

Chapter Seventy-Seven: The Confrontation

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Phera POV:

The sun dipped below the horizon, casting long shadows across the outskirts of the Red Moon pack territory. My heart pounded in my chest as I made my way to the rendezvous point. The air was thick with tension, every rustle of leaves and snap of twigs making me jumpy. I knew my mates were close, their presence a silent reassurance as I walked into what could be a dangerous situation. They had insisted on being near, hidden in the shadows, ready to strike if things went south.

As I approached the clearing, I saw him standing there, hands in his pockets, his posture relaxed but his eyes scanning the area warily. Josh. My ex-boyfriend, once a trusted friend, now a traitor. He hadn't noticed me yet, and I took a moment to gather my thoughts, steeling myself for the confrontation.

"Josh," I called out, stepping into the open.

He turned quickly, surprise flickering across his face before he masked it with a smile.

"Phera," he said, his voice dripping with false warmth. "I didn't expect you to come here. How did you know I was here?"

"I have my ways," I brushed off his question, my heart aching at the sight of him. "I thought it was best we talk privately. There's so much to say."

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He nodded, stepping closer. "I've missed you, Phera. You look... different."

"Yeah, being kidnapped and tortured does that to a person," I replied, my voice steady despite the storm of emotions swirling inside me.

Josh's face tightened, a flicker of something dark in his eyes. "I never wanted that for you. You have to believe me."

"Then why, Josh? Why betray me and the pack?" My voice cracked, the raw pain seeping through.

He sighed, looking away for a moment before meeting my gaze again. "Because I love you, Phera. I always have. After my fated mate rejected me, I knew you were the only one for me."

"That's not love, Josh. That's obsession," I said, my voice laced with anger. "You don't hurt the people you love."

He laughed, a bitter sound that sent chills down my spine. "You don't understand, Phera. I did this for us. Erickson and Rex, they promised me we could be together."

"And you believed them?" I spat, taking a step closer. "They used you, Josh. Just like you used me."

"No, you're wrong," he insisted, his eyes wild. "I did what I had to do. For us."

"For us?" I repeated, my voice rising in disbelief. "You betrayed everything we stood for. You betrayed our pack, our friends... me."

"I did it because I love you!" he shouted, his eyes flashing with desperation. "I couldn't let you be with them. Those

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bastards don't deserve you."

"And you do?" I challenged, my eyes blazing. "You think this is love? This is madness, Josh. You're not the man I once knew."

His face twisted with rage, and he took a step closer, his hands clenching into fists. "You don't get to say that. You don't get to judge me. You're mine, Phera. You've always been mine."

"I'm not yours," I said firmly, my heart pounding. "I belong to my mates. I belong to my pack. And I will do whatever it takes to protect them."

"You think they can protect you?" he sneered. "They couldn't even save you from me."

"That's where you're wrong," I said, stepping closer until I was inches away from him. "They will always protect me. And I will always fight for them."

He looked at me, his eyes filled with a twisted kind of love. "I could have given you everything, Phera. Why couldn't you see that?"

"Because what you're offering isn't love," I said softly, my voice breaking. "It's control. And I will never be controlled by you."

Josh's face contorted with anger, and for a moment, I thought he might lash out. But then he stepped back, shaking his head. "You'll regret this, Phera. You'll see."

"No, Josh. The only thing I regret is ever trusting you," I said, my voice steady. "This ends now."

As I stared into Josh's wild eyes, I heard the familiar

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voices of my mates in my head, their urgency palpable.

"Phera, back away. He's about to go feral," Damon warned, his voice strained.

"No," I replied firmly through our bond. "I need to end this."

Josh's eyes flickered with a dangerous glint as he sensed my defiance. Without warning, he lunged at me, his movements feral and fast. I barely had time to brace myself before his fist connected with my jaw, sending me sprawling to the ground.

Gritting my teeth against the pain, I scrambled to my feet and launched myself at him. My fist collided with his ribs, earning a satisfying grunt of pain. But Josh was relentless, grabbing my arm and twisting it behind my back with a cruel smile.

"I always knew you were a fighter," he snarled, his breath hot against my ear. "But you'll never beat me."

I twisted my body, dislocating my shoulder in the process but freeing myself from his grip. With a scream of rage, I spun around and kicked him hard in the chest, sending him crashing into a tree.

"Never say never, Josh," I spat, my shoulder throbbing with pain.

He recovered quickly, charging at me again. We exchanged a flurry of punches and kicks, each blow landing with brutal force. Josh's face contorted with anger as I fought back, refusing to give in.

"You could have had everything with me," he growled, grabbing a fistful of my hair and yanking my head back. "But you chose them."

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"Because I love them," I shouted, slamming my elbow into his gut and breaking free. "And I'll always choose them over you."

Our fight raged on, each of us landing punishing blows. I could feel my strength waning, but I refused to back down. Josh's eyes were wild with fury, his movements becoming more erratic and desperate.

Just as he aimed a vicious punch at my head, I ducked and kicked his legs out from under him. He fell to the ground with a thud, and I wasted no time, pouncing on him and pinning him down.

"You never understood what love is," I said through gritted teeth, my fist connecting with his jaw. "It's not about control."

Before he could respond, a pack of rogues burst from the trees, their snarls filling the air. My heart pounded as they rushed towards us, but I didn't have to face them alone. From the shadows, my mates and the Alpha King's team emerged, their eyes blazing with fury.

Damon, Axel, and Zane tore into the rogues with savage efficiency, their movements a blur of deadly precision. Blood and fur flew as they dispatched the attackers, their focus unwavering.

I turned my attention back to Josh, who was struggling beneath me. "This is for everything you've done," I hissed, raising my fist for one final blow. "And for why I was always at the top of the academy."

With a swift, powerful punch, I knocked him unconscious. His body went limp beneath me, and I let out a shaky breath, the adrenaline slowly ebbing away.

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Around me, the sounds of battle faded as the last of the rogues were defeated. My mates rushed to my side, their eyes filled with concern and relief.


"Phera," Zane said, his voice a mixture of pride and worry. "You did it."


I nodded, my body trembling with exhaustion. "We did it."

As the reality of our victory settled in, I allowed myself to lean on my mates, their strength and support a comforting presence.

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