

Chapter Seventy-Two: Gathering Storm

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Zane POV:

The past couple of days had been a whirlwind of activity, strategy meetings, and sleepless nights. The sense of urgency was palpable, and the weight of the impending war against Blue Moon and Erickson loomed over us like a dark cloud. We had no choice but to declare war, and with the Alpha King's support, Erickson and Josh were named fugitives. Their whereabouts were unknown, but we were determined to hunt them down.

Our packhouse had become a hub of activity. Allies from various packs had arrived to lend their support, their presence a testament to the strength and unity of the werewolf community. As I walked through the crowded halls, I couldn't help but feel a sense of pride mixed with the ever-present worry for Phera.

In the main conference room, leaders from different packs were gathered, their voices a low murmur as they discussed strategies and plans. I recognized many of them—Alpha Vince of the RavenClaw pack, Gamma Thomas standing by his side. There were others too: Alpha Marcus from the Silver Moon pack, Alpha Lars from the Shadow Fang pack, and Beta Samuel from the Stone Ridge pack. Each of them had brought their best warriors, ready to stand with us against the threat that loomed.

Axel, Damon, and I had been in constant meetings, coordinating with our allies, ensuring that every detail was meticulously planned. We couldn't afford any mistakes.

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The stakes were too high.

"We need to ensure that our borders are heavily fortified," Alpha Vince was saying as I entered the room. "Erickson is desperate, and desperation makes people unpredictable."

"Agreed," Damon replied, his tone grim. "We've already increased patrols and set up additional barriers. We're also working on securing our airspace."

Alpha Lars nodded.

"We'll send some of our best flyers to assist. They can help monitor from above and provide an early warning system."

I joined them at the table, nodding in agreement.

"Thank you, Lars. Every bit of support helps. We've also started regaining our financial stability. The saboteurs may have tried to cripple us, but we've managed to trace the funds and reclaim them."

Axel leaned forward, his expression serious.

"We've traced the money to various accounts. The Alpha King's advisors have been invaluable in helping us recover our assets. We're back on our feet, financially at least."

"Good," Alpha Marcus said, his voice steady. "We'll need all the resources we can muster. Erickson won't go down without a fight."

"And what about Rex?" Gamma Thomas asked, his brow furrowed. "Has there been any sign of him?"

I shook my head, frustration gnawing at me.

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"No. He's still in hiding. We have trackers out searching for him, but so far, he's managed to stay one step ahead. It's as if he knows our every move."

Beta Samuel frowned.

"Could he have someone on the inside?"

Damon's jaw tightened.

"It's possible. We're investigating that angle as well. Trust is a precious commodity right now, and we can't afford to take any chances."

The room fell into a contemplative silence, the gravity of the situation weighing heavily on all of us. The support from our allies was reassuring, but the threat of Erickson and Rex still hung over us like a dark shadow.

"We need to stay vigilant," Axel said finally, breaking the silence. "Every pack here has our gratitude. We couldn't do this without you."

Alpha Vince clasped his hand firmly.

"We're in this together. Red Moon's fight is our fight."

The others echoed his sentiment, a chorus of agreement that bolstered our resolve. We were united, and that unity would be our strength in the battles to come.

As the meeting continued, I couldn't help but think of Phera. She was healing, but the trauma of her ordeal was still fresh. Her strength and resilience were awe-inspiring, and I knew she would stand with us when the time came.

For now, we had to focus on the immediate threat. We had to ensure that our pack was safe, that our allies were

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ready, and that Erickson and Rex would be brought to justice. The road ahead was fraught with danger, but we would face it together, united and determined.

Phera POV:

As I stood in front of the mirror, my reflection stared back at me, a haunting reminder of the horrors I had endured. My body had mostly healed, but the branding and other scars remained, a permanent testament to the torment. Tears welled up in my eyes, and I quickly looked away, unable to bear the sight.

The door creaked open, and Newmara stepped in, her presence a comforting balm to my frayed nerves. She moved with the grace of someone who had weathered many storms and come out stronger on the other side.

"Hey," she said softly, coming to stand beside me. "What's wrong?"

