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## Forever in the Past and Forever in the Future chapter 111

Marco's POV

"Mister Sanchez, what can I do for you? I'm having a terrible day," Katherine sighs into the phone.

"Katherine, we need your help. Something's wrong with Kas," I pace around the living room, cause ain't no way I can stand still right now.

"What's wrong with her? Out with it," she snaps. There ain't no concern for Kas in her voice. She just sounds annoyed. Kas was right about this bitch.

"She is hysterical, and it seems like she's in a lot of pain. She keeps calling for Amari," I explain as patiently as I can.

"Well, that is probably because Amari passed away sometime last night or this morning," her voice is so cold and uncaring that you'd think she didn't give a shit about Amari. It makes me feel like she just threw a bucket of ice water at me, "Just tell your Alpha to keep giving her all those hugs and kisses until she gets over herself."

"Wait? What do you mean, Amari and her mate passed away?" I ask. How can she say it with no emotions, like it doesn't matter that her sister died? °

"What don't you understand? She didn't come down for breakfast, so I sent someone to fetch her. They found her and Jasen dead in their bed. Deceased, gone, kicked the bucket...0h, that's right, you're Hispanic...Muerte. Comprende?"

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I'm trying to think of what Mama would say in this situation, even if this lady did just throw down her racist card on the table. I think she would say 'Marco, sé amable ahora, sé enojado mas tarde' [Be nice now, be mad later]. "I-I'm really sorry for your loss, Katherine"

"Aren't we all, Mister Sanchez? If Kas had just drank the damn wine Deon gave her last night, none of this would be an issue. She'll be fine. I'm sure what she is experiencing right now is the bond she shares with Amari breaking," Katherine says, like it ain't no thing and hangs up the phone on me.

I look at my phone, thinking about everything the woman just told me.

Dionysus was telling the truth.

Katherine hired him to be at the event. '

None of this would be an issue.' The wine was poison, and she knew it. She hired a god to kill her sister? Even thinking about it sounds crazy, but how else do you explain it?

'Tell your Alpha to keep giving her all those hugs and kisses'. What made her say that? I put my hands on my hips and look around the room, trying to put the pieces of the conversation together.

"Carly?" I mind link her.

"Hi Marco, everything okay?"

"This hotel, what made you book here? Is this the only five star one around?"

"No, there were others, but Santoro Enterprises staff said all of their VIP guests stay here. They were able to get us a special rate for the rooms."

I look around again. You gotta be fucking kidding me. I'm so fucking stupid.

"Carly, we're cutting the stay short. Get everyone packed up. Contact the airport; get our flight switched to this afternoon. The earlier the better."

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“O-okay? Marco, what’s going on?”

“Security breach. Everyone needs to be ready to leave in half an hour. Mind link communication as much as possible. I know you can’t with Delilah, so just talk as little as possible with her. Got it?”

“No problem, Marco. I’ll let you know when the cars are downstairs.”

“James, Bronx, you’re not gonna believe the phone call I just had. It’s time to leave. Carly is already making arrangements,” I switch my mind link to them.

Once we’re on the plane, Delilah gets her doctor bag of potions and goes with the rest of the ladies into the bedroom at the back of the plane to see if they can help Kas feel better. We stay out in the main area and discuss what’s going on. It’s real uncomfortable cause Bronx is so angry that it’s making the rest of us feel like we have to submit to him.

“She double crossed her own sister?” Tyree asks with a surprised look when I finish telling them everything.

“Think about all that mythology crap we learned growing up, Tyree. All them gods and goddesses backstab each other all the time. No loyalty. I mean, I can’t believe Katherine did it to Kas cause that’s her damn sister and if you ask me, it sounds like she killed Amari and Jasen too. Ain’t no way them two just woke up dead after being perfectly healthy yesterday,” I add. °

“Every single suite we were staying in had microphones in the walls and mini cameras hidden. They were watching us the whole time,” James says leaning forward with his elbows on his knees, “I should have been more thorough when we checked in.” ‘

“You know for next time, James,” Bronx stands up and starts pacing, “But now that we know, we need to do everything we can to protect Kas from Katherine. When I spoke to Milo last night, he said Tessa is doing really well at Blood River. She’s a good security strategist and an expert in Krav Maga. Speaking of which, James, I want you to have a couple of training sessions with her. See what else she can teach us.”

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“Of course. I’d be glad to,” James nods. Bronx stops pacing and looks more serious, “Milo also said anytime they mention Katherine, Tessa breaks down again and is useless for the rest of the day. Think of it like when you guys were on Ops teams and had to rescue hostages. It takes months or years for those people to recover from those experiences. We know that. Now imagine someone being held hostage

for thousands of years. She acclimated to her environment to survive. There’s no handing her off to her family. We should plan on her staying with us long term. She’s one of us now and we need to take care of her until she dies.”

“Shit,” Tyree mumbles under his breath.

“We seriously underestimated this, Katherine. Myself included,” Bronx crosses his arms in front of himself, “ When we get home, we’re regrouping with our Beta and Gamma to come up with a better plan. To protect Kas and Tessa.”

