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Forever in the Past and Forever in the Future chapter 126

Bronx's POV

"Come on, man. It's been a month. We're sick of this shit. If this is your order, if this is truly what you want, then man the fuck up and come to the dungeon so you can see your damn handy work," Milo's steel-gray eyes bore into me, " Like you said, you don't give a fuck anymore, so prove it. Come see what you're doing."

"Watch your tone, Milo," I stand up, growling at him.

"Look, Bronx, you can come with us right now or you can find Blood River another Beta. I have plenty of packs who have already said they would give me asylum. Fuck being a Beta. I'll take a job as a front gate guard and call ita fucking day. I'll pack my shit, take Codi, and leave today if that's how you really want this to go down. Your choice," he crosses his arms and stares me down. Behind him, Reggie has his hands on his hips, looking at the floor.

"What about you, Reggie? You're awfully quiet. Are you part of this ultimatum, too?" I lean forward against the desk, giving him a chance to speak up.

His blue eyes glance up at me, then back at the floor before he clears his throat, "We've already spoken to the Manae. They said we can stay at the Kardia tou Manae if we need to. Their new home. If that's what we think would be best for Katie."

All the rage that Saint has been feeling roils inside me at the thought of even more people abandoning us. These guys are supposed to be my two best friends. They would just pick up and go that easily?

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"Fine. I'll go to the fucking dungeon. But I don't know why it's so damn important to you. I already told you to

feed her, and you gave her the stupid blanket she wanted. Why do I need to see her too? She chose her fate," I snarl, stepping around my desk to follow them out the door.

"Shut up, Bronx. I'm so sick of your shit. I just need you to shut the fuck up," Milo growls as we make our way down the back stairs to the dungeon, with Reggie following quietly behind us. °

When Milo opens the dungeon door, Tyree stands up from the chair behind the small desk.

"Alpha, Beta, Gamma," he regards us.

"Tyree, you're the only guard down here?" I ask, looking around for everyone else, "Shouldn't there be more security?"

Tyree looks around as well, confused, "Alpha, we only need one of us at a time. I'm here during the day. There are other guards here at night, but one at a time is more than enough."

I look at him suspiciously, "Huh. Okay." "Any activity?" Milo asks him, ignoring me.

Tyree looks at the monitor. His eyes look remorseful when he looks back at Milo, "Just some shuttering, but nothing has come of it. I-I don't know how much longer it will last, honestly." Shuttering? What is he talking about? I glance at Milo, then Reggie, but they both continue to ignore me.

"Is this what the kitchen brought for her?" Reggie asks, picking up a covered to-go container.

"Yeah, please take it away," Tyree screws up his face, looking at the container, "it smells disgusting."

Reggie picks up the container and gives Milo an annoyed look. Milo motions with his head for me to follow him. From behind us, I hear Reggie talking to Tyree.

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"We just need to be strong for her," Reggie murmurs, "Have faith in the Moon Goddess for this to be over soon." The motion sensors turn on the lights as we walk down the dark hallway. We pass the soundproof solitary confinement cell with the solid silver door. From the tiny window, I see a pair of light brown eyes stare out at us. They grow wide when they see me and a dull thudding sound of the occupant pounding on the door thumps into the hallway. I turn my eyes away. Just another traitor who chose his fate.

We get to the silver barred cell at the end of the hallway. I recognize it as the one where Kas once forced me to shift using her goddess voice so Lex could fight Saint. Milo stops with a sigh and flips several switches on the wall, changing the lights in the cell from dark blue to a soft white glow. There's a low cot in the center of the cell, piled with blankets.

I cross my arms and sigh in frustration, "Okay, I came down. What's the big deal?"

"Stay here," Milo snarls, pushing the button on the wall to open the door. He steps inside while Reggie stands in the doorway.

"Be careful," I call from outside the cell. Milo scowls at me and rolls his eyes.

"Shut up, Bronx," Reggie finally speaks up.

Milo gingerly pulls away layers of blankets, but there is no movement from the bottom of the pile. He whispers words of encouragement and asks for forgiveness from the bedding. Is she even in there? Even with all the security upgrades, maybe she escaped.

