

Chapter Eleven: Back In California

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Phera POV:

The conversation I had with the triplets replayed in my mind like a broken record. Why wasn't it the right time? What could be so important that they couldn't even tell their own goddamn mate what had made them act the way they did, knowing I was their mate all those years. But, all of those things aside, what tore my heart into pieces was when they didn't even flinch when I mentioned them and Newmara. That meant they knew I was watching. Did they mean for me to see them together? That they preferred my sister over me, and now that she's mated to their younger brother, I'm their fallback while I should've been their number one priority the moment they turned eighteen and knew about me being their mate. 1

"Ms. Evans!" I heard Mr. Maxwell shout my name, jolting me out of my thoughts.

Looking up, I saw the entire class staring at me as I blushed, embarrassed. Fuck! This was probably the tenth time I had been called out like this over the past five days.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Maxwell. What was the question?" I asked meekly.

"Doesn't matter now, Ms. Evan; it's already been answered. Keep dozing off like this, and you'll fail your final in three days." He snorted.

Meeking out a quick sorry, I went back to staring at my laptop. Crap! I needed to stop thinking about the triplets. After the drama in the clearing, I had made Josh pack up and leave that very night, which was now five days ago. It would be an understatement to say everyone was shocked that I left, and I had called them from California, telling them I had left for an emergency. Well, they were more disappointed than mad. Mom and Dad went on a tangent, asking if I was okay, why I left, and that I should be with my mates and all that mushy mates talk. I wish I could tell mom and dad why I didn't want to be with my so-called mates, but that would probably strain their relationship with the triplets, and I didn't want that. After the triplet's parents died, mom and dad had taken up the role of caring for them, helping them when needed. In a way, they were their children too. Nate was another story in itself. He was raging that I had left and didn't even bother telling him. He legit went on for an hour on the phone, eating my ear out that it was selfish of me to leave like that and that running from my problems wouldn't solve anything. I wanted to ask him what he knew of my problems. Other than the fact that I avoided the triplets, I didn't think he knew anything, but I feel now that isn't the case that he knew more than he let on and if that was the case me and him were going to have a very serious talk. Then there was Newmara. She had called me almost

every day up until yesterday, her call I refused to pick up. I was happy for her and Adam, I honestly was, but until she or the triplets didn't tell me why they had done what they did all those years ago, our relationship would remain strained. 4

Speaking of the triplets, they hadn't once called me, but they all texted me the same thing the morning after I left, saying, 'Enjoy till you can because soon there will be no escape.' I didn't know what they meant, and I didn't want to know.

Well, that's a lie. The message did have my heart beating out of my chest, and my anxiety was at an all-time high, deciphering what they meant by the message. There was no way they could force me back. Well, I like to believe that was the case, but us being mates might complicate that, plus we lived in different multiverses. They never bothered coming before and knew about me being their mate. I doubt they will make the journey now. All I needed was to land a job in a wolf-owned company, and I would be Gucci! But for that, I needed to ace my exams, which wouldn't happen if all I thought about in class were the triplets. Ugh! Screw my life and this mate bond! As much as I wanted them, I didn't want them. I knew I was being stubborn, but I had a right to be. It took me years to recover, somewhat forget about what happened, and finally find a guy I could see myself being with even though he wasn't my mate, but that all got taken away in a matter of a day. I was the triplets in name and soul; I had always been since the day I saw them, but what hurt was that they didn't see me that way. I wasn't going to let myself be hurt again; I didn't work this hard to be

on the top just for it to be taken away.

"And that's a wrap! Good luck, and I hope to see you all at the graduation ceremony." Mr. Maxwell said, ending the lecture.

See what I mean! I couldn't concentrate because of the triplets! Damn those boys! Well, men, incredibly gorgeous, muscular, ugh, no, Phera, think of something else: accounting, math, interviews, anything but those three. Packing my books up and shutting down my laptop, I dragged myself down the stairs. 1

"You know, sweetheart, you'll end up back in Red Moon if you don't pass and land a job." I heard Josh say from beside me, putting his arm over my shoulder.

I just elbowed him in the gut, huffing and puffing.

"Don't say stuff like that!" I said, giving him my best glare.

He chuckled as he ruffled my hair, which earned him a scowl from me. Josh had been amazing this past week. It was like going through the whole ordeal with the triplets, as I did eight years ago after I got back to California. Josh was there to catch every tear of mine that fell, hug me and tell me that everything would be alright, that I would get through this, and that I was stronger than this. He was my support system, but despite knowing him for years and even dating him, his touch now made me uncomfortable. I didn't tell him, though. I could tell he was already hurt about the fact

we weren't together anymore. I didn't want to make things awkward just because he draped his arm over me or hugged me.

"No, seriously though, P. I get it, trust me, I do better than anyone else would over here. Mate business is always sensitive stuff, but you can't let it get in the way of your goal. You've worked so hard over the years to stay on the dean's honour roll, not to mention secure the top position for warrior student. Don't let that all go! Just pack all your thoughts up and push them away and then open that box up the moment you finish your last exam, and I'll be there. Then cry, punch me, hell, even scream. I'll be there for you, but right now, what matters is you and how much effort you put into your life. Don't throw that because, best friend or not, I'll knock you on that cute little ass of yours if you fuck up." Said, Josh

I couldn't help but smile genuinely for the first time since I left Red Moon. He was right! I worked too hard to screw everything over now! I hugged him as he chuckled.


"Thank you! Thank you for everything." I said.

"Always, P. I'll always be there even when you don't want me to be." Said, Josh.

You could hear the sadness in his voice, but I ignored it, not wanting to ask what he truly meant by his statement. I just hugged him tighter and didn't say anything. My focus for the next five days would be my exams and graduation. Then I'll

worry about my screwed-up mate life and mate bond.

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