

Forever in the Past and Forever in the Future Chapter 134

Chapter 134

Musu's POV

My life was so different a year ago. I was the acting female Beta for the Lune D'or pack in . France, waiting for my brother to find his mate. Then I found Marco Sanchez. His Alpha and Luna were visiting our pack for a long weekend. Our Gamma Jenna and I wanted to bring fresh pastries from our local bakery to them as a welcome gift. Marco is one of the personal guards for the Luna from the Blood River pack, so he was on duty in the hall outside their suite when we came down the hall.

My initial impression of him was how impressively large of a Werewolf he is. He's not quite as big as an Alpha wolf, but close. A broad and muscular man, with a serious expression that makes him look intimidating. Marco is exactly what you think of when you imagine a bodyguard. He is clean shaven, with his black hair cut into a Caesar style haircut. His bronzed skin makes his light brown eyes stand out like shining topaz jewels. I swear my heart skipped a beat when his plum and rhubarb scent hit my nose for the first time and my wolf, Mercy, howled in delight at the sight of him. 1

I knew in that moment, that I wanted to spend the rest of my life with Marco. I didn't know how that was going to work since his pack was in the state of Montana in the United States, but I didn't care. My hopes to be with my mate were almost dashed when he nearly shot his Alpha trying to protect me. But fortune shone on us when both of our Alpha's were merciful and allowed us to stay the weekend together. Let me tell you, it was a weekend that will live in my memory forever. When it was time for him to leave, my family and Alpha gave permission for me to go live with him and I haven't regretted a moment since. 1

I truly can't imagine a more perfect mate. Marco treats me like a queen, never missing an opportunity to kiss me deeply or cherish my body. Every time he sees me, he smiles like it is the first time he has ever laid eyes on me. Even though I have a job working for MasonCo, he works hard to make sure I have everything I could possibly want and more. While he would never say so, I think he would rather I stay home than work, but he knows how important my work is to me, so he suffers in silence.

We have even gone to look at engagement rings, so he knows my ring size and what style I like the best. We also recently moved from his old one-bedroom apartment to a two-bedroom house near the packhouse so we can start planning for a family once we get married.

Another glorious thing about my mate is that Marco loves cooking for me when he isn't working, which is perfect because I could burn pasta. He and some of the other

unmated warriors took cooking lessons from the Luna. She put together the cooking program when she found out he was interested in cooking, but didn't know how to make much more than instant macaroni and cheese. She did a great job, because I don't have to worry about a thing in the kitchen. And for safety's sake, if we don't have leftovers in the fridge the evenings Marco works, I join the pack members who eat dinner at the packhouse.

The Sanchez family is large and loving. Marco is the youngest of five boys. His brothers all have mates and pups. His parents love and care so much about all of us. The entire family spends every Sunday with them at their house. Marco's mother has helped me learn Spanish and taught me how to make saffron rice. His father has shown me how to dance merengue style. I'm thrilled I know Spanish and how to dance merengue. Marco says it is a good thing he and Mama Sanchez know how to make saffron rice.

I walk in the door an hour later than usual, still preoccupied with Lenora's reaction to the video I showed her. I'm pulled from my thoughts by the delicious smell of pork adobo and Latin music filling the house. A smile forms when I go to the kitchen to see Marco, barefoot, wearing boxers with an apron and no shirt. He tastes the sauce from the pot on the stove.

"Mi belleza de ébano (My ebony beauty)!" he flashes his dashing smile when he sees me and extends his hand, bidding me to him. I gladly put my hand in his, feeling our familiar sparks comfort me after a long day, and let him pull me into his loving embrace. He rocks us in rhythm to the music, kissing me like he hasn't seen me in a week. When he pulls away, he lifts the spoon so I can take a taste of the sauce. I take a little sip from the spoon. I can't help but moan and nod at how delicious it is. He kisses and nuzzles my cheek before he asks me to set the table while he finishes up.

"Please put a shirt and shorts on for dinner, Mon Loup (My Wolf)," I call over my shoulder as I take the dishes to the dining room, "We're only animals outside the house and in the bedroom, not at the dinner table!"

I hear him groan as he goes for a shirt and shorts. He has to wear a suit for work, so he says when he is at home, the fewer clothes he has to wear, the better. Not that I mind seeing him walk around in nothing but underwear, but wearing clothes at the dinner table seems reasonable to me.

I see Marco looking at me from the corner of his eyes as I set the table. He fills our dishes with the large servings of the pork dish before sitting down himself.

"Tell me about your day, Marco. I could use the distraction," I smile as I take a proper bite of the delicious pork food.

He tells me about the Luna's progression in her warrior training but his words fade into the background as the images from the video overtake my mind again. The

ruthlessness and lack of remorse over such a violent act still trouble me. The look of fear, clear in the victim's eyes, even through the graininess of the video.

A year ago, when the Alpha and Luna approached me about an opportunity to work on a special project, I was ecstatic. The opportunity to search for the mythological daughters of the Moon Goddess known as the Menae. We thought it would mean I would get to travel and meet new people while helping Luna Kas find her long-lost family. I wish I still had the same optimism as I did back then. It has brought nothing but stress for everyone and heartbreak for my Luna.

"Musu, a-are you okay?" The concern in Marco's voice brings me back to reality.

"Hmm? What? Yes, it sounds like she's going to do great." I look up at him and realize he has his hand over mine.

"Where's your mind, mi Corazón (my Heart)? Cause it sure ain't here with me," He reaches up

and caresses my chin.

"I'm so sorry, Marco. I-I was just," I'm not sure what to say to him, "It was just a tough day at work, but I'm fine. I promise. You have my attention now. Please, continue."

"Is it something you can talk about?" He asks, trying to sound casual, but I can sense his worry. My handsome mate, he cares for me so much. He hates to see this job taking a toll on me, but he also understands how important it is to me and to the Luna.

"No, unfortunately, isn't something I can talk about right now," I frown. I hate keeping secrets from him, but I have orders.

"Tell you what, lemme draw you a bath instead of boring you with specs about my new handgun," his features soften and he chuckles when he realizes I haven't heard a thing he has said to me, "I'll let you have time with your thoughts. Just lemme know when you're ready and I'll come to bed, alright?".

I smile as I take his hand from the side of my face and kiss his palm. "Thank you so much, Marco. A hot bath is exactly what I need right now. I'll take the dishes to the kitchen." 1

He stands and kisses my forehead before going to start the bath for me.

I'm just finishing the dishes when I feel his muscular arms wrap around my waist and his soft lips on my neck. I turn around and hug him back, letting myself melt into his chest.

