

Twenty-Seven. Perpetual Winds

The first thing that Lukan could feel was the air blowing against his face. But that was all he could feel. The rest of his body from his arms and legs, to his tail, fingers and toes. All were numb. He could feel nothing but a small autumnal breeze on his face. All he could deduce was that he was lying on his back. Where? Was he still behind Klaus' house? And then Lukan remembered exactly what he saw. It was the worst thing he had ever seen. Such a sight was going to be burned into his mind for the rest of his life. Lukan knew it. Lukan didn't want it. Lukan wished he never saw what he had just seen. However, if he hadn't, what would have happened? Klaus would have-- He would have...! Lukan could not bring himself to think about it. He refused to think about it. Soon, his sight was coming back. He found himself in a familiar room. A room he hadn't been in in forever. A familiar smell wafted to his nose alongside another that was less familiar, but still recognizable. He could only hear a harsh ringing in his ears. Feeling slowly, but surely began to return to the rest of his body. He felt a bed underneath him. His paws were grasping at the sheets. He tried to open his eyes. At first they wouldn't. It took an additional several seconds for him to be able to pry them open, and even when he did, his vision was far too blurry to make anything out. He could see a mass of tan on one end of his vision, and silver in the other. Lukan could still not talk yet, even as the rest of his vision and hearing began to return. He could vaguely hear the otter shouting out his name. The wolf was talking to the otter, sounding very worried. Lukan still could not discern any words. It took him several seconds for him to be able to catch anything at all. He swiveled his head slightly as Klaus continued to say his name. Lukan saw that the window was open, and it was windy outside. It was early in the morning, several hours at least after Lukan had collapsed, or so Lukan assumed by the orange light flooding into the room.

"Lukan! Please be okay!" he heard the otter's muffled voice exclaim.

"Seriously, Klaus, we should call an ambulance for him!" Platt confronted him again.

Klaus shushed him as Lukan slowly managed to push himself up, shaking and holding his head.. "Wait! I think he is coming to! Thank God you-"

It felt as though Lukan was no longer in control of his body. Even though the reason why wasn't in his prevalent thoughts, and even though he did not actively tell his body to do so, he was barely aware of his arm swinging out at full force clocking the otter directly across the jaw, interrupting him, and sending him spinning to the floor. Lukan could feel himself breathing heavily as the rage made him dizzyier than just waking up did. "You... you fucking, shitfaced rudderbutt!" Lukan snarled as he jumped off the bed and on top of the otter, grabbing the otter's neck with his bare hands. "You

think you could get away with this!? Did you?!" he shrieked as he shook the otter, Platt looking on horrified as Klaus looked up at Lukan with frightened eyes, bulging slightly from their sockets.

"L-Lukan! Stop!" Platt exclaimed as he grabbed at Lukan from behind, who responded with a simple, but swift elbow straight into the gut, winding him. Platt recoiled into the bed, eyes shut tight and holding his gut in pain.

"Did you think this was the answer, huh!?" Lukan wailed as he whaled on his now more than just ex lover as the otter whimpered helplessly underneath him. The otter's once handsome face was covered in newly formed bruises and scars as Lukan attacked him with every bit of force he could muster until he tired himself out. Lukan found himself gasping and panting, breathing heavily as being unconscious just moments ago inhibited what energy he had. "Good-fucking-bye! I never want to see your worthless face ever again!" he spat on the otter before storming out of the room, almost immediately starting to cry profusely, tears pouring from his eyes in just milliseconds.

He vaguely heard Platt ask Klaus, "Do you want to call an ambulance now? Or you know, the police?"

"Nooo..." The otter groaned. And whatever else they said was not in the raccoon's earshot as he slammed the door to the otter's house behind him. Lukan couldn't go any further. Not one step further. He felt himself slump back against the door, sobbing harder than he had ever had in his entire life. So that's it. It's over. And this is how it ends. Lukan thought in his mind as he howled in complete agony- How long? How long had this been going on for? Lukan thought to the otter's slowed appearances. His disappearances. His evasion. Was this the reason behind it all? Was Klaus just going behind Lukan's back the entire time to go and be with Platt?! Was this why!?

Lukan's heart hurt. His entire chest hurt. Wherever his heart was, he could feel its shard piercing his lungs, making it hard to breathe. He could feel them carving through his ribs to spread the pain even further, as though he had inhaled a jar of thumbtacks. Once again, the otter broke his heart. This time though. This time. It wasn't out of fear of hurting the raccoon. This time was out of malice. Lukan could feel it. What drove Klaus to such a disgusting decision?! Why!?

