

Chapter Thirty-Seven: Revelations and Resolutions

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Phera POV:

Waking up in the infirmary was like emerging from the depths of a murky lake, each of my senses coming back to life one by one. The antiseptic smell was the first thing that hit me, followed by the softness of the bed I was lying on and then the gentle hum of machines. The infirmary was a medical sanctuary designed for both wolf and human physiology, boasting advanced technology mixed with traditional healing herbs known to our kind.

"Hey," a soft voice whispered near my ear. Opening my eyes, I saw Damon sitting beside me, his blue eyes tired but relieved.

"You're awake," he said, as if he'd been holding his breath all this time.

"I guess I am," I replied, my voice barely above a whisper. My throat was dry, each word a struggle.

Axel walked over holding a cup of water with a straw.

"Here, drink this. You need to stay hydrated."

I took a sip, wincing as the liquid made its way down my parched throat. "Thanks," I said, offering a faint smile. His eyes met mine, and for a second, we were enveloped in an unspoken conversation, our souls conversing through the windows of our eyes.

Zane stood at the foot of my bed, his arms crossed, his face an unreadable mask.

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"You had us scared, you know," he finally said, breaking the silence.

"I had myself scared too," I admitted, the words a featherlight confession.

A tense pause filled the room. It was Damon who finally broke it.

"Phera, what were you thinking? Running into the battlefield like that, especially after we told you—"

I cut him off, my voice sharper than I intended.

"I was thinking that I'm not just your mate but also a warrior and the future Luna of this pack. I can't hide while others put their lives at risk."

Damon's eyes softened, the rigidity in his posture dissipating.

"We don't want to cage you, Phera. It's just hard for us to imagine our world without you. The thought alone is a nightmare we can't bear."

"I get it, I really do. But you have to understand that it's my choice to make. And you can't shield me from the world forever," I said, my voice tinged with a plea for understanding.

Axel joined in,

"We would never dream of caging you, Phera. Your spirit is one of the things we love most about you. But loving someone also means worrying about them. You can't fault us for that." 1

"I don't," I said, locking eyes with each of them in turn."

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But love is also about trust. Trust that I can handle myself, trust that I'll make the right decisions."

Zane uncrossed his arms and came closer.

"It's hard, you know. To find that balance between loving and letting go. But we'll try, for you and for us."

I felt a genuine smile tugging at the corners of my mouth, a small yet significant victory in our ongoing journey of love and acceptance.

"Good," I said, "because whether we like it or not, life is going to keep throwing curveballs at us, and we need to be a team to catch them."

They each took one of my hands, their eyes reflecting the promises and challenges that lay ahead. This was us, bound not just by love, but also by the choices and sacrifices that came with it—each thread a part of the intricate tapestry that was our shared destiny.

And so, we sat there in silent understanding, acknowledging the fragility and resilience of the threads that bound us, each one equally vital, each one a promise of trials and triumphs yet to come.

Lying on the infirmary bed, every fiber in my body screamed in agony.

"Why the hell hasn't this pain subsided yet? Werewolves heal fast. That's Werewolf 101!"

The air in the room thickened with tension. Damon's jaw clenched, his eyes turning into icy sapphires. Axel looked like he was about to punch a wall, and Zane... Zane just looked at me with a blend of concern and frustration that was unnerving.

Damon broke the silence, his voice tinged with controlled fury.

"You were not just stabbed, Phera. That weapon was soaked in wolfsbane. It inhibits our natural healing ability. It's toxic and dangerous, and it's slowing down your recovery."

Axel chimed in, nearly cutting Damon off in his haste to speak.

"However, the doctors say you're doing better than they expected. Your wolf is strong; she's fighting off the wolfsbane more efficiently than we've seen before. You should be back on your feet by tonight."

"Tonight?" I echoed, incredulous. "I can't even believe we're having this discussion. Wolfsbane is not something to mess around with. But wait—what were they even after? Did they steal anything? Kidnap anyone?"