"I'm worried about you, Musu. You ain't your usual self lately." He rubs the back of my neck and buries his nose into my hair as I breathe in his sweet scent, letting it lull me into a calm state.

"I'll be okay, *Mon Loup*. Lenora is going to speak to Alpha Bronx and Luna Kas soon. So you will find out soon as well," I confide as much as I can.

"Okay, well, I'll keep the Xbox company. But, you know, if you need any help in the bath, just give the word. I'll be right there," he whispers in my ear. I can practically hear the smile in his tone. His voice is rich with double meaning.

I give him another kiss and slip out of his arms, "I think I'll be okay for now, but I will let you know if I change my mind."

I settle into the hot bath, letting the water soak away my worries. My mate is in the living room growling and swearing at his game while I relax. I feel my eyes getting heavy and let them close for a moment.

Luna Kas is embracing the woman in the floppy hat and sunglasses. The woman is holding the

dagger behind Kas's back. Marco and I try to warn her, but the woman takes off the glasses and hat to show it is Kas, embracing a twin version of herself.

"Musu. Musu, wake up," Marco's gentle voice coaxes me from my dream. I sit up in the bathtub and shiver in the cold water. Marco is kneeling next to the tub with a fluffy towel.

"Oh Marco. I had a weird dream about Luna Kas." I yawn as I stretch my arms and stand up.

"Well, I'm sure she'll love to hear about it tomorrow. For now, it's time for bed. Falling asleep in the bathtub is dangerous," he gently scolds as he wraps the towel around me and carries me to bed.

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Chapter 3

Bronx's POV

"Kas, Baby, are you sure there's nothing I can say to talk you out of this? I really feel like you need more time before we try this again." I block the door to our apartment with

my hands raised helplessly. She's still upset from Sunday, which is very out of character for her. She is usually pretty forgiving and wants to talk through things as soon as she is feeling less troubled, but she has kept the bedroom door locked all night for the past several nights and this morning, didn't come out until she was completely dressed and ready to go. I know it's a useless plea, but I have to at least try to stop my mate from getting hurt again. "Yes, I'm sure, Bronx. Lex and I are ready this time," Kas says defiantly, crossing her arms in front of her chest, "Now let's go, we're going to be late." Yeah. She's still mad. I sigh, and rub my hands on my face in frustration before letting them drop heavily and moving out of the way so she can leave. I can tell from her demeanor Lex is still influencing her. If that's the case, nothing I say is going to make a difference. "This is bullshit, Bronx," Saint growls, "Why does she want to do this so badly?" "She wants to prove herself to the pack, and she thinks this is how," I explain to him, "The way we treated her the other day doesn't help, Saint." (1) "Well, I don't care how determined she is...or how cute she's when she's mad.

I'm not rolling over like a damn puppy for this," he huffs. His tone is antagonistic and playful at the same time. "I don't expect you to roll over. In fact, we need to keep trying to stop her," I reassure him. "Wait. Really?" He sounds surprised. "Yeah, think about it. If she's able to do this, then what's next? She won't stop. Sometimes we need to protect her from herself, Saint." "Sometimes you're not as much of a dummy as I think you are," he muses. When I open the door, Kas's personal guards, James and Marco, are already standing in the hall, ready to escort her. They give me a respectful nod, then pull her forward so they can speak with her privately. Honestly, she doesn't really need guards anymore. She can take care of herself if she needs to, but trouble has a tendency to find her, so it gives me peace of mind knowing they have her back. James and Marco are two of my best warriors. James specializes in hand to hand combat and Marco is a master marksman. They both served with me in the military, so I know how capable and fearless they both are. I had assigned them to guard Kas since a week after she came to our pack. Back then, she needed them to protect her. Now she relies on them to keep her fighting skills sharp. In the past year, they have gone from teaching her how to defend herself to training her to beat me in a sparring match. Kas isn't just my mate and Luna of the Blood River pack.

She is also a goddess. That isn't just me praising her. I mean, she's my little goddess, but that's only when we're alone, if you get what I'm saying. But when I tell you she's also a goddess, I'm talking about the literal sense of the word. Her mother is the Moon Goddess, Selene. Yeah, that Moon Goddess. Kas is one of fifty daughters called the Menae. Don't get me wrong, Kas had a really rough life growing up. She was raised as a slave who was severely abused by her old pack. I was lucky I found her when I did. She probably wouldn't have survived much longer. She didn't know who or what she actually was until her seventeenth birthday when Lex woke up and told her. To be honest, for as much research as we have done and as much outside help as we have gotten, we're still trying to figure out exactly who she is. My sister Lenora and Marco's mate, Musu, have a special assignment through my security company to find Kas's forty-nine sisters. I get to the training field after warmups and join in on a cardio workout. Afterwards, the trainer breaks us up into smaller groups to work on various

techniques. I work with some of the high school juniors and seniors who are getting pretty big.

They need someone to show them how to leverage their body weight against opponents. I'm six feet six inches tall and two hundred and sixty pounds, so I'm the best person to teach them. I look across the field and see Kas working with kids who just turned twelve and allowed to start their training. She is only five feet three inches tall and about a hundred and twenty pounds, so they are close to her size. They are working on basic defensive stances and proper form. 1 "Bronx, some of those pups are bigger than Kas. Are you sure she's safe?" Saint worries. "Oh, now you're worried about her? Saint, she can take Milo and Reggie down in a two on one. She's fine." I roll my eye at his fussing. The whistle blows, and it's time for grappling. The matches start with the junior warriors and progress to guards and, finally, ranked pack members. Kas and I stand next to the ring watching match after match. She stands a step further away from me than she usually does, silently showing her irritation with me. I can feel the tension in her growing as each match passes. The best match of the morning is my sister, Lenora, who is my Beta Milo's mate and Musu, who used to be the acting female Beta in her old pack before becoming mates with Marco, so it is a Beta vs Beta match. They are both very competitive and excellent fighters. Lenora barely wins by locking on a painful-looking submission hold. The two women limp out of the ring, laughing and joking with each other. I notice Lenora grab a towel to wipe blood from a cut on Musu's chin. She has become so much more motherly to everyone since my niece Codi was born. Now, for the moment I've been dreading. It's finally time for me to spar with Kas. Saint and I absolutely do not want to do this, especially after coming to terms with the fact that I shouldn't have let him grab her yesterday. He says he understands what he did is wrong, but he doesn't sound very remorseful about it. 1 In the past ten months, Kas has fought me four times but has lost every time. She has gotten better at each match, but she still isn't able to achieve her goal. After each defeat, she gets more angry and frustrated. When she gets emotional like that, a purple aura glows around her body. Just one of her many supernatural abilities. Our pack is used to it by now, but it can still be a bit startling if you aren't expecting it. While it may not sound like Kas fighting me is a fair fight based on our size difference, but trust me, it is. I could describe her fighting style as a technician, where mine is more brute force. Thanks to James and Marco, what she lacks in size, she makes up for in skill and technique. James even mentioned once that he thought she would make a good assassin. Over my dead body. Not that she has it in her to kill someone, anyway. She saw someone get shot dead in front of her once. She didn't handle it very well. "Alright, Alpha. Luna. You both know the rules. You can use wolf strength, but no shifting, no biting, no clawing. Oh and no powers, Luna," the trainer announces as Kas and I both step into the ring, "Match ends with three count pin, submission, or knockout." I take off my eye patch and hand it to my Gamma Reggie. I rarely like to take it off in front of everyone, but with James educating her, everything is a weapon. Kas would definitely find a way to use it against me. I lost my eye in a battle with a witch about six years ago when I was in the military. She carved it out with a cursed silver knife. She also paralyzed me and cut out a chunk of my liver. The tip of the knife broke off inside me. The witch probably would have killed me if it hadn't been for Milo and Reggie. Even after several surgeries,

