poisonous concoction? I look at my glass and then at the chocolate.

"Oh. I-I think I understand," I say, putting the glass to my lips again, "It's obvious he was told to be here. I think I have to drink the wine, then eat the chocolate later. Like, a request by Zeus."

"Zeus doesn't request anything, Kas," Leticia looks at me with a worried expression, "He usually just orders and demands shit from people. Please don't make him mad."

I look between my sister and my friend and drink deeply from the glass, "If this combo is going to let me go see him and he says what I think he's going to say, we don't have to worry about me making him mad. He's going to make me mad."

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Delilah and Leticia show me a spell to seal the bottle and keep the wine fresh so I can take it home to have with the chocolate later once I decide what I want to do. I'm surprised how

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easily I can perform the spell. It feels effortless and natural. Leticia rolls her eyes in frustration, insisting this is basic stuff compared to the magic I have performed in the past.

The rest of the night goes without incident and we have a fun time getting to know Leticia better. She and Delilah discuss current trends in magic and explain important details to me. The more they speak, the more it feels like we are rehashing a conversation I've already had. Bits and pieces of spells and incantations formulate in my mind. At the end of the evening, the server comes over and announces that the bill has already been taken care of. Carly already called the restaurant and took care of the charges.

"Bronxy paid for dinner? Oh my Goddess, that's so sweet!" Leticia gushes, "You know what this means?"

"That my husband is being extra controlling again?" I roll my eyes.

"Well, yeah, but we've all met him. Everyone knows he would spend every penny he has on you if you would let him, Kas. But that isn't what I was going to say." happiness to one that is cold and calculated. She looks pointedly at

Delilah, "If Bronx paid for dinner, Delilah still needs to make up for throwing a spell at me."

I feel myself tense at the change in mood. Lex takes notice and prepares herself in case she needs to come to the front.

For a moment Delilah looks taken aback, but she quickly composes herself. Her eyes turn a royal blue and her voice sounds like little bells when she speaks, "I am sure I will find a way, Leticia. In fact, as long as it doesn't involve dark magic, I give you my word."

"Oh, you gave your actual word," Leticia raises her eyebrow. Her smile turns smug, "That's some real magic shit right there, Kas."

When we finish eating, the server brings out Leticia's to-go box of chicken fingers. She gives me a kiss on the cheek and shakes Delilah's hand before she leaves while Delilah and I wait for Marco to come let us know the car is ready for us.

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“Alright, madame. Home to meditate. We need to cleanse our spirits. Then you’re going to tell me how you plan to deal with the wine and chocolate situation,” Delilah lectures with a faux stern look, “I could practically see your gears churning all night. I know you’ve thought about it already.”

“I can’t hide anything from you, can I?”

“Never,” she smiles, leaning her shoulder into me with a laugh as Marco approaches the table.

“Ladies, your car is waiting in the back. We’ll leave through the kitchen,” he advises, “Kas, no stopping to talk to the chef.”

“I’m I that much of an open book to you two?” I giggle. °

“Yes,” they respond at the same time. When we get back to the apartment, Delilah and I make a list of ingredients so we can experiment with recipes all day tomorrow. Marco takes it to his makeshift office in the living room to plan for the delivery.

Delilah and I sit on the bed in her room and take an hour to meditate. Instead of actually meditating, I use that hour to go to the apartment to speak to Leticia. Hopefully Delilah won’t know the difference when we wake up.

I stand in the apartment’s hall and put my hand around my neck. The necklace did not transport with my consciousness. I open the door to the apartment and hear Leticia come running down the hall and to greet me with a strong hug, “Kas, you’re here? I didn’t know I was going to get to see you so much today!”

“I don’t have much time but I wanted to thank you for coming to dinner, Darling,” I return her crushing hug, “I’m so glad you and Delilah could come to a truce. Also, it was so weird seeing you in a different form. I don’t have time now, but you are going to teach me how to do that, right?”

“Kas, I keep telling you, you already know how to do all this stuff. We just have to unlock it inside of you,” she insists, “Have you decided what to do about Zeus?”

