

Chapter Sixty: Echoes of Captivity

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Phera POV:

Consciousness greets me not as a friend, but as an adversary, dragging me back to a reality I'm not ready to face. Disorientation is the first sensation that washes over me, followed closely by a dull, pervasive ache centred around a burning on my neck. It's a cruel reminder of the last moments before darkness claimed me: the ambush, the struggle, and the sharp, unexpected pain of acid. Crap! Even thinking about it wants me to curl in a corner and hide.

Blinking against the dim lighting, I take in my surroundings with a growing sense of dread. The world has shrunk to the confines of a cold, merciless cage, its bars as unyielding as the reality I'm forced to confront. Fuck! How'd I get here and by who? This isn't just a physical trap; it's a mental one, designed to break spirits as much as bodies.

Outside my prison, the room stretches, shadows clinging to its corners like spectres. There's nothing familiar about this place, nothing comforting to latch onto. It's a void, a space devoid of warmth, of life, of the pack, of my mates who no doubt probably know by now that I had royally fucked up. The realisation that I'm utterly alone, cut off from my mates, from my people, sends a fresh wave of panic coursing through me.

Desperately, I reach out with my mind, seeking the comforting presence of the triplets, Nate, anyone at this

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ponit, but the attempt fizzles out, stifled by the lingering poison in my system. Wolfsbane, the silent thief of my strength, has robbed me not just of my physical capabilities but of the deep, intrinsic connection to my wolf. The isolation is complete, a chasm that yawns wide and threatening, filled with the echoes of my own fears.

Grabbing hold of the bars of this sickening cage I test the limits of my prison, fingers curling around the cold metal, pulling with a strength that feels as if it's been syphoned off, leaving me weak, vulnerable. The lock mocks me with its silent presence, a symbol of my current impotence.

The sound of approaching footsteps tears me from my reverie, heart hammering against my ribcage, a desperate drumbeat in the quiet of my cage. My body tenses, every instinct screaming to fight, to defend, but the wolfsbane coursing through me renders my efforts futile, my body uncooperative. Fuck! This is bad! Really bad! I just had to stay alive. I knew the triplets would come but I needed to be smart right now.

The door creaks open, admitting a figure shrouded in the ambiguity of backlight. I strain against the dimness, trying to make out features, to find something recognizable in the silhouette that now holds my fate in their hands. But the face that emerges from the shadows is a cipher, an unknown variable that adds a new layer of fear to my already fraught predicament.

"Who are you?" My voice, though weak, carries the weight of my defiance, my unwillingness to succumb to the terror that seeks to engulf me.

The stranger stops just outside my reach, a smirk playing across his hard features that are unfamiliar, yet

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undeniably hostile. Even though I have no clue who the hell the guy is, for some reason it's as if I've seen him. He's tall maybe around six feet and three inches, hes had muscular as an alpha but not just there. His olive skin and dark brown eyes hold so much anger that I'm surprised I'm still not shivering.

"Someone who's been waiting a long time for this moment," he replies, his voice a cold caress that sends shivers down my spine.

His words are cryptic, his presence an enigma, but the intent behind his gaze is clear and chilling. I am not just a random victim; I am here for a reason, a pawn in a game whose rules I do not know. Shit, could this be the third party Josh was talking about?

The cage, the room, the stranger—each is a piece of a puzzle I'm scrambling to solve, each moment that ticks by a precious resource slipping through my fingers. But even as despair seeks to take hold, a spark of something fiercer ignites within me. No way in hell would I let this asshole win. I just needed to keep him talking and stay alive. The triplets would find me.

The man's presence fills the cramped space, his silhouette a dark smudge against the sparse light filtering through the dirty windows. Despite my situation, anger bubbles inside me, pushing against the lethargy imposed by the wolfsbane. I won't show fear, not to him.

"Who are you?" I demand again, injecting as much authority into my voice as I can muster from my weakened state. "What do you want from me?"

He chuckles, a sound devoid of any real amusement, more a display of scorn.

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"Oh, Phera, always so direct. Always playing the fearless leader, even when you're literally in a cage."

His words sting, but I refuse to let him see that.

"If you know so much about me, then you know I won't be intimidated by a coward who hides in the shadows."

The stranger leans forward, and the dim light catches his face, revealing a smirk that doesn't reach his cold eyes.

"Intimidated? No, I wouldn't say that. But you should be aware, Luna. Your pack, your precious mates, they're scrambling. Financial ruin, physical threats, you name it. And here you are, caught like a lamb ready for slaughter."

My heart skips, not from fear, but from the mention of my pack, my family.

"You're lying," I spit out, despite the seed of doubt that plants itself in my mind. The financial struggles, the physical threats—it could all be part of his game, but the precision of his words unnerves me.

He laughs again, a sound that echoes mockingly around the stark room.

"Lying? Oh no, Luna. If anything, I'm more informed than you are right now. Your pack is on the brink, vulnerable. And you, their Luna, are here with me. Quite the predicament, wouldn't you say?"

Anger flares, hot and fierce, battling the cold dread that tries to take hold.

"You won't get away with this," I say, my voice stronger, fueled by the rising fire within. "My pack, my mates, they are stronger than you think. And they will come for me."

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The man straightens, his amusement seemingly fading as he regards me with a calculating gaze.

"Perhaps, but time is on my side, Phera. Every moment you're here, is a moment your pack flounders. How long do you think they can last without their guiding light? Without their Luna?"

His words are meant to unnerve, to unsettle, but they also ignite something within me—a resolve, a determination that hardens my spine and sharpens my focus.

"You underestimate them, and you underestimate me," I counter, my voice steady despite the turmoil inside. "We are bound by more than just duty or blood. We are bound by a bond that you could never understand."

The stranger studies me for a moment longer, his smirk returning as if he finds my defiance amusing.

"Brave words, Luna. We shall see how long they sustain you here." With that, he turns, leaving me alone once again, but not defeated.

As his footsteps fade, I take a deep, steadying breath. This man, whoever he is, holds the keys to my cage, but not to my spirit. My pack, my mates, they are my strength, and with or without a direct link to them, I draw on the bond we share, a silent vow that no cage, no poison, can break. The room feels smaller, the darkness more oppressive, but within me, a light flickers stubbornly, refusing to be extinguished.