

Chapter Eighty: A Desperate Gamble

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Phera POV:

I stood outside the interrogation room, my heart pounding with a mix of fear and determination. This was the moment of truth. Taking a deep breath, I steeled myself and pushed open the door. The sight that greeted me was jarring – Josh was tied to a chair but his hands loose but cuffed, his face bloodied and bruised, evidence of the beating he'd received at the hands of the guards and my mates and probably countless other allies.

His eyes widened in surprise as I stepped into the room, but then a twisted smile spread across his face. "Phera, sweetheart. Didn't expect to see you here," he sneered, his voice dripping with mockery.

I swallowed hard, forcing myself to remain composed. "Josh, we need to talk."

He laughed, a sound that grated on my nerves. "Talk? About what? How you betrayed me? How you are with those bastards instead of me?"

I took a seat across from him, trying to appear calm. "Josh, this isn't about you and me. This is about the pack, about lives at stake."

His expression darkened, eyes narrowing with contempt. "You think I care about the pack? A pack that isn't even mine. All I care about is you."

"Josh, please," I said, my voice softening. "I need your

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help. You were always there for me. Can't you do this one thing?"

He scoffed, shaking his head. "And what do I get in return?"

I leaned forward, trying to seem vulnerable. "Just tell me what you know. Help me, and we can figure something out."

His eyes flickered with something close to affection before hardening again. "Figure something out? Like what, Phera? You going to leave your precious mates for me?"

Forcing tears to well up in my eyes, my voice trembling. "Josh, I'm begging you. Please. We need to stop Rex. He's going to destroy everything."

His expression softened momentarily but then hardened again. "Why should I trust you? You chose them over me."

"I didn't have a choice," I whispered, letting the tears fall. "You know how the mate bond works. But that doesn't mean I didn't care about you."

He seemed to waver, his eyes searching mine. "I loved you, Phera. Still do. But you left me."

I reached out, placing my hand on his, even though the touch made my skin crawl. "I know, and I'm sorry. But we can't change the past. Help me now, Josh. Please."

His expression softened further, and for a moment, I thought I'd broken through. But then his face twisted in anger again. "You're just using me."

"No, Josh," I insisted, my voice desperate. "I'm trying to save lives. I'm trying to save us."

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He pulled his chained hand away, slamming it on the table. "Us? There is no us, Phera. There never was."

I flinched, tears streaming down my face. "Please, Josh. If you ever cared about me, help me now."

He laughed bitterly, leaning back in his chair. "You're good, Phera. Really good. But I'm not stupid."

"Josh, please," I begged, forcing my voice to break. "Just tell me what you know. I'm begging you."

He stared at me, his eyes filled with a mix of anger and longing. "You always did know how to play me," he muttered.

"Josh, it's not about playing you. It's about saving lives," I said, my voice steady. "Please, help me stop Rex."

He seemed to consider my words, his expression shifting between anger and something softer. "And what do I get in return?"

I took a deep breath, meeting his gaze. "We can talk about that. Just tell me what you know."

He leaned forward, his eyes boring into mine. "You really think I'm that easy to manipulate?"

"I'm not trying to manipulate you, Josh," I said, my voice firm. "I'm trying to save lives. If you ever cared about me, help me now."

He seemed to waver again, his expression conflicted. "I don't know, Phera. You left me. You chose them over me."

"I didn't have a choice," I repeated, my voice gentle. "But that doesn't mean I didn't care about you. Help me now,

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Josh. Please."

He stared at me for a long moment, his eyes searching mine.

"Josh, please," I whispered, my voice breaking. "Help me stop Rex. Help me save our pack."

He sighed, leaning back in his chair. "Fine. I'll tell you what I know. But I need immunity in return. I don't need those bastard mates of yours ripping off my head"

I nodded, relief flooding through me. "Thank you, Josh."

He looked away, his expression pained. "Just don't think this means I've forgiven you. You used me when I gave nothing but true love in return."

Did I not ever see how much of a narcissist this guy was? Was I that desperate to forget the triplets that I didn't notice these red flags over the years?

"I understand," I said softly. "Just tell me what you know."

His eyes hardened again. "No, Phera. I'm not doing this for you. I'm doing it because I love you. Always have, always will. Even after my fated mate rejected me, I knew you were the only one for me. But you chose them."