“Excuse me, gentlemen?” Musu, Carly, and Diane are standing by the curtain at the back of the plane smiling at us.

“Is Kas okay?” Bronx jumps to attention, ready to go to Kas.

“Oh yes, Alpha, she’s fine,” Diane reassures him, “She asked to speak with Delilah and Marco...privately.”

When Bronx turns around, I’m pretty sure he’s gonna pounce and strangle me to death, but he sits down and glares at me while I walk to the back of the plane instead.

Kas and Delilah are sitting on the bed. Delilah is holding three vials of green liquid in one hand and wiping tears away from Kas’s face with the other.

“You okay, Kas?” I try to smile, but her puffy eyes and red nose make me feel bad for her.

“I will be,” she sniffles, “I have no choice. Please sit down, Marco.”

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I slide the door closed and sit on the edge of the bed, "Alright, whatever you got to say, make it quick before your husbands take turns murdering me for being in here with you two."

"I've moved the timeline up," Kas says blankly.

"Because of Amari?" There's an uncomfortable feeling in my chest, cause this is all getting too real too quick.

She takes two of the vials out of Delilah's hand and hands one to me, "If you drink this, it will force you to keep it a secret. That's the only way I'm going to talk about it with either of you. Delilah has already agreed to drink it." I take the little tube out of her hand and look at it, "This shit ain't gonna poison me?"

"No," Delilah shakes her head, "but it will prevent you from speaking about this conversation."

"What happens if I try?"

"Your, uh, your throat shuts and cuts off your breathing until you pass out," Delilah shifts her eyes around so she don't have to look at me.

Kas snuffles and holds up her vial like she wants to take a shot. Delilah does the same. I look in the vial again and hold it up with a sigh. We all throw them back at the same time. It has a sweet, then kinda sour taste but seems harmless enough.

"Alright, so what's goin' on?" I hand the tube back to Delilah.

Kas explains her impossible trip to Mount Olympus and what really happened to Amari and her mate.

"You got Zeus's power inside you right now?" I ask, looking her over. She looks like shit, but I assumed it was cause of losing her sister.

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“A good bit of it, yeah. It’s uncomfortable too. I need to get it out as soon as I can,” Kas says shifting in her spot, “Plus, since Leticia has the Mavri Magea in one place, I can’t wait much longer.”

“Kas, what if you’re not ready? What if you haven’t learned enough magic or how to harness your powers?” Delilah puts her hands over her mouth and whispers.

“When I was with the Mavri Magea, I could feel their power feeding me, strengthening me. I wasn’t taking it from them. It was like they were sharing it with me. It felt...right. We shared memories. It helped fill in all the things I’ve forgotten over the centuries. I know who I am now and don’t want to forget it. The only way to do that is to see this through to the end.”

“Let’s see if we can help you stay in the light, mon ami,” Delilah takes Kas’s hand, then takes mine with her other one. Kas holds her other hand out to me and I take it so we make a little circle. Delilah and Kas both close their eyes, so I do, too. I feel a warmth coming from their hands that feels like I’m holding a cup of coffee. When I open my eyes, it fades away. I don’t know what just happened, but I feel more calm than I did when I came into the room.

“Thank you, you two. I appreciate you more than you’ll ever know,” Kas smiles, “Can you send Bronx in? It seems like a good time for a nap with my mate.”

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Bronx's POV

Diane offers to keep Kas company in the apartment while we work out a plan on how to keep her and Tessa safe from the rest of the Manaë. I feel better knowing she is a nurse and Kas trusts her. When I get back in the afternoons, she reports that Kas mostly sleeps and spends a lot of time in the shower. Almost every day, after I dismiss Diane, Kas lets me hold her while she continues to cry from the lingering pain. I don't know how else to help her and it's killing me. She doesn't leave the apartment except to come downstairs for dinner. She insists being with the pack will lift her spirits up.

Delilah comes to the apartment every evening after dinner with her bag of potion ingredients. She and Kas spend an hour with the bedroom door closed meditating and trying different remedies to help ease Kas's pain and help her sleep. Some nights it seems to help. Other nights, I have to hold my sweet little mate while she whimpers and cries to her mother for mercy. I feel completely helpless. There is nothing I can do but be there for her.

Delilah easily convinces Kas that she shouldn't come back to work until she feels better and until there are fewer reporters hanging around in front of the bakery. They decide to let Kas work on accounting and purchasing from home while Delilah takes care of operations. To cover for Kas's extended absence, the PR team puts out a statement that Kasis really shaken up by what happened at the charity event and is choosing to spend time out of the public eye for a while.

I meet with my Betas, Gammas, James, Marco, and Tessa every day, working out details on a better security plan. After a long three days, we all finally agreed on a strict strategy that ends just short of putting motion sensors in Tessa's suite and my apartment. We place extra guards and put as many technological upgrades in place as we can in the packhouse and

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around the perimeter of the territory. Delilah sets up various wards around the packhouse and territory, but she explains she doesn't know if they will work against attacks from deities.