there is some silver embedded so deeply that I have to live with it in my body. It's not enough to make me sick, but enough that my liver will never fully heal and I will never be at one hundred percent strength. 12. The trainer blows the whistle and steps out of the ring. Kas takes a defensive posture, making her petite frame that much more compact. Her eyes flash black as her wolf Lex comes forward, then back to their regular bright violet, practically glowing with energy. She's not my beautiful, caring mate right now. She is a cold blooded warrior. An apex predator, locked in on her target. Her sparkly silver hair is in a braided ponytail that bobs back and forth behind her as she lightly side steps just out of my reach. James and Marco call out instructions to her while some of the pack members cheer her on. The entire pack watches us intently. I take my stance and mirror her movements before stepping forward and taking a half-hearted jab at her, knowing full well she will easily dodge it. As I lean forward, Kas lands a series of jabs and a knee into my ribs. I hop back to avoid the full brunt of the blows. After a few more minutes of me not taking the match seriously, she stands up straight and glares at me. "What? You done already, Baby?" I ask with a smirk, standing upright as well. "Fight me, Bronx," she snarls at me. "I am fighting you, Kas." She steps forward and pushes hard against my chest, forcing me to take half a step back. I feel Saint taking notice now. "You told me if I beat Reggie and Milo, I could fight you. I beat them both at the same time. I have proven myself worthy of this match. So quit screwing around and FIGHT ME," she yells, giving me another hard shove. "Knock it off, Kas," I growl through gritted teeth. I can feel Saint trying to claw to the surface as his patience crumbles. He will not tolerate being disrespected, especially in front of our pack. Even if it is from our frustrated mate. A low rumbling growl comes from Kas as a purple aura starts to glow around her body. I cross my arms and stand my ground against her growing tantrum. I love my mate more than anything, but she is only nineteen and can be a bit immature at times. Just like the impatient Alpha warrior wolf I share a body with. "Don't be a damn COWARD, BRONX!" she screams, her purple aura shining brightly now, and slaps me across the face. In that moment, Saint loses any semblance of restraint he was holding on to and pushes forward, trying to take control of my body. I struggle against him while trying to keep my composure with Kas. She notices something is wrong and steps back slightly. "Absolutely fucking not," he snarls as I feel myself being yanked to the back of my mind. I can't tell if he is talking to me or about Kas's actions. Completely disoriented by the sudden switch in control, I watch helplessly as he takes over and lunges at her with an earth shaking growl. It's been over a year since Saint lost his temper to the point where I can't control him. I hurt people I care about and did things I will regret for the rest of my life. The details on what happened aren't important right now. What is important is that I have been on medication and in therapy to help keep him calm ever since. Kas doesn't seem to be surprised by Saint taking over and lunging at her. Instead, she braces herself like she was expecting it. In the split second it takes to reach her, I realize I have played into her strategy for the match. She used my wolf against me. She's so damn smart. 1 As I grab under her armpits, she laces her hands behind my neck and pulls backwards. She arches her back and, using a combination of my momentum and her body weight, she shifts us to her right side, pulling us into a roll. We hit the mat with a hard thud. As we land, I feel an odd shift in the surrounding energy. A force that is not me involuntarily pulls Saint back and I'm suddenly in control of my body again. As my body comes to a stop out of the

roll, I realize Kas is no longer gripping my neck. In fact, she isn't in my arms at all. I lift myself up and look around, but I don't see her anywhere in the ring. The pack members around the ring look confused. As they realize she's gone, their eyes go wide and people start murmuring to each other. "Kas?" I pull myself up onto one knee. Is this some sort of trick? I can't sense her emotions and I can't smell her fresh rain and lilac scent. She's gone. What the Hell is happening? "Kas?" I yell more urgently. Kas has many abilities, but disappearing into thin air isn't one of them. Marco and James both jump into the ring, sniffing the air, searching for their Luna. "Where did she go?" I look at the two guards, trying to convince myself this is some sort of trick they taught her. "James, where is she?" "I-I don't know, Alpha," he looks around in disbelief. The people around the ring all look frightened now. "Well, she couldn't have just disappeared into thin air!" I growl at him dangerously. "Alpha, this ain't something we taught her," Marco explains, still looking around frantically. I have never seen Marco panic before, but I think he is right on the verge. "Don't just stand there! Split up and find her," I bark at the dumbfounded faces around me, "She has to be here somewhere." "Yes, Alpha," the entire pack replies in unison and immediately starts splitting into search groups. "Search every inch of the territory until you find her! Musu, Lenora, if we don't find her within half an hour, collect your things and meet me in the research library," I order before turning away to help lead one of the search groups.

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Chapter 136

Daughters of the Moon Goddess by Neener Beener Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Katherine's POV

"Katherine, things are getting worse. How much longer do we need to wait?" My sister Amari whines as she paces behind me. "I'm well aware of the situation, Amari. We have to have patience. We can't just yank her away from her life and demand that she save us all." Amari stops pacing and looks into the monitor at the young woman cleaning the counter of a bakery, then sighs, "Why not?" "You know the rules. Just because we are goddesses, doesn't mean we can do anything we please. She can't know anything unless the situation is dire." "I hate the rules, sister. Besides, this is dire. The Dark has already killed one guardian. How many more have to die? All of them? Do you think we're next? And what about all the sisters in our charge? What if they're in danger too," she shakes her head with worry while asking rapidfire questions she knows I don't have the answers to. Amari doesn't look away from the screen while she speaks.