Maybe it's another fucking magic trick. I can feel Saint in the back of my mind paying attention to what is happening.

"Why are there so many blankets?" I ask, leaning against the wall across from the cell.

"She's cold. So we gave her extra. Is that a problem?" He glares at me.

"No," I sulk, observing him. Cold? Bullshit. It's not cold at all. We keep the temperature controlled down here, but I will not argue with him right now.

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He moves slowly, peeling away the layers of grungy, soiled bedding, whispering quietly to the un moving pile. When he gets to Kas's green and gray blanket, I feel an unexpected hitch in my breath. Saint is fully at attention now, waiting to see what happens, buthe still says nothing. A very faint scent of fresh rain and lilacs comes off of the blanket, but it's old and stale, like it's been lingering for a long time. I look closer, curious why the scent isn't stronger. Even after rejecting her, if she's in there, I should still be able to smell her. There is no way she's in there.

I watch Milo drag back the last blanket, exposing a thin, almost skeletal, hand that hangs limply off the edge of the cot. He carefully slides the blanket down further to expose the head and shoulders of a bone thin woman, laying on her side. Her tangled white hair looks like it used to sparkle and shine, but now it's just dull and thinning. Sections of it have fallen out, leaving her scabbed scalp exposed. Her skin is sallow and tight against her bones and tendons. Her thin lips are dry and cracked from dehydration and eyes sunken into their sockets. Dark circles stain the area under her eyes.

I can barely hear her slow heartbeat against her infrequent, shallow breaths.

I don't even know how she's alive in this condition. Saint howls in pain at seeing his former mate in this state.

"He's here, Little Sister," I hear Milo whisper close to her ear. At first, there's no reaction from the lifeless form. Even when she opens her eyes slightly and looks at me, no other part of her body moves. It's like it takes all of her energy for that small action. Any violet those eyes once contained is gone, replaced with a dull, listless, light gray. It's like everything that made her spirit who she is, has been sucked out of her. I'm not sure she is cognizant enough to realize I'm standing outside the cell before her eyes slowly close again.

I take a step away from the wall appalled by the shocking sight, "I thought I told you to feed her."

"No, asshole, you used your Alpha tone to order us to 'feed her scraps from the trash, like the pig she is'," Reggie snarls,

throwing the food container at me. I open it up and see there is some spoiled egg salad, mostly eaten spare rib bones, and some soggy scraps of salad, "She was already underweight when she got back. We've brought food from the garbage down every day but

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she refuses it. There may be nothing left for her, but she still has her pride. And now she's too weak to eat."

I look into the cell as Milo pulls the blanket further down to Kas's legs. As the blanket comes off of her, two more heartbeats thump loudly in my ears. The scent of pine needles and lavender wafts through the air, enchanting my mind. I forget myself and almost touch the bars of the cell when I see it. Her large belly is the only thing weighing down the cot. The hand that is not hanging off the side, is covering her stomach protectively.

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"She's pregnant?" I ask out loud, no one in particular.

"Twins," Reggie says dully.

"Based on how big she is and comparing her to when Musu was pregnant, we think she's due any day. Since she hasn't eaten, her babies are basically using her body for nutrition. For lack of a better term, they're eating her alive," Milo says, as he brushes his hand against her cheek. He sits back on his heels and looks at her with tears in his eyes, "We don't know what happened to Lex. She hasn't been able to heal her for over three weeks now."

"What did the doctor say?" I gulp hard. I plant my feet to the ground, afraid to move.

"You said no fucking doctors," Reggie hisses at me through gritted teeth, "or have you forgotten?" 7

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“LOOK WHAT YOU DID TO HER YOU SON OF A BITCH!” Saint’s first words in weeks are pure rage against me. He tries to claw his way forward to take control and get to Kas, still protective of her. I take a step forward. A small piece of me, a deep down part that has been hidden away until this moment, still wants her. Still wants to keep her safe and protect her.

