

**Lea Monde**

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**Rated:** R for Restricted

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**Epilogue: Frozen in Ice**

*My name is Fellania, daughter of the Bloodclaw. The role of the Arch-Druid was my birthright.*

*A nice bath, a good night's sleep, some clean clothes after dealing with Vampires and Wolfmen in a five-star classy place with an oriental motif was just the place for me to enjoy all that. True this place was in the Orient, Tokyo Japan to be exact, with the beauty of Mount Fuji right before my very eyes. Mount Fuji was a beautiful thing, white-capped and silent for so long. Seeing it up close and personal was a... spiritual sensation.*

"It calls to you... doesn't it?" a voice asked and I turned to see Pendragon in the arms of that Lilly Jade fem, who, strangely enough, may even be stronger than me!

"It... does." I admitted. "I love the Orient, Mount Fuji, China, Japan... It's like it..."

"...Calls to you." Pendragon finished.

I turned and nodded. "You know... finishing other people's sentences may seem like a wise and wonderful thing, mister dragon, but for us lesser mortals it's pretty damned annoying. You may be all high and mighty with these spooky quasi cosmic powers," I waved my hands and rolled my eyes in an impression of an incantation. "But still... it's annoying."

"My apologies, truly... I was eager to acknowledge your draw to this fair land."

"Eager? Why?"

"Because this was your first mother's land... and that," he pointed through the open window at the dormant volcano. "Was her mountain. 'Fellania, The Mountain Queen' she was called. Her domain was all that could be seen from atop the mountain, and it stretched far and wide! Of course the mountain has worn down a bit, especially after it blew up a couple of times, but regardless, it still is your mother's mountain. Kinda has to be... she was the only one who stayed on it when it blew... twice! Not even the mighty Kitsune remained atop it. Even I remained at the bottom of it. My shrine used to be right... there." And he pointed to the base of the mountain. "There saw the beginnings of many monastic orders throughout Japan and China... and where your friend Sue's first-mother lived and trained nearly her whole life."

*I looked back at him discerningly, resting back within Lily Jade's arms with new bandages wrapping his small torso while Lilly Jade made a throne of her enigmatic bosom amidst hugging him tighter and purring, rubbing her cheek against his head. He looked like he was really enjoying that spot... and the attention.*

"So what does that mean for me?"

“It means that Asia is in your blood. The land calls to you, and you yearn for it. Look me in the eye and tell me that’s not true.”

“I won’t bother.” *I replied and looked back at the volcano.* “I think... I will climb to the top of the mountain first.”

“White Oak would like that.” *Pen said and again I turned to him.*

“Why?”

“Because your first mother pulled it from the cinder cone on that mountain. It was the thing that kept it from erupting the first time. If you’d like... I can show you where she made her home... your new home if you so choose. It is your ancestral home and birthright after all.”

*I hesitated, blinking. It still stands?!*

“Maybe later.” *I replied at last and gripped the window sill. I felt the vibration of the White Oak as it created its elaborate headdress in my hair, with hair rods and hair stays all connected together by a webbing of vines decorated with leaves. It made me feel... prettier whenever it did that.* “I have some errands to run first.”

“Of course... and... before you leave, Fellania, you are planning to do that today?” *he paused and I neither acknowledged or denied the claim.* “I would like to have a private word with you.”

“Yeah... sure...” *I replied and Lilly immediately turned with Pen to head down the stairs. The smell of breakfast was wafting up the stairway.*

*My tummy gurgled, a good meal would be nice right now, but something else was gurgling, and it was maddening me. I wanted it satisfied, and in all honesty, I knew of only one person that I considered fulfilling it with.*

*Turning from the window, continuing on the mission I’d started this morning, I strode down the hall, coming to one specific person... or... rat.*

*Coming to his door, pausing for breath, I shamelessly pulled open my robe so that the bands only barely covered my nipples, revealing a little of the disks of the areola before I lifted a hand and knocked on the door forcibly. Then I tried to get into a suggestive position, chest hanging into the robes while I switched positions several times, and when the door finally opened, I had just a moment of gladness at seeing an awake and nearly naked Remy that was dressed in only a sheet... right before my heart plummeted as I saw past him at the naked female rat laying face down in his bed – er – nest.*

*The stank of sex hit me in the face like a London Fog.*

“Fellania... I... this is unexpected. I’m sure...”

“N-never mind.” *I choked and pulled the front of the robes tightly shut.* “It was nothing... I-I see you’re busy.”