I notice her eyes turning glassy with unshed tears. I feel my nerves turning raw at her outburst "She shouldn't have to go through this every lifetime and we shouldn't have to bear witness. Never remembering who she is? Having to sit back and watch her suffer alone? It's cruel and you know it," Amari finally sighs, stepping away from the monitor.

“First of all, Cordell wasn’t just a guardian, he was my mate. You don’t think this hurts me as much as anyone else?” I snap at her with a growl. I push my chair back roughly, knocking her into the wall behind me. “Kathrine, you know it’s not-,” she tries to interrupt. I raise my hand, stopping her in her tracks. “Amari, unless you know of some other way, one we haven’t found in the last five thousand years, then we have no choice but to stand back and bear witness to her life without interruption. When the time is right, we will know, and we can summon her. Until then, we need to wait.” I throw my arms out to the sides as I walk away backwards from her. “So quit whining about it. We need to give Tessa and Alexandros a chance to stop The Dark. For her protection and ours.” I put my hands on my hips and glare at her. As usual, the talented healer’s emotions are pinned to her sleeve. She lowers her soft blue eyes, letting her long auburn hair fall into her face. I immediately regret the tone of my voice when I see her reaction. “I’m sorry, Amari. My temper got the best of me.” I sigh in defeat and reach for her hand, but she turns away from me instead. “I’m going for a run. Mind link me if you get news of Cora and Dante’s whereabouts or any of the Feral for that matter.” I throw open the door to my office and sulk away. Away from Amari, away from the drama of my family, away from the sadness I feel when I think about everything I shared with Cordell in this house.

The housekeeping omegas bow as I pass them in the hallways of the regal estate. The beautiful home has been in our family for over three centuries, but with the talented housekeeping staff and our abilities, we are able to keep it looking practically brand new. “Have a blessed day, Luna,” the staff all say as I pass by, with their eyes to the ground. I internally groan. I hate the formalities that come with my position and I wish they would treat me like everyone else. Being the oldest of fifty sisters is burdensome. For once, I would like freedom from responsibility. A warm breeze and the salty sea air greet me as I step outside. I take a deep, cleansing breath and pull off my dress, placing it in the basket by the door. “Alright, Seraph, let’s blow off some steam,” I say to my wolf. “Katherine, you never have to tell me twice,” she purrs in response. I feel my bones start to crack and elongate. My skin stretches as my body becomes larger and my blonde hair becomes flaxen colored fur. Seraph shakes herself out and bolts for the woods. We run deeper and deeper until we come to a small clearing with a stream. I shift back to my human form and I put on a dress from the basket next to the stream. I sit on a rock, dipping my feet into the cool water, and think about my mate. I look in the water at my reflection. My gold colored eyes stare back at me. As hard as I try to hide it, the sadness is still fresh in my features. I close my eyes and try to imagine my mate’s pine and sandalwood scent. The memory is so strong. We had over two hundred years together in this life, but my imagination isn’t the same as the real thing. I know I will see him in our next lifetime, since our human and wolf spirits are eternally connected. But not having him with me for the rest of this life still hurts. I remind myself that it’s just another part of the life of the Menae. Cordell and I lead the group of nine Menae, known as the Maven. Not just in this lifetime, during all of our spirits’ journeys. The eleven of us have a natural talent for various aspects of knowledge, politics, business, and money. It helps us maintain all of our business ventures and helps finance anything our large family may need. Since our memories and experiences follow us from lifetime to lifetime, our experiences almost exceed our bank accounts. Almost.

Cordell was in Milan on business when I felt our mate bond break. Just like it has a dozen times before, it felt like a bottomless pit ripped open in my heart. It pulled me in and didn't let go until it destroyed me.

I didn't know what happened to him, just that he was gone and I felt like I might die too. Amari and her mate, Jasen, healed me. Amid the blinding pain and agony, I felt their warmth and love spread through me. Filling the dark, gaping hole inside me a little. While they took the physical pain away, the emotional pain was just as bad. There is nothing a healer can do to take emotional pain away. I barely left my room for a month before our sister, Tessa, dragged me out of bed by my hair and made me go back to work. She knew I needed to keep my mind busy to get through the loss of my mate. While she was right about making me get back to work, she didn't have to pull my hair. At the end of the day, we are sisters, and you learn these sorts of nuances about each other when you know each other for over seven thousand years. Tessa and her mate, Alexandros, lead nine of our sisters we call Frouros. They are our sentinel. Some of the most fearsome warriors that have ever walked the earth, they provide security and protection for all the Menae. When they found out Cordell died, I didn't even have to ask. They immediately set out to find out what happened. They worked with the local authorities to find Cordell. His body was in an alley. His throat was slit, and he was missing an eye, his liver, and his heart. They checked the surveillance footage from a bank security camera only to find his murderer was a well dressed petite woman.

The investigators promised to keep searching until they found her and brought her to justice, but we already knew it would never happen. When Tessa showed me the video, we both knew right away, the woman in the video was our sister Leticia. 1 Leticia is one of the nine sisters who is part of the group we call Mavri Magea or The Dark. She doesn't lead the faction, but she has been power hungry for thousands of years and was finally bold enough to set something into motion that could not be reversed by murdering Cordell. I could only hope our mother gives us a sign to summon their leader before too much damage is done. If Leticia is out there hunting down guardians. Then we are in uncharted territory.

Forever in the Past and Forever in the Future Chapter 137

Chapter 137

Daughters of the Moon Goddess by Neener Beener Chapter 5

Chapter 5

"Katherine. Tessa has news. Come back quickly." Amari's voice rings in my mind and pulls me from my thoughts. "Alright, I'm on my way," I sigh. I shift and let Seraph take us back to the house. I step into my office to find Amari, Jasen, Tessa, and Alexandros all waiting for me. I slow my pace as I feel tension thick in the air, solidified by the serious