I look at Reggie, then Milo, then to Kas. I broke our mate bond, so why do I feel this way? How could I have let this happen? Why didn’t I listen to the people around me? What have I done? As I take in the scene in front of me, the lights flicker and Kas seems to have a convulsion, what little muscle she has left contracts, and she pulls her limbs closer to her stomach before it stops and the lights brighten.

“What was that?” I look around the room.

“We think she’s going into labor. She doesn’t have any magic left, but it’s been happening for two days now.

She’s so weak, we don’t know how she is possibly going to give birth,” Milo wipes a tear from his eye as he watches her helplessly.

“Get the doctor,” I hear myself say, pushing Reggie aside, “Give me privacy with my mate and get the doctor now.”

“She’s not your mate anymore, Bronx, but she’s still our Luna,” Milo stands up and blocks my way, “I’m not letting you hurt her.”

“I won’t hurt her,” I snarl, pushing him out of the way, “Get out of here, go get the doctor.”

I hear Milo and Reggie run down the hallway, but can’t take my eyes off of Kas. Saint is pacing impatiently in my mind, “Fix her. Fix her now, asshole. Save our pups and fix our mate.”

I kneel on the ground next to the cot and look at Kas. She doesn’t look real. It is like a gruesome caricature of who she used to be. I feel tears stinging the corner of my eyes.

“Kas, it’s me,” I whisper softly, trying not to let the urgency I’m feeling come through in my voice but I still hear it waver, “Kas, I don’t expect you to forgive me. Hell, I don’t even expect

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you to want to be in the same room with me, but for right now, please, let me try to heal you. For our pups. Let me save our pups. Please.” ‘

I watch for any type of response. I listen closely to her slow heartbeat. Two smaller heartbeats thump harder and faster as I speak, recognizing the voice of their father. I raise my shaking hands but stop an inch above her skin. I swallow the lump in my throat and stop myself from touching her.

“Kas, please, before it’s too late. I didn’t know. I swear I didn’t know,” I beg, “You left me. I-I thought you left me for them. And then I was mad because I thought you didn’t trust me. But I know now. I fucked up, Kas. Please. Please don’t make our babies pay for my mistakes. I will make sure they have the best care. Please.” ;

I watch as she slowly opens her eyes and looks at me. The foreign, hollow gray of her irises shrinks as her pupils dilate. Her eyes close again and she gives one small nod. I take that as her permission and carefully lift her up by her back and knees into my lap. If it wasn’t for her stomach, she would weigh less than air.

I hold her as tight as I can without feeling like I’m going to break her fragile bones and concentrate all my energy. I imagine everything she has ever told me about what it feels like for her to meditate and what it feels like to heal someone. My mind thinks about my essence leaving my body and being absorbed into her skin and through her blood. I imagine Kas and our pups, and giving all three of them whatever it is they need to live. I can sense our babies trying to fight for their lives, but I can’t find Kas’s spirit anywhere.

I open my eyes and look at her. The unfamiliar light gray eyes are barely open, trying to look at me. The purple aura I have tried to convince myself I hate surrounds us and brings a sense of calm to the room. As I hold her, I can hear her heart. Each beat is softer and further apart than the last until there are only two little heartbeats thumping as hard as they can.

My heart feels like it’s being torn in half as the pack bond of our Luna dying fills me. –

A mournful howl comes from deep inside my chest. I rock her helplessly in my arms and lean my forehead against hers, letting my tears flow freely. In the distance, I can hear howls from around the packhouse from everyone else feeling the Luna bond break.

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"Bronx, let her go. The doctor needs to save the pups," I feel Milo's hand gripping my shoulder, but he sounds so far away. I hold my sweet little mate closer to my body, praying for a sign that she's still with me. That she hasn't given up. That my anger and stupidity didn't kill her. It's a fool's wish. She's gone. I did this to her.

I look up to see Reggie and Milo with pained looks on their faces. Behind them are doctors and nurses crying with their hands clutching their hearts as they struggle through the pain of the Luna bond breaking.

"I'm so sorry," I whisper. I want to say more, but I can't think of anything good enough.

The world feels like it is in slow motion as Reggie unwraps my arms from around Kas's body and places her on a gurney. The medical staff immediately runs out of the dungeon to get her to surgery and deliver the babies.