Milo and Reggie go dark with their teams for a few days to handle the security breach at the hotel in Greece. Tessa could only provide limited information on Santoro Enterprises' existing security systems since Alexandros and Katherine handled all of it. She gave us dozens of international locations to search to get whatever it is they needed.

"I don't know what video and audio files you're talking about, Bronxy?" Milo smirks at me when they get back from wherever they have been, "And neither does anyone at Santoro Enterprises or Golden Mountain pack."

"Even from the Australian servers?" Tessa crosses her arms, challenging him.

"I didn't have time to get a boomerang from the airport gift shop. I was only able to get this," Milo opens his duffle bag and pulls out five blade server cartridges, "There were fifty total in there, but these were the five that were

"Locked in the vault?" Tessa asks with her jaw wide open.

"Yeah, how did you know?" Milo gives her a goofy grin.

"Those...oh my Goddess...those are our files," she stares at the cartridges wide eyed.

"No shit, Tessa. We got them from a Santoro Enterprise facility," Milo raises his eyebrows and nods slowly at her, then hands the pieces to James, "Careful, my dude, they're heavy."

I watch Tessa rub her fingers on her forehead the same way Lenora does when she's frustrated, "No Beta, you don't understand. Those are OUR files." "Can you give us some more detail about what's on the server blades, Tessa?" I ask before she gets mad at Milo.

"We used to have a library with all the information about each of the Manae, but once the technology was available, we switched it to be all digital. If those are the five blades from the vault, you have every bit of historical information there is to have about the five leaders of the Manae. Between the five of us alone, there is close to forty thousand years' worth of

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data. Images of ancient scrolls, translations of tomes, born and death dates, identities throughout the years, information about our abilities. Everything,” she stops short and looks at Milo, “Wait. That vault requires biometrics from multiple people to get in. How did you do it?”

Milo holds his finger to his mouth like he’s keeping a secret and whispers, “ Black ops”.

James looks at the contents in his hands in awe. We watch him back out of the room, “I gotta go. I know just the person to help me with these. We’ve got work to do. I’ll keep you posted!” “Arrogant Beta you got there, Bronx,” Tessa murmurs, smirking at Milo, who is pretending to swing a baseball bat and pointing to his imaginary home run.

“Yeah, he drives me fucking crazy, but I wouldn’t be here without him,” I lean back in my seat and watch him celebrate his acquisition.

Tessa leaves to meet with Marco and Musu. They have been discussing the inner workings of the Manaes for the past several days so we can get a better understanding of how they operate in case we need to attack. When she can handle it, they discuss how cold and ruthless Katherine can really be.

When they report back to me, I’m not surprised by their findings. It turns out Katherine will do anything to keep power over the Manaes. The more power she has, the happier and the more dangerous she is. Since Kas is the only one who is able and historically willing to challenge Katherine’s position, she will do anything to get rid of her youngest sister. Even if that means killing her before Cora is reborn. If Cora isn’t reborn, Kas can’t be either. If neither Kas nor Cora are alive, Katherine will find a way to gain control of the Mavri Magea and the Agrios. Amari’s submissive Giatros will fall in line now that she is gone. By the time she is reborn and ready to take her place, it will be too late. Tessa’s obedient Frouros will bear the same fate.

kkk

I’m checking the last email in my inbox on Saturday when there’s a knock on

the door. I look at my watch, four forty- five p.m.

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"Come in!"

The door opens slowly and I hear a high pitched little giggle as Codi toddles into the room with Lenora behind her. Even

Saint's brooding mood lightens up at the sight of her.

"Codi!" my smile is instantaneous. I put my arms out to her. She squeals happily when I pick her up and pretend to nibble on her cheek.

"Uncle Box!" she claps her hands at me. '

"Milo taught her that," Lenora smiles, " and now she keeps asking for you and for Kas. I figure, at least give her one of you guys."

Lenora sits in the seat across from me and watches me play with Codi to get her to say Bronx.

"How's Kas? I mean, when she's not faking to be happy at dinner," Lenora asks with a tilt of her head.

"I can't say she's doing great, but I don't know what else to do," I glance at her before I turn my attention back to Codi, letting her yank on my fangs and pretending to snarl at her. Her laugh gives me a couple minutes of distraction until it's time for her and Lenora to leave.

"Bronx?"

"Yeah?"

"Everything is going to be okay," Lenora reaches over the desk and squeezes my arm.

"I hope you're right, Lenora."

"I love you, Big Brother."

"I love you too, Leni. I love you too."

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"Uncle Box, Codi lub you."

"And Uncle Bronx lubs Codi," I give her a raspberry on the cheek before I hand her back to her mom.

I wait a minute until they leave and savor the silence before I get up and head to the apartment.

The smell of baked goods gets stronger as I get closer. When I turn the corner, I see Tyree on guard with two to-go containers on the bench next to him.

"Hey Tyree. Did Diane bake for you?" I ask him, already knowing that she didn't.

"No Alpha, the Luna must feel better. She's been baking all day. Diane wanted to give me more, but there's only so many cookies a guy can eat. I'm gonna give those to Mom and Dad," he says with a smile.