looks on their faces. "What have you found, sister?" I ask as I sit down. I give Jasen and Alexandros a nod of respect, then turn my attention to Tessa. No one says anything. Tessa is giving me a furious look, which is mirrored by the other three werewolves glaring at me. "What?" I feel my brow knit with confusion. "Did you know someone tried to kill the guardian of the Mavri Magea almost seven years ago?" She asks with a snarl. "WHAT?! No! I wouldn't keep information like that from you, Tessa," I defend myself. "Is this a joke?" "Katherine, don't play games. Was it Leticia? Don't protect her!" Alexandros growls. "Stand down, Alexandros," I challenge him. "Now is not the time to let The Dark divide us. We need to be united." He crosses his arms over his broad chest and stares me down with his piercing green eyes. "I swear to all of you, I didn't know," I reiterate forcefully. Tessa takes a human fashion magazine out of a folder and opens it to the center spread. There is a black-and-white full-page image of Bronx Mason wearing a designer suit, staring directly at the camera. His hands clasped in front of his massive body with the posture of a confident warrior. There is a dangerous smirk on his face that only Bronx could manifest, inviting and deadly at the same time. He's intimidating, even as a photograph on paper. He is the modern day personification of the guardians' grandfather, Perses, Titan God of War. Unlike the other guardians, whose human spirits were simply a gift from the Goddess Hecate to our mother, she blessed Bronx's spirit to be strong enough to protect the Mavri Magea. 1 Bronx's slicked back black hair and olive skin are clear, even in black-and-white. The editor of the photo left the distinctive crisp green of his iris colorized. His other eye is covered with an eye patch. Next to him is a petite woman wearing a dress made of fluffy layers of tulle. She is barefoot, standing on her tiptoes on a stepladder.

She's leaning forward, giving him a kiss on the cheek, her eyes are squeezed shut in some sort of moment of happiness or bliss. The only part of her that is not in black and white is her bright purple lipstick. "We already know he lost his eye during th-," I shake my head in frustration as I flip the page. There she is, making the rest of what I was going to say irrelevant. A perfect close-up photograph of our baby sister, Lokaste, the leader of The Dark. She is looking directly at the camera, innocence and happiness exude from her youthful features. Her sparkly silver hair is up in a topknot, and her large, vibrant violet eyes practically pop off the page. This picture is in color, but she is wearing dark gray lipstick. Presumably, trying to distract from her perfect, fair skin being marred by the thick keloid scars on her jawline and sides of her neck. I let my fingers touch the paper where her cheek is, as I admire her stunning features. I try to speak, but the words get caught in my throat. It doesn't matter how many lives she experiences; she is beautiful. Her life can be wonderful or devastating. It makes no difference. It's all erased from her memory at the end of each of her human length lifetimes. A blessing and a curse, she starts with a blank slate every time she's reincarnated. 1 It ensures she always has hope and her past cannot corrupt her view of the world of the people around her. More importantly, it allows Her spirit to be cleansed of the influence of The Dark. She has a never ending faith in others that anyone else would cast off. As long as Lokaste's human spirit is still on its journey, there is always a light in the world, now and forever. I look up from the magazine and realize my vision is blurred by tears spilling from my eyes. I wipe them away, clearing my throat at the same time. "Forgive me," I say with a shaky voice. I take a cleansing breath before I continue,

"We already knew Bronx lost his eye in the last witch war. It was in a battle with an old hag, not Leticia." "We went to the Elder Council, Katherine. There is more to Bronx's attack that was never published," Tessa says in her harsh, raspy tone. She pulls out papers with the Elder Council logo on the top and lets me read it.

It contains the information we already know about the attack, but also a description of the blade the witch used. A n old omate silver blade. It sounds exactly like the one used to kill Cordell. I read it several times, but the words on the paper don't change. 1 I flip to the next page marked 'CONFIDENTIAL' in large red letters at the top. I look up at Tessa and Alexandros questioningly. The Council never releases confidential information 1 Alexandros shrugs with a smirk on his face, "Randall Smith owed us a favor." I read through the page of private information. The witch didn't slit Bronx's throat, but she did paralyze him while he was still awake. Allowing her to pull his eye from his head and slit his gut open, so she could take part of his liver. Milo Emory and Reggie Slater saved him. The men are now his Beta and Gamma. The tip of the knife broke off in his liver before the witch could do more damage to his organs. It turned out it wasn't just a silver blade. It has some sort of curse on it. If Bronx had been any other wolf, not the guardian of The Dark, he would have died. That's how damn strong he is. The doctors could not remove all the silver. There are still some small pieces embedded in his liver, requiring him to retire from military service. 1 We know it took him months to recover, but he didn't leave the Blood River packhouse for over six months, so we didn't know what he was actually recovering from until the Council released its public report I look up from the paper, feeling my face blanch, "Just like Cordell. H-has Leticia developed the ability to glamour?" "We don't know, but obviously, he wouldn't have married Lokaste if she matched the description of the witch who almost murdered him," Tessa drops her arms, seeing that I clearly didn't know any o f the information from the confidential page.

"More importantly, Bronx isn't at full strength. This is bad," I sigh in frustration, setting the paper down on the table. Just then, a loud crackling sound comes from the corner of the room, startling all five of us. We look up to see the oil lamp that has been sitting dormant on a golden pedestal for millennia lights itself. The flame being emitted is vibrant purple. We all look at each other, the worry clear on everyone's face. "Okay, sisters. You two summon her. I'll go find Cora. She and Dante were last seen in Nepal, so I will start there. Wish me luck," I say firmly. "Katherine, be safe," Amari says, giving me a loving hug. I feel healing energy gently being pushed into my spirit "Don't worry, Amari," I hug her back, "Once the five of us are together, things will be fine." Kas's POV Holy crap. I know Bronx said he wouldn't take it easy on me, but how hard did we hit that mat? I can't remember anything after that.

Every inch of my body is aching. How hard did he land on me? I open my eyes, but realize I still can't see anything, even with my wolf vision. The room is practically pitch black and I'm on a cold cement floor. "Bronx?" I call out hesitantly. As my echo fades, silence fills the room. I sniff the air. Nothing smells familiar. 1 Well, that can't be good. "Lex? What happened? Where are we?" I ask, sitting up gingerly. "I don't know what happened. We were just sparring with our mate, then we woke up here. Wherever here is," she sounds like she's on high alert. "Okay, well, it's like James and Marco say, if we

think we're in danger, keep moving. So let's try to get out of here." I can already feel her healing me as I stand up, stretching my sore muscles. My eyes adjust to the darkness slightly.