"And now, you have seen just what emotions can truly do to a creature." This voice. While this creature was the last thing Lukan needed to deal with now, the raccoon just no longer gave enough shits to even acknowledge Will Perow. "Do you still insist that I am wrong now?" He spoke softly, almost in a sneer, in a tone so much harsher than the "I told you so" jibe.

Lukan sniffled heavily as he tasted the salt in his tears. "Fuck you," he shuddered. "Fuck everything you stand for you malevolent creature! Why can't you just leave us the

fuck alone?!" Lukan never thought he could swear this much in his life. All a part of the emotions that Will complained about.

Will was completely unfazed. "Well, this is what happens when you're judgment is clouded by these emotions. You start making the wrong decisions. So I don't blame Klaus for cheating on you. I blame him for not controlling his emotions to prevent it. Can't you, any of you, see that I do want to help you improve as creatures and take the logical paths?"

"Nobody cares about your twisted rhetoric, cat!" Lukan exclaimed.

"But I am right, aren't I? Klaus was so confused, so conflicted, that when such confusion clouded his mind, it also obscured his judgment."

"You know what?! Maybe it did! But what Klaus needs to do is control his emotions, not get rid of them! And communicate with others when something is wrong! I remember him telling me that not long after we met," Lukan sniffled again, voice completely rearranged by the state of his nasal cavity.

"I was right. That otter is truly beyond help. And you've let him do this to you, raccoon. Don't think for a moment you were completely faultless here."

Lukan just sighed and buried his head in his arms. "Just please, fuck off."

"I can only hope that one day, you'll learn," Will said as he walked along. Lukan did not watch him, only listened to his pawsteps as they strode away.

Lukan knew that he should also move away from the otter's house what the infidel still inside and likely to come out sometime soon. Lukan picked himself off the ground, dusting off his tail. He took a deep breath, filling his seemingly punctured lungs with cooling, refreshingly crisp, morning air. He looked behind the otter's house, towards where the sun has risen and began to think. With this fate having come to light, just what was Lukan to do now? There was only one thing that Lukan could think of. He looked towards the otter's door. Although the creature deserved what he got, Lukan still had no intention to hurt him at all. He was tempted to apologize. But he wanted to be spared from the otter begging him for forgiveness. The raccoon already knew that he was never going to have any.

Lukan found himself home in triple the time it normally took. On top of his legs still feeling weak, he just didn't want to move them much. Such a combination led to him moving slower than time was lately. When he had gotten home, he was met with Sarah Benka's loud and relieved voice.

"Lukey?! Where on Earth were you!? I hope you were at Klaus'!" she exclaimed from her computer across the room.

Lukan sighed as he walked across to get to the hallway that led to his room. "I was. Kind of."

"What does th--"

"Klaus and I are broken up again, I--"

"Oh no! That's awful, honey..."

"I caught him cheating on me," Lukan sighed monotonously.

She was immediately aghast. "There's no way!" she gasped.

"Way. I caught them making out last night." Lukan replied, still completely toneless.

"O-oh my God... Are you ok-?"

"No."

"Do you need any-?"

"No." And with that, Lukan shut the door behind him without caring at all what he had just done to his mother. There was nothing else that the raccoon could think of other than what he had just seen, and what he thought he must do about the entire situation. Lukan felt it. If he had any doubts about wanting to before, then this whole fiasco blew all of the right out of his mind for good. Lukan wanted, no, needed to get out of Lilac Grove forever. To escape Klaus. To escape Will. To escape this entire shitfest for good and never look back. But the same question stayed on his mind. Where?! Lukan remembered his mother's jest about moving to the southwest and thought for a moment if that would be a viable option.

First and foremost though, Lukan needed to attend to his aching heart. How. With what? How on Earth does any creature deal with anything like this initially? Lukan cursed his lack of preparedness. Aero had even warned him to be prepared for anything! He contemplated going to his mother, as she seemed to offer him something along the lines of mental help. He dispelled that thought. What could she do? Besides, he didn't want to talk about it with her. Not with her.