I nod with a little smile, glad to hear Kas is back to her old self, but when I open the door, I can't believe what I am seeing. Dozens upon dozens of cookies, muffins, cupcakes are stacked in containers all over the apartment. Pies and cakes in various stages of cooling are covering almost every surface that doesn't have a container.

Diane comes rushing out of the kitchen when she hears me come in, "Alpha, sir, I-I don't know what happened. One minute she was sleeping, the next she insisted she needed supplies for baking and once the kitchen staff brought up what she needed I blinked my eyes and there was...well...this..."

"You blinked your eyes and there was this?" I look at her unconvinced.

"Yeah, not an exaggeration," she looks at me with wide eyes, "The Luna won't stop baking. She says she needs to get the energy out of her system."

"Okay, Diane. I got it from here. You can go home. Take some of these containers with you, please. Hand them out to whoever wants some."

"Y-Yes, Alpha."

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I make my way to the kitchen where Kas is decorating cookies to look like little autumn leaves.

“Kas, did you freeze Diane and Tyree?” I ask calmly, even though inside I am upset that she keeps freezing our pack members.

“Just for a little while, I needed more time. I just need more time, Bronx,” she puts down the icing bag and turns toward me. Her eyes are watery like she was crying and she has a little bit of icing on the tip of her nose.

“Baby, you and I have no idea how much time we actually have left in this life,” I step forward and take her by the shoulders, “Just like everyone else, we don’t know what is going to happen. The future isn’t set in stone. Everything is going to be fine. Just please, stop freezing people in time because that isn’t going to solve anything, okay?” She gives me a little frustrated look, “Okay. Um, I need to let Lex out. She’s driving me crazy. I spoke to Marco and he said he and James and a few other guards can escort me to the western part of the territory on Monday. There shouldn’t be anyone out there.”

“That’s good, Kas. That will be good for both you and Lex to get out of the pack house for a while,” I pull her closer to me for a hug.

Even with as much as she’s done today she still feels like her energy is practically vibrating trying to get out of her.

“Yeah. It will be good,” she murmurs into my shirt.

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Kas's POV

I look in the bathroom mirror and sigh, "Lex, we're doing the right thing here, right?"

"Yeah. I truly believe we are. Everything will change. We've known for centuries it wouldn't be easy, but right now, you have all the tools and resources you need to make it happen," she reassures me, "You've got this."

"You can feel it taking over, can't you? The darkness. Even with Delilah trying to help remove its presence every day?"

"That is your human spirit, Kas. I don't feel it. I just sense that I feel you're not the same anymore. You may never be, honestly. But I will always be here for you, regardless."

I lean against the back of the door and cross my arms, "What if I'm happier this way? With this feeling inside. I'm stronger than I've ever been. It's a little scary, but it feels good too."

"Kas, what do you want me to say? That you should stop letting Delilah try to help you? Let yourself become corrupted by dark magic?"

"A part of me does, yeah."

"I love you, Kas, but if you really feel that way, go to Hell."

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"I plan to, Lex," I cut her off, not wanting to start more of an argument with her. I look in the mirror closely one more time. There are dark circles forming under my eyes and my skin is becoming pale. I need a break from all this, but there's no time for that.

I fix my ponytail, then open the door. Without warning, Julia shoots a fireball from her hands directly at me from another direction a dark smoking potion gets hurled at me, I deflect them both with a swipe of my hand before either can land on me, then extinguish them with an incantation before they can damage the carpet.

"Good, but stop holding back. Who's next?" I call out, prepping for two more sisters to step forward and spar with me using their abilities.

"Kas, you're going to get hurt," Leticia stops in the hallway, looking worried and tired.

"Leticia, do you think she's going to take it easy on me?" I put my hands on my hips, scolding her, "No. She won't and I'll

"We all need a break, Kas," Leticia wipes her forehead with her sleeve, "We've been at this for hours. You may have Zeus's endless energy, but we don't, darling."

"IT only have a few days left," I drop my shoulders and soften my tone, "I just want to make sure I'm as ready as! can be sol can come back and take care of all of you."

"Are you going to stay for dinner?" A voice calls from the kitchen.

"Not tonight, darling," I call back.

I have been coming to the apartment every day to train with the Mavri Magea and strengthen my skills. Somehow, the apartment knows we are training and morphs itself into a full gym for us to use. When we finish for the day, it changes back into a regular apartment with enough bedrooms that I guess we could consider it a dormitory.

The Mavri Magea are trying to get along for my benefit, but I can tell it is a strain on them to all have to be in this proximity to each other. While being close to them strengthens me naturally, it is not so natural for someone who controls fire with their mind to be near someone who controls other people's emotions for very long. I understand now while they

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spread themselves around the globe instead of being a close-knit unit like the Sentinel or the Mavens.

I haven't told them any of the details, just that I plan on continuing forward until I have completed what I started centuries ago. None of them question me. They just insist on helping if it's going to help them and the Manaes.