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"I have to Keep it quick, Leticia. I have less than an hour. Were you able to get the meeting I asked for?" I ask, trying not to sound too excited. She doesn't know about my deal with the God of Thunder, and I'm not trying to tell her either. °

"Not yet, but I'm still working on it. You're lucky your name carries some weight. Name dropping the youngest Manaë gives me some leverage. It's making it easier to get on the inside," she points at me with her fingers in the shape of a gun and gives me an exaggerated wink, "Give me another few days. I will send a message. Just look for it."

"Thank you, Leticia. I couldn't do this without you. How many other Mavri Magea have you been able to track down?"

"Six at the ready so far. Julia and Ellen are notoriously difficult to find, but I have feelers out. They will come out of hiding soon. I have put the word out for everyone to convene here by your orders. They're all so excited to see you."

"I'm excited to meet them too," I can't help but smile at the prospect of meeting my sisters. The ones who are actually looking forward to meeting me instead of wanting me to be caged until

I die, "Remind me, what are Julia and Ellen's abilities again? I want to make sure] have everyone straight in my head before I meet them."

"Julia has pyrokinesis and Ellen, well she's not a gorgon, but she can turn people to stone. It's not permanent, they turn back but, well, the person just isn't the same after. She hates it. The Manaë seem to be the only ones immune to it. Both of them think it's too dangerous to be around people, so they choose to stay hidden. Best to not draw attention to themselves. Can't blame them, right?"

"I understand. Well, thank you for trying your best, Leticia. I am lucky to have you on my side," I smile at her warmly, "I have to go. Delilah is waiting for me."

"I love you, Kas and I'm so proud of you," she says, gripping me tightly, "Things are really going to change now. I can feel it."

"Yeah. Things are definitely going to change, darling. For all of us," I sigh, before I kiss her cheek and leave the apartment.

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When I open my eyes, Delilah is sitting up, smiling at me happily, "Feel better?"

"Yeah, things are good now," I smile back, hoping she doesn't catch on that I am talking about something completely different from what she is talking about.

"Want to feel something that is going to make you even better?"

"What do you mean?" I feel my brows knit as she grabs my hands and puts them on her belly. I can sense Alexander's heartbeat, but as I let my hands settle on Delilah's shirt, I feel a slight but distinctive thump against my hands. My whole body jumps back, startled.

"He-he's kicking you?" I look at her belly with surprise, "I know that happened when Lenora was pregnant with Codi, but I didn't know what to expect with your pregnancy. I figured it would be different since Alexander will be a hybrid."

"Kas, it happens with all pregnancies. I'm a little surprised it's so soon. It's so exciting. Maybe it means it won't be seven months after all. I can't wait until he does it for James," she gushes.

I look at her with tears in my eyes, "So y- you can really feel him in there?"

She nods and the pillow next to her, "I bet he would love a few words of encouragement from his Luna. My heart practically beats out of my chest as I lay down next to her and coo close to her belly at Alexander. I tell him how outstanding his mom and dad are and how excited I am to meet him in a few months. I watch Delilah blush as I tell him how he's going to be a great warrior like James and, based on how person who doesn't know about my first conversation with Zeus. I decide not to tell her. I don't want to get her hopes up in case I don't live long enough to have a pup of my own. Instead, I tell her I met with Zeus in person and he must want to discuss our initial conversation more in depth. Delilah looks at me carefully, "I will not press you for more detail on that initial conversation, but please remember you can tell me anything, Kas."

"I know, Delilah. As far as the wine and chocolate, I'm going to hold on to it for now. I want to tell Bronx before I use it. He knows about the first meeting," I confide, "Also, I'm not sure if it will transport me somewhere or if it will be like it was last time where my body was napping with Codi while my consciousness was somewhere else. I don't want to trigger the necklace to go off without him knowing."

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“Kas, of all the things that you have said over the past two days, that is probably the most reasonable,” she says as she lays back on the pillow and looks at me. Her eyes slowly turn from soft baby blue eye to a darker shade.

“What’s wrong, mon ami?” I ask her, patting my hand gently on the side of her face.

“I know it’s only been two days, but I miss James so much. I mean, more than when I am usually away from him,” she says, wiping tears away before they fall.

“They say the mate bond is a lot stronger when you’re pregnant,” I tell her. I roll on my back and pull her down so she can snuggle against me, while I wrap my arms around her to comfort her.

“Will you stay in here with me tonight?” she asks softly.

“Of course, Delilah,” I hug her a little tighter, so she knows I mean it.

