

# Forever in the Past and Forever in the Future

Chapter 211

## Chapter 79

"Here come the Alpha and Luna now," Ashley motions to US as we enter the great room.

I hold up the books and look at the children who all still look pretty tentative about their new environment, "Who wants to hear a story? Follow me!"

I walk backward slowly, with a big smile, as children look up to their parents for permission. Moms and dads gratefully set toddlers down and let go of their children's hands, encouraging them to follow me, so they can have a few minutes of peace.

I lead the children over to the corner with all the comfortable cushions and bean bags. Once we are all settled in, I give the kids a choice, a book or a story about the Moon Goddess. They all agree they want to hear about the Moon Goddess, so I tell them the story of how the Moon Goddess and Endymion fell in love and had fifty daughters together. I leave out the parts about factions, abilities, and that I am one of those daughters. I let Lex help by using her voice for the male characters in the story.

As I tell the story, I see Ashley out of the corner of my eye give me a thumbs up with a big grin. Even some parents are listening in. I glance over to see some of them smiling and whispering happily to each other.

"Is that it?" One of the girls cries out desperately as I finish the story.

I feel myself chuckle, "Yes, darling. For now, that's it, but guess what. Every Thursday afternoon, I go to the pack library and we have story time. Ask your parents to get the information from Gamma Ashley."

The girl's eyes brighten when she hears she will get to hear more stories from me.

"Now, who here is going to school on Monday?" I look around at the group. More of the children raise their hands, "Oh! So exciting! I bet your teachers are going to be thrilled to meet you."

A little girl sitting near the back looks up at me with a worried face, "Is school scary, Luna? I've never been before."

"Well, school can be scary at first, but a lot of new things are scary. Once you see that there is nothing to fear, then it's fun. What's your name, darling? What grade are you going to be in?" I reassure the girl.

"I'm Hannah Fisher. I'm going to be in first grade," she says, a little more confidently. As I look more closely at her, I realize it's the little girl from the basement.

"Well, you are in luck, Hannah Fisher. The first grade teachers are the best," I emphasize the word best, making my eyes big, "And the first graders are learning a play for Winter Solstice. I bet they can find a role for you."

Hannah smiles and her eyes get glossy, "Really?"

"Yes, really. I'm sure of it," I look up to see Ashley tap her watch, "Okay everyone, it looks like your parents need you back so we can get lunch. Who likes chicken fingers?"

All the children raise their hands excitedly, "Great. Go find your Moms and Dads. I will meet you in the dining room."

All the children get up and run to find their parents, who all look grateful I could provide a quiet moment for them. Hannah is still sitting on her cushion.

"Is everything okay, Hannah?" I ask.

Hannah looks down at her lap, not sure what to say. I slide off my bean bag and sit on the cushion next to her, "You can tell me anything, Hannah. You don't have to be scared." 1

"Luna, Mommy says you d-didn't kill that man in the basement. B-but I-I saw ..." her eyes get watery as she speaks.

"Hannah, I'm going to tell you a little secret. I have a lot of sisters. One of my sisters looks like she could be my twin, but she's older than me. That's who you saw in the dungeon. She, well, she's influenced by dark magic. She doesn't realize what she did is wrong, but I'm trying to help her understand it was," I watch Hannah think over the information.

When she speaks again, she looks at her hands in her lap and her voice is lower, "Luna, I-I'm sorry I blamed you. I was scared."

"It's alright, Hannah. I'm not mad at you. No one is. I have a question though," I tilt my head and lean down to get her to look at me, "What were you doing in the dungeon with that man? He wasn't part of the pack. It could have been dangerous."

Hannah looks up at me now. The look on her sweet little face is so complicated. Her watery eyes spill tears, "Umm, he told me if I gave him information about the new Luna, he would give me money so my family could move away from Silver Moon."

"So you went into a locked dungeon with a man that promised you money?" I try not to sound suspicious or accusing, but I can feel anger boiling inside of me. Lex is pacing and growling as Hannah provides more information.

"I know I'm not supposed to go with strangers, but I just wanted Mommy and Daddy to be happy again," she cries, wiping her sleeve across her face.

"I see," I nod and hold my hands out to her, "Hannah, can I give you a hug? A lot of people say my hugs make them feel better. Do you want a hug that will make you feel better?"