When we're not training, we're working on a plan to get the cursed silver pieces from the packhouse vault. I am surprised how easily the ten of us can work together on it. All I had to do was show them the layout of the packhouse and explain where the vault was, and they eagerly asked if they could help by using their own talents. I am more than grateful for all the input I can get, but hesitant about letting them use their talents against anyone in my pack.

While I spend my days with my sisters, Diane thinks I'm sleeping. Cora told me I would feel pain when she died, but I didn't realize it would happen when other Manaes died as well. Leticia believes I only feel the deaths of the other Leaders since I share their abilities. She has never known me to experience pain of a bond breaking when one of the Mavri Mageas dies in previous lifetimes. So we come up with ways to hold back the pain through magic. It's uncomfortable in its own way, not feeling the natural pain of mourning. Some days it works and I'm okay, but other days, once Bronx and I are alone, the dam breaks and all the emotions and physical pain escape at one time.

When I'm with the Mavri Magea in our gray and green apartment, I feel great. Almost invincible, regardless of my physical appearance seeming to deteriorate. They share their energy with me willingly. It is dark and a little erratic, but I'm doing my best to control it. [have too much at stake to let the dark overtake me, yet. Sometimes, though, I can't help it and I let it be my driving force, knowing I have one goal in mind. The person I was before all of this would never have relinquished themselves to the thoughts and ideas I have now. I would have never been strong-willed enough to see this through.

When I'm home in the packhouse, I feel perpetually exhausted. Everyone assumes it is from the pain of losing

Amari. In reality, it is just stress and the strain of training with my sisters all day. There is so much riding on this plan. Delilah comes every evening to meditate with me and try to cleanse me of dark energy as much as she can, but she isn't able to get all of it out. Every day, it fills me a little more, refusing to relinquish its grip on the edges of my soul, and every

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day, I let it nestle deeper in the corners that are becoming heavier and darker. It doesn't help that Zeus's foreign energy is eating away at me trying to escape. I fight every second of every day to contain it. I am going to need it when the time comes.

I make Bronx take me to the dining room every day. I need to be around the pack. Some sense of normalcy and distraction from the changes happening in my mind and body makes me feel better about what I'm doing. Sometimes I see people look at me and whisper to each other. Other times they smile as they walk by, but don't stop to say hello like they used to.

The patient, caring parts of my soul that refuse to give up on trying to be a good person and become disheartened at the pack members' reactions to me. I see them look at me sympathetically or whisper to each other and shake their heads while they look from the corners of their eyes. They smile politely when they walk by, but they rarely say hello to me anymore. My little storm cloud hovers over me most days as I fight the urge to shout at them and demand respect.

There is some redemption when Hannah tells me how much she loves school and introduces me to her new friends. They are so thrilled about their Solstice play. Even though I promised Hannah I wouldn't miss it, I don't know if I will be here. Maybe I won't be anywhere. It's hard to say. I'm glad they're excited, though. I do my best to pretend to be excited for them and pray to my Mother that they will stay innocent forever.

When the days are all said and done, sometimes I can keep it together and relax with my mate, enjoying each other's company in the privacy of our apartment. Other nights, the dam breaks inside of me and I can't help myself. He holds me and comforts me while I cry until I fall asleep. I let our mate bond comfort me and I pray to my Mother again. This time it's not for the innocence of children. It's for redemption and mercy for my future actions.

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"Kas, this is where you live when you're not with us?" Julia asks, looking around my apartment in the packhouse in awe.

"Yep. This is it," I smile as I take a couple of boxes out of her hands, "What's your home like when you aren't at Mavri Magea apartment?"

"Well, it's basically a bunker," she frowns, "I can't have a whole lot of flammable items. Just the necessities." I give her a compassionate look, "Maybe soon, I can help you hone your ability. Get a better control over it?"

"I would love that, Kas," she smiles before she steps back through the portal to get more containers of baked goods they have prepared using my recipes. I look at the clock on the wall, four thirty p.m.

"Alright, ladies, time to wrap it up. I'll take it from here and I'll see you all soon," I clap my hands, giving everyone a hug before they climb back through the portal in my bedroom.

When the last of the Mavri Magea disappears into the white circular light, I wave my hand and recite the incantation to close it. I rush out to the kitchen, flick some flour onto my sundress before I unpause my BLACKPINK playlist and uncurl my

hand, releasing Diane and Tyree from their frozen positions and go back to icing the cookies in front of me, humming and dancing to the music. Diane drops her hands to her sides and looks around, "Oh, my. Did we really bake this much today, Kas?"

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"Yeah, it can pile up really quick. What can I say? Time flies when you're having fun, Diane," I shrug with a smile, "Don't worry, Bronx and I will deliver it all to pack members. We always find it's a great way to connect with them. Especially if I go a little overboard and have enough baked goods to go around. Maybe he'll agree to do it tomorrow even though we are supposed to stay in the apartment."

"A little overboard?" Diane asks. She nods in disbelief as she realizes just how many containers are around the apartment. She was so pleased this morning when I asked her to order supplies from the kitchen so she and I could bake instead of me sleeping all day, taking it as a sign I was feeling better. Poor Diane didn't know it was partially an act. I mean, I am happy I got to spend the day with her, but baking all day was really just a vehicle for my plan to get started.

