

Forever in the Past and Forever in the Future Chapter 145 Read Online

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Book 2. Chapter 13

The cool morning air combined with the dew dampening my cheek rouses me from my sleep. I pull Kas closer to my chest so she won't catch a chill. She grumbles a little at being moved, but doesn't wake up. My little sleepyhead. She hates waking up early. I smile as I take a deep breath with my nose buried in her hair. Her fresh rain and lilac scent is mixed with something else. Mud and a little blood.

Hold up. Mud and blood?

My eye snaps open and I see the sun is rising over the treeline. We are still out in the woods. I look around to find we are in the grass next to the Blood River. We are both naked and look like we have been rolling in mud puddles. There is a pile of rabbit remains nearby. I notice my face feels sticky. I wipe my mouth with the back of my hand. When I pull my hand away, I see it's covered with goopy, almost dried blood that smells just like the rabbit carcasses. Gross. 3

At some point during the night, Kas and I both shifted, but I can't remember a thing after Saint cut our link. I need to get some clothes for us from the nearby lockbox. I adjust my position slightly so I'm on my back, assessing how far away the container is from where we are. As I turn, I feel sores all over my body. I groan a little and try to find a spot that hurts, that isn't covered in mud. I find a couple spots on my arm that clearly have the remnants of bite marks, but Saint has already started healing them. They are just red and sore now.

"Saint?"

"Let me sleep. It was a late night," he grumbles.

"Not so fast, buddy. What exactly happened last night? How come Kas and I shifted and why are we in the woods? I told you to get her back to the packhouse by dawn."

"Listen, Bronx. I'm not gonna taint your virgin ears by getting into the nitty-gritty details. Just know that Lex and I mated...a lot. It was a night to remember. I don't even know the last time Lex was such an animal. It was probably when she was affected by Cora," I can practically hear him purring, "We were too worn out to make it to the packhouse, so we shifted for you and letting you snuggle up by the river. Like camping. Isn't that what you guys call romantic?" 4

I'm not sure what to say to him. I can't really be mad. He has every right to spend time with Lex as I do with Kas. Who am I to judge if he wants to have a wild night out in the woods with his mate? I just wish he would have taken her back to the packhouse like he said he would instead of romping around until he was too tired to make it back.

"Okay, well I'm going to get us some clothes and go home. Wait. Who's Cora?"

"Leader of The Feral," he yawns, "Don't worry about it, you'll never meet her."

"Fine. Go back to sleep."

"Thank you and you're welcome," he adds, emphasizing 'welcome', like he did me some sort of favor before he curls up to fall back asleep.

I carefully slide my arm out from under Kas and gently lay her head on the ground. She sighs deeply, but looks content. She also has rabbit remnants around her mouth. The wolf side of me thinks it looks kinda sexy. The human side of me knows it will horrify her if she sees herself with blood all over her face. I make a mental note to get her into the shower before she has time to look in a mirror.

I make my way to the lockbox and pull out a pair of shorts for myself and an oversized shirt and a blanket to wrap Kas up in. While I'm doing that, I mind link our ranked pack members and James and Marco.

"Hey everyone, I'm headed back to the packhouse with Kas. I want both James and Marco on duty. One of you inside the apartment, the other outside. Better yet, bring Tyree in as well. I want him on the stairs. No one on the fifth floor except for ranked members."

They confirm and cut the link to get themselves organized.

"Ashley, let the PR team know I don't need a script. I know what I'm going to say."

"No problem, Alpha."

"Lenora? I need you and Musu to find anything you can about a group known as The Feral and a woman who leads them named Cora."

"That's it? You don't have any more info than that?"

"Based on a conversation I had with Saint just now, I think this Cora woman may have somehow magically affected Kas and Lex. I don't have anything else other than that."

"Alright, we're on it."

“Milo, Reggie, you’re shadowing me today as representatives of MasonCo. After we release the tape to the media, we are going to HQ. There are going to be reporters and you are going to be speaking to them.”

“Got it, boss man. We will change into suits now,” Milo confirms before cutting the link.

I kneel down in front of my sleepy little mate, prepping the shirt to put on her.

“Kas, wake up, Baby. We have to get back to the packhouse,” I stroke the side of her face with my hand.

“Pack house?” she gives a cranky little growl, resisting waking up and barely opening her eyes, looking around at her surroundings.

“Yeah. It looks like Lex and Saint had a wild night last night. They let us roll around in mud puddles and sleep by the river. Come on, sit up. I have a shirt for you and a blanket, so you can go back to sleep. I’ll carry you,”

She groggily sits up and lets me pull the shirt over her head. I wrap her up like a burrito in the blanket and pick her up.

“Hey Bronx,” she whispers, trying not to fall back asleep in the warm blanket.

“Yeah, Baby?” I look down at her and smile. Her eyes are closed, but she is smiling too.

“I just wanted to let you know I love you and I’m so glad to be home,” she tells me as she snuggles further into my chest.

My heart sings at her words, “I love you too, Kas. More than anything.”

“But I’m still mad that you left me alone on Sundays.”

Well, I guess she’s feeling better.

“You’ll be glad to know, I’ve learned my lesson. You will never be alone on Sundays again. We can talk more about it later. I have some business to attend to after I get you in bed.” 3

She gives a little hum before her snoring begins again.

When I get Kas back to our apartment, I settle her in the bed and turn on the shower. I coax her out of the blanket and join her in the shower, helping her get all the mud and blood off of her. She practically purrs when I wash her hair.

“Kas. I have a question,” I say while I’m massaging shampoo through her scalp.

“Yeah, what’s up, Sweetheart?” she asks with her eyes closed, a content smile on her face.

“Do you know anyone named Cora? Or people who are part of a group called The Feral?”

She opens her eyes and looks up at me with concern, “No? I don’t think so? Why?”

“It was just something Saint said to me this morning,” I say nonchalantly, “Nothing to worry about.”

When I’m sure we are both completely freshened up, I wrap a towel around Kas’s body, another around her wet hair, and lead her back to bed.

“Kas, I don’t want you to worry about the bakery or anything today. Delilah has it under control. Please, just get some rest and get your energy back, okay? I’m going to have Mrs. Miller bring food for you. Food that isn’t raw rabbits.”

“Raw rabbits? Gross, Bronx.”