*The ache in my loins had become paramount...*

*I'd spent all morning convincing myself whether or not that this needed to happen, and Remy was sort of a friend... well... he was the only available male I knew of here, and I wasn't going to whore myself to any of the guys I saw here. Most of them probably couldn't handle me anyways. It was the bane of being so strong...*

*Turning on my heel and striding away, I made it several long paces before...*

*"Fellania stop." Remy said, but I strode forward still. "Please stop." And the second request held me and I slowed to a stop. Despite my strength I couldn't go any further, and just hugged myself.*

*"I'm used to females throwing themselves at me." Remy began.*

*"Oh you do, do you?" I snapped. "Every female in the world just throwing themselves at you. You're so hot that I'm not even an exception?!"*

*"Let me finish, damn it! You bull-headed, irate..." He stopped. "No... no I'll not do this. Fellania just listen to me. Those females throw themselves at me, because they are horny... looking for a fucking. I'm a rat. Despite the moniker, fucking like rabbits isn't nearly as intense as fucking like rats. So when a woman stands before my door, obviously showing me what God has given her in her own right, it was free sex. I'm a guy... of course I want to get some fucking on... with us rats it's a survival technique.*

*"Did you know that in my training, there were a thousand other male and female rats that started with me?" he asked me and approached me a little to be heard.*

*"What's that supposed to matter?" I asked and rounded on him, seeing him standing there in his blanket.*

*"Between youth, which is like growing up in a hood anywhere in America, I made lots of friends, and then came our Rite of Passage. The Rite of Passage for a rat is... perilous. Deadly. What we do to ourselves to be the best of the best at what we do... do you know how many other rats died?" I fell silent. Died? From a Rite of Passage? "About a third of us." He finished. "And we don't have one Rite of Passage, we have seven. Seven! I've personally made it through six, possibly my seventh by now, but each time we go on a mission, each time we go through any sort of Rite, there's a chance we don't come out of it, and out of that original class of a thousand, do you know how many of us are left?"*

*"A-a few hundred?" I ventured.*

*"Twelve." Remy replied immediately and I swallowed. "There are twelve of us left. Our society isn't friendly for the weak, Fellania. We're not strong like bears or cats or wolves, but damn it! We have an ability that makes us feared nonetheless. But it makes us cold, it makes us hard, and it's everything I can do to live by the moment and try to be happy and free. Please don't go angry, Fellania. Please don't consider this our last moment. I'd like to consider you as a friend to me."*

*"You make friendship sound so special." I replied. "I've got lots of friends."*

*"I don't." he replied with an air of finality so profound that I swore the Earth itself gave a shiver just then. Might've been an earthquake I'd just picked up on, maybe not. "You're in pain... I see that, you wanted me to relieve that pain, I'm honored, I am... so... so very honored Fellania, but you're so precious to me. Too precious for me to... befoul such a pure woman with my ways and destroy it with something as so frivolous as sex."*

*"Befoul?" I repeated.*

“What sort of a mate would you consider me to be? Your yearning, your wants and desires that just drove you to my door was because your body is telling you that now is the time to breed. I’ve smelled the heat on you for days now. I’m a rat, you’re a bear, our breeds are about as compatible as cats and wolves. And what sort of life is that for you? A husband in whom you may never know when he’ll be back again, a perpetually empty womb. It would drive you insane.

“It’d be like caging a nightingale.

“It’s a situation made all the worse because before this moment... before this very moment I might’ve at least done you, and our friendship would end after that moment of passion was over.”

“Why before now?” *I asked meekly, wringing my hands.*

“You saw her.” *Remy replied simply, and now he neared enough and reached out to take my hands. Even in his hybrid form he was so much smaller than me.* “She’s my own breed, she’s... *pure.* Do you have any idea how rare of a treasure it is for her to be that way? A pure woman? She’s not some used and abused whore like most of the females of my breed become. My mother, bless her pure heart, was an exception to that whole mess. Pen... hid this fem from our people, he... kept her safe from our damnable society, brought her up right, trained her differently, and... I... *feel* for her. I really do. When I have feelings like that it wouldn’t be fair to her or to you to harbor a... sexual... relationship with you, Fell.

“We’re comrades in arms now, friends too I hope. Comrades can still hate each other, but friends are different, it’s deeper, and at the very least, I would like to hold that with you.” *He squeezed my hands.*

“It hurts...” *I moaned, and began to weep and he embraced me... as best as his little arms could with the thickness of my bust and all.*

“I know... I’m sorry. I’m sorry if I hurt you.”

*I embraced him to me tighter, not caring if his head pushed in between my breasts.*

“Friends?” *I murred.*

*He laughed.* “Friends.”

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We were given a mage to teleport us to my room. Pen *insisted* that I remain in the temple till I gave birth, so in the meantime, I had to pick up a few things... one of which was my very pregnant cat Mew.

A few tomes, some clothes and things and...

“Mad.” I giggled and strode toward him as he stood before the open bay windows overlooking the city of Saint Paul. “We can go city watching when we get back to Japan.”

“It amazes me though.” He said looking down at all the people running around. “Horseless wagons, instant communication through devices and not magic, artificial light from something called electricity. Look at those ships on the river, what are those called?”

“Barges.” I mused not even looking at them as I palmed his shoulders and pressed against his back... and ground his backside. Saint Paul was a major shipping hub. Here in Saint Paul there was a place called ‘*The Five Highways*.’ It was a narrow span where there was a train track that followed the bluffs, and next to that was a road, next to that was a walk path, next to that was a river, and next to that was a private airport. “They go up and down the river delivering coal, iron and grain mostly.”

“A ship like that would be the sort of thing to brave the ocean, and before we left Japan, I could see the ocean from there and the mighty ships that were moored there. Massive things longer than this... skyscraper... is tall. Humans have done marvelous things.”