The teary little girl nods and stands up. She looks over at her parents tentatively. I turn my head and see them nod to her before she slides into my lap. I wrap my arms around her and rock her back and forth, releasing a little calming energy to her.

"Hannah, here at Blood River, no one will ever ask you to go anywhere without your parents knowing first, okay? No one will ever touch you without your permission, even if it's just to hold your hand. That is how we raise our pack," I tell her gently as I smooth her hair down.

I feel her nod against my chest as she snuffles.

"I have one more question, darling. It is a scary question, but it is very important. I heard you are going to speak to the Council about what happened in the dungeon and I want you to make sure you tell the truth but I need to know. Did that man touched you," I speak softly so she knows the conversation is between US. 2

I feel her body slightly stiffen, and she takes a ragged breath. I close my eyes and brace myself for whatever it is she is about to say. Lex is already growling, prepared for the worst.

"No, Luna, not the way you are thinking. He told me I was brave for helping him and thanked me for going into the dungeon with him. And he held my hand to go down the stairs since it was dark, but after that, he didn't touch me. He just wanted information about you, I swear," her sobs are bigger now. Somehow, I can sense she is telling me the truth. I tighten my arms around her and let her cry.

"Thank the Goddess. I would kill that son of a bitch a second time if I needed to," Lex snarls as she and I breathe a collective sigh of relief. I smell Bronx and Milo's scents getting closer behind US and a couple other scents, I assume, are her parents.

"It's alright, Hannah. Did you have any information to give him?" I ask, still rocking her in my arms.

"Um, only that you were pretty, and that you were going to let US go to school," she admits between hiccups.

I can't help but giggle, "Well, Hannah, it sounds like you are a very brave and smart young lady. We are lucky to have you as one of our first graders."

I feel Bronx's hand on my shoulder. I look to see him kneeling behind me, looking very serious. Milo and the girl's parents are right behind him. Milo has a worried expression on his face and Hannah's parents look concerned for their little girl. I give them a wink and a brief nod to show them everything is going to be okay.

"Hannah, it looks like there are some people here who would also like to give you a hug," I jostle her gently so she will look up. She smiles when she sees her parents. I can she is missing her front teeth. It makes her look even cuter.

"Before I let you go, I just want you to promise me two things," I put my finger under her chin so she will look at me.

"Yes, Luna?" she asks, looking unsure of herself.

I wipe the last of her tears before I speak, "First and most importantly. Promise me you will never, ever, ever go off with a stranger again. Remember what I said, no one in Blood River would ever ask you to go anywhere without asking your parents if it is okay first."

She nods vigorously, "Yes, Luna. I promise. I won't go anywhere without Mommy or Daddy saying I'm allowed."

"Good. The second thing is, make sure you tell the Council the whole truth. There is a lot of adult stuff going on that you don't need to worry about. All you need to worry about is telling the truth, but whatever you tell them is going to be very important to that adult stuff. Okay?"

"O-okay. I promise," she says with another nod of her head.

"One more thing, Hannah," I look her square in the eye, "I know how scary it can be to have to speak to the Council. I will be there since I'm your Luna, but you have to sit by yourself in the front. Just remember, they are werewolves just like you and I. They are no better than anyone else. They're just older. That's it. You need to be brave and tell them exactly what happened. I know what happened was scary, and it's probably still scary to think about it, but it's the past and nothing like that will happen to you again. Not if I have anything to do with it. It's my job to keep you safe and I take that responsibility seriously."

Hannah takes a deep breath and smiles at me before she throws her arms around my neck and gives me a tight hug, "Thank you, Luna."

"You're welcome, Hannah," I let her out of my arms and she runs up to her parents. Her father picks her up and hugs her tightly. Her mother silently mouths 'thank you' to me before they walk away.

"Good job, Luna," Bronx says quietly. He gives me a kiss on the cheek, "Are you okay?"

"Alexandras didn't touch her. He just wanted information about me," I let him know. Behind him, Milo puts his hand on his heart and exhales a breath.

"Thank the Goddess," Milo says, "I would have brought him back from the dead and killed him all over again."

"Yeah, you and Lex both," I confirm, "Bronx, we need to talk to Tessa. Why was her mate hiding in the dungeon? And why was he trying to get information about me?"

I see a glint of anger flash across Bronx's face.

"Hey! No getting angry. Do I need to have my new intelligence officer handle it?" I hiss at him.

Bronx looks at me from the side of his eye and growls, "No. I will behave myself."