I vaguely hear the door and smell Bronx's dark chocolate and coffee scent, but I'm so engrossed in the details of the cookie I'm decorating, I don't even hear Diane say goodbye or Bronx come into the kitchen.

"Kas, did you freeze Diane and Tyree?" he sounds calm, but I know he must be mad. He has asked me not to use my abilities on pack members before unless it's an emergency. I take advantage of his forgiving mood to tell him about my worries of needing more time and about letting Lex go for a run when my guards are all back on duty. He gives me a little pep talk about the time we have left in this lifetime and looks pleased I'm planning to shift to go for a run.

"So does all this mean you're feeling better?" he asks with a smile when he pulls away from a comforting hug. I close my eyes when he smooths my hair away from my face. His hands feel so warm and gentle against my skin, I can't help but lean my head into his hand and sigh.

"Better than I have in almost two weeks," smile back. I let my hands wander under his shirt and around his waist, pulling him to close the gap between us.

I stand on the tops of his feet while he walks forward, pressing me between the counter and his body. I kiss his chest with sweet little kisses when he leans forward to slide the cookies on the counter behind me away. He moves his hands under my ass and picks me up, setting me gently on the counter so we are closer to eye level. He kisses me gently on the lips

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before moving to my neck with soft little nibbles, sliding the straps of my sundress away and down to my collarbone, barely avoiding my

marking spot. Shivers go up my spine at the whisper light touch of his mouth against my skin, making me giggle.

He smirks as he lets me lift his shirt, exposing his hard tattooed chest and chiseled abs for me to admire. I toss the shirt on the floor and he continues where he left off, pulling my dress over my head and onto the floor with his shirt, kissing my collarbone down to my breasts while he caresses my midsection. I feel him grab my thighs and growl quietly, spreading my legs apart further so he can stand closer against me.

He slides his hands up my thighs slowly until he reaches the top hem of my panties and slips his fingers below. I gasp as I feel his palm press against my clit and his fingers move toward my core, slipping inside me in one smooth movement. He slides my panties off with the other hand, tossing them to the floor with my dress. I lean back on my hands and moan with a howl when he rocks his hand to pleasure me from the inside and out.

“Bronx, I...oh Goddess,” I groan and squeeze my eyes shut, trying not to let myself release so soon, but it feels so good all I can think of is wanting more. I feel my hand move on top of his, trying to press harder against my most sensitive spots, but I can’t concentrate enough to show him what I want. A whimper escapes me when he eases my hand away so he can have control.

My breath becomes heavier at the sensation building inside me and focus on taking his pants off. When I lean forward, using his arm as support, he keeps rocking his hand against my clit and working my core with his fingers, inching deeper with each movement. My breaths hitch when he finds my most sensitive spot and concentrates the movement of his hand in slow, rhythmic circles. I unbuckle his pants, letting them fall to the floor, and move my fingertips inside his boxers. He leans into me as massage his cock with one hand, feeling it grow larger and harder with each stroke, and pulling the boxers to the floor with the other hand.

“You’re so wet, Baby,” Bronx whispers into my neck right below my ear, “Cum for me. Cum on my hand. Put on a show for me.”

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I feel him change the pace of his hand, rocking faster, ramping up the pleasure I feel against my clit and my core. The faster speed makes my breath turn heavier, responding to his movements. "It feels so good," I moan as I let the sensation relax and excite me at the same time. I look into his eyes when I feel him getting harder in my hand. They flash black for when Saint tries to come to the surface. It makes me more excited knowing they both want to be with me. I tighten my grip on his cock slightly, adding more pressure to my strokes. Bronx groans heavily in my ear, showing me his approval without words.

The stimulation of him touching me and my hand stroking him brings me to the edge of control. My back arches as I get closer to my climax from his hand. Bronx takes his other hand and supports my back, watching me through his eyelashes as the orgasm surges through me, making me shudder in ecstasy. Lex purrs in satisfaction at the wave of bliss.

"Oh, my little goddess, so beautiful when you let go," Bronx murmurs when he feels my muscles relax. He pulls his hand out from between my legs and licks my juices from his hand. I wrap my legs around him, but he stops me and grabs me by the hips, turning me over so I'm bent over the countertop with my legs dangling off the ground. When his hard cock presses against me from behind, I feel myself gasp and my body involuntarily stiffens as a flashback of a memory comes to mind.

"We don't have to," he says apologetically and leans forward, nuzzling my cheek, "Let's go to the bedroom."

"No, go ahead. I want you," I close my eyes and take a deep breath as he takes his time when he enters me from behind.

He goes slow at first, sliding his cock almost all the way out of my core so the head is just barely in, then gradually slides deep inside in a steady rhythm. My muscles contract around him, making him groan and lean forward on top of me. I feel one of his muscular arms snake over my shoulder down the front of me, pulling my back against his warm chest and allowing him to play with one of my sensitive nipples. He rolls it between his fingertips turning it harder at his touch. The other arm wraps around my waist, pulling me off the counter until he is holding me up, rubbing my clit in soft slow circles that match the rhythm of him thrusting deeply into my core. All I can do is hold on to the counter and let him have complete control of my body. Both of us pant and moan with pleasure from the sensation of a new position for us.