“Wait till I show you the internet.” I purred and nibbled his earlobe for a moment before he turned.

“This is a world of wonders.” He mentioned and palmed my tummy, and I leaned against my big... strong mate... right before I heard a door open.

Turning I blinked at the sight of a black cat walking from the bedroom toward the kitchen... and by walking I should mention that he had on a thick wool hat and a pair of leather boots that came right up to his rear haunches, and he walked on just his hind feet. He was a Russian Blue cat, a blue-gray furred feline wearing a collar around his neck and dark blue lines striping his form elegantly that glowed faintly to the eye of only those who could see the supernatural like Lycan like Mad and myself.

He walked to the refrigerator, opened it, pulled out a container of cream and popped it, sipped it, capped it and turned before nodding at us.

“Dobre’ dien...” He nodded and then halted and then jerked himself back to us. “Susan! What are you doing here?!”

“I live here, Ivan.” I chuckled. “What are *you* doing here?”

He drew himself up. “Well I will have you know that I’m most upset with you... most upset. I place my pregnant mate into your hands and then you leave for six days without so much as a how-do-you-do? I mean, you didn’t even clean out the litter box! Great Maker, woman... that’s poor handling right there.

“Well, Mew got scared, she telepathed me and asked me to come care for her. I was of course waiting for this day with absolute anticipation, don’t think I have claws anymore from nibbling on them,” he spread his hand-like paw and spread the fingers showing there were no claws there anymore. “But still! I am very, very disappointed in you.”

“Uh-huh...” I smirked and let go of Mad to stride to him. “And why didn’t you take her to your home in Mir?”

“Because! ...Your place is more comfortable.”

“That’s a talking cat.” Mad blinked.

Ivan eyed him from head to toe. “And you’re currently with a talking cat!” he said and gestured to me. “What’s the difference?” and he gestured to himself and me repeatedly. “At least he’s brighter than that Lee fellow.” Ivan smirked. “Speaking of whom...”

“That’s being dealt with.” I said quickly.

“Hm... right. Poor guy was in tears for days, sobbing like a little girl, and he’s... *‘Being dealt with.’*”

“He was sobbing?” I asked, and I felt Madoushi grip my shoulders from behind... reminding me that he was still here.

“Like a little girl, yes. *‘Oh my beloved Susan. I have earned your ire. Oh Boo-hoo-hoo, woe is me.’*” Ivan said in a mocking tone. “Upset Mew seriously so I offered to send him to where I was sure you must be, just to shut him up. Mew’s in a delicate mood right now... and a sobbing tiger like him is not the sort of distraction I’d like to have braying about my mate like a bleating goat. I tell ya.”

“And so you’re nonetheless here to mooch off my refrigerator.” I smirked.

“Oh this? No... not for me. This is for Mew. Little warm milk... does wonders for a girl so heavy with kittens she can’t even stand up long. It’s everything she can do to get to the litter and back. But with these two paws I managed to drag her basket into the bathroom! With her in it too...” and he flexed an arm showing a rather thick bicep muscle. “Yeah...” and he kissed it. “...I’m masculine!” and he jerked up on his cluster hidden beneath the fur. “Now if you’ll excuse me abusive person... I’m going to go take care of my mate like a sire’s supposed to.”

Mad and I looked at each other as he turned, and rolling my eyes I hurried after him and gripped him by the scruff and lifted him off the ground with Ivan giving off a quick yowl.

“I’ll have you know I was trapped in a world between worlds saving the world which includes you and Mew. Now let *us* go care for my magical kitty.”

Mad followed with a smirk at what was happening as Ivan hung from my hand, holding onto the bottle of cream.

“Honey, I’m back. We have guests!” Ivan said as I arrived with him, he still dangling in one of my hands.

“Oh send them away... I’m tired.” Mew moaned and I dropped Ivan onto the foot of the bed with a yowl, and he bounced as I approached Mew who was in her magical kitty shape, a bright white with glowing red etches, and a collar with a thick bell at her throat. But she’d changed since I was here last.

Her six breasts were little mounds now, and her tummy had been growing thickly, but regardless, as a magical kitty, she was human-shaped... partially, so her elegance was still maintained despite giving me a marginal look of what I’d look like with my tummy swollen with a single baby.

“Hi Mew.” I mentioned and sat beside her.

“Sue! You’re back!” Mew gaped. “Where did you go?! You left me all alone!”

“Not much of a choice. I was yonked and I couldn’t bring you with. Besides... you wouldn’t want to be where I was.”

“But you changed.” Mew said, her eyes glowing in the dim of the room as Mad came to stand at the doorway. “And you have a new male.” She smirked. “Good... I couldn’t believe you let that other overbearing male stick around for so long.”

“We were having a relationship, Mew... a relationship that wasn’t going so well anymore.”

“And you’re pregnant.” Mew said and I jumped a little.

“How do you know?” I asked.

“Sue... I’m a cat, symbol of femininity and sexuality? Duh. Now give me my cream.” She reached out for it and Ivan provided, uncapping it even and removing his hat while moving it gently between his fingers while she drank it all. “Oh... that’s good.”