Zane shook his head, finally joining the conversation.

"We've done a thorough sweep; nothing's missing or out of place. It's perplexing."

"So they just burst in for what, shits and giggles?" The absurdity of it all left me seething. "Who does that?"

"That's exactly what we need to find out," Damon retorted. "Random acts of violence like this... they're not just dangerous; they're a sign of something more sinister at play."

Axel leaned in, his eyes locking onto mine.

"And we will find out, Phera. We've got warriors interrogating the captured rogues, and we've doubled our

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patrols. Whoever is behind this is not going to get away with it."

A palpable silence filled the room, each one of us lost in our thoughts, contemplating the unsaid implications of our conversation. Finally, I broke the silence.

"Listen to me, all of you. We're a team, right? That means we face whatever this is together. No more trying to lock me up 'for my own good.' Deal?"

They exchanged glances, their eyes communicating messages that words couldn't capture. Then, as if on cue, they all turned back to me.

"Deal," they said in unison.

Their agreement, though succinct, was filled with unspoken promises—promises of solidarity, of collective action, and of a love so deep it could weather the most ferocious of storms. And as their eyes met mine, I knew we were bound by something unbreakable. Our journey ahead would be fraught with challenges, but whatever lay ahead, we would face it together.

Still lying on the infirmary bed, I looked at each of their faces. Damon's eyes had softened, Axel seemed a little less tense, and Zane... well, he always wore his heart on his sleeve. It was time to open up, even if just a smidgen.

"You know, I've been thinking..." I began, choosing my words carefully. "I've been fighting this whole mating thing for so long, but maybe it's time for me to stop being so stubborn."

Damon's eyes widened, and he leaned in closer.

"Are you saying what I think you're saying?"

"I'm saying that maybe it's time we start thinking about what comes next for us. As mates. Fully bonded mates. No running, no walls... well, fewer walls," I clarified, feeling a strange sense of vulnerability mixed with relief.

Axel grinned, and that singular expression seemed to light up the room.

"Phera, do you know how long we've waited to hear you say that?"

"I can imagine it's been a while," I said, chuckling softly. "But don't get ahead of yourselves. I said 'thinking about,' not 'jumping into.'"

"We know, we know," Zane interjected, his eyes twinkling with a mixture of joy and something more; perhaps a hint of the challenges we'd all acknowledged but not yet faced. "Baby steps, right?"

"Exactly," I affirmed. "We've got a lot of steps to take, but it's a start."

The door to the infirmary creaked open, and my brother Nate stepped in. His face was flushed, and he looked like he'd sprinted the hundred-yard dash. He locked eyes with me briefly, nodding as if to check I was okay, before turning his attention to Damon, Axel, and Zane.

"You'll want to see this. We've found something," Nate announced, urgency lacing his voice.

"Found what?" Damon asked, rising from his chair, his posture stiffening instantly.

"Something related to the attack. I think it's better if you see it for yourselves."

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Axel and Zane exchanged a knowing look before they all turned to me, as if asking for permission to leave.

"Go," I said, mustering as much strength as I could. "I'll be fine. And when you come back, maybe we can continue this heart-to-heart. It's long overdue."

Damon moved first, leaning down to give me a lingering kiss on my forehead.

"We'll be back as soon as we can. And Phera, thank you—for letting us in, even if it's just a little."

Axel followed suit, his kiss landing softly on my cheek.

"Baby steps, remember?"

Zane was the last. He took my hand in his, squeezing it gently.

"We'll crack this, and then we can focus on us. All of us."

With a final round of assuring glances, they left the room, following Nate out of the infirmary. As the door closed behind them, I couldn't help but think about the turns my life had taken, and the ones yet to come. We were in this together, through thick and thin, and somehow that thought made the lingering pain a little more bearable.

I leaned back into the pillows, closing my eyes briefly.

This was just the beginning of our journey, filled with love, risks, and undoubtedly more challenges. But whatever awaited us, we would face it. Together.