I tried to force a smile, but it faltered.

"It's just... the scars. They remind me of everything."

Newmara placed a gentle hand on my shoulder.

"Phera, you've always been beautiful. Do you remember how Nate, Adam, and I would always talk about how the triplets looked at you?"

I chuckled despite myself.

"Yeah, you used to tease me about it all the time."

She smiled, her eyes sparkling with the light of old memories.

"Remember that time when you were a teenager, just

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starting to blossom? You must have been about fifteen, and you were at the pack's summer bonfire. You had no idea how the triplets were practically circling you like protective wolves. You thought they were just being big brothers."

I laughed, the sound light and airy, breaking through the heaviness in my heart.

"I remember thinking they were just overprotective. I didn't realise they were scaring off every boy who looked at me."

"Oh, they were more than overprotective," Newmara said, grinning. "Do you remember Tim? Poor guy just wanted to give you a flower he'd picked. Damon, Axel, and Zane almost tore him apart with their glares."

"Tim was terrified," I said, shaking my head. "I thought he was just shy."

"They were making sure no one got close to you," Newmara said. "And you were completely oblivious. You thought they saw you as their little sister."

"Well, they always treated me like that," I said, a hint of sadness in my voice. "I never realised they felt anything more."

Newmara squeezed my shoulder.

"Phera, you were the only one who didn't see it. They've always been in love with you. Nate, Adam, and I could see it plain as day. No scar could ever make them not love you. They see you, the real you. And they love you for who you are, not for how you look."

Tears slipped down my cheeks, but this time they were

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tears of gratitude and love.

"Thank you, Newmara. I needed to hear that."

She hugged me tightly, her embrace filled with warmth and reassurance.

"It's time, Phera. It's time for you to complete the bond with them. It's time for you to become one with your mates."

I pulled back slightly, looking into her eyes.

"But what if... what if they see these scars and it changes how they feel?"

Newmara shook her head firmly.

"No scar could ever make them not love you. They see you, Phera, the real you. And they love you for who you are, not for how you look."

Her words settled into my soul, easing the lingering doubts. I knew she was right. My mates had shown me time and time again that their love was unwavering. It was time to accept that love fully, to embrace our bond completely.

"Okay," I said, my voice steady with newfound resolve. "It's time."

Newmara smiled, her eyes shining with pride and love.

"Let's get you ready then. This is a momentous occasion, and you deserve to feel every bit as beautiful as you are."

Together, we set about preparing for the night we would become one. As I donned the lingerie Newmara had brought for me, I felt a sense of calm wash over me. The

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Lingerie was simple yet elegant, a soft white that contrasted beautifully with my dark hair. It flowed around me like a whisper, delicate and ethereal.

Newmara helped me with my hair, weaving it into a braid adorned with small flowers. She applied a light touch of makeup, enhancing my natural beauty without overshadowing it. As she worked, she continued to share stories from our childhood, each one a reminder of the love and support that had always surrounded me.

"Do you remember the time when you fell off your bike and scraped your knee?" Newmara asked, her fingers deftly working through my hair.

"Yeah," I said, smiling at the memory. "I thought it was the end of the world."

"And who was the first person to pick you up and carry you home?" she asked.

"Damon," I replied softly. "He carried me all the way back and made sure I was okay."

"And Axel and Zane were right behind, ready to beat up the sidewalk for hurting you," Newmara said with a laugh. "They've always been there for you, Phera. And they always will be."

By the time we were finished, I felt transformed. Not just physically, but emotionally. The weight of the past few weeks still lingered, but it no longer felt insurmountable. I was ready to face whatever came next, with my mates by my side.

Newmara stepped back to admire her work, a proud smile on her face.

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"You look stunning, Phera. They won't be able to take their eyes off you."

I took a deep breath, feeling a surge of confidence.

"Thank you, Newmara. For everything."


She hugged me again, a final squeeze before stepping aside.


"Now go to them. Complete your bond. It's time for you to be truly happy."

With her words echoing in my mind, I turned and walked out of the room with a robe around myself, ready to face my mates and the future that awaited us.

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