Lukan soon found himself looking online for resources and advice particularly from other creatures who had suffered the same sort of fate that he had. They all said the same sort of things. Time with friends. Time with yourself. Time with the things you love to do. Time. Time. Just. Time. Let all the emotions out initially, and then let time do the rest. Was that all Lukan could do?! Lukan refused to let that be! There had to be something more promising than just waiting! Waiting was the last thing that Lukan wanted to do. He wanted someone like Klaus in his life again right then. Right there. Klaus' betrayal tore a gaping hole, a massive void, right into Lukan's heart. Time would never heal that wound, Lukan couldn't believe it would! But what now? How could Lukan fill that void now? From who? Where, since there was no way in hell it would be in Lilac Grove! There was nothing he could do for the time being, and he knew it. Such hopelessness let Lukan fall from his desk chair and break down once again.

Lukan tried to tell himself to relax. Think more carefully. More rationally. But every time Lukan did, the emotions just erupted from him continuously. October 8th. 9th. 10th. 11th. 12th. For over a week it was the same constant feelings he felt when he

saw Klaus kissing that wolf. They never subsided. They never started to get better. Lukan was only just able to pull himself to work just to keep his job, but was too wrecked to do much of anything. His coworkers and bosses all asked him what was bringing him down this time. Lukan did not even respond to any of them this time around. While he didn't want to be alone, he did want to be left alone. Lukan just did not care anymore, doing shabby job after shabby job with his work. None of his supervisors complained. They were too short on staff to let him go, and they more than likely hoped Lukan's funk would end soon. Lukan did too, but his mind stayed wrapped inside a perpetual tornado of sadness and anger. If there was any saving grace at all, it was that Lukan did not see Klaus, Platt, or Will ever since that awful day. The very last thing Lukan wanted was to see either of their faces again. Lukan was afraid of potentially hurting either one of them again. Regret was added to the pile of negativity in his head. What had he done? He never wanted to law a pad on the otter, but the anger. The horror. Just thinking of what he had done. Lukan just had no control over himself any longer. Did the otter deserve it? The raccoon couldn't answer that himself. The otter deserved something alright, but was it... That? Perhaps, as this was by far the worst pain that Lukan had experienced thus far in his life. Nothing has ever come close, and he hoped that nothing in his future ever will again.

October 16th. And for the first time since it happened, Lukan felt his heart stay consistent and normal. He didn't feel light headed from his emotions and he felt like he could control his thoughts again. Lukan didn't think he could be so out of it. It was like he was drunk for ten days straight; he could barely even remember much of what he even did for the past week and a half. Still, his heart still ached and hurt as if it were hit by a train. Nonetheless, Lukan's mind calmed enough to where he could focus on the initiative that he saddled himself with: find somewhere to go that's away from Lilac Grove, preferably securing a reason to leave so his mother wouldn't question him too much. Lukan was determined this time. He refused to leave his computer until he solved at least one of the conundrums that he was faced with. He also debated on joining a site similar to the one that Klaus had regarding gay creatures like himself. But not one catered to young teens dealing with family and school issues surrounding their sexuality. But one that was for heartbroken creatures like himself. Did such a thing exist? It had to; the Internet had everything! All Lukan had to do was search for it. Lukan shook his head violently as the search bar held the first three letters of his search "hea". He was straying too far from his objectives. But there was something in his fingertips that compelled him to do so. No. Why was Lukan turning to this in dealing with his first heartbreak?? Even considering something like it was stupid of him to do. Lukan turned back to his search.

A pinging sound on his computer startled the raccoon, causing his tail to fluff out in protest. Lukan's damaged heart raced, for which he feared that it would self

deconstruct itself. Then he breathed a respiteful breath as he realized that it was just an email, and nothing more. For a moment, he dreaded from who it may be. Was it Klaus? Lukan hoped it wasn't Klaus. Lukan no longer had any desire whatsoever to even talk to the traitorous creature. He wanted the otter out of his life for good, and leaving Lilac Grove would enforce that desire.

The only other creatures that knew his email were Aero and Nate. Lukan assumed it to be Aero. Perhaps he had heard of what happened and wanted to attempt to console the raccoon. But when Lukan went to check the email, he was surprised to find that it was from Nathaniel Love. What could the black cat want? He opened it without much hesitation, as it was not from the creatures he was currently evading.

'Lukan. I hope you are doing well. I just wanted to apologize again after everything that's happened, but that's not what I wanted to write to you about. I know this is going to come out of the blue, but a friend of mine insisted that I mention this. You and Klaus are the only creatures that I know of that are gay and trustworthy'. (Lukan scoffed heavily) 'My friend, Fidel, was wanting to meet more gay creatures online and make more friends, but he hates the idea of public chat groups and whatnot, so I thought I'd shoot you a message about it. He didn't want to email you directly because he was worried he'd come off weirdly if he just messaged you out of the blue. I'll give you his email address. He hopes you'll at least talk to him. Sorry if this seemed to have come out of nowhere, and I hope I didn't bother you or anything, especially after what happened with Will and all of them. I hope things are all good now.

