WILL WIGHT

NEW YORK TIMES BEST-SELLING AUTHOR

KICKSTARTER BONUS SCENE!

BLOODLINE

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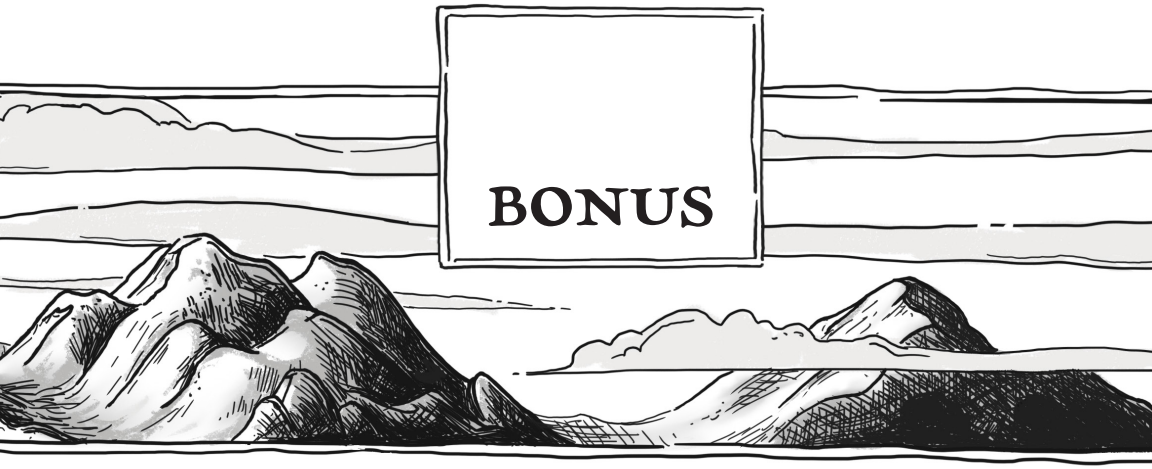

***Bloodline* Kickstarter Bonus Scene: Spoiler-free!**

Location: Just before Chapter 18 of *Bloodline*

"Return," Lindon commanded himself, and he vanished before Yerin's eyes.

She lunged forward to catch him, but failed. Stupid. A second too late, she realized she could have kept him there. Her will could have broken the working.

Now, it was too late.

She could feel the invisible, torn space where he'd vanished, but she was no Sage. She couldn't do anything anymore. Too late.

He'd thrown himself to a Dreadgod.

A pair of black-gloved hands grabbed her face and then Mercy was calling her name. "Yerin! Calm down! Stop!"

Only then did Yerin realize she was babbling about the Dreadgod, about tracking Lindon, about her Moonlight Bridge. The words that came from her mouth were nonsense even she didn't understand.

It hadn't even been a single hour since Yerin had almost lost herself to the Bleeding Phoenix. That terror still ran through her veins.

Another sudden shock, another thing to be terrified of, was more than she could force through her brain.

Behind her, through the still-open portal to Sophara's void key, she felt Orthos beginning to advance.

Eithan put his hands on his hips. "Well, ladies? What are we going to do?"

Yerin pushed away from Mercy and marched up to him. "Follow! How do we follow him?"

"Even if we could, he decided to go back alone. Shouldn't we respect that?"

Yerin punched him in the chest hard enough that even he flinched. "No time for this! How do we do it?"

"So you're saying that he *shouldn't* have thrown away his own life?"

"Yes! Bleed and bury me, Eithan, tell me!"

"But that's what you did."

The words didn't make sense for a moment, but they still stopped Yerin in her tracks. "What?"

"He did exactly what you did." Eithan didn't look cold, but his smile had faded to almost nothing. "Minutes ago, you tried to activate your Moonlight Bridge. Where were you going, Yerin?"

"I...That's different! I was the danger, I *had* to get away. He's moving back into danger!"

"It wouldn't have felt any different to us," Eithan said.

Mercy's lip was bleeding slightly, and she wiped it away as she looked up at Eithan. "I know what you mean, but Yerin is right. Every second counts."

"Orthos," Eithan called, "is Lindon in combat yet?"

A roar and a flare of fire aura came from within Sophara's key.

"He's advancing, we shouldn't disturb him," Eithan continued. "But I do take that as a 'no.' Now, Lindon has done exactly what you tried to do. He's left us out for our own safety. It is *his* home that is in danger. His people. Surely we should trust his judgment."

Yerin struggled within herself.

She didn't struggle to decide what to do. That was clear. But she strained to move aside the heavy weight of panic and the new burden of guilt Eithan had dropped on her.

Circumstances aside, this *was* what she had tried to do. If her Bridge had been available, she would have left Lindon in the exact situation she was in now.

Lindon and Mercy and Eithan. Even Orthos and Dross and Little Blue. How would they have felt, if she had tossed herself to the Phoenix?

"Sorry." Yerin's eyes began to fill with tears. "I'm sorry. Didn't know which way was up, but still I...We still need to go."

Eithan arched his eyebrows as though surprised. He turned to Mercy. "And you? Your responsibility is here."

Mercy planted Suu on the ground and met Eithan's gaze. "My responsibility is to the family, and he's family."

Eithan beamed and, to Yerin's shock, leaned forward to throw his arms around both of them. "Oh, children, I'm so proud of you all! All three of you. These are the moments that make you glad to have forcibly adopted a pair of orphans."

"Can you open the portal?" Yerin asked immediately.

"Lindon's not an orphan," Mercy pointed out. "His parents are downstairs."

Eithan shook out his sleeves. "Yes, obviously we're going to follow him. No heroic sacrifices without my approval. He thinks we're likely to slow him down and get ourselves killed, and he's right, but that doesn't mean we won't try."

He extended a hand and pointed to the spot where Lindon vanished. "Yerin, you can sense the spatial distortion, yes?"

Eithan's change in attitude ignited hope in Yerin's chest. Clinging onto it, she sent out her spiritual perception.

"Only a touch," Yerin said quickly. "Like a cobweb."

"Try to activate your Moonlight Bridge and try sensing it again."

White light sputtered around Yerin as the Divine Treasure failed to activate, but she felt a kind of...link between the two. As though when she poked the Bridge, the crack Lindon left behind shivered in pain.

"I feel it, but just a whisper."

"Well, listen harder, then. Once you get ahold of it, I'll support you, but you'll have to be the first one through. And be quick. It's less like opening a portal and more like pushing yourself through a glass—Ah, Orthos is finished."

A second later, the spiritual fluctuations of Orthos' advancement settled, and he marched out of the void key with the distinct feel of

soulfire in his spirit.

His head lifted proudly, his eyes shining red. "So how do we follow Lindon?"

"Yerin's working on it," Mercy reported. "All we can do is encourage her. You can do it, Yerin!"

"Go, Yerin!" Eithan cheered.

Orthos snorted smoke. "I believe we should leave her to concentrate."

Yerin could have kissed him.

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