I looked to Ivan as he fingered his Russian hat, and then I looked to her.

“You’re a bitch, mew.” I mentioned.

“What? Sue... why are you comparing me to a female dog in heat?” Mew asked.

I gestured with both hands to Ivan. “Are you going to even say thank you? He’s here at your beck and call, cowering to you. You carry his babies, and you can’t even give him the time of day? Give me that.” And I took the cream from her and she made a face and reached out for it.

“But... but...”

“No buts. You’ve become a downright bitch, Mew. This guy right here was willing to come from Mir, Russia. From the freaking interior of the continent, all the way here to Minnesota, to serve your every beck and call, and you can’t even say, thank you?! Do you realize how hard it is to find a dedicated mate willing to serve and protect you as a female? You’re a scandalous despicable creature for doing such a thing, and when someone gives everything that they are and you can’t even say ‘*thank you*’... or, or... or ‘*I love you*’...” Ivan and Mew looked at each other and back to me again as I ranted. “...then you’re just the worst person in the world! And when you can’t even say it when you carry his children... and... and...” I began to tear up, becoming angry and sad at the same time, and Mad sat beside me and covered my belly with a hand, reminding me that I should be calm for the burden I hold.

“I’m sorry. It’s been an emotional last couple of days.”

“So I see.” Mew replied, and then wedged herself upward, Ivan hurrying to help her up and then to stand. “Oi. Ok. Ok... thank you Ivan.” Mew said with a nod and a pat on his shoulder and he immediately swept into a deep bow with a sweep of his hat.

“My pleasure.” Ivan spoke before standing again.

“Susan...” Mew mentioned and stepped to me, palming her full and ripe belly, having to rebalance herself as she teetered. “You will find, that when you grow heavy with your kitten... or kittens... or whatever they are... that you will grow so tired that you will forget certain things. Including pleasantries.

“I thought you’d abandoned me. I was sobbing when Ivan came for me, and I clung to that male all night as he remained with me. I felt decimated and abandoned and while I slept this cat went all over the place looking for you... finally finding an answer with that weird freaky dragon guy who farts and burps pixie dust.” Mad looked to me with a raised eyebrow with that statement. “Ivan returned to me and cared for me for the whole time, bringing me food and water and helping me to so much as use the litter box for crying out loud, and I’ve thanked him many, many times before now.

“So my question then, Susan, other than being pregnant yourself, what made you fly off the handle just now?”

She palmed my muscular arm with her paw, kneading it briefly with her claws.

“Lee... even after finding out I might be carrying his cub... still couldn't say *'I love you.'*” I answered and gripped my hands together.

“Funny, he was saying it over and over again in the mirror when he was here.” Ivan mentioned.

“Saying it to himself in the mirror isn't the same as saying it to a lady's face, Ivan.” Mew said with a swish of her tail. “As such, you've proven yourself greater than that Lee guy any day. You got more manliness and power in your little paw finger than he does in his whole body.” She said and showed him her fourth toe of her forepaw. “Lee was a good guy, affectionate true, but if he can't say it to your face, then he doesn't love you.” She eyed Madoushi then. “Which brings me to this... guy. Has he said it?”

“Yes.” I answered quickly.

“Good. Then the answer is simple. Drop that Lee guy and take up this... guy... and live happily ever after. See! I'm not a bitch. Now can I have that nice cream for my babies now?”

I eyed her and smirked and then handed her the bottle, and she tipped it back and drank more of it, coming back with a milk moustache that she licked off her lips.

“I hope it's as easy as that.” I murmured.

“It is as easy as that. It's only difficult if you make it difficult.”

“What if...” I paused and then sighed. “I don't know who the father of my own baby is?”

“Do you mean father or sire?” she asked me before drinking more.

“Sire.”

“Then who cares? Like that commercial said, any male can make a baby, but it takes a man to be a father. Oof.” She finished as she fell to the bed and made it bounce a little. “Oh... little ones weighing me down heavily.” She purred. “But need some fresh cream.”

I sighed and then stood. “Well Mew... we better get going. You can stay here with Ivan, but I did come to bring you back with me. I suppose I should give you a choice.”

“With you! You're my human... well... sorta. I'd be nothing if not with my human. But if you're packing... Ivan... could you please get my bed ready and... the thing.” And Ivan hopped to it.

“Thing? What thing?” I blinked looking at her.

“Oh just my dingle ball.” She giggled and stuck a pinkie paw-finger in the corner of her mouth.

I stared at her with a raised eyebrow. “We need to talk about your catnip habit, Mew. But... we'll do that later. For now, that nice gentleman from the shrine will be here soon to take us back.



“Dear me, you’re a human who experiences sheer and utter pain while giving birth and you don’t want to have something make the experience more pleasureable? Why Susan... how else do you think women can enjoy birth other than being stoned for the length of it?”

She giggled and I chuckled, rolling my eyes.

“Fine... but... pack for nine months. We’ll be there for that long at the very least.”

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There was a terse moment as we returned home with a couple of suitcases. Pen said he was going to assign me a midwife and make my life as comfortable as possible, but as we were going to our rooms, we passed Lee in one of the common rooms.