“Yeah, I know,” I shake my head thinking about our wolves’ carnal habits, “I will be back to check on you this afternoon, but James is going to be outside the bedroom door, and Marco is going to be in the hall. I even have Tyree by the stairs to be on the safe side. If you need anything, anything at all, let them know.”

“Okay. Can you hand me my blanket, please?” her voice getting sleepy again.

I grab her old green and gray blanket. It is the only thing left from when she was a slave with her old pack. We brought her to Blood River wrapped in it two years ago. She can’t explain why but, she finds it comforting. If it makes her happy, it makes me happy.

I lay next to her on the bed whispering words meant just for her until she falls asleep with a smile on her face. When I’m sure she’s completely out, I kiss her forehead and get myself prepared to go to the conference room and record a message for the media.

Katherine’s POV

“Katherine! Turn on the television! Bronx Mason is on the news!” Amari comes running into my office.

“On the news? Why?”

“T-Tessa messed up,” she whimpers, her face turns pale.

I knit my brows and turn on the television to the news station. Even through the screen, I can feel the anger rolling off of him. Sure enough, a prerecorded message from Bronx

plays out. He looks like he's barely containing his rage as he eloquently threatens the people who kidnapped his wife and tortured her for four days before trying to drown her. He offers a hundred thousand dollars for information that leads to the arrest of the perpetrator. The reporter then provides a phone number and website for MasonCo for anyone who has information.

My words of warning ring in my mind, "Tessa, wherever you are, be safe, darling. He's tearing the Earth in half to find you."

I lean back in my chair and stare off in the distance, trying to determine my next move. I usually thrive in situations like this. Typically, these situations don't involve the complicated web of my family.

Wherever Tessa is, even Alexandros cannot find her. He and the rest of the Frouros left two days ago to search the far corners of the world for her, but she has been two steps ahead of them at every turn.

The gears on my head churn as I try to come up with a plan.

"Katherine, you're rolling your lip, darling," Amari's voice pulls me from my thoughts.

I look up at her, then down at my hand. Sure enough, I coated my thumb and forefinger in red lipstick. I pull a tissue and wipe my hand. I lean forward and clasp my hands together on the desk. 1

"Amari, please do what you can to prepare Cora. Let me know if you need my help to convince her. I have some calls to make, but she'll be coming with us to the United States," I smile.

"Do you think that's wise?" she looks at me like I have a second nose on my face.

"Getting closer to Bronx or involving Cora?"

"Well, both actually, but I was referring to Bronx. It's a dangerous game, Katherine."

"Yes. I'm sure of what I'm doing. It's time to make our move. We need to lure Tessa out of hiding and keep the remaining guardians safe from Leticia."

"Alright. As always, I place my faith in you, Luna," Amari sighs before she bows slightly and leaves the room.

I push the button on my desk phone.

"Yes, Luna?" my assistant Sarah responds through the speaker.

“Contact our Dallas, Texas office, please. We need to start plans for a new facility in Montana.”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“Also, contact MasonCo. I want to discuss a security contract for the new facility with the potential to broaden to international locations.”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“Sarah, ask for a meeting directly with Bronx Mason. Drop my name if necessary. Don’t take no for an answer.” “Yes, ma’am.”

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Lenora’s POV

Musu and I meet in my office fifteen minutes after I mind link her to let her know we have new information and need her help immediately. She is dressed casually, a light blue tank top and white jeans. The combination makes her deep complexion look even darker. She has her hair wrapped in a blue and white silk scarf, hiding her beautiful twisted black hair.

“I apologize for my appearance, Beta. I wasn’t expecting to leave the house today, but since Marco got called in, I got dressed quickly and came here with him,” her dark wide-set eyes are filled with an unneeded apology.

“It’s alright, Musu. I am appreciative that you even agreed right now,” I praise her in return, “So here’s what the Alpha told me. He wants information on a group called The Feral and the leader of the group. A woman named Cora, who may have magical abilities. He didn’t say she is a witch, but maybe?”

“I don’t know about the name Cora, but I think I saw a book in Alpha Bronx’s private library that referenced Agrios. I know it’s an old Greek word, hmm let me do a quick internet search,” she flips open her laptop and starts typing. After a moment, she turns the screen toward me, “The word itself means wild or savage, but in Greek mythology, there was a Gigantes created to fight the Olympian gods during the Giant War, named Agrios. He was supposed to replace the Moirai, who are more commonly known as The Fates. It never came to be because someone killed Agrios during the

war.

“Okay. I will look into the definition side, you look further into the mythology side. Look for any covens or witch subcultures that somehow identify with the Gigante or maybe even the Fates.” I write some notes on my notepad, “Bronx has restricted the fifth floor today, so no getting into his library.” 1

“I can make do, Beta. Mind if I sit at the conference table?”

“Have at it, Musu. Let’s regroup in forty-five minutes. Thank you again for coming in at the last minute,” I turn to my laptop to get started.

Musu doesn’t get up. I look back to her to see she has a concerned look on her face, “Is everything alright?” “I don’t mean to overstep, but now that we have found the Luna, do you think it is a good time to discuss the video with Alpha Bronx?” I audibly sigh, “Yeah, there isn’t really any avoiding it now.”

She nods and makes her way to the meeting table in the back of the room.

Half an hour later, a knock interrupts our research.

“Come in!”

The door opens and Bronx steps in. Milo and Reggie follow behind him. I feel a small pit in my stomach expecting Bronx’s reaction when we show him the video.

“Well, don’t the three of you look dashing,” I smile, resting my hand on my chin, referring to the suits they have on. Bronx is even wearing a tie.

“Thanks, Sugar,” Milo smiles and leans over the desk to kiss me on the cheek.

Bronx and Reggie sit in the chairs across from me while Milo sits on the edge of my desk. Musu approaches and regards them all formally.

“Leni, we’re going to MasonCo headquarters in a few minutes. The news outlets haven’t even received the video file yet, but Ashley says a ton of reporters and paparazzi are already queued up outside. They caught wind from the media outlets that there is going to be an announcement in an hour,” Bronx says in a serious tone.

“Alright. We are looking into the information you gave us. Musu, take it away,” I gesture to her.

She fills the guys in on the information she had hypothesized.

“So is it associated with the Menae?” Reggie asks.

“We will let you know when we have some definitive information. I don’t want to get anyone’s hopes up. Beta, is this a good time to discuss the video?”