I hold her protectively as we talk about mundane things until she falls asleep.

I open up a mind link to my guards, “ Hey guys, if you need me, I’m in Delilah’s room. She fell asleep, but she’s feeling a little homesick. She really misses James. I want to make sure I’m here if she wakes up upset.”

“No problem, Kas,” Marco replies, “I just spoke to Musu. She’s really missing me too. Being away from her right now is kinda killin’ me.”

“Don’t worry, Marco,” Tyree chimes in, “ This is the last trip until your pups are born.”

“Yeah, I know,” Marco replies, “Good night Kas. Let us know if you need us.”

“Will do. Good night guys,” I feel myself smiling, knowing Bronx will be here tomorrow evening.

I let my eyes get heavy. Delilah’s slow, even breaths lull me into a sleep. In my dream, Milo pulling covers off of me. I feel weak and can’t move, barely able to open my eyes to look at him. He is whispering something, but he sounds like he is underwater, so I don’t know what he’s saying. Reggie is standing in the doorway. Anger coming off of him.

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Finally, I hear Bronx whispering to me, pulling me into his arms. I can't understand his words but I can feel his sadness and worry. I smell his coffee and dark chocolate scent while I try to look him in the eyes, but I fall back into the dreamlessness of deep sleep.

Forever in the Past and Forever in the Future chapter 104

Bronx's POV

I lean over and give Kas a little kiss on the cheek to wake her up. I don't want to startle her and wake up Delilah, too.

Delilah has her long, spindly arms wrapped around Kas with her head on Kas's shoulder. Kas is holding Delilah in a loving, protective manner, looking happy and peaceful. I watch Kas smile and slowly open her eyes, never taking her arm away from her protective hold on her best friend. Her eyes get big with excitement when she sees me.

Before she can say anything, I put my finger to my lips.

I open up a mind link for a silent conversation, "Hi Baby, come on, let's go lay down in our room."

"I can't, Sweetheart. Delilah misses James. I told her I would stay here with her," she gives me a little pout. She leans her head on top of Delilah's for effect.

"Well, if you are staying in here with her, what am I going to tell this guy?" I use my thumb to point behind me where James is standing in the doorway.

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Kas's beautiful violet eyes light up even more when she realizes I brought James with me to surprise Delilah. She gently unwraps Delilah's arms from around her and lets me help her get out of the bed. James gives us a grateful nod as he closes the door behind us.

Kas puts her hand over her mouth and giggles when we hear little bells chime from behind the closed door as Delilah realizes James is there with her.

"I know I wasn't supposed to be here until this evening, but we couldn't wait to surprise you. James has been losing his mind being away from Delilah while she's pregnant. I brought Musu,

Carly, and Diane with us too," I whisper to her as we walk down the hall, "you should have seen the look on Marco's face."

"They're all here?" Kas asks, closing the door to our room. She looks a little confused but glad for the company.

"Yeah. You should have seen Marco's face when Musu walked through the door. You would think it has been a month since they saw each other.

Everyone gets a little vacation time with their mates this week. Even Tyree gets time to relax after you get back from the designer tomorrow. I set all of them up with rooms at La Bristol and didn't even ask Carly to help with the arrangements. I did it all myself so she could be surprised too. Lenora set up a security team from the Paris office to take over for the rest of the week," I sit on the bed and put my hand out for Kas to take. She slides her hand into mine and lets me pull her close to me, "That way you and I have time together without everyone looking over our shoulders for once. The Paris guards have orders to stay outside the building unless we need a driver to take us somewhere."

"If you don't want people looking over our shoulders, you haven't seen the papers this morning," Kas says to me, turning her eyes away slightly.

"No. Why? What happened?" I pull out my phone to look at websites. How did she get in trouble in less than three days?

I look through the tabloid website headlines: 'Mason's New Look' 'Trouble for Mason Moguls?' 'Date Night Darlings'. The PR team already told me about this stuff. I scroll through

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pictures of Kas and me in the car the day I picked her up from work. I skim the articles criticizing my new eye, theorizing why we were out together on a weeknight, if there is some sort of wedge growing between us, and even one with a closeup of her new necklace trying to estimate its value. All the usual bullshit.