A loud humming sound fills my ears. I try to stand up, but Milo pushes me back down to my knees. I see him in front of me, shaking his head and saying something, but I can't hear him over the humming.

All I can do is put my hands over my face and sob.

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Kas's POV

I sit in front of him, even though he doesn't know I'm there. I'm afraid if I look away, I may never see him again. Elexis's black snout pushes under my elbow so I will put my arm

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around her while she sits next to me. I let myself lean heavily against her while we watch our mate realize that my spirit has left my body.

"He broke the mate bond, Kas. Our spirits' journeys are finished," Lex says quietly, "There are no more lifetimes for us." °

"I understand," I nod slowly as I run my fingers through her silky onyx fur, "Lex, through everything, I forgive him. I'm sure it seems foolish, but I don't have the desire to hold on to hate or malice when I move on. So, I forgive him."

"Of course you do. You have a good heart, Kas. I know how much you loved him over the centuries."

"I've made my peace, and I died knowing! did everything I could do to save my sisters and keep my pups alive. There is nothing else I need to fulfill me." «

"It has been a pleasure being your wolf, Kas. I couldn't ask for a better human spirit to be attached to for the last five thousand years," Lex says as she gives my cheek a lick.

"Thank you for being such a magnificent wolf, Lex," I look up and smile at the giant black wolf, "I'm going to miss you."

We both look back at Bronx as Reggie takes my body out of his arms and puts it on a gurney. Everyone looks like they are in pain.

"They feel the Luna bond breaking," Lex says as if she was reading my mind.

"How long will it last?" I watch as Reggie and the medical staff run the gurney down the hallway.

"It depends on the pack member. Children, meh, a couple days and for adults, a couple weeks. And for the ranked members, it could be a long time. Bronx will probably always feel it. Since he broke the mate bond, he will not die in the next couple of years unless he does something stupid. He is going to live a normal lifetime now," Lex explains, "but it's his and Saint's last one, too."

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Milo is trying to comfort Bronx through his own pain. I frown, wishing I could take this part away.

"Hello Mother," I say out loud when I feel her presence behind me.

"Hello lokaste, Elexis, my darlings," she says, sitting next to us. I feel a comforting warmth as she takes my hand.

"Mother, can you please take their pain away? I don't want anyone else to hurt because of me," I feel tears blurring my vision.

"You know I can't, lokaste," she says, ignoring my request, "My daughter, you caused quite a stir this lifetime."

"I did what I had to do. I don't have any regrets. If I had known it was going to be my last lifetime, I would have eaten more grilled cheese sandwiches. A few more bananas, too," I try to lighten the mood, glancing at her. She has pulled her blonde hair back into a bun. Her blue eyes are deep like the ocean and her perfect skin naturally glows.

"I agree. You should have eaten more grilled cheese sandwiches. I also agree that you did what you had to do to help the Manaes. In fact, it's the first time in five thousand years that I realize you have been acting selflessly. You spent so much time in the shadows, I thought you had lost your way," she tells me while she observes Bronx and Milo, "I convinced the other Olympic Gods to give you one last chance to redeem yourself, even though I wasn't sure of your true intentions. I see now, everything you have done has benefited others. I apologize for not having more faith in you, my darling."

"Well, I don't know what to tell you. Hopefully, people can learn from their mistakes, but I won't be here to see it. I don't have a mate anymore, so my spirit's journey is finished," I shrug.

"About that," she puts her fingers under my chin and turns my attention away from a distraught Bronx toward her, "I came here to give you a choice, my darling. We told you if you saw your quest through, we would reward you."

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"A choice?" I ask, confused, "I've already told you, I don't want any rewards for doing the right thing.'

"Yes, a choice as a reward. The Olympians were having a lively discussion about you and Elexis when they found out Bronx broke the mate bond," she smiles sweetly.

"A lively discussion, huh? Ironic choice of words, Mother," I feel myself roll my eyes at her.

"Well, the discussion was about what to do with you now that you have completely changed the fates of your sisters," my Mother explains, "With Zeus's blessing, I have an offer for you."

