

TWELVE-B: The Lost

Lukan watched as Klaus's eyes widened wider than the full moon as he knew it. Shock and disbelief were all that could be found in those emerald pools.

"No..." Klaus whispered. "That's not possible. How is that possible?"

Lukan shook his head. "I can only assume that he followed us and got into contact with you! Wh-when did you two meet, anyways?" he couldn't help but fidget his limbs uncomfortably. He was just as shocked as Klaus, if not more. Where DID Nathias come from? Why is he here? How is he and Klaus together? What's going on here!?

"We met when we stopped for lunch after passing Bright! I-I-- We talked and I told him that you and I were boyfriends and... well..." Klaus trailed off as he was unable to keep his voice steady any longer.

"W-well?" Lukan pressed as Klaus looked away.

Klaus was hesitating heavily. Klaus must not want Lukan to know anything of what he was going to say. But Lukan had to know. He had to know why! "He told me what you were doing was bullshit... and that he could make a better boyfriend than you," he said sadly.

Lukan was far more hurt by those words than he probably should have been. "Oh has he now...?" he spat with fire.

Klaus flinched. "Y-yeah," he whispered.

"And you believed him?! How can you believe that lying piece of shit and not in your OWN boyfriend!?" Lukan found himself screaming at the top of his lungs. He knew full well that his mother could hear him in the shower, but he did not care anymore.

"Y-you don't give a SHIT about me, Lukan! You don't care about me at all! That's why I had to turn to Nathias! You wouldn't love me anymore!" Klaus yelled back, but in a more defensively hurt voice rather than anger.

"That's not true, Klaus and you know it!" Lukan exclaimed incredulously

"You're fucking kidding me," Klaus spat. "If that were even remotely true... This never would have happened in the first place! You refused to understand my pain! And that is the ultimate sin a boyfriend could commit..." he growled.

"Well I do now," Lukan replied hotly. "And you chewed my head off because I told you that I did." He could feel the air exhaling from his nose heating up as hot as fire. There were no words to describe the fury he felt now.

"Too little, too late," Klaus growled in his face.

"Guess who ran off to cheat on me when I told him I wanted to help him?! You did, you traitorous infidelic vixen!" Lukan breathed, shoving his nose into Klaus's

forcefully. It was nothing like the nuzzles they used to share.... Lukan missed them, but after what Klaus has done... no way.

"What else was I supposed to do? Keep waiting only for the pain to overwhelm me?! ... Or rape my boyfriend to finally let off that pressure...? I had to choose something that would hurt no matter what!"

"Klaus, sometimes you have to make a tough decision. If you loved me enough, you would have held your faith in me that I would come round. And I did. But it turned out you had no faith at all," Lukan said in a hard voice.

"Tough decisions. Yeah, I bet you know all about those, don't you?" Klaus seemed to be tormenting Lukan with his own past memories. Oh no. He did not just go there.

"Yes, Klaus, I do know all about them," Lukan started, keeping his voice ominously soft. "We all do. And I still have not forgiven myself for what I did back then. But my question is, do you regret what you've just done to me?"

Klaus did not answer. He only glared at him, eyes blazing with unwavering flames of emerald fire.

"Klaus!" Lukan shouted to get him to answer.

"You know what Lukan? I will be regretting this a lot less, the more you treat me like shit. In fact, I should be breaking up with you right now for all this," Klaus replied finally.

Lukan's eyes widened as he suddenly felt his heart in his throat, feeling as though he were about to vomit it up. "Klaus, are you serious? All I wanted to do was to help you... but I did not know how I could without surrendering my body to you..." he wanted this to end. He wanted it to be over! All of it!

"I'm sorry Lukan. I know why you hate that so much but... it really was the only way at the time. And you just refused... Refused to believe me when I said I needed it. Needed more than anything else in the world. Especially when I told you my story and how my drive has led to what I've been feeling these past painful years. And I'm sorry... after everything, I can't forget that. Ever..."