I take a deep breath, “Yeah.”

“What video?” Bronx asks, sounding annoyed, “Does this have to do with Kas?”

“Uhhh, no. It has to do with you. I don’t even know how to introduce it. We got this last week, but Kas was kidnapped the morning before we were going to show you. Just watch,” I turn my attention back to my computer and click on the video file.

Musu and I watch the guys’ reactions. All three have eyes glued to the monitor. Milo looks horrified. Reggie looks defeated. Bronx looks so angry that he’s about to shift.

“Who the fuck is she? Why the fuck does she have the cursed knife that almost killed me? And why the fuck does she look like she could be my wife?” Bronx growls, still looking at the monitor.

“Musu, do you mind fielding this one?” I give her a pleading look.

Musu calmly explains that the video is over a year old and she received it from one of her contacts. The victim is Cordell Santoro. She pauses before she reads the police report she obtained through an informant with the local Milan police, explaining the missing organs. I look over at Bronx who is so angry; he is literally vibrating, but holding it together.

Musu explains that our forensics team believes the woman is the same one we have photos of from haunted and dark magic locations around the world. Definitely one of the Manae. As for the knife, we don’t know how she acquired it or her connection to Bronx’s attack.

“I remember hearing about Cordell Santoro’s death on the news. He’s the guy from Santoro Industries. They said it was a robbery,” Reggie recalls, “No one mentioned organs were the items being stolen.”

Bronx ignores Reggie’s revelation and asks, “Did anyone in this room know the Santoros were wolves?”

“No, Alpha,” we all reply in unison.

“How is a family that powerful not part of a huge pack?” It is a rhetorical question, but a good one.

“Musu, I want you to look into it. Find out who they are. If one of Kas’s sisters killed her husband, maybe there is some connection to Kas that we need to know about.”

“Yes Alpha, of course,” Musu, bows her head slightly. She looks at me hesitantly before she continues, “Alpha, we believe it is a good idea for you to have guards tailing you. For your safety, Sir.”

Bronx suddenly stands, making Musu flinch slightly, “No. Milo, Reggie, let’s go.”

“Bronx, please listen to reason,” I jump up, following him out of the room. He turns to face me and I see his eye flicker black.

“I. Said. No,” he snarls in his Alpha voice through gritted teeth, forcing me to stand down. Without another word, he turns around and leaves.

“Sorry, Sugar,” Milo gives me a sympathetic look, “We’ll try to talk some sense into him.”

He gives me a peck on the cheek before he and Reggie obediently follow after their Alpha.

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Musu tries to hide her disappointment at Bronx’s reaction, even though we were both expecting it.

“You did a good job, Musu. We knew he would not say yes that easily,” I place my hand on her forearm to comfort her, “It actually wasn’t as bad as I thought it would be.”

She smiles weakly at my compliment, “Thank you, Lenora. I suppose you’re right. At least he didn’t break anything.”

“Listen, we have half an hour before the Bronx’s message goes live. How about we take a break from work? I’ll ask Mrs. Miller to bring a snack and we will watch the broadcast together. We can get back to research after.”

Her smile widens to genuine gratitude as we make our way to the love seat on the other side of the room. I mind link the kitchen staff and ask for some snacks and drinks so Musu and I can relax for a bit.

Ever studious, Musu keeps doing research while we wait for our food and the announcement to be released, but came up with nothing. It isn’t long before one of the omegas brings us food and drinks so we can sit back and relax. I turn on the TV.

The talking head announces a rare statement directly from the CEO of MasonCo, Bronx Mason, in regard to his wife, Kas Mason. A head shot that the PR team took of Kas shortly before she and Bronx got married flashes on the screen. An involuntary smile crosses my face just by seeing her.

“Our Luna is so beautiful,” Musu muses with a smile of her own.

“Yeah, Bronx is a lucky guy, huh?” I giggle. Musu follows suit, with a little elbow in my side.

The video of Bronx slides onto the screen. He is wearing a gray suit like Ashley recommended, but he is wearing a black shirt and black tie. His eye patch is light green to match his eye. I recognize it immediately. Kas gave it to him for Winter Solstice.

I watch as my brother lets go of all pretence and speaks the way he did when he was in the military. A glint in his eye and tone in his voice that I have not seen or heard since before he met Kas. The deliberate, succinct, calm cadence in contrast to the unrelenting intensity of his glare and caustic severity of his words makes my jaw go slack. I look over at Musu, who is wide eyed with a tortilla chip sticking out of her mouth, mid-bite. She has never known this side of him.

“Is this the Bronx Mason who Elder Henri warned me about?” she asks in a quiet voice, never taking her eyes off the screen. Elder Henri served in the military with Bronx. He knows exactly how dangerous my brother can be.

“Yeah...that’s him. He’s been gone for a while, but looks like he’s back,” I clear my throat, “This explains his reaction to the video we showed him.”

My cell phone dings with a text message.

Dad: Lenora. What the Hell is going on?

Lenora: Everything is okay now, Dad. I didn’t know that was what he recorded though

Dad: Tell your brother to call as soon as he can. Mom is ready to strangle him. Love you, sweetie

Lenora: Okay, Dad. Love you too.

Mom and Dad have been in Norway for the last five weeks. We had called them when Kas went missing. They offered to come home, but there was nothing we could think of that they could actually do to help, so we told them not to come. They were relieved when I let them know Kas was back. Just like everyone else, they love Kas with all of their hearts.

Bronx’s little media message apparently has gone viral in a matter of ten minutes.

"You know what, let's get back to work," Musu says as she collects herself and finishes her chip.

"Good idea. Back to work."
Bronx's POV

We decide to have a driver take us in one of the dark tinted SUVs instead of driving ourselves to MasonCo headquarters. It's easier that way. We don't have to be seen until we are ready to see people.

I let myself get lost in my thoughts while Reggie has the PR team on speaker phone as he and Milo discuss what they should and shouldn't say to reporters. It's the regular shit. Be formal with traditional media reporters, be friendly with paparazzi.

I really just wanted to stay home with Kas and spend time with her. Make sure she is alright. I know she said she can't remember the last four days, but yesterday was definitely stressful for her. 1

I pull out my phone and call Carly.

"Good morning, Alpha. Can I help you?" she answers, ready to get to work.

"Carly, have flowers sent to the Luna. Roses. Purple and white," I instruct, "A lot of them."