We looked at each other for a long moment or two before Lee got up and approached us. Mad, despite Lee’s size, dropped my bags and went to go stand in front of me, and Lee stopped.

“I approach, and he protects you from me. I approach and you hide behind him.” He said, and I hid my face from Lee and gripped Mad’s back.

“Go away Lee. We have nothing to talk about. You were a good lay, but right now you mean nothing to me.”

“How can you say that after everything we’ve been through?” he gasped.

“Because I mean nothing to you.” I replied. “Until you can say the words... I don’t even so much as want to see you. And this child inside me... you will never see. Not so long as you continue to remain silent. Now go away.”

He hesitated, clenched... and then left, and Madoushi exhaled noticeably.

“You’re right, Sue... that guy’s crazy.” Mew mentioned near my shins as she stood cradling and palming her belly. “Loves you enough to dick you and impregnate you, maybe, but not enough to love you and even acknowledge that he’d impregnated you.”

There was a trembling moment, and then I broke into tears. “Let’s just get to our room.” I replied calmly.

“Good thing too.” Madoushi mentioned.

“Why?” Ivan mentioned as he trembled underneath three suitcases of diminishing size, balancing them all like a Hoo from Hooville might.

“Because I want to put some distance between me and that tiger; every time he comes near I keep having this deep foreboding fear that we might just really fight each other, and when it happens and you are round, it might hurt you and the cub. That... and the next time it happens, I fear I might just kill him... or him me.”

“Hmm...” Ivan said and then laughed. “A wise man once told me that bravery is not having fear, but still doing a thing regardless of fear. Lee has proven himself that he is not as brave as he thinks he is. Look! He’s afraid of a female!” Mew slapped him in the back of the head. “Shutting up.” Mew nodded smugly with a wry and knowing smirk.

“Wise words.” Mad commented and moved to pick up the bags.

“Good... cause that little prick over there told me them moments of entering this place.” Ivan nodded in a direction and looking in that direction, we saw Pen smoking a pipe in Lilly’s arms, and seeing us pay attention to us he lifted a hand and waved in greetings to us.

“That Pen. He’s just like a bad penny.” I smirked and wiped my tears. “Turning up when you least expect it to give just that added little bit to pay for what you need to pay for.”

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*Again, my name is Fellania, though right now I wasn’t feeling so hot... or so special.*

*I had new clothes, I had my first mother’s staff, and I was going to leave with the clothes I had on my back, for wherever the wind and my feet would take me. But I felt as if I needed to leave... now.*

*I tried to choose a time when I wouldn’t be noticed, after midnight when the shrine was largely asleep, and only its guards were awake. But then of course the guards wouldn’t stop me.*

*Reaching the common room, I dropped letters for Remy and for Sue, and then turned and jumped at seeing that Pendragon guy sitting atop a pedestal smoking a long stemmed pipe.*

“No letter for me? I thought I was being such a good host to you, Lady Fellania.” *He mentioned the moment he saw that I saw him, his green eyes shining like lamps through the dim haze.*

“I’d rather forget this place.” *I said.* “Now if you’ll excuse me...”

“I’ll tell Susan and Remy you didn’t bother saying goodbye.” *Pen said sharply and I rounded on him.*

“I’m trying...”

“...Not to listen.” *Pen said sternly.* “Sorry that I overrode you again, Lady Fellania... but you are letting your fears override your heart and if you finished that statement in your own way then you’d’ve let your own words lie to you and you’d follow the course that they told you to follow.”

*His words stabbed me, made me tremble, and I began to cry.* “What do you know of my fears?” *I growled... but half whimpered it at the same time.*

“You fear that in your advanced age, that you’ll not fulfill your role as a woman. Your womb yearns for a child, and yet it remains empty. Even Remy – a rat – decided to spurn your affections in the strength of his true love for you in the form of friendship... which to him means the world. He’d rather go without sex than to tap your fine tight ass and voluminous breasts.” *He wagged his eyes and took another draw from his pipe, the smoke of which was pinkish and smelt of incense.* “You fear, that you’ll never find the mate that completes you, fulfills for you that which your friend Susan has despite its complications with Lee, and rather be around, see her grow heavy with her kitten or watch her love bloom while yours remains cold, that you’d rather abandon your friend in her time of need.”

“I-It’s not like that.” *I protested.*

“No it’s not.” *Pen began and drew from his pipe again.* “Oh wait... yes it is. You can face whatever atrocities you’ve faced in Lea Monde, but when it comes to this... you run?”

“It’s not like that!” *I sobbed.*

“Perhaps. Perhaps not.” *He drew from the pipe again.* “What if I told you, that for the past million and a half years, I’ve been in the business of answers? People need answers; I give them the correct ones. What if I were to tell you that I knew the answers to your questions. Would you believe me?”

*I sniffed, on the verge of tears for some reason.* “What questions do I have? I know all my questions, and if I don’t then I find them out for myself.”

“Do you? When will you marry?” *he asked me, and I embraced myself.* “When will you have a cub for your own?” *my arms tightened.* “Where are you going, where are you coming from, who are you, what are you doing, why are you here, what...”