"S-so why won't you let me help you now, Klaus? I understand it all now. And now I am willing to just give in and help you in any way possible. But why won't you do it now?" Lukan implored him. The raccoon was feeling increasingly more desperate the more they continued to argue.

"Because, Lukan," Klaus started in a slow voice. "I can't let go of what someone has done to me. I can't let go of what I may do to them either, but... thinking of how inconsiderate you've been... I cannot forgive or forget. I'm just like you, in that regard."

And Klaus was right too. Lukan WAS just like that too. Always had been throughout his entire life, even before the Bright fiasco. He was heavily untrusting and quick to find faults in anyone. He gave friends one chance and one only. He wouldn't

forgive. Would never forget. The only thing his memory was good at keeping track of was every wrongdoing committed against him and nothing else. Especially after the Bright fiasco... he'd be quick to rip up imaginary contracts to the sparsely few friendships that could be forged. It was something that was always a part of him. And now... having the same thing done to him all those years later really started putting into perspective how all his ex-friends felt when he'd push them away for trivial reasons. It was not a good feeling in the slightest.

"K-Klaus..." Lukan whispered. "I-I... I'm so sorry..."

Klaus shrugged. "Like I said. Too little, too late."

Lukan looked away, not letting Klaus see the tears streaming down his face. Klaus wasn't even regretting what he was doing. Why? Was Klaus using Lukan's anger to justify his wrongdoing? No... Because Klaus doesn't know the extent of the pain Lukan suffered, and Lukan's anger was hiding said pain? Possibly. Was he hiding his own guilt, and Lukan's anger helped him cover it? Maybe...? Lukan had no idea what was going on in the otter's mind anymore. It had become so corrupt with ill feelings and ill desires that the real Klaus was nowhere to be seen anymore. Where was he? How could Lukan find him again? Was it even possible?

Lukan could only hope so now. But his hope was fading fast...

As Lukan expected, his mother confronted him and Klaus as to why they were yelling a few moments prior as soon as she left the shower. "What in Lord's name were you two shouting about while I was in the shower!?" she demanded.

Lukan wasn't sure what to say at first. She already knew that the two lovers were in a big spat at that moment, and for the moment she only knew that it was because Klaus was pressuring him into constant sexual activity. But now it was a different and more horrifying beast altogether. Should he even tell her about that? No. That was a stupid idea, especially now...

"We're just having a few problems is all, Mrs. Benka," Klaus explained plainly. Well that's a truthful, but horrifically vague answer. Lukan's mother absolutely hated vague answers. This time was no different.

"What kind of problems?" she demanded. "The whole constant sex thing?"

Lukan jumped a little. She was not supposed to let Klaus know about that! Klaus, however, looked thoroughly unfazed. "Exactly," he lied and nodded.

"Is it that difficult to come up with a compromise for this...?" she scowled.

"It is when you're as big a prude as Lukan is," Klaus stated, returning her scowl with one of his own. Lukan took offense to that immediately and without thinking, bursted out.

"Yeah, and even harder when you're as needy and slutty as Klaus!" he exclaimed. Klaus glared at him, looking like he was about ready to slash at Lukan's throat. Lukan wasn't afraid. He wanted him to bring it on.

"Would you two boys just stop it!? Do you two need couples counseling or something? What will it take for this feuding to end?!" Lukan's mother had obviously lost patience along with the two of them. And when she loses patience...

"Tch, whatever makes this raccoon see reason, I don't give a shit," Klaus spat, narrowing his eyes fiercely.

"Likewise," Lukan retorted coldly.

The mother raccoon growled. "We do not have time for this! We need to figure out what we're going to do about our situation with unemployment and homelessness!" she exclaimed impatiently. "Get your tails into gear, or we're all going to be in big trouble!"

Klaus still held a look of hostility towards Lukan and the raccoon returned it back, unwavering. He knew his mother was right, but Klaus... he just couldn't be allowed to continue acting this way...

"Both of you, get in the car, now. And I do not want to hear any arguing while we're out, understand?" she was being demanding again. Like any kid, Lukan hated that. Besides, he wasn't going to anyways, and he knew Klaus wouldn't either unless they wanted her to know what really was going on. And they could not have that at all.