"Yes, Alpha. Is that all?"

"For now, yes. We should be there in fifteen minutes. How's the atmosphere?"

"Well, a little tense, but calm with all things considered."

"Alright, good. What's on my agenda for the day?"

"Two messages so far this morning. The Council needs to speak with you about Silver Moon. They didn't give more detail than that. Also, the CEO of Santoro Enterprises wants to speak with you. Something about a data center in Montana. Her assistant insisted that the meeting be with you. They are based out of Greece, but they are willing to come here for the meeting." "Santoro Enterprises?" My interest is piqued. We just finished watching the video of Cordell Santoro being murdered last year. I didn't know the Santoros were wolves until the video, but now that I know, I'm happy to meet with them. The timing seems a little too convenient, though.

"Yeah, Katherine Santoro," Carly confirms.

"Okay. We can look at schedules when I get into the office and figure something out for both things. Thank you, Carly," I hang up without waiting for a reply.

I look at my phone to check emails when I realize the car is absolutely silent. I look up at Milo and Reggie. They are both staring at me like I just stole the crown jewels.

“What?” I ask, confused by their reaction.

“Santoro Enterprises?” Milo says.

“Yeah. Reggie, you are on recon to figure out who Katherine Santoro really is before the meeting. Loop in Lenora and Musu if necessary. Something is clearly fishy here,” I say, crossing my arms in front of me.

“You got it, boss. Want me to send a team to Greece?” he asks.

“Do what you need to do,” I confirm.

“What am I doing?” Milo asks.

“You’re still on reporter and paparazzi duty.”

“Ah man, Reggie, how come you get to do all the fun stuff?” Milo whines.

“Just lucky, I guess,” Reggie smiles and elbows Milo.

When we finally get to the office, reporters swarm the car, but the security guards hold them back until we get into the underground garage.

“Yeah, you guys stick me with the sucky jobs,” Milo complains, looking at the people trying to catch a picture of me.

“When was the last time it was like this?” Reggie wonders out loud.

“When we got back from the honeymoon and everyone found out they took Kas hostage in the jewelry store robbery,” I remember it like it was yesterday, not a year and a half ago.

We climb out of the SUV and I look at Milo one last time before I feed him to a completely different type of pack of wolves than he is used to.

“Where’s your tie?” I ask.

“I only had a Winter Solstice tie. It is in the shape of a Solstice tree. As fun as that would be, I didn’t feel like having you strangle me today. Maybe you will have better luck tomorrow,” he gives me a goofy grin.

I’m not in the mood for Milo’s shenanigans right now. I take my tie off and hand it to him. He rolls his eyes and takes it from me and puts it around his neck. He pulls the end over

his head like it's a noose, crosses his eyes, and sticks out his tongue. Reggie snickers. I walk away before I actually strangle my brother-in-law.

Carly meets me in the atrium of my office with some stacks of papers. She follows me to my desk so I can review them. While I'm signing my name to paper after paper, she updates me on other matters.

"I'm working with Katherine Santoro's assistant to nail down a date and time for the meeting, Alpha," she informs me, "I also have our analysts already looking into the financials for the company to make sure it is even worth it."

"Thank you, Carly. Who was it that called from the Elder Council? I will call them back now?"

"Elder Randall," she says quietly, avoiding my eye.

I groan. That guy is such a jerk. A lot of packs believe I will be elected to the Elder Council when I retire. I hope Randall retires before that happens.

"Alright, I'll take care of him. Keep me posted on Santoro Industries. Offer them accommodations at the pack house."

"Yes, Alpha," she bows and backs out of the room, closing the door behind her.

I call Elder Randall before I get interrupted again.

"Ah, Alpha Regent Bronx Mason," he answers jovially, using my full title and name.

"Hello Randall. You called about Silver Moon?" I ask.

Silver Moon is the pack Kas grew up in. When the Council found out about her abuse, they stripped the Alpha of his title and forced him to be a rogue. They gave the rest of the pack the option to either stay, request refuge in other packs, or peacefully become rogues themselves. About half of them left on their own accord. The Council took over to lead the pack until a new suitable Alpha could be found, trained, and acclimated to the pack.

"Bronx, listen. I hate to call you in these circumstances, but we need your help with Silver Moon. It's been two years and we still haven't been able to find an Alpha to lead them.

"Okay, so what are you asking me to do?"

"We need you to absorb them into Blood River."

“Excuse me? You want me to just absorb three hundred wolves into my pack?” I ask in disbelief.

“Well, we would give you financial support obviously. We wouldn’t expect you to do it on your own.”

“Randall, I understand Silver Moon is under my region and I am responsible for them, but have you seen the news? Right now isn’t the best time for me to make such a big change to my pack.”

“Yes, I know. In my defense, the announcement wasn’t out until after my initial call. I am sorry to hear that Luna Regent Kas has been through an ordeal. That being said, I know this sounds like a request, but it isn’t. The Council is making this a requirement.”

I lean back and rub my hands on my face. I can feel the flush of anger heating me up from my neck up. Aside from the fact that I don’t have time or patience to take on another three hundred people into our pack, I’m extremely hesitant to take on people from Kas’s past onto our territory.

The Goddess is testing me. There is no other way to look at it.

“Alright, Randall. How long do I have for this transition? Can I get six months?” I do my best not to let my voice growl.

“Let’s say start within four months, complete transition in six months. We can go to Silver Moon next month and make the announcement.”

I lean forward, holding my head up with my hands, “We need to give them the option to not come to Blood River, Randall. Each and every one of them needs to know, if they come to my pack, it is on a probationary period based on the history with my Luna. I will not tolerate abusive pack members on my territory. And I will take matters in my own hands if I find anyone has stepped even a toenail out of line. That includes execution by my hands if I deem it justified. If the Council wants me to be responsible for these wolves, they don’t get to interfere in my pack matters. Do you understand? Do I make myself clear?” 1

There is a long silence on the line.

“Randall?”

“Yes. I am sure we can make some sort of concession. I will call next week when things aren’t so tense, Bronx.”

“That’s Alpha Regent Bronx to you.” I hang up the phone before he can respond.

I sit in the silence, focusing on what my therapist would say. She would say, choose where to focus your energy. Right now, my energy needs to be focused on my mate. I look at the stack of papers on my desk and the unread emails on my computer screen. I need to power through all this so I can get home to her.