The only light is coming from under the door on the far end. It is just enough to allow me to see that I'm in the corner of a large room. There is a cot, but I'm sitting next to it, not on it. Other than that, there is no furniture. Is this a dungeon? If it is, it's the cleanest dungeon I have ever seen. I walk cautiously toward the door when an unfamiliar woman's voice mind links me. "Don't try to leave, Iokaste. The door is enchanted." "Who's there? How do you know my name?" I call out loud. Taking a defensive stance. More importantly, how did someone outside my pack mind link me? "Darling, I know you can't remember, but if you could please just stop touching the enchanted door and listen, we can be done with this childishness and I can explain," the voice says, sounding somewhere between bored and frustrated. I look at the door again. It looks ancient. Ornately carved and gouged with deep scratch marks. My brain fights between going toward it and listening to what the voice has to say. "Lex, decision by majority. What should I do?" "I don't know what's on the other side of the door or what happens if you touch it, Kas. That woman's voice sounds familiar somehow. I say we give her one minute to explain and if it sounds like a load of crap, we bust out of here," Lex advises. "All right, lady, you've got one minute to explain," I yell into the darkness. "Ah, so Elexis has finally talked some sense into you," the voice chuckles dryly. "Forty-five seconds!" I growl. How does she know my wolf's name? "Kas, we are your sisters. We brought you here to tell you the truth about who you are." My body goes numb for a moment. No freaking way. "What?" I whisper in disbelief.

Forever in the Past and Forever in the Future Chapter 138

Chapter 138

Daughters of the Moon Goddess by Neener Beener Chapter 6

Chapter 6

Bronx's POV Four days.

As of this morning, it has been four fucking days since Kas disappeared into thin air. We haven't found a single trace of her anywhere. She's not on pack territory or the bakery shop she owns in town, she hasn't been seen at MasonCo headquarters. I even had an international MasonCo security team check our apartment in Paris. Her cell phone and all her belongings are still in our apartment. There have been no hits on her image on any surveillance videos MasonCo has access to around the world. She's gone. It's like she really disappeared into thin air. I feel like I'm going insane. For the past three days, I have been trying my hardest to focus on searching for my mate, but I kept getting overwhelmed by Saint's raw emotions.

He swings wildly from wanting to be hyper focused on finding Kas to crushing regret and guilt that his last moments with her were full of anger, not fueled by the love and caring she deserves. That's on to of trying to control my own emotions and impatience. I'm mad at myself for not doing a better job controlling him because now he and I are both paying the price. Maybe she would still be here if I would have kept him in check. And I'm frustrated because we have made no progress in finding Kas. I just can't accept that she just popped out of existence. Milo and Reggie keep pulling me out of meetings and conference calls because I can't make it through without losing my temper. As much as the pack members want to contribute to finding their Luna, most of them are too scared to be around me to continue.

I'm getting ready to go to the conference room for another day of calls, meetings, and organizing searches for Kas, but Milo mind links me and asks to speak in private first. A few minutes later, he and Lenora are at my door with their baby, Codi. Based on research by a witch named Lady Camille, we are pretty sure Kas isn't able to have children unless she asks permission from the God Zeus himself. You know, because getting an audience with Zeus is as simple as sending him an invitation for dinner. At this point, we have a better chance of finding him than Kas. I'm glad for the distraction when Lenora hands my niece over to me. The little pup happily giggles and claps her hands at me while I give her raspberries on her chubby cheeks. She has the same green eyes as Lenora and me and her hair is getting darker every time I see her. Lenora is convinced it will be completely black like ours by Codi's second birthday. "BOO!" she shrieks at me with her bubbly high pitched voice. I watch, amused as Codi scrunches up her face and puts her hands up like she is making them into pretend claws. She makes a little rawr' sound to add to the effect.

I smile and let my fangs extend, I playfully snarl and growl at the giggling pup. She grabs onto one of my fangs and pulls on it while she squeals with joy. What can I say? Codi loves her scary Uncle Bronx. 2 "Bronx," Lenora says with a sympathetic look, "Milo and I think you need to be sidelined from meetings about Kas. We can update you at the end of the day, every day, until we find her." "Leni, what are you talking about? I'm not giving up on finding my mate," I use her childhood nickname while I scold her, watching the tone of my voice. I don't want to actually scare Codi. "Come on, man. No one is talking about giving up." Milo steps in defensively. "We all want what's best for Kas. The interruptions during meetings are slowing things down. You can still help by searching the territory for her. You can contact Henri or Lady Camille, see if they have any information. I wouldn't expect anything less from you. In fact, we were kind of thinking it may be time to take this to the media. The more people looking for her, the better. I can get the MasonCoP R team gathered and in the conference room in an hour." I sigh, contemplating my next move. I don't want to argue with my sister or Milo, but I also don't want to waste time not looking for Kas. "Let's go for a run, Bronx," Saint grumbles, "I don't have patience for stupid phone calls right now." I give Codi a kiss on her forehead and give her back to Lenora. "I'm going to let Saint out for a run. I'll let you know what I decide when I get back." "That sounds like a good plan," Lenora smiles. "We'll be in the conference room." She kisses my cheek, then pats it before they leave. in I try letting Saint out for a run. He isn't in the mood to talk, so I give him as much

control as I feel like I can trust him with. We travel for hours to the far reaches of the territory but not to blow off steam. He is searching for Kas and Lex.

I let him do it if it's going to keep him calm. I don't have the heart to tell him what I have already accepted in my mind. He won't find them. Wherever Kas is, I just pray to the Moon Goddess that she is safe and not scared or hurt. We get back to the packhouse late in the afternoon. We quickly shift and I throw on shorts, not bothering with a shirt, before making my way to the conference room. I walk in quietly and stand to the side as Reggie is finishing a call with one of the MasonCo private detectives. Milo and Lenora are next to him, comparing something on their laptop screens. A few other pack members are further down the table, pointing to areas on the world map, whispering to each other. "Alpha," Reggie says as he is hanging up, "No news to report here. How about you?" I sit across from him and put my elbows on the table, letting my hands support my head. Milo and Lenora look up from their laptops, giving me their full attention. I see Milo's eyes turn white as he mind links someone. Most of the people who are reviewing maps stand up and leave silently. "Let's bring in the PR team in the morning," I sigh with defeat once they are out of the room. "You're doing the right thing, Alpha," my assistant, Carly, approaches me. "The pack is getting really worried about the Luna. They're really worried about you too, if I'm being honest." "Thanks Carly. I appreciate your support in this." I give her a weak smile. "Can you please ask Mrs. Miller to bring my dinner to the gardens? I can't go to the dining room tonight. I just – I can't." "Mine too, Carly. I appreciate it. I'm not leaving the Alpha alone right now," Milo chimes in. "Yeah, me too, please," Reggie adds in. "Of course. I will go speak with her right away," she reassures us and steps out of the room, giving us privacy. "Don't worry, Bronx. Ashley and I will address the pack tonight.