They all left the hotel as the mother coon wanted them too, but it did not shake the hostile and fiery aura that surrounded both of the younger college age creatures around her. She must have noticed, as despite how adamantly she was against it, she knew that setting them off was not a good idea. It was a tense several hours that passed. They checked out the library, help center, went for lunch, returned to stores, checked job corp... All the same garbage they've done before, and nothing has changed in the slightest. No answers. No information. Nothing. That only made the tension rise even higher. At this point, the pressure was built up so strongly, it was as if Salamanda had the highest source of pressure on the planet. It was only moments from blowing over, Lukan felt it. He and Klaus had to address this fiasco somehow.

But something had to happen as soon as they approached the hotel room. There was someone standing there. It was a tall, lanky black cat with daunting yellow eyes. His fur shined with starlight on a bitterly cold winter night with the lighting they had then. Lukan stopped halfway up the stairs when he saw him. Nathias Love.

"Who's this in front of our room?" the mother coon demanded with a scowl.

Klaus's eyes flashed with worried recognition as he dashed up the last of the stairs and looked at the cat. "N-Nathias! Wh-what are you doing here!?"

The cat did not even look at the otter. Just as well, his gaze is like a beam of ice. "I was going to check on you and see if you have made a decision yet. But then I see

you out with these ringtails so I suppose your mind is made up?" came his wintry voice that forced Lukan's ears down every time he heard it. Lukan's face was burning, however. No one. Ever. Calls him ringtail and gets away with it. And Nathias knew it pissed him off.

"Decision? Are you talking to Klaus?" the mother coon tilted her head. Lukan willed her not to speak, but he knew that wasn't going to happen, nor would Nathias tolerate it.

"This business is between me and the otter and nobody else, lady," he said with a sneering, diamond hard hiss. "Would you two raccoons, please, kindly, not be here when I have someone else to talk to?" his voice was a demand, as if he were shooing a fly away.

"Excuse me?!" Lukan's mother was indignant. "And what right do you have to talk to me like that, mister?" she snarled. Lukan willed his mother to shut up so Nathias wouldn't lose it on her. The cat, however, still remained stern looking and unwavering.

"And who are you to be here right now, when I have private business with someone that is not you?" he countered softly, and eerily. It was as if his voice was never there... but everywhere.

"Uh... this is our hotel room," Lukan's mother's face scrunched up in disdain as she said that.

"Be that as it may, you are still interfering. I do not like interference. So can you not be as such?" Nathias continued evenly.

"How uncouth!" Lukan's mother's tail fluffed out. "You are the one invading around our room, so what right do you have in keeping us from being there!? And what business do you want with Klaus? Drugs, I assume or--" suddenly a thought seemed to cross her mind. She looked at the otter. "No... you cannot be implying--"

"Would you just leave us be!?" Nathias' voice raised to a shrill like a hurricane force gust of wind. "It matters not what business we have to you, ringtail! It matters only to me and that otter!"

"Aren't I involved too, Nathias?" Lukan asked suddenly, half not meaning to. His mother was surprised.

"Lukas, you know this cat?" she looked at him, eyes widened.

"Boy do I ever know this one. Son of the Loveless, right?" Lukan prompted.

The cat's eyes flashed like a yellow blizzard. "How dare you address me as such you filthy ringtail!" he snarled. Lukan was only somewhat fazed by the direct hostility.

Lukan knew that calling him the Loveless was a smart move. A flash of curiosity was in his mother's eyes now. "Loveless? That's familiar... where have I heard that name before...?"

Nathias' eyes were aimed right at Lukan. It froze him solid and forced his heart to palpitate. Lukan could not breathe so he could edge his mom closer to realization.

That look instantly froze him solid. Nathias knew how to immobilize him with just one arctic stare. "You will not..." he whispered. Then he addressed Klaus, not taking his eyes away from Lukan. "You. Just tell me if you decided."