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"More," I manage to whisper between gasps. The building pressure of another orgasam takes over as Bronx moves faster. I feel his cock getting harder with each thrust until he stops deep inside of me. He moans with a howl as he squeezes his arms around me tighter.

The familiar sensation of his cock twitching inside of me before releasing his hot seed fuels my desire for him.

The movement in my core triggers my climax, making me grip the counter tightly and howl in pleasure. I press my hips back and grind against him, making the orgasam last as long as possible.

When my muscles finally relax, he slides out of me and carries me to the bedroom. He lays me down and gets me a towel so I can clean up before he lays down next to me, pulling me close.

"Bronx?" I murmur while I stroke the scruff on his chin.

"Yeah, Baby?" He looks down at me with a smile.

"I don't care how many lifetimes we have. I just hope each one has a moment like this. Where there is no question how much we love each other. Where we can just hold each other and be happy. That's all I want," I feel my voice crack, but I don't let myself cry.

"We can only hope the Goddess blesses us with that type of life, Kas," he kisses my forehead and holds me closer.

We wrap our bodies around each other and whisper sweet words of love until

Bronx falls asleep. I watch his peaceful slumber wondering how many more times I will get to see him this way in this lifetime.

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## Forever in the Past and Forever in the Future chapter 115

“Tessa said she and Arnie can escort us to give everyone else a break, but only pack members who live in the packhouse, okay? If we leave the packhouse, we have to have extra security. Even if it is just the houses down the street,” Bronx lectures me after making a few phone calls.

“I’ll take it. We can get everyone else tomorrow in the dining room,” I smile and throw my arms around his waist before I run on my toes to the shower to get myself ready for the day. I turn on the water in the shower and get undressed, take off all my jewelry, including my lavish, trackable, diamond dog collar, and place it all in the little velvet lined dish on the countertop. Oh sorry, I meant to say, the beautiful diamond necklace my husband had custom made, using the latest nanotechnology, so he could know where I am every second of every day.

I step into the shower and start washing my hair. As I’m massaging the shampoo into my hair, I hear Bronx call me.

“Baby? Did you take your necklace off? I got an alert,” he calls into the bathroom.

“Yeah,” I holler back over the noise of the shower, “I have to wash my hair. I didn’t want it to get full of conditioner. It’s on the tray on the bathroom counter.”

“Okay, just checking,” he says before I hear the bathroom door close, “Please don’t forget to put it on when you’re done.”

“No problem, Sweetheart,” I call back sweetly.

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"Lex, how long was that?"

"Ninety-seven seconds. I thought it would be faster. Better give us a buffer, just in case" she advises.

"Yeah. That's a good call. Ten seconds?" Inod and pout my lip as! rinse out the shampoo.

"I haven't been out in for a long time. I'm itching to go. Ten seconds is way more than enough. We just have to shift quickly."

"Okay. You're not exaggerating, right? If you tell me ten seconds, I'm giving you ten seconds."

"I can make it eight if you want," she snarks back.

"Fine. Ten. You don't have to be a little bitch about it," I huff at her.

"You don't have to be a little bitch," she mimics in a mocking tone. I roll my eyes and cut off our connection before she makes me mad.

I rub the conditioner into my hair and pile it on top of my head. I close my eyes and think outside of my body, "Leticia, are you there?"

"Hi Kas! Is it time?" Leticia asks excitedly.

"I'm in the shower. Be ready to take notes. I will recite the incantation as soon as I'm dressed."

"Got it! You behave now, Kas. I only have two eyeballs left since you told me not to kill Bronx or Jasen," she warns, but sounds more like she's reciting the safety instructions airline stewards give before the flight takes off.

She changes her voice to sound like a moaning ghost with a giggle, "T'll be waatchiling youuuu."

I smile and shake my head at her, "I'll see you tonight before I go to sleep.

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Love you, Leticia.”

“Love you too, Kas!” she chimes happily as I pull myself back to my body and finish my shower.

I put on a thick sweater and black jeans, paired with a pair of trainers. Once I dry my hair, I put all my jewelry back on, including the necklace and a string bracelet with some of Leticia’s hair braided into it. I recite an incantation as I slide my fingers over the bracelet. It glows purple for a moment, and the vision in my left eye goes blurry. I blink hard a few times to adjust to the sensation of seeing double and look in the mirror. The dark circles under my eyes are more pronounced than they have been before, making my skin look pale. I haven’t weighed myself, but I feel like I may have lost weight.

My left eye looks bloodshot from the spell, which doesn’t help my appearance any, but I know it will fade soon. I hide the bracelet under my sleeve and head out to meet Bronx so we can hand out boxes of baked goods around the packhouse.

“Kas, what happened to your eye?” Bronx asks when I meet him by the door. He takes my chin in his hands and gives me a concerned look.

“Oh, I got shampoo in my eye. Lex is already healing it. It will be better in no time,” I brush off his worry.