-Nathias M. Love'

After the black cat's signature, there was an email address at the bottom. Lukan looked at it curiously. What was this? Who was this? Lukan shook his head. This was not worth his time at this moment, he knew. Instead, he responded to Nate exactly what had transpired over the months since the black cat had left Lilac Grove. From him and Klaus getting back together, to the otter cheating on him and his desires to leave Lilac Grove. Nathias took a few moments, but he did respond quickly.

'Holy shit. I'm so sorry that happened to you, man! To think that Will was about to make me do that to you, it's just horrifying, you know? I can't believe the nerve of some creatures sometimes. Either taking advantage of the weak minded, like myself, or just doing shit like this. It's this kind of shit that Fidel is worried about encountering, which is why I sent this to you. I'm glad I saw this before I sent the same email as before to Klaus, because now I know that otter can't be trusted. So will you at least talk to him? He's probably more shy than you, if you can believe that! I wouldn't know for

sure, since he's an online friend of mine too, but just judging by the way he writes to me gives me that vibe.

Again, I really hope you are okay after what Klaus did. That's just so wrong on so many levels, and I don't blame you for wanting to leave Lilac Grove at all. Damn it, I wish I could help you from all the way over here, but all I can do is send out my condolences. Please forgive me. God! It makes me wonder if that plan Will had had worked, would Klaus have easily let me cheat on you? I would feel beyond horrible if it did.

I really hope the best for you Lukan. You don't deserve any of this. Nobody does, but you especially. You've been this nice coon through the short time I knew you, and it just sucks that the nicer you are, the more shit is thrown your way by shitty creatures like Will and Klaus. I hope that stops soon. Good luck, Lukan.'

Once Lukan had finished Nate's reply, he turned his attention over to the email address of this Fidel. Lukan debated over himself whether he should send a message to him. He had no idea who this creature was, only an impression of what Nate had said. But once again, Lukan found himself acting without being in full control of his body, like it really did have a mind of its own. He found himself typing out a lackluster greeting addressed to the owner of the email address linked to him. What harm could it bring? A creature that was so many miles away could only do so much harm after all. Besides, there was no way it could be the worst decision that Lukan ever made. No. That would be the very idea of having rusted that otter at all. Giving him a second chance, despite actually wanting to had to have been what damned his heart to condemnation. Lukan hoped he wouldn't make a decision that would hurt him in such a way ever again. Lukan wasn't even fully aware of what he had wrote before he had sent it.

After doing so, Lukan went to his bed and just stared out the window. All the raccoon was able to do as he set his sapphire blue eyes pointing at the darkening sky was to simply think. Think of what next. What to do now. How to cope with the deep, penetrating flood of loneliness that had took residence in his heart where his love for Klaus used to be. It suffocated him, made it impossible to breathe easily. It destroyed his positivity and made him unhappy. It was a parasite. An illness. One that Lukan knew he'd never have if he remained ignorant to how powerful love actually was. An overwhelming sense of regret washed over him as he realized just what his decision to help the otter had entailed for his life. It had set off a chain of events that had coalesced together into whatever the shit that the raccoon found himself now. Lukan began to feel complete regret over everything that had transpired over the past year. He thought about how Klaus had said that love was a drug far more powerful, addictive, and potentially destructive than anything considered illegal by society. Was

that truth in the otter's words? The only truth that he would give him in the end? Lukan did not want that to be the case, but he also did not want to find out, for he no longer desired to even see the otter ever again for as long as he lived.

Lukan barely heard the ping on his computer, letting the raccoon know just as he began to slip into dreamland that he was messaged by someone. Was it whoever this Fidel creature was? Lukan groaned as he tried to shut the noise, and thus, the entire world out. He was too close to falling asleep to force himself to get up now. After all, this night was the first time in a long time that he was able to fall asleep as fast as he was going to. But it may only be because of just how exhausted Lukan has become over the lack of sleep that persisted for the previous ten days, and such tiredness overruled his worrying. Lukan still worried about his present. What it will lead to in his future. What he'd dream about as time passed by while he slept. He also couldn't help but worry about what Klaus and Platt may be up to. The silver wolf having stole what was rightfully his after all. Lukan felt himself subconsciously growling as his consciousness gave way. All the raccoon knew was that the sooner he got away from all of this, the better off he'd be.