I reached out, my hand trembling. "Josh, I'm sorry. But this isn't about us. This is about saving lives." I repeated again.

He leaned forward, his eyes boring into mine. "You think I care about those lives? The only life I care about is yours. But you keep choosing them over me."

Tears welled up in my eyes. "Josh, please. If you ever cared about me, help me now."

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His expression wavered, but then he hardened again. "You're good, Phera. But not good enough. I'm not giving you anything."

Frustration bubbled up inside me. "Josh, damn it! This isn't a game. Lives are at stake."

He leaned back, a twisted smile on his face. "You always did know how to play me, Phera. But not this time."

Desperation clawed at me. "Josh, please. Help me stop Rex."

He shook his head, a bitter laugh escaping his lips. "You think I'm stupid? You think I don't know what you're doing?"

"Josh, it's not about you. It's about saving lives, countless hundreds if not thousand. Plus I'm also helping you get immunity for your crimes." I insisted, my voice breaking.

His eyes softened for a moment, but then he steeled himself. "No, Phera. I'm not giving you anything."

Tears streamed down my face as I realised he wasn't going to break. "Josh, please. If you ever cared about me, now is the time to prove it."

He stared at me, his eyes filled with a mix of anger and longing. "You won't get to me this time. You're a manipulative bitch. But not this time."

"Josh, please," I whispered, my voice breaking. "Help me stop Rex."

"He shook his head, a bitter laugh escaping his lips. "You think I'm stupid? You think I don't know what you're doing?"

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"Josh, it's not about you. It's about saving lives, think of your family, friends." I insisted, my voice breaking.

His eyes softened for a moment, but then he steeled himself. "No, Phera. I'm not giving you anything."

Tears streamed down my face as I realised he wasn't going to break. "Josh, please."

He stared at me, his eyes filled with a mix of anger and longing. I stood up, my heart heavy with the weight of failure. "Josh, I'm sorry. But I had to try."

As I turned to leave, Josh's voice cut through the air, stopping me in my tracks. "Wait, Phera."

I paused, my heart pounding, and turned to face him. His eyes bore into mine with an intensity that sent shivers down my spine. "What is it, Josh?"

His expression shifted from anger to something more vulnerable. "I've always loved you, Phera. Even after everything, that hasn't changed. My fated mate rejected me, and I thought I'd never feel whole again. But then I found you. You made me feel alive. But you chose them over me. I can't forgive that."

His words were a mix of pain and possessiveness, a declaration of love twisted by his own narcissism. "Josh, I —"

He cut me off, his voice rising. "You want my help? Fine. I'll tell you everything. But I want immunity. I want your mates to promise they won't come after me for my crimes. That's my price."

I swallowed hard, the reality of his demand sinking in.

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Granting him immunity was risky, but the information he held could save countless lives. "I can't promise that on my own, Josh. But I'll speak to them. Just tell me what you know."

He sighed, leaning back in his chair. "Alright. Rex and Erickson have a plan, and it's not pretty. They're going to launch an all-out assault on Red Moon. They've gathered a massive force of rogues, mercenaries, and deserters. But that's just the start."

Josh's eyes darkened as he continued, his voice filled with a gruesome calmness. "They plan to slaughter everyone. Men, women, children. It doesn't matter. They'll kill them all. They want to send a message, to show that no one is safe from their reach."

The blood drained from my face as he spoke, the horror of the plan unfolding in my mind. "How... how do they plan to do it?"

Josh's smile was chilling. "They have a network of spies and infiltrators within your pack. They've been poisoning your food supplies, weakening your warriors with slow-acting toxins. When the attack comes, your defenses will crumble from the inside out. And then the real fun begins."

He leaned forward, his voice dropping to a whisper. "They'll capture your mates, Phera. They'll make an example of them. Torture them in front of everyone. They want to break the spirit of Red Moon, to show that even the mighty can fall."

Josh's lips twisted into a cruel smile as he finished outlining Rex and Erickson's horrific plan. My heart pounded, a mix of fear and anger surging through me. "You're lying, Josh. The Alpha King would never let this

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happen. He would stop them."

Josh's eyes gleamed with dark amusement. "Oh, sweet Phera. The Alpha King can't intervene. There's an ancient law about hierarchy and blood relation. The law states that unless the conflict directly threatens the royal bloodline or involves a direct challenge to the throne, the Alpha King must remain neutral. Rex knows this, and he's exploiting it to his advantage."