"An offer from Zeus? Thanks, but no thanks. I've had enough of that guy," I dismiss her and turn back to Bronx.

"Kas, we want to give you the opportunity to be immortal. Truly immortal, like the Olympians."

I feel Lex startle against me at my mother's statement. I take a deep breath and press my lips tightly together.

"Mother, I haven't done anything that deserves immortality. I did what any decent werewolf with the powers I had would do," I shake my head at her, "I don't want immortality."

"Alright, well, what can I do to show our appreciation?"

I look at Lex, then to my Mother, "OUR appreciation? Who else are you representing?"

"Most of the gods and goddesses on Mount Olympus."

"Ah. I see. You said I have a choice. What's my other option? Because, no offense, Mother, but I don't want to be associated with the Olympians," I shake my head at her.

"None taken," she pats my hand, "The other options are end your spirit's journey as it is fated or, continue your journey in this lifetime but on a more even footing."

"More even footing?"

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"Yes, darling. You and Lex can continue your journey, but your lives will be just as long as any of your sisters, if not longer, and you will keep your memories when you are reincarnated. Now that you've shown that you can resist the corruption of dark magic, you've proven we can trust you with your past."

"I only want to continue my spirit's journey if I can rehabilitate the Marvi Magea and our Leaders. Completely. Not just in this lifetime. For the rest of their spirits' journeys," I say flatly, "They are all so tortured. It's not fair to them."

"It may take a few centuries, but I think we can arrange for that," she nods. She points at Bronx, "He's right you know."

"Right about what?" I look at Bronx who has his head in his hands looking hopeless.

"You drive a hard bargain, lokaste," she nudges my side.

I finally look at her and smile, "Yeah, according to my husband, I'm a damn good businesswoman."

"I have one condition of my own if this is the fate you chose," Mother says. I turn my attention fully to her.

"Okay? What is it?"

"I need you to be a mentor and a leader for your sisters until Katie is truly ready to take over. It could be an extremely long time. Potentially multiple centuries, but I trust you will know when that time presents itself." °

I look at Lex, "This isn't just my journey, Lex. It's yours too. Does that sound okay to you?"

"I think it sounds like an exciting new chapter in our story," Lex chuckles, "And I think we've got this, Kas."

I take her snout in my hands and kiss her nose, "I love you, Lex."

"I love you too, Kas," she purrs at me.

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“Okay Mother, Lex and I both accept. What’s next? We have to wait until Cora is old enough to have a pup, right?”

“No, darling. Close your eyes. When you wake up, you will be in the operating room. You’re going to be in pain for some time, but nothing you haven’t experienced before. I can’t give you abilities back right away. They will strengthen again over time. Also, it will take a while for Lex to acclimate to your new extended lifetime. You may not always feel her with you at the beginning, but please trust that she is there,” she smooths my hair as she speaks to me.

I nod, not feeling confident about Lex not always being accessible.

“The good news is you’ll get to see your babies and hold them. Maya and Andreas are being delivered right now. By the time you wake up, they will both be swaddled, hungry, and crying, just Waiting for you,” she points to Bronx, “ I’m going to take care of this situation. He will join you as soon as he gets word that your heart has started again.

Please be patient with him, Iokaste. You know how he is. You may have forgiven him, but it’s going to take a long time for him to forgive himself. Living for hundreds of years at a time is going to take some adjusting for him.”

“Thank you, Mother,” I take her hand and squeeze it.

She leans forward and kisses my forehead. I immediately feel sleepy. I Wrap my arms around Lex and let myself close my eyes, sliding both of us into darkness.

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The smell of pine needles and lavender fills the room. I keep my eyes closed and hide my smile as the giggles get closer.

"Mommy? Are you awake?" Maya's little voice whispers loudly. I can feel her weight climbing onto the bed.

"Shhh, Maya, Mommy gets to sleep, because it's her birthday," Andreas giggles at her while he climbs onto the bed as well.

I roll over and pretend to yawn with a big growl and stretch my arms out wide, grabbing them both and bringing them toward me. Their happy squeals fill my heart with joy.