Then I see pictures of Kas holding Delilah's hand, being led into a restaurant by Marco, with Tyree holding photographers back. The article headlines read: 'Girls Night in Paris' 'Kas Caught Red Handed' 'Kas's Parisian Getaway' 'Just Business Partners?'. The articles talk more about Kas and I growing apart since she was abducted and how she and her business partner, Delilah, have become closer than ever potentially in a budding relationship.

"You're kidding me with this crap, right?" I look up from my phone. I rarely let the tabloid articles get to me, but this shit is ridiculous.

"Our impromptu outing at home must have triggered a lot of rumors. There were so many paparazzi outside the restaurant yesterday. Delilah looked terrified, so I held her hand while we walked in. But don't worry, at the end of the night, Marco had us go out the back door instead."

I turn off the phone and put it on the nightstand. I don't need to read any more bullshit headlines today, I think to myself as I rub my hands over my face in frustration and sigh, "I know it isn't your fault, Kas. It looks like you did exactly what the PR team has taught you. And you were being a good Luna by helping Delilah navigate that situation safely." °

"Um, there's more," she says, trying not to sound guilty.

I look at her from between my fingers, "More?"

"Dionysus was our sommelier at the restaurant. He gave me a bottle of wine and a piece of chocolate," she points to the dresser, to a bottle and a little golden wrapper.

"Dionysus? The God of Wine and Ecstasy was your sommelier for dinner?" I ask. Trying not to sound like I don't believe her, but seriously, it has to be a joke, right?

"He said I need to drink the wine and eat the chocolate. I think Zeus sent him. He definitely didn't want to have to be there serving me. That's for sure," she says, thinking back to the previous night, "I think somehow the combination will let me go back to Mount Olympus. I

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don't know for sure," she looks at the wine and chocolate, then back at me, "I didn't want to do anything without talking to you about it first."

"So you think all the craziness of the past couple of months is finally finished? Do you think this is him calling you back to tell you that you can have a pup?" I run my fingers through her hair and look her in the eyes, trying to read her expression, trying not to let my tone sound too eager.

Her expression turns gloomy, and she shrugs her shoulders, "I-I don't know. I mean, how could there possibly be more? So much has happened since the last time I spoke with him. I have no idea if I have made the right decisions or not."

"Come here, Kas," I pull her against my chest and wrap my arms around her, "I know it's important to you and it's important to me too, but don't care what Zeus has to say. If Cora ends up being the only pup for us to care for, then so be it. That is what the Moon Goddess has fated for us. Maybe you should try to wait until after the charity event to drink that wine. Do it back home. I don't know if that makes it safer or not, but" ' I feel her nod and lean heavier against me, so I lay back on the bed, pulling her over me onto the other side of the bed, and wrap her into a tight bear hug. I can feel her tears making my shirt wet as I hold her until her breathing slows, and she falls asleep.

"There are some things money can't buy," Saint sighs heavily, "What can we do to make her happy, Bronx? I don't like when she's sad."

"I think all we can do is to be there for her. I know we both want to do everything for her, but for this, she is kind of on her own. Zeus didn't invite us to Mount Olympus."

"Being a wolf is so much easier than being human...or a god."

I chuckle dryly at his statement, " Maybe so, Saint."

I let her sleep for another couple hours until she wakes up on her own, insisting she needs to make breakfast for everyone. Usually I would try to talk her out of it, but I also know that being in the kitchen, doing what she loves, will make her feel better. Feeding her pack members, including two who have pups on the way, will help take the stress off of all the other things she is worried about.

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Kas pulls Carly into the office and helps make reservations and buys tickets for events and museums around the city for everyone for the next week, so they don't have to worry about anything.

When it's time for her appointment with the designer, we send all the ladies in a large SUV with Tyree and one of the French MasonCo guards while Marco, James, and I take all the luggage to the hotel and get everyone checked in to their rooms.

"What's Tyree gonna do all week?" Marco asks.

"Well, he asked Kas not to make any reservations or buy any tickets for him anywhere. He just wants to wander around the city. He said he may even go out to the countryside to let his wolf out for a run," I shrug, "Maybe he is finally ready to try to find his mate?"

"Maybe. You know, if you guys could stop finding mates in France and somewhere closer to home instead, that would be nice," I can't help but laugh, "

With my luck, his mate is going to be weretiger royalty or something. How the Hell would we get her home without a fight from her family?"