Klaus was looking away from them all over the railing on the walkway outside the room. He sighed. "Nathias... Lukan told me who you were, I did not want to believe it. I still don't believe it. In fact. He's lied to me before," he directed a glare right at Lukan, "and I believe he can do it again. It may as well be a ruse to get me to say no. I won't fall for it. I accept," was all he said afterward.

Lukan could not believe his ears. H-had Klaus just shot down the truth of the cat's identity based on his animosity towards him?! Did Klaus just choose one of the most dangerous creatures in the world over him!? D-did Klaus just... lose all sense of judgment whatsoever due to what Lukan failed to do? No... it couldn't be. It's not possible! Lukan refused to let it be true! Lukan defied Nathias' ice ray eyes and called out. "Klaus!"

Klaus did not flinch. Nathias nodded. "Good. That is what I wanted to hear. Good evening to you all." The black cat took a small bow and turned to walk away in the other direction. He seemed to vanish just six rooms down the line... As he turned, Lukan was thawed, but his heart still wouldn't slow down at all.

"What was that all about? Klaus, what did you decide to do?" Lukan's mother demanded.

Klaus shook his head. "That I don't think I am allowed to tell you, Mrs. Benka," he said plainly.

"No. I think you can, Klaus," she argued. "You chose drugs. No wait. Of course not. You chose sexual favors. Right?" she said with a hard voice. Harder than the diamonds Nathias had.

Klaus said nothing in his defense. He knew what she said was unequivocally and irrefutably true.

"Klaus!" she exclaimed louder, mimicking Lukan's own frustrations that morning. It was as if she had turned into him. Lukan had chewed off Klaus in the morning, now his mother would follow suit that night. If Lukan were Klaus, he would have cracked and finally ended the facade that Klaus was having to pretend he was doing nothing wrong. But Klaus was more stubborn than that. A weaker will, but a far more stubborn mind. And when that mind becomes poisoned by anger and desperation... Lukan knew that Klaus was not going to ever see the evil of what he's done so easily anymore. Lukan had to wonder... what could he have done to make him see the truth? Was there another path he should have taken instead? One of the other four things he thought were wrong... was one of them right all along? Maybe Klaus would have seen light then, but would the problems go away? Nathias would still be at large after all. Would any of them have brought him down as well? But Lukan would not preemptively know

which one would have! He did not even figure out it was Nathias until after he made the choice! If he had known... if only he had known!!

"Well if Lukan isn't going to help me, then who will!?" Klaus demanded. "Lukan, would you have been okay with me having sex with other guys if I were with you?" he demanded, butting into the mother coon's impending objections.

Lukan felt his regret return to anger. "Oh NOW you ask me that, you fucking infidel! You know what, I don't know... but I guess I don't have a say in the matter anymore, now do I?!" he demanded.

"I never had a say either, Lukan," Klaus whispered. "I did not choose to be this way. To be this hurt."

Lukan shook his head. "But you did choose to hurt me instead. That was not my decision." he said, looking away. It was at that moment that he realized his mother was not even there anymore. Possibly to give them their own space. If only she had the mind to do that earlier!

"You will never understand the pain that I have endured to this point," Klaus whispered.

"And what about mine, huh!? Remember a promise I told you about when we first met?! Do you not fathom the pain I suffered either!?" Lukan demanded.

There was a flash of remembrance in Klaus's eyes. Lukan hoped he was starting to get to him again... the real Klaus. But he shook it away. "I never wanted it to come to this," Klaus said quietly. "But it has."

Lukan felt his heart racing as he desperately tried to reason with the otter. "But why?! Why did you let it get like this!?"

Klaus sighed as he looked up at the sky. "It wasn't my choice alone..."

Lukan felt a new surge of anger, but no longer had the energy to manifest it in his voice anymore. "Why do you keep blaming me?" he demanded.