My mind reeled at his words. "But why? Why would the Alpha King follow such a law when so many lives are at stake?"

Josh's laughter was cold and mocking. "Because, Phera, breaking that law could destabilise the entire werewolf hierarchy. It would set a precedent that could lead to chaos among the packs. The Alpha King's hands are tied, and Rex is counting on it."

I felt a cold shiver run down my spine. The implications of Josh's revelation were horrifying. My mates and the others were waiting outside the interrogation room, anxious and on edge. I needed to tell them everything, but first, I had to get out of here.

"Thank you, Josh," I said, trying to keep my voice steady despite the chill his presence sent down my spine. "Even though your presence terrifies me, thank you."

Josh's smile faded, replaced by a look of intense longing. "I still love you, Phera. Remember that."

Tears welled up in my eyes, my stomach churning with a mix of fear and revulsion. "Why, Josh? Why are you helping them?"

His expression softened momentarily, a flicker of the man

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I once knew. "Because they promised me something I wanted more than anything. They promised me you. They said that once Red Moon fell, you would be mine."

I shook my head, tears streaming down my face. "Josh, this isn't love. This is madness."

He shrugged, his eyes hardening again. "Love, madness... What's the difference? Now, do we have a deal or not?"

I hesitated, the weight of the decision pressing down on me. "I'll talk to my mates. I can't promise anything, but I'll try."

Josh nodded, a grim smile playing on his lips. "Good. Now get out of here. And Phera... be careful. Rex isn't someone you can trust."

I turned to leave, my mind reeling from everything I'd just heard. As I reached the door, I paused, looking back at Josh. "Thank you, Josh. Even if your presence sends chills down my spine, thank you."

I turned away, refusing to give him the satisfaction to see what his presence does to me now. As I opened the door, I was met by the worried faces of my mates, Nate, and Adam. They crowded around me, their expressions a mix of concern and anger.

"What did he say?" Damon demanded, his eyes blazing with intensity.

I took a deep breath, my heart heavy with the weight of the information I carried. "Rex and Erickson are planning an all-out assault on Red Moon. They've gathered a massive force of rogues, mercenaries, and deserters. They're going to slaughter everyone. Men, women, children. It doesn't matter. They want to send a message,

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to show that no one is safe from their reach."

Axel's jaw tightened, his fists clenching at his sides. "We need to root out those spies. Strengthen our defences. Prepare for the worst."

"And what about Josh?" Zane asked, his voice tense. "What does he want?"

I shook my head, the reality of the situation settling in. "Josh wants immunity. He wants us to promise that we won't come after him for his crimes. But that's not all. He revealed something else."

I explained the ancient law Josh had mentioned, about hierarchy and blood relation, and how it tied the Alpha King's hands. "The Alpha King can't intervene unless the conflict directly threatens the royal bloodline or involves a direct challenge to the throne. Rex is exploiting this law to his advantage. I'm not sure what exactly the alpha king promised you all and what you exchanged in return but you should know this"

Nate's face darkened with anger. "So, we're on our own."

"We already know of this law, sunflower. Don't worry whatever the king could have done without breaching the law he has and if we're being honest we wouldn't have you back and a lot of other assets without his involvement." Axel said giving my head a kiss but I could feel the tension radiating of him and my other two mates

I sighed and nodded then turned to look at everyone, my voice strong despite every bone in my body shaking with dread with the upcoming doom.

"We have allies. We can still fight back. But we need to be smart about it. We need to find those spies and take them

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out before the attack happens."

Damon clenched his fists, his eyes burning with fury. "We need to act fast. Lives are at stake."

"And what about Josh?" Axel asked again, his voice laced with frustration.

I looked at each of them, my heart heavy with the weight of the decision. "I don't know. But we need to decide quickly. The information he gave us could save lives."


The triplets exchanged glances, their expressions a mix of anger, frustration, and determination.

"We'll discuss it," Damon said finally. "But no promises, Phera. That bastard deserves to pay for what he's done."

"I know," I whispered. "But right now, we need to focus on saving our pack."

They nodded, their resolve clear. We had a long road ahead of us, but together, we would face whatever came our way. And as I looked at my mates, my brother, and our allies, I knew that we would fight with everything we had to protect what was ours.

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