We have a beer in the hotel restaurant as we wait for our mates and Carly and Diane to return.

I smell the intoxicating fresh rain and lilac scent coming from behind me, making my heart hit a hard beat. I let her wrap her arms around my shoulders from behind me and growl a little as she nips my ear playfully. Marco and James also turn their attention away to happily greet their mates.

"How was your appointment, Baby? Did you get to pick a dress?" I turn in my seat and pull her around until she is sitting in my lap, letting her legs hang off the side. I drape my arm around her waist and breathe in her scent, noticing that she seems so much more relaxed than she was earlier.

"Yup. We also stopped by a couple of other places and got Musu, Carly, and

Diane some things to wear, too. Even if they will not be photographed on the red carpet, it was my turn to say 'no price tags' today," she smiles as she nuzzles my cheek.

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“Look at you Mrs. Mason. Big baller, huh?” I don’t even realize my hand is on her ass until I notice a few people whispering and giggling behind their hands at us. One of them snaps a picture with their cell phone. I give an annoyed glare, then turn back to Kas, “ How about we get out of here before we draw too much attention. We’ll see everyone in a few days. Okay?”

Kas looks up and sees the people trying to take pictures of us and agrees quietly, “Yeah, let’s go back to the apartment. I’m sick of this type of attention.”

We spend most of the next week intentionally not focusing on our regular day-to-day lives. We wander around the sights of the city and find small cafes where we can be left alone. When we are not discovering hidden corners of the city, we hole up in the apartment. More precisely, in our bedroom.

Forever in the Past and Forever in the Future chapter 105

Kas’s POV

Hundreds of flashes go off as we take our spots on the little x’s on the red carpet in front of the wall of photographers. We ignore the questions being yelled at us as Bronx slides his hand around my waist and squeezes a little. I look up at him with a big smile, which makes the flashes go off even faster. My smile gets even bigger when he gives me a wink, then leans down to give me a kiss.

“You’re so fucking beautiful, Kas,” he whispers against my lips, before he stands straight again and walks away backwards. He raises his hands toward me and looks toward the photographers, then claps his hands, showing the crowd how much he approves of my slinky black dress. We don’t go to many red carpet events, but for the ones we go to, Bronx always gives the media a minute to get solo pics of me. I feel Lex swoon at our mate, making me blush again before I pose by myself.

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I may be young, but I'm not stupid. After my interactions with Katherine, I completely understand she invited

Bronx and me here for clout. We are just another feather in her cap. Convincing the Masons to attend one of her events is an impressive feat, indeed. If she wants attention, I'll be glad to provide it. Two can play at this game.

I let my little storm cloud, combined with Lex's bold personality, fuel me as I stand by myself in front of the endless sea of flashing cameras. I turn and let everyone see the large keyhole back of the dress, intentionally exposing my keloid scars from years of being whipped by my former Alpha. It's nota secret to the public that I have severe scarring, but the human world believes it is from being in a fire when I was young. It is something I have discussed before, but never shown off in the human world.

There is a lull in the noise when the crowd, who has never seen the scars, realizes how severe they really are.

When I turn my head and wave at the photographers with a sly smile, the flashes and questions start again, even more frenzied than before.

Through the noise, I hear giggling and clapping. I see Delilah, Musu, Carly, and Diane chatting excitedly in the left wing while they watch me pose.

"Kas, who are your friends?" a voice calls out from the crowd. I wave the women toward me. Carly looks around, not sure what to do in the impromptu moment. A woman with a headset and clipboard motions to Carly that they should all come out to join me. I can hear her say you have forty-five seconds as Carly nods her head.

Bullshit, lady. We have as much time as I damn well please.

My four friends shyly make their way hand in hand out to stand next to me. I see them looking at the view from center stage in awe. We wrap our arms around each other's waists and pose with big cheerful smiles. I call out to the reporters who each woman is and how I know them. Carly whispers she will provide the spelling for everyone's names so it is correct in any publications that want to post them.

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"I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for these ladies. They are family to me," I say loudly to the reporters. They do not know it is a dig at Katherine and the rest of the Manaes, but I know damn well she is watching the video feed and she will hear it. I imagine how angry she looks right now with a sense of satisfaction.

While we all smile and wave. When we walk out of the spotlight, Carly goes to speak to a production assistant and gives them everyone's names with the correct spelling °

I am stopped by a reporter from a fashion website who is accompanied by a cameraman recording video for a quick interview.

