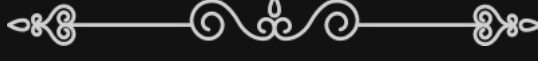


Forever in the Past and Forever in the Future

Chapter 182



Chapter 50

"So you think Tessa and Katherine are Manae?" Milo looks at the pictures of Tessa. Simply not believing what he is seeing.

"Well, we know that Cornell took Katherine's name when they got married. It was all over the news when we were younger. Don't you remember?"

"Oh yeah. I remember thinking he must have come from a weak pack since he joined hers instead of her going to his." 1

"Yeah, so we know they are sisters and now we have photos of one of them looking the same age for over a hundred years. We know she isn't a vampire. Do you have a better explanation?"

"Aliens?" 1

"Milo, we don't have time for humor," I stop pacing and rub my hands over my face before putting my hands on my hips, "We need to be downstairs in fifteen minutes."

"Okay, one problem at a time," Reggie says calmly, trying to defuse the situation, "I will have extra guards, and an omega put in the hallway where this Persephone woman's suite is. If she leaves the room, the omega will be there to escort. We can say the guards are only there to make sure no one from the pack bothers her."

"I like it. Good," I nod.

"Assuming they have powers like Kas, do you think they would use them against US in our own conference room? What if this is an actual business meeting?" Milo asks, shrugging his shoulders. 1

"Well, Carly did say they have actually purchased a parcel of land near the state border and have applied for construction permits, so something is definitely happening," I lean on the table, drumming my fingers.

"So maybe we play it like we don't know they are special. Just force them into a corner by dangling Tessa in front of them. If they have powers and they use them against US, what could we really do, anyway? We know Kas has powers, but we could never stop her from using them. She operates on the honor system," Reggie chimes in once he finishes mind linking the staff who need to be placed in the hallway.

"I could bring a silver sparkler in," Milo's face turns a little darker.

"Milo, you're not a prototype of a weapon that's still in development to a business meeting," Reggie scolds. 3

"Fine, party pooper," Milo crosses his arms and sulks.

"I think Reggie is right. We just hold our cards close and see what happens when we put Tessa and Katherine in the same room," I drop my head and look at the floor, racking my brain for a solution, but I don't see one. Reggie is right. If they use their powers against US, we have no way of stopping them. Not without Kas here, and if she was here, I can't imagine she would use her powers against her sisters she has been searching for.

I look at my watch again and grab my suit jacket, "Alright. Let's go."

When Katherine Santoro steps into the room, the energy of the room immediately changes. I'm not sure I would have noticed it if I hadn't felt a similar feeling when Kas comes into a room. While Kas's energy, when she allows you to feel it, is complex and hits you deep, Katherine's is pure power and a sense of control. I wonder how easily people submit to her requests and demands without realizing why. Does she know she exudes it or if it just comes naturally?

Katherine's white blonde hair is accentuated by her light gray, almost silver eyes. She is wearing light makeup on her fair skin. Just enough to show she put some effort into her features. She looks polished in her dark colored suit and red high heels. I imagine Lenora would approve if she was here.

Behind her, Amari Curadora, vice president of Human Resources. Her auburn hair flows long behind her. Her soft blue eyes don't really fixate on anything. I try to sense energy from her, but she seems reserved and quiet.

I get the sense that she is the person who keeps Katherine calm and in check when needed. Maybe she isn't aware of Katherine being a goddess? Amari's mate Jasen sits quietly next to her with a similar calm demeanor. They complement each other well. After shaking everyone's hands with a cordial smile, he opens his laptop, ready to take notes.

If there are any pretenses from the Santoro team, it doesn't show. Maybe this is actually a straight up business deal.

Carly stands near the end of the table and calls everyone's attention with a smile, 'Why don't we go through introductions? Lunch should be delivered in about forty-five minutes, then we can get started with presentations.

Alpha Mason, please go first."

She steps out of the way and sits at what she calls 'the bridge' in the corner of the room. We had to rebuild the packhouse a couple of years ago after a major fire. Reggie was in charge of it and put as many technological bells and whistles as he could manage. Her station where she can control all the electronics and presentations for the room but more importantly, we have hidden security cameras installed where she can see everyone's faces, she can even adjust cameras to see their computer screens and make it show on my laptop if I message her. 2

Shortly after we finish our introductions, the door in the back of the room quietly opens and Tessa rolls in a cart full of covered plates. I watch as her eyes sweep the room and widen. Because of the blue contacts, I can't see a change in her pupil size, but I imagine it is there. Before she thinks anyone notices, she adjusts her posture and goes back into character, pretending she doesn't recognize anyone in the room.

Images from Carly pop up on my screen. Kathrine giving a wide side eye to Tessa. Another of Amari and Jasen looking confused when they see Tessa. I look up at them and see they are back to smiling and cordial, speaking to the analysts and Milo and Reggie.

Interesting. They didn't know each other was here.

I message Reggie and Milo's laptops with the images, 'They were surprised to see each other. We can discuss tonight. Business as usual for the rest of the day. It could actually be a lucrative account.'

I notice them nod in recognition without actually looking at me to avoid attention before they close their laptops to enjoy lunch and get to know our guests.

The rest of the afternoon goes without incident. Except for having to focus on not letting Kathrine's energy influence or sway me, it's just a regular meeting with potential clients, getting to know their company better and understand their security needs.

Before we break for the day, Amari approaches me and shakes my hand again. I feel her energy now, comforting, warm, and welcoming. I recognize it almost immediately.

"Oh, you're a healer?" I ask with a genuine smile.

"Yes, is it that obvious?" her eyes brighten, and she giggles slightly.

"My mate is a healer also," I respond, "She has a similar energy as you."

I see a little falter in her eyes before she speaks again, "That's great! The Moon Goddess has not blessed the Earth with nearly enough of us. W-will we get to meet your Luna at dinner service?"

Out of the corner of my eye, I see Kathrine take closer notice of our conversation, "Unfortunately, she is away on business, but she sends her regards."

"Oh, that is such a shame. Well, I will be back in the area in a few months when we begin construction. Maybe I can plan to meet her another time."

"Absolutely. You would love Kas," I grin, thinking about my little mate," Everyone does."

"Well, in the pictures I have seen of her in the newspapers, she looks like she is a very sweet, happy young lady," her eyes dart away for a moment. Her posture stiffens a little as she speaks more hesitantly, "Well, thank you for your time today, Alpha Mason. I have one more thing to ask before we get ready for dinner."

"Of course. What can I help you with?" I cross my arms over my body and listen to what she has to say.

"My sister Persephone would like to know if she can go for a run on your territory after dinner," Amari asks in a sympathetic tone, "You see, she is one of the few of our kind that lives most of her life as a wolf. We brought her as a consultant so she can evaluate the land parcel we purchased.

Being in human form is...well, it's difficult for her. She doesn't connect well with people."

I look at her blankly for a moment. 'My sister'. Persephone, also known as Cora, is Amari's sister. Amari is one of the Manae too.

I look around the room at the rest of their team of analysts and project managers. They all have features either similar to Katherine with blonde hair and light gray eyes, or similar to Amari with red hair and blue eyes. Holy shit.