A small knock on the door pulls me from my work. I look up at the clock, one-thirty.

“Come in,” I call out.

Carly comes in, looking a little pale, “Um, Alpha?”

I put my pen down and look at her with concern, “What’s wrong Carly?”

“I just got a call from Tyree. The Luna just tried to kill James.”

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Kas’s POV

According to the clock, it’s one in the afternoon. My stomach growling rouses me out of bed. Before he left, Bronx said Mrs. Miller was going to bring food up to the apartment. Seems as good a time as any to go see what goodies she brought up.

I go into the walk-in closet and find a pair of sweatpants and an oversized shirt. As I’m getting dressed, my mind churns with the events from yesterday, trying to put some sense to all of it. How did I end up in the pool in the first place? Where have I been for the last four days? I think they are questions best thought about over a turkey sandwich and hopefully a banana. I put my hair up in a floppy bun before I head out to the kitchen.

As I get to the bedroom door, I smell someone’s scent. It definitely isn’t Bronx’s dark chocolate and coffee scent that I love so much, besides, he told me he was going to the office. This scent is out of place in my home and I’ll be damned if I’m disappearing for another four days. My brain immediately switches from questions of my disappearance to defense mode. I let my fangs and claws extend, ready to attack as I slowly, quietly crack the door open.

A large man is standing half-way between the bedroom door and the sofa with his back facing me. He is in jeans and a white t-shirt with his arms crossed in front of him as if he’s waiting for something. All the training James and Marco have given me over the

past year floods into my brain. If I can get a foot planted on the small of his back, I can get leverage over him and try to bring him down.

“Kas, what are you doing?” Lex hisses at me.

“Attacking a man who broke into my apartment. I’m not getting kidnapped again, Lex. What do you think I’m doing?” I snap.

“Kas, that’s just-”

“Not now, Lex,” I interrupt.

Before she can respond again, I let a purple aura build around me. I suppress a growl as I launch myself at the man from behind. One foot securely lands on the small of his back while my knee is between his shoulder blades, giving me leverage to lean back without falling off of him. My hands wrap tightly around his thick neck at the same time. He lets out a strangled cry as my claws bury deep into his windpipe.

He grabs my wrists and starts to pull, but not enough to throw me off of his back. The growl I was suppressing lets loose from my chest, making the room rumble as he grabs me. I start to push my claws deeper into his neck, pulling them back toward my body at the same time. I can feel his pulse quicken against my fingertips as I get closer to his jugular. The metallic scent of blood is thick in the air as he drops to his knees.

Something’s wrong. Why isn’t he defending himself? Why isn’t he fighting against me? Just as his knees hit the ground, Marco throws the apartment door open and comes rushing in.

“Kas! No! Stop! It’s James! Luna, please! It’s just James! You’re gonna to kill him!” he begs. Marco is holding his pistol, but he has both hands in the air in front of him, showing he doesn’t intend to shoot. His eyes are wide, darting from James to me as he takes slow, deliberate steps towards us.

James? The split second of distraction is enough for the intruder to reach up, grab me by the shoulders, and throw me over top of him, flat on my back. The wind gets knocked out of me as I hit the ground, forcing me to dislodge my claws from his throat. I look up to see James grabbing his neck. Blood is gushing out between his fingers as he falls to the ground. My fangs and claws retract at the shock of seeing James bleeding out from his neck.

Marco races over to James’ side and drops to his knees, “James, stay with me, man.” His voice isn’t nearly as panicked as it should be. His eyes glaze over as he mind links someone, then I watch in horror as Marco consoles his friend.

Oh, my Goddess! What have I done? What have I done?

“Kas, don’t just sit there. Heal him before it’s too late!” Lex yells in my head.

I can feel the tears stinging my eyes as I pull myself up. I can’t catch my breath as I crawl next to James. What have I done? There’s so much blood. James’s face is pale, his usually cheerful blue eyes look glassy and far away.

“James! No no no no no! Oh my Goddess, I’m so sorry. I’m so sorry. Can I heal you, please, James? Please! Just blink if it’s okay for me to heal you!” I cry, not able to stop the tears now. I force down a sob as he looks to me and slowly blinks.

I position myself next to his shoulder, surrounded by a growing pool of blood that soaking into the carpet. Marco looks at James with disbelief in his watery eyes. Then he looks at me and shakes his head slowly. His mouth opens and closes, but nothing comes out.

“Okay, Lex. Let’s concentrate. We can do this,” I state to her as calmly as I can, which isn’t very calm at all. I wipe my tears away with my sleeve and clear my throat.

“Sending you all my energy, Kas. Let’s go,” she whines, seeing James fading on the ground.

I gently pull James’s hands away from his throat. Blood continues to pour out in spurts from the gaping wound. I feel like someone is squeezing my heart as I see the extent of the damage my claws made. I place my hands over his neck and close my eyes in concentration.

In the distance, I can hear and feel people around me, but they all fade away as I focus on saving James’s life. I send my energy out into his body, pulling muscle and tendons back together. Fusing flesh, repairing tissue that I tore in half. I feel someone gently shaking me awake. There is an energy to their touch, intense but familiar and comforting. Why do I feel like a truck hit me?

As I come out of the darkness of sleep, I can hear a woman calling me, “Iokaste...Kas... Time to wake up.”

I know that voice, but I can’t place it. No one calls me Iokaste, except for Delilah’s mom, Lady Camille. It definitely isn’t her voice. Why does this woman sound so familiar? I slowly open my eyes. A bright light is shining through the doorway into the dark room, making it impossible to see anything except her silhouette.

“Lex, where are we?” I ask groggily.

“Not now, Kas. You have important visitors,” her tone is full of warning.

A woman is crouching next to the cot I’m laying on. I jolt up and push myself as far away from her as I can. My eyes adjust to the bright light from the doorway.

I try to send energy to my hands. Maybe if I can burn her a little, she will back away. I concentrate on my energy, but nothing happens. Okay, weird. I try to focus to slow time down a little. If I can freeze these two women in time, I can escape out the door and no one gets hurt. I try to focus, but again, nothing happens.

Oh, my Goddess. I'm trapped. I look around to see if there is a way to escape around them, but the only exit is the door the woman is standing in.

Wait a minute? Is that who I think it is?