"We will give them some sort of update," Lenora says stoically. "Thank you, Lenora," I murmur before rubbing my hands on my face. We sit in silence. There isn't really much to say. I don't have the energy to be angry anymore. I just want to do whatever it takes to get Kas back. After a few minutes, Reggie's mate, Ashley, peeks her head into the room. "Hi guys," she whispers softly. She comes in and closes the door behind her.

There is a stark difference from her usual cheery tone when she speaks, "Carly mind linked me. MasonCo PR team will be here at nine a.m. tomorrow. Bronx, you should wear a gray suit and a solid color tie. They will bring a camera crew and have a script ready so you can record a statement to send to media outlets. They will have it distributed by eleven a.m." I'm lucky to have her as the head of Human Resources for my security company, MasonCo. I look up at her and nod. She smiles sympathetically at me.

The lump that has been sitting in my throat for the past few days won't be ignored any longer. Saint finally realizes what I just agreed to and I unintentionally slam my fist on the table in frustration. Everyone around the room jumps with surprise. I look down and see a crack where my fist has damaged the table. I feel myself blinking back tears, "Guys, you can say what you want about me. I don't care how weak you think I am. Saint and I need her back. W-we can't survive without her. I don't know how much

longer I can take this.” Ashley presses her hands to her heart, then rushes forward to give me a big hug. I feel Lenora pile onto the hug next, then Reggie and Milo.

Forever in the Past and Forever in the Future Chapter 139

Chapter 139

Daughters of the Moon Goddess by Neener Beener Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Katherine’s POV

It takes three days to find Cora and Dante. They lead the sisters who we call Agrios or The Feral. They have always been more wolf than human. Preferring to be outdoors in wolf form, not having to abide by restrictive confines of society’s rules. About three thousand years ago, they decided to leave our pack and live peacefully as nomadic wolves. Watching them struggle with life in human form was painful.

I still remember the day we watched the rusty brown wolves with red eyes happily bound off in different directions into what is now known as Germany’s Black Forest. As long as they stay away from prying human eyes in wolf form, they can live hundreds of years at a time. We only see Cora if Dante dies while she waits for him to be reincarnated. Occasionally, we need Cora and Dante to help us with family issues. The oil lamp coming to life with a flame was one of those issues. A harbinger that we need to come together and rally against an imbalance. The purple of the flame indicates something specifically related to The Dark. I find them deep in the Khangai mountains of Mongolia. The closer I get, the more it feels like something is wrong. I can feel their pain, but it is so raw and animalistic, I can’t pinpoint what’s causing it. Seraph runs countless miles until their scents are strong enough for a good, long howl to summon them. She waits until she feels their presence. I can’t smell Cora or Dante, but two of the Feral are waiting for me in the thick trees. When I’m sure they are watching, I shift back to my human form and call out to them. “Sisters, please. We need Cora and Dante to come home. The Dark is trying to shift the balance of power. We need help. Mother has lit the harbinger flame,” I speak loudly into the dusk of the forest.

A giant, rusty brown wolf comes into the small clearing. Her red eyes express that emotional pain I can’t define. She walks forward and uses her mouth, gently pulling on my hand, whining with worry. I shift back to Seraph’s form, and we follow them for a couple of hours. We come to an area with a network of shallow caves they are using as their homes. The metallic smell of blood is thick in the air as we approach, putting me on full alert. I look at my two sisters, who are pained and worried. I tentatively pad my way into the cave where the smell of blood is the strongest. Cora is in human form, crying, draping herself over Dante’s body. I don’t know if she didn’t hear me or just doesn’t care. She’s mourning the loss of her mate. I feel her pain in my chest, but I push it down. She needs my support right now.

I wordlessly sit beside her and pull her into my arms. She is covered in Dante's blood. Surprisingly, she easily lets me embrace her as she continues to wail at the pain of losing Dante. I understand exactly what she is going through. I look down at him to see his injuries are almost identical to Cordell's. Leticia has committed this crime. I'm too late. Questions swirl in my mind, but none of them are important at the moment. Not more important than comforting Cora. "Cora, darling," I whisper gently as I stroke her long chestnut brown hair, "The flame has been lit. I hate to ask this of you, especially right now, but I need you to come back with me instead of making the trek on your own." Cora looks up at me and sniffles, letting me wipe the tears from her scarlet red eyes before I take her in my arms again. "Cora, The Dark has done this. Mother has lit the violet harbinger flame. We are summoning lokaste." I rock her gently as I break the news to her. Regardless of how wild she may be, at her core, she is my little sister. She just wants to live in peace, and that dream has been ripped away from her. She sighs and looks down at her mate sullenly. "Giati (Why)?" The sound of her voice startles me. Raspy and dry. She probably hasn't spoken in human form in centuries. "Why? Do you mean why did Dante have to die?"

"Why was the flame lit?" I shake my head and look at her in confusion. She doesn't have words. I get the feeling it's been so long since she has had to speak, that she doesn't quite remember enough human words to respond. "Come on, Cora. Let me help you bury him before we go back to Greece. I have a private airplane waiting for us in Bulgan. It is large enough that if you want our sisters to come with us, they can stay in wolf form. The only one I need to be in human form for now is you, but we can go most of the way to the airport as wolves. Alright?". She takes another ragged breath and nods. She leans over and kisses Dante, stroking his chin one more time before walking away and shifting. Our wolves dig a grave nearby, then we shift back to carry him to the burial site. The four of us gather around the mound and howl mournfully into the mountain sky, sending a prayer to Mother to protect him and send his spirit back to earth quickly. "Cora, where is everyone else? Our other seven sisters?" I ask when we are getting ready to leave. She thinks about my words for a moment, possibly trying to remember their meaning. Finally, she holds up seven fingers, holds them to her chest, then throws her hands out. She has let them roam to where they please. "Alright. Seven fewer people to worry about, I guess," I shake my head as I mutter to myself. Our sisters decide to stay in the mountains while Cora and I leave immediately. When we get outside the airport, I take her to the spot where I left a duffel bag with clothing. I give her a loose fitting dress, slip on boots and a coat. Just enough to cover her, but easy enough for her to remove quickly if she feels like she needs to. When we walk in the doors to the estate, something feels off. The energy of our home feels different. "Cora, I will send Amari and Jasen to find you, but for now, go mourn," I gently take her hand in mine. "Iokaste. Thélo próta na ti do (I want to see her, first]." I nod and lead her down the hall, hand in hand. We make our way into the depths of the estate to find Amari and Tessa. Being in this close proximity to Cora is making my wolf side feel stronger. just as I know her human side is being strengthened by being close to me. I feel her squeeze my hand as we walk.