"Hello, darlings," I squeeze them tightly in my arms.

"Mommy, happy birthday!" Andreas says happily and gives me a wet kiss on the cheek.

"Mommy, Auntie Delilah said she's made a cake for you," Maya says with big gray eyes. She lays in my arms and plays with my white hair. She gives a sly little smile, "I think she made chocolate."

"Oh, she did, did she?" I smile back. The twins talk excitedly at the same time, telling me about all the things they want to do with me today for my birthday until it's time for cake. I listen intently as I wipe the sleep out of my eyes.

"Daddy has a surprise for you too!" Andreas says proudly. His light green eyes sparkle and he pushes his light brown hair out of his face.

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“Oh, he does?” I muse, helping him brush his bangs to the side. I had specifically told him not to get me anything, but that has never stopped him before, “Are you going to give me any hints?”

“No, Mommy. Not even for chocolate chip cookies,” Andreas says solemnly. I laugh, “Okay, fine. Speaking of which, where is Daddy?”

“In the living room with Uncle Marco,” they say almost in unison.

“Okay, why don’t you go let them know I’m awake and I will be out as soon as I’m dressed,” I kiss them both on the cheek and send them out of the room. When my heart started a few minutes after they deliver the twins, the entire pack rejoices. That’s what I’m told, anyway. I am too weak to find out for myself. Bronx arranges for me to live in the suite next to his apartment. For the first four months, I cannot get out of bed without help from the nurses. When she gets back from maternity leave, Diane becomes my personal nurse. She also gladly accepted the position of nanny for the twins.

Bronx keeps his distance for a couple of months. Diane tells me he got intensive treatment for his mental health in the hospital wing. He is taking it seriously this time. For a few months, he only comes to see the twins when I’m sleeping, not wanting to upset me with his presence. He finally starts coming to the suite when I am awake, but stands at a distance. He asks me how I am, but is careful not to get too close to me or try to have any sort of meaningful conversation. Diane says it’s difficult for him to believe that I have no hard feelings about how he treated me but he’s trying.

Bronx comes every day and spends a lot more time with our babies once we are on speaking terms. Delilah, Ashley, and Musu come on the day’s Diane has off and take turns helping him and showing him how to take care of them when I am too exhausted to do it. ‘

After a year, he brings me flowers every week and takes me to the hospital wing for doctor appointments. He also makes sure I take my medicines and vitamins. We have actual conversations and discuss pack business. Not like we used to, but it’s a start. He also brings my meals up to me and escorts the twins and me down to the dining room a couple of times a week.

After a year and a half has passed, Diane insists that Bronx and I go on a date while she and Carly keep the children for the evening. He takes me to the botanical garden where he has a

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chef flown in from Paris to make us dinner and he shows me roses bushes he had dedicated to Maya and Andreas. It is the first time we really talk about our relationship since our pups were born. He still doesn't believe I have forgiven him.

After that first date, Bronx and I spend more time together. There are even some nights where we have the twins sleep in the nursery in his apartment.

Bronx and I sit close together on the sofa and watch cooking competition shows until I fall asleep. He puts me in the bedroom without waking me up and sleeps on the sofa. If the babies cry or need to be fed or changed, he gets up and lets me sleep.

One afternoon, just before the twins' second birthday, I'm laying down in Bronx's bed with the babies while they nap. Bronx comes in and sits on the floor next to the bed. I watch intently while he rubs his hands over his face and sighs. He looks at me and looks away over and over until he can finally talk. I listen patiently while he quietly recants everything he had been going through for the past couple of years. He explains he is trying but still struggling with everything. He worries he isn't good enough for the twins, for me, for the pack, for anyone. Like Mother said, he is having trouble wrapping his mind around being alive for hundreds of years and what that means for our future together. I hold his hand and let him get it all out. When he finishes, I pull him onto the bed with me and wrap my arms around him as far as they will go. He quietly cries and apologizes to me again until we both fall asleep.

After that day, we were practically inseparable. A couple weeks after Maya and Andreas's second birthday party, I fully move back into the apartment and the four of us are a complete family.