"L-Lenora?" I ask as her outline becomes more clear with Lenora's strong features and signature black ponytail.

The woman looks annoyed, "No, I'm not Lenora. Are you thirsty?"

She points to the other woman, who is sitting on the floor in front of the cot. I look more carefully at the woman in front of me. She is holding a metal wine glass toward me. Her long chocolate brown hair is in dreadlocks pulled back into a ponytail. She has scarlet irises, red as blood. Her sun-weathered skin makes her look older than she must really be.

"Where am I?" I snarl at the woman, who looks like she could be Lenora's twin. She doesn't respond, she just rolls her eyes at me. The woman in front of me looks at me sympathetically but doesn't say anything. Something about her makes me want to throw my arms around her and hug her fiercely. As I look at her, I feel my purple aura building. Internally, it feels strong, but as I look at my hands, it is barely a tint.

What am I thinking? I can't hug my kidnapper. The woman's eyes turn brighter red in response to my aura. I see her tremble. Is she scared of me? Is she going to attack me?

She dips her fingertips into the metal cup and puts them in her mouth. As she does, words from a foreign language float into my mind, "Eisai dynatós. Empistéfsou ta énstiktá sou." 2

I don't know what it means, but it feels like the words are imprinted into my mind now. Did she just mind link me? It felt different from a mind link. It was was a different type of connection. I don't understand what's going on.

A woman's voice comes over an intercom, telling me the only way they will let me leave is if I drink from

the cup.

I look at the cup being extended to me again. I close my eyes to concentrate on the words for a moment. What do they mean? I feel like I should know. I just can't put my

finger on it. When I open my eyes, I look deeply into the scarlet eyes of the woman in front of me.

One of three things is going to happen here, I resolve in my mind. Either I drink out of that cup and it's poison that will kill me, I drink out of the cup and absolutely nothing happens – I'm a prisoner here forever, or I drink out of the cup and somehow get to go home and see Bronx and the rest of my pack.

I have to take the chance. I have to have hope that I will see Bronx again, even if it's only a thirty-three percent chance.

I take the cup from the woman. As I do, her fingers brush against mine.

A vision flashes in my mind. She and I are standing next to each other on a battlefield. We are both dressed in heavy leather armor. The sounds of fighting are coming from all around us. As our enemies get closer, she takes my hand.

“Eisai dynatós allá tha eimai pánta edó ótan me chreibzesai. S'agapó. [You are strong, but I will always be here when you need me. I love you.]”

Before I can stop her, she throws herself at the charging wolves and sacrifices herself to save me. An endless scream escapes me as I feel her connection disappear. A surge of energy builds in me until it explodes from my body like a bomb. I look around where there were just fighting wolves, witches, and vampires around me. There is nothing now but the scorched earth. The smell of char, rot, and death fills my nose before I pass out.

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Forever in the Past and Forever in the Future Chapter 149
Book.2 Chapter 17

Bronx's POV

As I rush out of the office, I get a text. I look down to see who could possibly interrupt me right now.

Lenora: Code Violet

Shit.

Code Violet means Kas is in a catatonic state. She's having a vision about some sort of traumatic event in her life. I have given orders that no one is to touch her when she has a vision because she could accidentally use her powers on them.

Carly informs the driver that I am headed to the garage and in a hurry. He is ready and waiting for me by the time the elevator opens. I jump in the back of the SUV and call Lenora as he drives.

"Lenora, what's happening?"

"From what we can tell, Kas attacked James on purpose, but she didn't know who she was attacking. Marco says as soon as he entered the apartment and saw Kas with her claws in him, he told her it was James and not an intruder. She stopped immediately and tried to heal him," she explains.

"What do you mean 'tried to heal him? Don't tell me he died,'" I feel a pit in my stomach at the thought.

"Well, she started to, and at some point, she fell into a vision. We aren't exactly sure when."

"She started having a vision while she was healing James?"

"Yeah. She was able to heal all of James's physical injuries, but he lost a lot of blood. She went all mannequin before she could finish that part," she pauses before she continues, "His wolf is trying to heal him, but James lost a lot of blood. He is pretty weak. He's in the hospital wing now getting a transfusion. Delilah is down there with him." 1

"How did you separate James from Kas without touching her?" I wonder out loud.

"We pulled James by his feet until he was out from under Kas. She's still on the floor of your apartment."

"Oh my Goddess. Where are you?"

"Sitting at your breakfast bar watching her." "Anyone else with you?"

"Just Tyree right outside the door. Marco was completely freaked out, Bronx. I sent him and Musu home. You're going to need to speak with him. Make sure he's okay."

"Alright. You okay?" I ask.

"Yeah. I-It's a lot of blood Bronx. Like, a lot. I don't know how he didn't die," I hear her swallow hard.

"Okay. Hang in there, Leni. I'm on my way. Thank you for being there for her."

“No thanks needed, Bronx. She’s my Luna. She’s my like little sister. I will see you when you get here.” There is a touch of sadness in her voice. She doesn’t wait for me to say goodbye, she just hangs up. 1

“Go faster,” I order the driver.

“Sorry, Alpha, not until we are on pack territory. We have two cars full of paparazzi tailing us. Going too fast will attract attention or get us pulled over. The gatehouse guards will be able to stop the paps from following us. Then I can race up to the packhouse,” the driver apologizes without looking away from the road. I look at my watch. We should be on pack territory in less than ten minutes. Then another five or so to get to the pack house. I rub my hands over my face with a frustrated growl. If we weren’t being followed, I would jump out, shift, and get home in five minutes.

After what seems like an eternity, we finally pull up to the packhouse. I jump out before we even come to a full stop and sprint upstairs to the apartment.

Tyree moves out of the way when he sees me racing down the hallway. I throw open the door and get slammed with the powerful scent of blood.

Lenora climbs off of the stool she is perched on. She looks like she might have been crying, but Lenora never cries. It must be worse than I thought. She observes me as I approach my mate.

Any feelings of anger or frustration melt away as I absorb what I’m seeing. My heart suddenly feels like it’s in a vice and I’m frozen on the spot. It is a gruesome sight.

Kas is on her hands and knees, in the middle of the biggest puddle of blood I have ever seen. It has absorbed up onto the pant legs and edges of the oversized t-shirt she’s wearing. I look closer and realize it’s my shirt. Not just my shirt, my favorite shirt. It’s the one she wore when she first came here because we didn’t have any clothes small enough for her. The one she puts on when she is tired and doesn’t want to pick something from her drawers. She calls it our’ shirt.