I look at her with a smile and she gives a weak smile back. Her silent gesture shows support, even through the pain I know she is enduring gives me a little hope that everything is going to work out for the best. "Julia, what is happening? Where are Amari and Tessa?" I ask an omega who crosses our path in the hallway. She looks between Cora and me nervously, "They have summoned lokaste. S-she's here, Luna." "What? Where are they? Where is lokaste now?" "S-she's in the Waiting Room, Luna." "WHAT?!" I scream, unintentionally frightening the girl and making Cora jump a little. I don't have time for apologies right now, I turn and rush down the hall to stop my sisters from whatever torture it is they are imposing on lokaste.

Forever in the Past and Forever in the Future Chapter 140

Chapter 140

Chapter 8

"TESSA! AMARI! Where is she? What is the meaning of this?!" I roar as I throw open the door to the office full of monitors. Amari and Jasen jolt up at my outburst. Tessa doesn't seem bothered and continues to look at the monitors.

"She insisted, Katherine. In case lokaste is dangerous." Amari holds her hands up.

"What? You said to summon her," Tessa tries to justify with a growl. She is still looking at the monitor.

"Amari, can you and Jasen get the keys to Cora's suite and open it for the omegas so they can prepare it? She will also need your healing assistance later. We have lost Dante in this lifetime," I request, trying to keep my voice calm.

"Of course, Luna," the pair say in unison before leaving the room.

"I said summon, not kidnap, and lock her in the Waiting Room!" I snarl at Tessa, who continues to ignore me. Cora stands behind me, looking at us awkwardly.

I look at the monitor. lokaste sitting in the center of the room with her knees pulled into her chest, contemplating something. She stands up and goes to the door. As soon as she touches it, a magical current courses through her body, throwing her back several feet, and knocking her out cold.

Tessa pushes a button on the desk, "Place her back on the cot please."

The door opens and Alexandros steps into the room. He gingerly picks lokaste up and places her on the cot. When he is sure she isn't waking up, he steps out of the room, slamming the door behind him. As soon as the door is closed, lokaste sits back up in the cot, looking around, confused.

“Oh my Goddess! How long has she been in there?” I hiss at Tessa in disbelief.

“Four days. I summoned her just after you left,” Tessa’s tone is nonchalant.

“She has been in that room, touching that door over and over for four days?” I look at the monitor again. Anger boils in the depths of my soul, “No. You are not doing this to her, Tessa. She is innocent. She hasn’t committed any crimes. Get her out of there before she begins to remember. Send her home NOW!”

“Katherine, she doesn’t remember. Yesterday, her wolf convinced her to give me one minute to talk, but as soon as I explained I was one of her sisters, she went for the door again,” Tessa shrugs in an uncharacteristic act of defiance.

“I. Said. Now. Tessa,” I growl at her, my voice full of warning, “We will do this the right way. The diplomatic way. She is our sister and we are not damn vigilantes. Imagine the consequences if Bronx finds out. It’s only a matter of time before he tears the Earth in half to find her. You may as well kiss this lifetime goodbye.”

“Fine,” she grumbles, crossing her arms and sitting back in the chair with a huff, “but vigilante would be much easier.”

I grab her by the collar and force her out of the chair. “ NOW!”

She throws open the door to the monitoring room and storms off. Cora looks at me, then at the door. She chooses to follow Tessa and hurries out the door.

I sit in the chair Tessa just left and watch the monitors. I zoom one of the cameras in on lokaste’s sleeping face. She looks so peaceful, betraying the traumatic life we have had to sit back and watch her endure.

After a few minutes, the door to the room swings open. Tessa and Cora stand in the doorway. Cora is holding an ancient goblet.

“Tokaste, wake up,” Tessa calls from the doorway. The sleeping girl doesn’t move. Tessa and Cora both approach her. Cora squats in front of the cot and gently rubs lokaste’s shoulder.

“Tokaste...Kas...time to wake up,” Tessa says, in a bored, singsong voice with her arms crossed in front of her.

lokaste opens her eyes and scrambles back on the cot as far away from Cora as she can get. She squints at the bright light coming from the doorway after being in darkness for four days.

“L-Lenora?” she asks, looking at Tessa. Tessa’s brows knit, trying to understand who lokaste is asking for.

“No, I’m not Lenora. Are you thirsty?” Tessa asks, pointing to Cora, who is handing lokaste the goblet.

“Where am I?” lokaste asks with a snarl, ignoring Tessa. She looks around the room, trying to find a way to escape. A slight purple aura starts to glow around her body.

Through the darkness, I can see Cora’s eyes glow scarlet. She is fighting the urge to fight lokaste when she sees the visible energy starting to build around her. Cora takes a deep breath to calm herself. She dips her fingers into the goblet and puts them in her mouth, trying to show lokaste the contents are not dangerous. She tips the goblet toward her again, giving an encouraging look. lokaste looks at the cup suspiciously. Of course she does. She doesn’t know Cora or Tessa. She has no reason to trust them.

I push the button next to the monitor. “lokaste, you must drink from the goblet to leave the room. Otherwise, you’ll be stuck in there for eternity. None of us want that for you.”

She looks around when she hears my voice through the speakers. She looks at Cora holding out the goblet patiently, then looks back at Tessa.

“D-Do you know Lenora?” she asks Tessa. She still looks confused. Four days in the room have affected her memories, “You look like you could be her twin.”

“I don’t know your Lenora but if she is anything like me, she would want you to drink from this cup so you can go home and be with her. I’m sure she misses you very much,” Tessa’s tone softens now that she realizes lokaste is not a dangerous criminal who deserves to be tortured in the Waiting Room. Cora pretends to take a sip and extends the goblet to her again.

lokaste takes it from Cora now. Looking at her with caution, she sniffs the cup and takes a deep sip. Cora gently takes the cup back with a smile.

“That’s it,” Tessa smiles, leaning down behind Cora,

“Now just lay back and think about home. Think about your mate, Bronx and your friend Lenora. When you wake up, you’ll be with them and you won’t even remember this.”

lokaste’s eyes look sleepy and her shoulders slump. As soon as her body falls back, she fades away until she is gone.

Cora stands up and takes a sip from the goblet, quickly handing it to Tessa. Her form dissipates into thin air. I feel an energy surge behind me and Cora appears behind me in the monitor room.

She sighs as she sits next to me. “Still beautiful.”

I smile at her as English comes back to her, “Yes, she is.” 1

I look back to the monitor to see Tessa standing in the middle of the room. She walks toward the camera in the corner.

"I'm sorry," she mind links me before drinking from the cup. She tosses it out the door and fades away to an unknown destination.

Shit.