

Chapter Thirty-One: Maybe a Date?

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Zane POV

The first rays of dawn broke through the gaps in the curtains, casting a muted golden hue over the room. I groggily opened one eye, the remnants of last night's passion and intensity still coursing through my veins. The feeling of Phera's lips on mine, the electricity that zapped through us - it was all too vivid.

Pulling myself out of bed, I glanced at the mirror, taking in the sight of my slightly tousled hair and the day-old stubble that adorned my face.

"Get it together, Zane," I muttered to my reflection, splashing cold water to clear the remnants of sleep.

As I dressed, my thoughts drifted to Phera. The raw emotions, the passion, the undeniable connection. But it wasn't just about that one stolen moment. It was the culmination of years of suppressed feelings, battles fought, and a bond that seemed to grow stronger, even when tested.

Heading downstairs, the aroma of freshly brewed coffee greeted me. Axel was at the kitchen counter, nursing his cup, lost deep in thought. Damon, ever the early riser, was nowhere in sight, probably already at his morning duties.

"You're up early," Axel remarked, not looking up.

I took a deep breath, pouring myself a cup,

"Couldn't sleep."

Axel's gaze shifted to me, an unspoken understanding passing between us.

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Axel's gaze shifted to me, an unspoken understanding passing between us.

"Thinking about Phera?"

I took a sip, the warmth of the liquid doing little to thaw the jumble of feelings within.

"Always," I confessed.

He leaned back, folding his arms.

"You know, we're in this together. All of us. But each has our journey with her. Yours seemed to have taken quite the turn last night."

I chuckled,

"That's one way to put it."

The room fell silent, punctuated only by the distant sounds of the awakening pack. The weight of the situation, our collective responsibility towards Phera, and the intricate dance of emotions - it hung heavily between us.

Breaking the silence, I mused,

"She's strong, resilient. But she's been through a lot. We all have. Navigating this bond, especially after everything, it's... complicated." 1

Axel nodded, 1

"Yet, every moment, every glance exchanged, every touch - it brings us closer. But she has her guards up, understandably. And we need to respect that."

"I do," I asserted, "But the pull, it's hard to ignore."

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"I know," Axel sighed, placing a reassuring hand on my shoulder. "It's a dance, Zane. A dance of patience, understanding, and love. We'll find our rhythm." 1

With that, we lapsed into a contemplative silence, knowing that the journey with our Luna was far from over, and there were many more steps to take in this intricate dance of love and destiny.

Axel took a deep breath, taking in the rich aroma of leather and parchment mixed with the subtle undertones of our morning coffee.

"Zane," he began, setting down his cup on the antique coffee table, "how did our young warriors fare with Phera's training? What did the Elders have to say?"

I looked up from the parchment I had been scrutinizing, a smile spreading across my face.

"The warriors loved her, as expected. The training was nothing short of exemplary. She has an innate ability to inspire and teach; it's mesmerizing to witness."

"That doesn't surprise me in the slightest," Axel said, his eyes lighting up. "Phera has always had an air of authority that is as humble as it is commanding. But what about the Elders? Did they provide the affirmation we already know she deserves?"

I hesitated, my eyes narrowing.

"They were impressed, no doubt about that. But there was an undertone, Axel, an unsettling air of skepticism—almost as if they were trying to find fault where there was none."

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Axel clenched his jaw, his fingers tightening around his cup.

"I can't believe that even when faced with undeniable talent and skill, they still can't shake off their outdated beliefs."

"It's deeply entrenched, brother," I replied, shaking my head in disdain. "The roots of patriarchy run deep, especially among the Elders. They see Phera's expertise not as a strength of our pack, but as a challenge to their ancient ideologies."

Axel sighed, setting his cup down with a soft clink.

"And yet they don't realize that it's those very ideologies that have held us back for so long. If only they could see how Phera's financial plans for our pack, her genius in reaching out to businesses in the human realm, could revolutionize our entire way of life."

"Exactly," I affirmed, feeling a surge of pride at our shared convictions. "They're so blinded by their own preconceptions that they fail to see the treasure that's right in front of them. Phera is a game-changer, a catalyst for the transformation we've been yearning for."

Axel looked thoughtful, his eyes unfocused as if envisioning a distant future.

"Then it's all the more reason for us to stand by her, to be the wind beneath her wings. We know what she's capable of; now it's time to make sure she has the platform she needs."

"Agreed," I said, rising to my feet. "Our role isn't just to support her but to amplify her, to ensure that no Elder's

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misgivings can overshadow her light."

Axel stood as well, his posture radiating resolve.

"If the Elders are the mountain in her path, then we shall be the wings that allow her to soar over it."

A sense of solidarity filled the room, as if the walls themselves were absorbing our determination.

"To Phera, then," I said, lifting my cup.

"To our Luna," Axel responded, clinking his cup against mine, "and to the dawn of a new era she ushers in."

As our cups met, I felt a torrent of emotions flood through me—pride, love, but most of all, an unwavering resolve. A silent vow that no matter the obstacles, no matter the prejudices, we would stand steadfastly by Phera's side.

As Axel and I were lost in our discussion about the lingering issue with the Elders, the door gently opened, a soft creak announcing a presence we both sensed before we even looked up. Phera stepped into the room, a leather-bound portfolio in her arms, her posture emanating a sense of slight hesitancy.

"Hope I'm not interrupting anything," she said softly, her eyes meeting Axel's and then mine. "I've completed the financial report and would like Axel to review it if he has the time."

"Perfect timing, actually," Axel responded, extending his hand for the portfolio. "We were just discussing how incredibly proud we are of the direction you're taking this pack. Come in, please."

Phera advanced further into the room, handing the

portfolio over to Axel.

"I'd appreciate any feedback. This could bring some considerable changes to our financial standing, including our ventures in the human world."

As Axel flipped through the meticulously crafted report, his face brightened with every page turned.

"This is an extraordinary plan, Phera. The projections, the partnerships—everything. You've exceeded even my expectations."

Shifting his gaze to me, Axel couldn't contain his excitement.

"Zane, we're talking about a financial revolution for our pack here. We've got ourselves a powerhouse of a Luna."

Chuckling, I nodded.

"Oh, I never had a doubt that Phera is a treasure in every aspect."

Closing the portfolio, Axel's eyes shifted back to Phera, soft yet filled with enthusiastic intent.

"In light of all this brilliance, and the way you've been dealing with those asshole, misogynistic Elders, we ought to celebrate. How about a special night out, just the four of us?"

A flicker of hesitation crossed Phera's face, her brows furrowing gently.

"I don't know, guys. There's still so much to do and—"

I interrupted her, stepping closer and lowering my voice to a warm, persuasive timbre.

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"Which is exactly why we should go. You've been shouldering responsibilities non-stop. A single evening to appreciate you isn't just for us; it's for you too."

Axel chimed in, his voice gentle yet assertive.

"You've earned this, love. It's time to let us take care of you for a change. No agendas, no expectations—just an evening where you're the center of our world."

Phera looked from me to Axel, her eyes softening as she pondered our words. Finally, a hesitant but genuine smile formed on her lips.

"Alright, let's do it. I could use a break, to be honest."

Satisfied, I exchanged a triumphant glance with Axel. In that moment, we silently reaffirmed our joint commitment to the woman before us—the woman who had turned into the axis on which both our worlds revolved, yet deserved the world herself.