Klaus shook his head. "It's both our faults. I know what I'm doing is wrong, but..." he trailed off as Lukan knew what he was to say. His primal and sexual urges were taking over his mind. Clouding his judgment and sealing the true Klaus away until they're satisfied. At what cost, though? What costs were Klaus willing to pay in order to satisfy it? Losing the one he loved...? Klaus went on. "Like I said. It was to either hurt you, or succumb to these feelings. Which... in turn, would hurt you even more, possibly." Wait. What does he mean by that? "So in a way... I had no choice at all if they would end in the same destiny..."

"You chose what you thought would hurt me less, then?" Lukan prompted, voice cracking. Klaus nodded. Lukan rested his arms on the railing and looked up to the night sky as well. The stars shone dimly for his future. "I see. As the choices I found when I saw you kiss Nathias would only end in disaster as well. Klaus, did we make the right choices?"

Klaus sighed, closed his eyes and shook his head. "No Lukan. There are no right choices. Only wrong ones. We can only go for what our heart desires. And you know very well what mine did, right?" he looked at him with darkened green eyes. They were dimmer than the stars from sadness and stress. Not anywhere near as bright and twinkly when Lukan first saw them. They were a reflection of the Klaus that was not Klaus at all, but someone completely different. Lukan wondered if Klaus saw the same sort of thing in his own eyes.

"I do," Lukan replied. "I guess I realized that too late, huh...?"

"Were you serious when you said you wanted to help me, even after what I just did?" Klaus asked suddenly as a loud truck passed by on the street ahead. Traffic was thinning as the day died.

Lukan nodded stiffly, feeling his heart in his throat. "I always forget that sacrifices have to be made for the sake of whom you love," he said shakily. "I assume it's too late to go back now, huh?" he asked, fearing the worst.

"All I could think about was your horrifying disregard and your betrayal to how I felt," Klaus replied. "And my heart wouldn't stop screaming in agony... There was nothing that my mind could do to say no to Nathias anymore. And now he's going to make sure that you and I have no future together..."

Lukan was afraid of that. "And with Nathias being the one creature... backing out on him will be pretty much suicidal."

Klaus slammed a fist on the railing. It resounded with a long full, . "I wish I could have waited a little longer before making that choice..." he said in defeat. "I wish I didn't let my mind be taken over by those desires. I wish I wasn't so weak. I want to go back in time so that this would never have happened."

"There are a lot of things I wish for that never came to be, Klaus," Lukan put a paw on the otter's shoulder. It was shivering from being on the verge of tears. "All we can do is make the best we can with what we have and fix whatever mistakes we make."

"But you make it sound like a mistake with the Loveless is impossible to fix!" Klaus exclaimed.

Lukan dipped his head as the moon peeked over one of the rooftops to illuminate them, watching them as all hope seemed lost. "That's because it is. If there is an answer, I don't see anything. "You're not the only one who's lost."

Klaus took a long, deep breath. "There... is only one thing I have left to say... before I completely lose my mind for good. Lukan, I'm sorry."

"W-wait, lose your mind? What do you mean?" Lukan's heart skipped yet another beat. Lukan swore that any more of that would give him a heart attack.

"Promise me, you'll stay strong, when I can't," Klaus said, completely disregarding what Lukan said.

"K-Klaus?"

"Promise me!" There was a dull fire in his eyes.

"I-I promise, but--"

"Then please... don't break this promise like we both have constantly done to each other... please," Klaus replied in a voice that held some sort of finality. Sure enough, Klaus strode away after he finished. Lukan knew that he had no destination. Klaus just wanted to be alone, he assumed. Though he said something about losing his mind. Lukan was afraid to find out what he meant by that. Did he mean something like when Klaus blindly accepted Nathias' offer for sexual help? Klaus called himself weak as well. Klaus seemed to be completely in the know that his willpower was too weak to fight what his heart wants from him and to fight for what's right. Klaus knows it. Lukan felt sorry for the otter because Klaus knew he didn't want to for the sake of what the raccoon wanted. But his heart wanted the contrary that much more strongly. Lukan feared for what this meant for his future. He could only hope that both of them would stay strong for the blizzard in their line of sight.