There is blood coating the hair on the back of her head and all the way down her back. Lenora didn’t mention Kas being injured. It must be James’s. She’s staring blankly at the ground, lips parted slightly. A clearly defined purple aura surrounding her. I step closer, trying to avoid the blood as long as possible. When I reach the edge of the stain, I pause.

“What are you doing, dummy? Our mate needs us!” Saint growls at me.

I hastily slip off my suit jacket and roll up the sleeves of my shirt. Then I take off my shoes and socks before I drop to my hands and knees so I can crawl through the puddle to my mate. I feel the partially congealed blood stick to me like a grotesque sticky jelly.

“Kas?” I whisper.

It never gets easier. Seeing her like this, I mean. I know when I touch her she is going to be cold. I won't feel our sparks. Her scent isn't even distinguishable. The only part of her in the room is her body. Any other part of her essence is in some other part of the universe.

“Kas, I'm going to get you out of here, okay? You can't stay like this,” I don't know if she can hear me or not, but on the off chance that she can, I want her to know I am there taking care of her. I also don't know if she realizes she's covered in blood or if she knows just how badly James is hurt. I have to protect her, even if it's from herself, until she's ready to find out. That's what I was born to do, be Kas's mate. It's my job to take care of her.

I sit up on my knees and gently pull her up by her armpits. She turns limp like a rag doll as I settle her into my lap. I lift my hand to brush hair out of her face, but it's covered in partially congealed blood so I pull it back. I scoot myself to the edge of the giant crimson blemish on the carpet and carefully stand up.

“Lenora, follow me,” I say quietly, “Let's get washed up before we try to snap her out of it. I don't want her to see all this blood.”

We silently make our way to the bathroom. Without being asked, Lenora pulls the wooden stool from the vanity into the shower and turns the water on. When I see the steam, I step into the shower with my clothes on and sit down. I sit Kas on my lap, supporting her against my body.

Lenora sees I need help and steps into the shower with her clothes on, too. She helps pull Kas's shirt and pants off, leaving her in her underwear. I hold Kas while Lenora grabs a washcloth and starts cleaning her. She starts with Kas's scarred back and moves to the rest of her body, then finally washes her hair. As Lenora works, I realize she's crying. Other than when Codi was born, I haven't seen Lenora cry since she was nine.

“It's gonna be okay, Leni. We have to have faith in the Moon Goddess. All of this is happening for a reason,” I try to comfort her, knowing no words could be enough right now.

She nods as the water cascades down her hair and face, hiding the extent of her tears. She continues scrubbing the blood off silently, as if her voice will trigger an avalanche of emotions. My sister prefers her emotions to be shoved deep down inside, where no one can see them. Seeing this side of her is a testament to how much Kas means to her. When she feels like she has sufficiently gotten all the blood off of Kas, she shuts off the water and grabs a towel to help me wrap a towel around Kas.

“You good, Leni?”

“As soon as you tell me Kas is good, then I’ll be good,” she sniffles curtly.

“She’s gonna snap out of it any minute now. I don’t know how I know, I can just feel it. Let’s get her to bed. Come on.”

I take Kas to the bedroom and lay her down on the bed. Her glassy violet eyes are cold and empty against her pale face. Just like the other day, when it seemed like there was something deeper in her eyes, it seems like this vision episode is different too. Like I told Lenora, she is waking up soon. I don’t know how I know, I can just feel it.

Lenora drapes a towel over me and goes into the closet to find dry clothes for herself and Kas.

I’m finally able to brush Kas’s hair out of her face. I try to feel for the sparks of our mate bond, but there is still nothing there.

“Kas, Baby. Come on. I’m here. If you can hear me, come toward my voice,” I whisper to her. I take her hand in mine and close my eyes. I concentrate on our connection, trying to get some sort of reaction from her. Still nothing.

“Please, Kas, wherever you are, please. I need you to come back to me,” I plead with her. I put my other hand on top and enclose hers in between mine. Her little fingers barely stick out from between my hands, but it is enough for me to give them a little kiss.

A sharp spike of heat sparks off my lips when they touch her fingers.

“Kas?” I look at her again, hope renewed. There is a little more color in her face but her eyes still look distant and hollow.

“Kas, fight your way back to me, Baby. You can do it.” I smile as I speak louder now.

Lenora comes running out of the closet in one of my sweatshirts and a pair of gym shorts, “Is she awake?”

“I think she’s trying,” I nod, not taking my eyes off of

Kas.

Lenora jumps to the other side of the bed and takes Kas’s other hand, knowing full well Kas could burn her, “Kas, enough is enough. You get your ass back here right now. No more messing around, no more scaring us. That’s an order, Little Sister!”

Even in the severity of the moment, I can’t help but smile upon hearing Lenora use Milo’s nickname for Kas. She must feel better if she is bossing Kas around.

Lenora's face changes to one of discomfort as she feels the same spiking heat that I do, but she refuses to let go

Without warning, Kas gives a loud gasp, sucking in a deep breath of air. There is a strong burst of energy from her whole body. Her aura glows brightly then dims down again.

"Bronx? Lenora?" she finally squeaks at us. Our sparks finally start flowing between our hands. I reach out for Kas, but Lenora grabs her first and hugs her tightly against her chest. Kas hugs her back just as tightly.

"Bitch, don't you dare scare me like that again," Lenora scolds her Luna.

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Chapter 18

I wait as patiently as I can for Lenora to finish giving Kas a hug. She finally lets her go and kisses her on the cheek.

"I mean it. No more scaring me," she wags her finger

at Kas.

"I promise, Lenora. No more scaring you," Kas smiles back with a nod before turning to me. She takes her hand out of mine and brushes her fingers on the side of my face.

"All I want to do is pull you into my lap and hold you all night, Baby, but I need you to tell us about your vision before you forget. Can you do that?"

"Yeah b-but," she looks at me with watery eyes, "Can you tell me if James is okay? Was that real or part of my vision?"

"It was real, Kas. Don't worry, he'll recover. We can take you to the hospital wing to see him tomorrow. Okay?" Lenora squeezes her hand in reassurance.

Kas nods, looking at her hands for a moment. She collects herself so she can concentrate. When she's ready, she takes a ragged breath and tells us about what she saw.