“Enough!” *I shouted, almost sobbing as I closed my eyes and bit my lip to keep it trembling.*

*Pen tapped out his pipe and slipped it into a pocket of his staff that was balanced across his lap.*

“Within the year, within the year, to reclaim your ancestral home, from a deeply rooted family as old as mankind itself is, Fellania Bloodclaw, trying to find out who you are, and... to save the world.” *Pen added one step after the next, and blinking, turning to face him, he looked at me straight faced with no mirth or humor on it. He was absolutely serious.* “Your family is one I’ve watched over for three hundred thousand years, Fellania. The reason for that is two-fold.

“The first...” and he held up a little clawed finger. “Is that the planet has chosen you to protect her. A dubious Honor, to say the least, and one you have no choice within. Some day you’ll be a part of a team that will protect the Earth. Your strength shall be an absolute need for its success. And second...” *he paused.* “...Reincarnation doesn’t happen. What is dead is dead. Likewise... once a soul leaves the world, it’s gone... never to return. No strength, no power, no magic can override God’s will, and his will states that once you leave this world, there’s no coming back.

“But... there are tricks and loopholes to even God’s laws.

“I am going to reveal something to you, Fellania Bloodclaw, something that will utterly complete you, start answering those questions you have for yourself... but I will ask maybe five minutes of your time. If, afterward, you decide I’m utterly full of it, then you can be on your way. If not...” *and he raised an index finger of one hand.* “Then I can open the door and show you more, provide more for you, help you.”

“...I know what you’re thinking... because I’ve been thinking of it for a long time now. Why oh why didn’t I take the blue pill?” *I asked him aloud.*

“Ignorance is bliss... I grant you.” *Pen nodded.* “But you’re not Cipher... or Neo.”

“Five minutes?” *I asked him and he nodded, and even hopped off his pedestal, wavered for a moment but then balanced with help of his staff.* “Five minutes. I’ll even give you a booby prize.” *And from within his robes he pulled out a wad of Yen... in very large denominations.* “Deny my offer, and you may have this. It will take you

wherever you wish to go in the world and let you live like a queen. Or... if you wish... journey in which Madoushi might call a walkabout. Regardless, whatever you choose, the door here will always be open.”

“Then what is it you want to show me?” *I asked, straightening myself and steeling myself against the cry baby attitude I’d just had. I hate having to cry.*

“Come with me.”

*Pendragon, a short, tiny little thing, very much unassuming for the sort of strength and power he must hold, led the way downward, into a hidden place beneath the shrine, on a wide curve that descended to the level of the chamber beneath the floor he and Sue had descended with her scroll earlier, and entered into a sub-basement.*

“I came upon a discovery when visiting a Millennium Tree in the Antarctic.”

“A tree? I-in the Antarctic?” *I blinked down at him as he scurried along to keep pace.*

“Quite. As I was coming home, I felt suddenly compelled to seek out a place at the edge of an ice shelf, and considering the speed at which a ice flow flows at, you can imagine that this discovery must’ve been imbedded in the ice for a long, long time. A few hundred thousand years to say the least. Just to think when I came upon it, that this must’ve been so lucky to come out at this exact moment... and in my experience I’ve learned to recognize serendipity. I’m not one who believes in luck, but I do believe in fate.”

“Fate? I don’t believe in fate.”

“Oh?” *he smirked up at me.* “You tell me as to whether or not you believe that after you see this.” *And he gestured at a lock with no key hole or combination lock and it clicked open, right before the doors parted with the grinding sound of stone against stone.*

“It’s cold.” *I said and exhaled a breath, feeling my nips hardening from the chill as goose bumps rose up along my skin.* “Moisture.”

“Nothing to a half Polar Bear is it?” *Pen smirked.*

“No... but what’s in here?”

“Your family’s past... come full circle.” *Pen said, and flipped a switch and lights began to brighten, revealing lamps shining down on a block of ice that was partially chipped and melted, and caught on the inside, like a fly in a tray of ice, was a person.*

“What... is... this?” *I breathed deeply, feeling my body arch, my loins themselves seeming to swell and engorge as they were pulled toward that oblong cube, and I moaned softly through my nose as those loins moistened in anticipation, and I palmed my belly tightly as the yearning for a cub swelled inside me.* “What... power are you showing me?” *I breathed more deeply.*

*Pen made a dropping motion and a little light sparked to life as it fell from its hand and it grew into a shining thing that sped about briefly and from within its light, like its fizzing light were a heavy yellow fur, a little creature with bright eyes and big feet sticking out from beneath the light looked up at him.* “Go ahead... light it from underneath. I know you’re cold but this’ll take just a moment.”