A month after I move back into the apartment, I get back to the bakery part time to help Delilah and the team with the wedding season. I come home one day to find Bronx alone in the apartment. He tells me he had Diane take the babies for the afternoon so he and I could spend time together. He announces he made me dinner, and the menu is comprised of his signature fruit salad with a side of saltines. The first meal he ever made for me. When he comes out of the kitchen with my bowl, he gets down on one knee and asks me to take him back as my mate. I gladly accept him back. Three months later, we go through a formal ceremony to make our bond official again.

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A few days after my twins were born, Bronx listened to what Milo and Reggie had to say about what I was actually doing while I was gone. They released Marco from the dungeons that day. From what I'm told, Bronx had to beg him not to leave the pack. To make up for how he treated Marco, Bronx was more than willing to let him go on a sabbatical as long as he wanted. They also agree that when he comes back, they will find a different position for him, one where he is not assigned to protect me.

During his sabbatical, Marco is a stay at home dad for his own twins. He comes to visit me often and tells me he and Bronx are working on fixing things between them. Bronx wants him to work on a special assignment because of the pack expanding so rapidly over the last couple of years, but typical Marco, he doesn't like to talk much about himself. We mostly talk about the children and sometimes trade cooking tips. When I ask Bronx, he simply says he needed a protege and Marco was the best candidate for the job.

With Marco reassigned, Tyree and James become my guards, but at my insistence, on a much more relaxed schedule. One of them escorts me when I leave pack territory, but only if I'm not with Bronx. If the twins are with us, they both come with us to keep photographers at bay. It takes a while, but I convince them to start my training again. We begin slowly and find that I am not nearly as strong as I used to be. Lex is extremely frustrated at this development, but she tries her best to be patient, knowing we have centuries to practice and that she no longer needs to be a warrior.

The Manaes are flourishing at Kardianou Manaes. They have created a strong community and are thriving with their newfound freedom. I check on them a couple times a month, but try to give them the space unless they specifically ask for my help. They also make it a habit to come see all the children and develop relationships with them instead of waiting until they have all their memories. We hope it will help the emotional aspect of things when they come of age and their memories come back to them.

Every year eases us into a more comfortable routine. While none of us will ever forget the traumatic past of this lifetime, we know we can overcome anything to be together. We honor and respect each other and listen to each other much more than we ever had before. I am thankful to my Mother every day for giving me a choice to come back.

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Forever in the Past and Forever in the Future chapter 130

I sit on the edge of the bed in the silent room. So this is what twenty-five feels like. I wonder if a hundred and twenty-five will feel just as good. What about two hundred and twenty-five? I laugh to myself at the thought as I head into the bathroom.

I look in the mirror and run a brush through my white hair. None of the sparkly gray came back when it grew in four and a half years ago. I examine the mirror closer. It looks like there are some more violet flecks in the light gray of my irises, but maybe that's just me being hopeful. I still don't have any abilities other than being able to shift and mind linking other pack members.

I splash water on my face and brush my teeth. There will be time to shower later before the pack Summer Solstice party and pack run. I pick up some toys that made their way into the closet room and find a dark blue sundress to wear. Once I am changed, I look at myself in the full-length mirror and smile.

When I get into the living room, Marco comes up and gives me a giant hug, lifting me off the ground, "Happy Birthday, Kas."

"Thank you, Marco," I give him a peck on the cheek before he puts me down, "What are you two up to?"

"Nothing for you to worry about, Luna. We will see you two for the pack run tonight," he waves and shows himself out the door.

"Where are the kids?" I ask, heading to their rooms to collect them.

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"Delilah has them. They are helping her with the surprise chocolate cake,"

Bronx stands and walks over to me with a big smile. He kisses me deeply, then looks into my eyes, "Another fleck of violet in there, I think."

"Yeah, I thought the same thing," I giggle at him.

He puts his hand over his heart and tilts his head at me, "Forever my favorite sound. Come on, I have a surprise for you."

"Bronx, I asked you not to get anything for me. We're going to have hundreds of years together now. Material things are not worth it," I insist, trying not to whine.

