

# Forever in the Past and Forever in the Future

Chapter 184



## Chapter 52

I quickly set the table, take the food out of the boxes, and put it on real plates just as Lenora steps in the room with my guards. 2

"Oh, I thought it was just take out. This looks gourmet," Lenora looks impressed.

"Well, the plates help. Come on, sit down and let's eat. I still need to get a shower before we get our day started," I wave them over to the table and take my spot. The distraction of being able to eat with my pack members is exactly what I need to get my mind off of Bronx for a while.

When we finish eating, I get myself together for the day and we get started. Lenora and Tyree get settled in the conference room to help families with the relocation registration while Marco, Elder Randall and I push through building after building, house after house, assessing the value and determining what we can sell at auction. The pack members who choose to come to Blood River will be allowed to take their belongings, but most of the furniture and things like that are the property of Silver Moon. Most of what we find is shabby and run down. There is very little we will be able to sell. I mark most of it to be donated to charity or to be incinerated.

Except for the lunch break Marco makes me take, we work straight through until dinner. When Marco makes me stop.

"Luna, please sit. You need to eat," he calmly informs me.

"Marco, we're almost done. Only six more houses, then we're finished with this part," I feel myself whine. I don't need to eat. I need to keep busy to keep my mind off of Bronx.

"Kas, don't make me ask twice. I got orders," Marco hisses through gritted teeth. His professional voice erodes and his heavy Spanish comes forward, "Alpha says you need to eat, so you need to eat."

I roll my eyes and cross my arms over my body, "Alright, fine."

He pulls me out to the porch and sits me on the step while he goes to the car. He comes back with a cooler that has another to go box inside, "I should heat it up but there ain't no microwaves in these places."

"It's alright. Where's yours?" I ask opening the box to see spaghetti and meatballs with two pieces of garlic bread inside. I stab at a meatball with the plastic fork and take a bite. It's delicious, even cold. I guess I didn't realize how hungry I actually was.

"I ate mine an hour ago, when you was at the pool house," he explains. He pulls out his phone and aims it at me to take a picture, "Smile for the Alpha."

"Huh?" I say as I shovel a fork full of pasta into my mouth. He snaps the picture.

"Alpha said to send proof you been eating like he ordered. No better proof than a picture," Marco chuckles as he sends the picture off.

-Really, Marco? That's the picture you sent?-I laugh as he shows it to me.

"Hey Luna, what better proof could I send him? It will make him laugh," he smiles with a shrug.

"Um, sorry to interrupt, Goddess, but you don't happen to have any extra, do you?" Elder Randall asks as he steps out of the little house. The expression on his face makes me uncomfortable, but I can't pinpoint why.

"Sorry, Elder Randall, but no. I can ask Beta Lenora and Tyree to order something from the kitchen for you. It will be ready by the time we get back," Marco speaks for me, switching his tone back to his formal work voice.

"Thank you, uh, Marco is it? Don't worry about it. I will be fine. I can have an omega bring my meal to my suite when we get back," Randall holds his hands up and gives an awkward smile.

I inwardly smile, grateful that I don't have to confront Randall or share my garlic bread with him, but I want to talk to him about the way he has run the pack for the last two years. I look at Marco and tilt my head, trying to show I need a few minutes alone with the old Elder.

Marco takes his hand out of his pocket and looks at his watch. I recognize it as one I helped Musu pick out for his birthday.

"As soon as the Luna is done eating, we can get back to work. It has been taking fifteen minutes per house, so we should be done in about an hour and a half," he advises Elder Randall, "I'm just going to step over to the car to call my mate. If you or the Luna need anything, I just call for me, Sir." 1

I see Elder Randall's face darken slightly for a moment, then back to its usual uncomfortable smile. I wonder what that's about?

"That sounds just fine," he sneers slightly.

As Marco wanders away toward the car, I beckon Randall to sit down with me, "Elder Randall, please sit. A request from a goddess."

"Anything for you, Goddess Iokaste," he gives his fake smile again. I feel my back stiffen at him using my full name, but I don't correct him. He groans as he sits on the step with me.

"Randall, I want you to know I have spoken to Alpha Regent Bronx. Over the course of the last two years, you have run this pack further into the ground than a drunkard, abusive Alpha ever could. The treatment of the people here is appalling. As a member of the Elder Council, you should be ashamed of yourself," I scold the man in as calm a voice as I can, but I notice in the evening light, a slight aura is surrounding me.

"Goddess, I assure you, I have tried my best. The situation here was well, it was-"

"It was better two years ago when my former Alpha was whipping me nearly to death every night than it is now," I snap, "You have done this pack a disservice. Honestly, I don't believe you ever looked for a suitable Alpha for these people. I don't think you have put any effort into helping them at all and now you have made it Bronx and my concern."

I see his face blanch as his mouth opens and closes a few times, but he says nothing.

"What really gets me. Like really, really gets me angry," my aura glows brighter now, "is that you have been treating young girls of this pack as slaves. And don't deny that you haven't."

"Goddess, I did what I had to do to fulfill my duties to the Council," he voice has an irritated growl.

"Then you have failed the Council, Sir. The Council is supposed to be composed of the best retired Alphas and Alpha Regents our community

has to offer. If this is your best effort, you are clearly not part of the echelons you think you are," I use my words to hit him where it counts. Telling him he is not as elite as he thinks he is.

"Randall, not only have you done an abysmal job here, my Beta advised this morning that out of the four hundred adults, only two hundred and fifty have requested to come to Blood River. That's going to leave a lot of rogues and asylum seekers in my region to manage."

"Goddess, I won't apologize for what has happened here. I won't take responsibility for this pack who refused to take responsibility for themselves. We will finish tomorrow in the pack house with assessments and registrations for transfers. The following morning, you will go home and I have to stay here and deal with the aftermath."

"And what aftermath do you think that is?" I furrow my brow.

"Hope. You have given this group hope. The worst kind of incentive. A promise you cannot guarantee and now it will be difficult to control them," his voice is cruel and cold now.

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I control my breathing and will my energy to turn inward before something bad happens.

"Marco! We're ready here," I call out. He lifts his head in recognition and hangs up the phone while he jogs over. He takes the carton from me and leads us to the car so we can finish assessing the last of the run down cottages.