*The thing fizzed and then shunted itself beneath the block of ice where it rested on a pallet, and then glowed suddenly very, very brightly, illuminating the figure inside.*

*I... gasped, my voice getting caught in my throat twice before I stumbled back and fell to my rump at the sight of the thing, the person... that was inside the ice.*

“Do you know this person, Fellania?” *Pen asked.*

*My mind numbed, I remembered feeling so much, having sex, his hands upon my breasts, his penis in my loins, impregnating me, a child – Portia – growing to maturity... and him... leaving us... to seek duty. I nodded slowly, staring, gasping and gaping. It was a dream, come true.*

“A-Anhogamon.” *I whispered, and broke into tears.*

“Fellania Bloodclaw died at the ripe age of sixteen hundred and thirty two seasons. Her one and only husband, the only male she ever let enter her at a very young age of nineteen, was the only being she ever dared to love completely. No other man that ever entered her life after that point ever earned from her the fullness of her heart. They spent a winter with each other, a child was produced from their union, and then he left to complete a duty. The chest he holds in his lap.”

*Anhogamon was exactly as my dreams or memories remembered him as. A samurai, a Ronin who was given a special duty, held inside a box that he kept with him. He taught my first mother how to read and write and more. They learned love from each other, but in a state of meditation, Anhogamon had his damnable box with him, and in it was something he had to deliver.*

*I slid up to the ice, pressing my breasts against it, cleaving the corner as I clawed the ice, sheering deep grooves in it.*

“Fellania Bloodclaw never gave up on him, but sadly, Mount Fuji held her bound and she couldn’t leave its presence. Raising their daughter held her bound... she couldn’t leave, always hoping that her mate would return. When her life came to an end, she sought me out, looking for a way to wait longer.

“Like I mentioned before... I had absolutely no way of extending a life, Fellania. Nevertheless, I’ve tended to your bloodline, presented the serendipity to bring all its parts together again, till it created you.”

“But... why?” *I asked him, the tears freezing on my cheeks from how close to the ice I was, but despite that I was pressed against its cold chill, I’ve never felt warmer in my entire life.*

“Because you... Fellania Bloodclaw... are the heir to everything that your first mother was. Her powers, her abilities, her... burdens.”

“When your first mother was dying of old age, having outlived even your own daughter, granddaughter and great granddaughter, with your body white with age but still tough and strong, it was nonetheless not strong enough to resist the vigors of old age. So White Oak took all of her energy, every last bit of it the moment before her death, and held it close, warm, inside its own heartwood, and waited.

“A tree as ancient and as venerable as White Oak, older than some Millennium Trees even, was powerful enough to preserve the remnants of at least one soul for the next two hundred and eighty thousand years. I preserved and

tended the tree for all that time. I must tell you that it became problematic when the Americans assaulted Japan in World War Two...

“At the same time, I tended and provided for your bloodline, till at long last all the pieces started coming together again, and I was at long last able to present you, the heir to her bloodline and her soul, all her memories, everything that made her, her, to you.”

“A-am I still me?”

“Yes.” *Pen said. He didn't even pause, thank the Maker, I don't know what I'd do if he'd paused to so much as even think about it. Anything less would've made me wary.* “For the first time you feel whole, Fellania... or at least nearly whole, but nevertheless I assume that you now feel the fullest you've ever recalled in your whole existence.”

“Yes.” *I breathed, my breath escaping my mouth as fog as I palmed the ice with one hand like I was caressing this Anhogamon's face.*

“So then, in comes the final question, Fellania. The blue pill or the red pill?”

“The red one.” *I breathed.*

“I thought as much.” *And Pen hit another switch and heat lamps lit themselves, their warmth blazing against the ice to begin melting it.* “The process will begin, Fellania, but Anhogamon will be thawed soon. I can do this in hours, but that would be extremely detrimental to his health. This will have to be done gradually, precisely so that he can wake gently, let his blood unthaw and the bio-electricity barely alive in him start to flow again.

“Additionally, there are three-hundred thousand years worth of aging that his body will try to go through that we'll have to circumvent. Air isn't nice in that way, so some preservation will have to be accomplished, intravenous injections and so on, electrical spikes to get REM-sleep to accomplish, not to mention three hundred millennia worth of advancements to a Spirit Folk's soul.

“Spirit Folk?” *I blinked.*

“What the Lycan were called before they were called Lycan.

“Until he thaws, which will receive my undivided attention, I can offer you some things while you wait, Fellania.”

“L-like what?” *I choked definitely then, tears flowing freely now.*

“A home, comfort, friendship. Bears are solitary creatures but humans are social creatures... a werebear is torn at the very core of their being because of that. I can make you a very rich woman, Fellania. I can give you a great deal of what you want in life, even if you don't know what it is that you want.

“And this,” *he gestured to Anhogamon.* “Is my first, and greatest gift. What do you say? Will you stay? Besides... Susan will want her best friend near as she grows heavy with her kitten, and I can also only assume that she'll want you near for her wedding. So I ask you...

“What's it going to be?”