“Hi Tessa! Hi Arnie!” I smile and take her hand when we get into the hallway.

Arnie gives me a nod and greets Bronx. They get to work moving in and out of the apartment, stacking boxes onto a cart while I speak with Tessa.

“Hi Kas, how, uh, how are you feeling?” she asks, looking unsure of herself.

“I’m feeling much better. Thank you for asking. And how have you been? Bronx said you have been working closely with the team. Oh, would you like a cupcake?” I open the box in my hands and pull out a lemon cupcake with lavender icing for her.

“Oh, not right now. M-maybe when I’m done with escort duty,” she smiles, holding her hands up in front of her.

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"Suit yourself," I shrug.

"Is your eye okay?" She leans down and points to my left eye.

"Oh, yeah," I wave her off, "Shampoo in my eye."

"Okay, Luna," Arnie says, "We're ready. We will start on the second floor, then go down to the main level to catch anyone who is around."

"And the hospital wing?" I ask hopefully.

Bronx looks at the boxes, "Well, we should have enough. Worst-case scenario, we can come back and get more. Goddess knows there's plenty in there."

"Great! Let's go," I sing with a broad grin. Bronx lets me walk beside Tessa so she and I can chat. She tells me how much she enjoys being here at Blood River and is grateful that we are going to let her live out the rest of her lifetime here. She doesn't speak out against

Katherine, but she definitely seems more relaxed now that she has distance from her.

We make our way to the second floor and start handing packages out to the packhouse residents. Some people are not home, so we leave the boxes in front of their doors to make sure they don't miss out on the snacks. It is nice to see so many people, even if they are looking at me a little awkwardly.

I'm a little disappointed that neither Diane nor Carly are in their suites. I was hoping to apologize to Diane for freezing her. It needed to be done, but she didn't know that.

We make our way to the main floor, handing boxes to pack members who are working and then to the kitchens, where Mrs. Miller engulfs me into a powerful hug and hug. Tessa stiffens when she hears me squeak in Mrs. Miller's arms, but Bronx pulls her back and reassures her its normal behavior for us.

There isn't anyone just milling around because of the security protocols in place, so we can make quick work of handing out goodies. Arnie opens the door to the hospital wing, and I am surprised to see Diane and Carly sitting in the patient waiting area.

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“Diane! Carly! What’s wrong? Why are you here?” I kneel in front of them, taking their hands in mine.

“We’ll be okay, Kas. We have just been feeling a little off since we got back from Greece and our wolves haven’t been able to help, so we came in to get checked out. That’s all,” Carly explains. Diane gives her a sweet smile and smooths Carly’s strawberry blonde hair back.

“We already saw the doctor. He ran a couple of tests. We are just waiting for the results,” Diane pulls her attention away from Carly and looks at us with a sad smile.

“Diane, why didn’t you say something? I could have healed you. I can do it now if you want,” my eyebrows knit with worry for my friend and her mate. Inside, I fight against the storm cloud that wants me to be angry that they didn’t say something sooner.

“No Kas, you’ve been sick yourself. We couldn’t ask that of you. The doctor is more than capable of handling whatever is going on,” Diane pats my hand, “Here he comes now.”

I turn to see the head doctor walking towards us holding up two folders, “Ladies, um, would you like to come to my office?”

“No sir, you can tell us here. The Alpha and Luna are practically family,” Carly reassures him.

“Well,” he looks at Bronx and I nervously, then hands the folders to Diane and Carly, “we still need to do an exam for each of you to confirm for sure, but I, uh, want to be the first to congratulate you?”

Diane looks at him, confused, and opens the folder. I watch her scan the paper, then look up at him angrily. She takes the folder from Carly’s hand and looks at the paper inside.

“Doctor, is this some kind of sick joke?” she jumps up and growls at him. Her face is turning red with anger and tears are forming in the corners of her eyes.

“Diane, what is it?” Carly stands up and takes her hand, holding her back from the doctor.

“The tests show that we’re both pregnant, Carly. I’ve never been with a man. Not like that, anyways,” Diane’s lip trembles when she looks at her mate, “I swear to you. Never.”

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"I-I don't understand, Doctor. I mean, I dated a guy in high school, but that was years ago and I would never cheat on my mate. How is this possible?" I hear Carly's voice crack as she asks the question.

"Divine intervention," Tessa interrupts. "What? What are you talking about, Tessa?" Carly asks impatiently.

"IT would never question the strength of your mate bond," Tessa explains apologetically, "but it's happened before. You were in Greece when Amari and Jasen died. You both saw what Bronx did, so, presumably, it emotionally charged you to witness that. It may have been strong enough that Mother guided their spirits to you."

"Tessa, you think Diane and Carly could be pregnant with our sister and her mate?" I ask in awe, looking back and forth between her and Diane and Carly. She looks at the pair with compassion, "Unless either of you ladies have another explanation?"

Diane and Carly look at each other and start chuckling, which turns into laughter and tears, complete with hugs and kisses at the excitement of the news that they will both be having pups.

"Well, I definitely didn't see THAT coming," Bronx murmurs in my ear with a chuckle.

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