After she asks about the dress designer and fawns over how good I look, she asks a couple more serious questions, "Kas, can you tell us what's next for you?" "Well, my business partner Delilah and I have been considering another second location for our bakery. We'll see. One is a lot of work as it is, but we have big goals."

"And what about you and Bronx?" The reporter smiles broadly.

"Oh, you mean are we planning on having children?"

"Well, I would never ask that outright, but since you brought it up, sure."

"Maybe one day, but things have been really busy for us with my business getting off the ground and with

MasonCo doing so well, so we haven't talked about it much," I wave off the question.

"Thank you for your time, Kas. You look gorgeous as always."

I step away and am greeted by my friends. Bronx is still being interviewed by a reporter from a financial

magazine. While we wait for them, Marco takes pictures of us all together with his cell phone.

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“Diane, you look amazing,” I compliment as we wait for Bronx. She is wearing a light blue dress that falls below her knees with high-heeled sandals. She has styled her short blonde hair onto a messy pixie cut and she is finally looking healthy again.

“Thank you, Kas. I have never felt more glamorous in my life,” she giggles, “all those people taking our pictures? I don’t know how you do it.” ‘

Carly walks up next to Diane and takes her hand, “What are you two giggling about?”

“Oh, just the glamorous life,” I sigh with an exaggerated eye roll, “Speaking of which, Carly, you make this whole feminine tuxedo thing look gorgeous.”

She looks down at the tuxedo style suit she picked out at Chanel, “Thank you Lu -, Kas. It was a gift from my boss’s wife.”

During dinner, Katherine stands at the front of the room to give a speech. She thanks everyone and explains how important the event is for her charity organization. The organization provides clean water to millions of people a year in developing countries and they need all the help we can give them.

She invites everyone to go to the ballroom where the casino is and encourages us to buy as many chips as we can and to have a good time.

Before she gets off stage, she catches my eye and waves at me with a cold, calculated smile.

Oh, she definitely saw me posing on the red carpet. I give a big smile and wave back, but inside I feel the acid of distrust already eating away at me.

“Alright, ladies, I have to go say hello to a few business contacts. Marco and Tyree are in charge. There are also two MasonCo guards monitoring things from the corners of the room. James is going to be tailing me,” Bronx briefs us, “ There are chips for all of you, so go have a good time.”

He leans forward and gives me a deep kiss, “Please stay out of trouble, Mrs. Mason.”

“Yes sir,” I giggle before someone pulls him away.

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"Ladies," Marco hands us each a pile of plastic poker chips, "Please make our jobs easy tonight and try to stick together. Each of these chips is a thousand dollars. This is what Mr. Mason donated so far. Winning is a commitment to additional donations and Santoro Enterprises matches the winning amount. Everything goes directly to the charity. The more you win, the more money the charity gets."

None of us have ever played casino games before, so we walk around and watch other people play for a while. We stop at a table where a short man in a cowboy hat is throwing dice. The people around the table cheer and groan at each throw.

"Mrs. Mason, would you like to play?" the employee running the table asks.

"No thank you, I am fine watching," I smile.

The man in the cowboy hat looks at me carefully, shaking the dice in his hand, "Mason? You're Bronx's wife?"

"I think what you meant to ask is if Bronx is my husband?" I give him a confident smile. Behind me, Musu and Carly giggle at my response.

He gives me a little sneer, "Well, Mrs. Mason, would you mind blowing on the dice? For luck."

I look at Marco, who gives a small nod of approval. Then I look at Delilah and give her a little wink. She giggles and nods at me. I step toward the man and take his wrist into my hand, pulling him closer to me. His pulse pounding against my hand, letting me know how uncomfortable he is. I take a breath and blow gently on the dice, looking up at the man at the same time. His face turns beet red as he looks at Marco, then takes half a step back, closing his fingers around the dice.

"Th-thank you, ma'am," he stutters and turns back to the table. I walk away before he finishes throwing the dice. I already know they are going to land on his winning numbers. Cheers come from all around him.

"Feeling lucky tonight, mon ami?" Delilah says, wrapping her arm around mine.

"I'm feeling like this charity is going to make a lot of money tonight, Delilah," I wink at her as we walk away.

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