"I didn't buy you anything. I promise," he says as he leads me to the garage and opens the door to his Range Rover. He picks me up and sets me in the seat before he buckles me in and goes to his side.

"Okay, so where are we going?" I lean my head back and ask.

"Leave the driving to me, Kas. Maybe when you are a hundred, you will be interested in learning how to do it yourself," he raises an eyebrow when he looks at me.

I roll my eyes. He's right. I have no desire to learn how to drive. I just need to sit back and relax.

I look out at the lush green landscape as Bronx makes his way to a little restaurant in the middle of nowhere called Jimmy's BBQ. He has taken me here once before. I remember the food was great. When we get inside, the owner's wife, Shelly, greets us.

Instead of taking us to the booth she keeps reserved for Bronx, she takes us outside and to the little cabin next to the restaurant where she lives with her husband, who is a werebear/werewolf hybrid.

"When you were gone, Saint kept bringing me back here, and I didn't understand why. He just kept insisting I would find you here," Bronx explains.

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“Okay?” I say, confused, as he leads me into the cabin.

I finally spoke to Shelly and figured it out. Kas, there is someone very special who we would like you to meet,” Bronx says to me once we are sitting in the comfortable living room.

Shelly comes out from the hallway from the bedroom, holding a little boy’s hand. He has white blond hair and hazel eyes. He is no older than five.

“Kas, I would like you to meet Andy. Andy Latmus Briland,” Shelly smiles broadly. °

I feel myself freeze as I look at her. She nods happily and gently puts her hand on his back so he can step forward.

I look back at the little boy, with tears in my eyes, trying to find my voice, “H- hello, Andy. It’s a p-p. Sorry, it’s a pleasure to meet you, Andy.”

“You’re very pretty, ma’am. Please don’t cry,” he tilts his head and uses his sleeve to wipe my tears away. He puts his little hand in mine and smiles.

“Remember how I told you that Shelly’s husband is a hybrid? Werebear and werewolf?” Bronx says sitting next to me, “and that his werewolf side is dormant?”

“I-uh-yeah, I think I remember that,” I sniffle as I admire the little boy who is the reincarnation of my father. °

“Well, Andy here went to the doctor last week at Blood River and had some blood work done. Would you believe there is not a drop of werebear blood in his system? He’s a pure werewolf, Kas. In fact, we have never seen werewolf DNA so pure. It’s almost like he is the first of his kind.”

I look at Andy smiling proudly at me, “ Mommy said that makes me special.” “Oh my Goddess, yes. Your mommy is right, it makes you very special, Andy,” I smile and nod at him lovingly.

“Shelly and Dave called me and asked if I would have him tested. When we got the results, they asked me if they thought having Andy become a member of Blood River was a good

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idea. Werebears are pretty solitary, but Dave knows wolves need to be part of a pack," Bronx explains to me.

I look at Shelly, who is smiling at me, then back Andy again, "Andy, i-is that what you want? To come to Blood River and be part of our pack?"

"Yeah, Alpha Bronx said Mommy and Daddy could visit whenever and I would get to stay with these people called Gammas. They came to visit. They're really nice," Andy beams at me.

"You already spoke to Reggie and Ashley?" I look at Bronx with my mouth wide open.

"Yeah, they love the idea of Andy becoming one of us and we have already talked about having the suite across from their apartment converted so Shelly and Dave can come visit whenever they want. Honorary pack members, if you will," Bronx nods with a warm smile.

"Andy, do you know what today is?" I ask the little boy, taking his other hand in mine.

He shakes his head at me, "Thursday, ma'am?"

I laugh a little and nod, "Yes, it is Thursday, but today is also my birthday, Andy. And this? You coming to be part of our pack is the best present I could ever imagine."

"I'm your present?" He smiles, showing all his teeth.

It takes everything in me to not pull him into my arms right then and there, " Andy, do you think it would be oKay for me to give you a hug?"

Andy looks shyly at his Shelly, who nods at him, "Go ahead, Andy. She's your Luna."

Andy steps closer to me and lets me wrap my arms around him in a tight hug. I can feel already feel the connection between us and I know, in that moment, that all is right in my world.

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