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*I am Remy.*

*Fellania and I were meeting.*

*She wanted to see me, have a meal of some sort together. Not a date... just a meeting between... friends.*

*I liked friends. In my business friends were the most precious of commodities. Within the shrine was a café sort of place. It was where the various visitors came to eat whenever they rested here. Though human visitors were allowed to a point, the main shrine itself was hidden and cloaked with magic, and lycanthropes like she and I were given instructions that while the shrine was open to the public for the few short hours that it was open, that we were not allowed to be in our hybrid forms in their presence.*

*Within the café, I approached her with a smile, sitting down across from her in a chair that for her was too small, and for me it was too big.*

*“Did you bring it?” she asked pleasantly.*

*I smirked, and from my coat pocket, I withdrew a can of soda pop... A Cherry Coke. Sliding it over to her, Fell likewise reached into a satchel hanging at her side and produced a Coke with a Twist.*

*With two glasses of ice already present, she and I enjoyed a Coke together... you know... because of that jinx thing earlier.*

*“I’m glad I met you, Remy. Though I was unfairly prejudiced at first, you’re still a good man.” She told me.*

*“And you’re a good woman.” I replied.*

*“To friends?” she raised her glass.*

*“Cheers.” And I raised mine and we clinked the glasses together before drinking them down.*

*To the beginning of a... a friendship.*

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I sat on a stone bench, pleasantly in the spacious gardens of this ancestral shrine, dressed in a deep robe that wrapped securely about my bust, with an under wrap about my middle designed to hide the nipples along my navel should I actually be in a hybrid state, while the robe was parted open below the chest to reveal my nearly naked body. Thigh socks and a G-string were the only things I wore below the waist. All of this was to display that I was pregnant, a symbolic robe that covered arms but left neck and shoulders bare and was meant to accent my belly. The robe was white the underclothes blue.

It was Pen’s wish that I got preferred treatment because of my condition, and sitting there with a pregnant Mew balled upon my powerfully thick thighs, I was enjoying the warm sunlight over Japan. Despite that there was a noisy city just on the other side of the walls of the shrine, I couldn’t hear it in here somehow.

The tranquility here was magical.

Perhaps because he was threatened by Lee's presence, Mad had asked me to bond with him... a form of marriage. Perhaps also because of Lee's presence I agreed. Lee had protested, that I only knew this man for a few days, but I silenced Lee with the fact that Madoushi had already manned up to far more than Lee had, and despite Mad's slight size in comparison to Lee, at least Mad knew how to love a woman and not just screw her brains out.

Lee's tried to say something, but like much of what he'd tried to say to me lately, it got caught in his throat. I was rapidly seeing less and less of him, and it was like he was avoiding me. Pen explicitly forbid fighting in his shrine lest it was in a fighting ring that was provided, and to Lee and Madoushi he gave them the warning that he'd fight the winner.

So now was down time, for at least for nine months. Good... it'd be nice to slow down.

"Hello Susan." Pen greeted me, much to my surprise that he could approach so silently.

Pen was walking on his own two feet, recovering quickly from the blow he'd suffered from Remy's Grandfather's poisoned blade, pleasantly enjoying the sunlight like I was, though necessity to hide from any spying overhead satellites stated that he needed to be covered, so he looked like a draconic Yoda at the moment. Lilly Jade was present, again as a human now, and I couldn't believe it possible that one could be nearly naked like her, with her assets, but still not show a single hint of naughty bits. It was like her clothing was built to hide her femininity.

I'd learned that she was bashful, but so very, very gentle. She made friends with everyone she met, even that brick-shitting Falcor guy.

"A gentleman came calling for you a short while ago, Susan. He had delivered a simple gift, and left a message that you were to be thanked for your service to his people."

"H-his people?" I blinked, something tripping off in my head that made me nervous.

"Maybe we shouldn't give it to her Master Pen-Pen. I don't think she'll like it." Lilly mentioned in her soft mewling tone.

"Why wouldn't I like it?" I asked warily.

Pen pulled from his robes an object and he held it out to me. "This may be why." He said, and I started, staring openly at it.

It was a blue rose... the deepest blue I'd ever seen.

"Strange. I was amazed, yeah... I was amazed... me, after living for as long as I have, that's a rare thing... but blue roses don't happen naturally in nature. The closest is a man-made blue rose, but that is a manner of gene-splicing a genetic dye found in an aquatic animal into the rose itself, and in which case it's a hit or miss sort of thing. The genetic dye either effects the petals or it effects the stem.

"This... is a naturally occurring blue rose, Susan." He said and handed it to me.

"She doesn't like it." Lilly moaned.

"N-no... I like it. It's... just... I've only seen one rose like this before. In a garden found... inside a castle. A castle of ravens."



“Hmm...” Pen said thoughtfully. “A marvelous gift methinks. Too bad it won’t last too long with it cut from the plant. I can perhaps plant it if you like, Susan, or else wise we can press and preserve the rose... so it’ll last longer.”

“I’d like that.” I mentioned and smelt the rose, but then winced as I pricked my finger on one of the thorns.

But when I looked at the thorn, the blood that’d been pricked from my hand was absorbed by the rose stem.

“By any chance... did you glimpse the person who delivered this?” I asked as I stared at the now naked thorn.

“Why yes... yes I did. A gentleman, tall and very powerful looking. A round-eye, too, with the look of Elizabethan Europe to him.”

“I thought as much.”

“Someone we need to worry about?”

“Not if he lives up to his promise. Thanks Pen.”

“My pleasure.” And he hobbled away next to the lovely Lilly Jade, having pleasant conversation with her while I smelt the intoxicating scent of the rose.

It smelled like Drake.

<End>