“I think I saw some of the people who kidnapped me. There was a woman that looked just like Lenora, but maybe she was a little older? Or something about her seemed old, even though she looked young. She knew my name. She called me lokaste. There was also a woman with dreadlocks and red eyes. She mind linked me, but it wasn't a real mind link. I could actually see her words in my mind.”

Kas squeezes her eyes closed for a minute, then opens her eyes and looks at the nightstand. She grabs her journal and pen and scribbles something down on a page.

‘Essai dynatós. Empistéfsou ta énstiktá sou.’

ΒΑC 3ΑΙΗΤΕΡΕCΥΕΤAdskeeper

ماندے کے لئے کس چیز کی ضرورت ہے آپ کو و آن لائن 001 ڈالر رک

She Is Still On Top When It Comes To Who Is The Most Beautiful

“That’s what I saw,” Lenora and I trade a confused look. Kas has never remembered this much detail from a vision before, and this message in a foreign language is pretty specific. She only knows the little bit of Spanish that Marco has taught her.

“Looks like Greek. I will see if Musu can translate it,” Lenora takes a picture of the page with her phone and sends it to Musu. “So then, um, I think I had a vision inside my vision?” a confused look crosses Kas’s face, “but I-I’m pretty sure it was the past. Not the future, like it usually is. It seems like it was a past life, but not one I already knew about. I was fighting alongside the woman with red eyes in an intense war. We knew each other, and she sacrificed herself for me, Bronx. She threw herself at charging werewolves. I could feel her connection disappear when-,” her voice trails off. She looks like if she tries to finish, it might make her cry.

Kas absentmindedly rubs the heel of her hand over her sternum while she talks. Her eyes aren’t really fixed on any one point in the room.

“Connection? Like a mate bond?” I ask as gently as possible, but in reality, I’m feeling a tinge of jealousy that Kas could have had a different mate. Even if it was in a different lifetime.

“No, not like a mate bond. It was more like something connected our essences to each other,” her voice is soft, “She said something else in that language, but I understood it in English.”

“So, she was someone special to you? What did she say?” Lenora asks, smoothing Kas’s partially dry hair. “Yeah, I think she was important to me. She told me she would always be there for me and when she died, it hurt so bad. It made me have this huge burst of energy come out of my body. I felt like a bomb was exploding out of me. And when I looked around, everything was...well, it was all gone. As far as I could see,

everyone and everything was destroyed. Burned and flattened. I think it was because of the energy that came out of me. I don't know. I-I just don't know."

She finally looks me in the eye. The floodgates are about to burst. She held it together long enough to tell us about her vision, but now she needs my support. I pull her into my lap and lean my head on top of hers. As soon as I fold my arms around her, she begins to bawl. Between her sobs, she says she didn't mean to hurt James. She doesn't want to hurt anyone. We all know that. It was an accident, but we can figure out how it happened later.

This isn't the Kas who has become stronger every day since she came to Blood River. She isn't the Luna and leader that everyone loves and respects. Right now, she is a scared nineteen-year-old girl, who grew up not being able to trust anyone around her. She was lonely, scared, and trying to hide from the world. It's the deep dark part of her we all wish never existed. I know it will never go away completely. It will always be a part of who she is, but if there is anything I can do to keep it at bay, I will do it. If it wasn't for our mate bond, how would she handle a situation like this? I don't know and I don't even want to think about it.

I hear Lenora's cell phone ding. She looks down at it and frowns.

"Is that Musu?"

"Yeah. Those words are Greek. It means 'You are strong. Trust your instincts'," she says with a knit brow as she looks at me rocking my sobbing little

mate.

I shrug my shoulders, and she shrugs back. Lenora gives Kas one last sympathetic look before kissing the top of her head and kissing my forehead.

"If you need me, just send a mind link. I'll be back in a heartbeat."

"Thanks, Leni," I mouth the words and watch her

leave.

I turn my attention back to Kas, thinking about the translation. Clearly, someone else has as much faith in her as I do. I just have to figure out who this mystery red eyed woman is.

Once Kas has calmed down, she pulls away from me slightly and gives me a pleading look.

"What's wrong, Baby?" I caress her face, hoping I can fix whatever's wrong.

“Bronx, what if the red-eyed woman is a prisoner, too? What if she wasn’t allowed to talk to me, so she had to send that message in my head?”

“Well, typically prisoners aren’t allowed to be around other prisoners, unless they have developed Stockholm Syndrome. Then the captors would want them to convince the newer prisoner to stay and become a sympathiser too.”

She looks at me with a little shock on her face.

“H-how do you know that?”

“Ahh, don’t worry about it,” I brush off her question. I don’t need her to know that Milo and Reggie deal with those sorts of sorts of things all the time in their covert ops division of MasonCo. 1

“Well, we need to find out who she is, Bronx. If she needs help, we need to help her,” Kas pleads.

“Okay, we can regroup with everyone tomorrow and see what we can do with the information we have. Don’t get your hopes up, Kas. We don’t have much to go on, but we will try our best. I promise,” I nod at her with a smile.

She gives a small sigh, but she understands my position.

“Now, how about you get a nap before dinner? When you wake up, you can decide if you want to go downstairs or eat up here. You had a pretty big burst of energy right before you woke up. There is no way you’re not worn out. I really want you to take it easy and not push yourself. And before you argue, everyone will understand if you don’t go downstairs tonight. The whole pack loves you and wants you to take care of yourself. Alright?”

“Okay. Bronx, do you think Delilah is going to hate me?” she frowns as she wraps her arms around my arm and leans against it.

“Delilah could never hate you, Kas. You know that. I do think we will need to give James and Marco some time off, though. Lenora said Marco is pretty shaken up and you know how Marco is, he has nerves of steel.”

She nods again. I can feel her sorrow and guilt. I really just want to sit here for the rest of the day and hold her, but I have a couple things to take care of. Specifically, the carpet just outside the bedroom door.

“Baby, I have to get the maintenance staff to come up and take care of the carpet. I’m not going anywhere. I will be right out in the living room. If you need me, just yell. Okay? I really don’t want you to go out there until the carpet has been removed though. It’s pretty

gross.”

“More gross than raw rabbits?” she smiles, trying to lighten up the mood a little. 1

I chuckle, “Yeah, Baby. More gross than raw rabbits.”