

## Chapter Eighteen: Answers Will Be Given

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Phera POV:

As I reached the end of the corridor, the double wooden doors that stood as the gateway to their office loomed larger with each step. Intricate carvings adorned the oak, forming a pattern of intertwined circles that seemed like a cosmic dance, representing our complicated connections. With a gentle push, the doors opened, revealing Axel, Damon, and Zane standing inside, their gazes locking onto me with a mixture of anticipation and relief.

The air inside was a blend of their individual scents, so intoxicating that I had to remind myself to breathe. Axel moved first, closing the distance between us in just a few long strides, and before I knew what was happening, his hands were gently cradling my face.

"You're here," he murmured, his voice tinged with disbelief and hope.

"I am," I managed to say, swallowing the knot of emotions that had lodged itself in my throat.

His thumb lightly traced the outline of my lips, a simple touch that sent ripples of both pleasure and irritation through me. My inner wolf howled in delight, but the human

part of me—the part that remembered the night on the balcony eight years ago—wanted to pull away. Damon was next, his presence felt even before he spoke. 1

"You look beautiful," he said, a warm smile touching his lips.

His eyes held mine, and I could see the joy, the sheer happiness that radiated from them. His scent of cedar and musk enveloped me as he took my hand, placing a soft kiss on the back of it. An involuntary shiver went through me, and I hated how much I liked it. Zane moved in last, standing behind me, his large hands coming to rest on my shoulders.

"Glad you could make it," he said softly, his voice a deep baritone that rumbled through me.

I felt his nose nuzzle briefly against the nape of my neck, and his scent—grass and musk—filled my senses. My wolf practically purred in response, urging me to lean back into him. I stood there, encircled by them—my mates. The irony of it all wasn't lost on me. Here they were, treating me as if I were the most precious thing in the world, and yet, they had left me in the dark for eight years. A part of me wanted to hate them for it, but as their scents and their warmth enveloped me, I found that I couldn't. Their physical closeness rekindled memories and dreams, muddling my ability to stay detached. Axel's grey eyes met mine once more.

"Shall we go inside and talk?"

I looked at each of them in turn, the urge to demand explanations rising within me. But I quelled it, saving it for the conversation that would undoubtedly unfold once we were behind closed doors.

"Sure," I said finally, my voice betraying none of the conflicting emotions that were waging a war within me.

They seemed to exhale collectively as if they had been holding their breath, waiting for my approval. Axel led the way with a nod, his hand lightly touching the small of my back as we moved further into the room. Damon and Zane followed closely, their steps measured, but their eyes never leaving me.

The office was a cavernous space, filled with bookshelves, plush furniture, and state-of-the-art technology. It was a sanctum of personal and professional life, with framed photographs placed next to business awards, a strange but intimate mix that only seemed to make sense within the context of their complex personalities.

As I took a seat on the sumptuous leather couch that dominated the center of the room, I couldn't help but think that this was it—the threshold of new beginnings or the reopening of old wounds. With a deep breath, I prepared myself for whatever lay ahead. For better or worse, it was time to face the past and confront the present. And as they took their seats around me, their faces earnest, their eyes searching, I couldn't help but feel that whatever came next

was going to change the course of our lives forever.

The weight of the moment settled over us like a heavy blanket, a tangible manifestation of the words yet to be spoken and the questions yet to be answered. The sleek, modern lines of the ADZ Corporation office seemed incongruent to the emotional chaos swirling between us. Axel, Damon, and Zane, the formidable alphas of the werewolf world and the men fate had intertwined with my life, sat there, their towering presences filling the room. Each of their scents mingled, painting a tapestry of masculine energy—cedar and musk from Damon, pine and musk from Axel, and the earthy essence of grass and musk from Zane. 1

Axel's fingers had ceased their restless drumming on the armrest, frozen mid-tap as he registered the gravitas of my question. His gray eyes, usually so unreadable, betrayed a flicker of vulnerability. Damon looked like he had swallowed something sour, his face tightening into a grimace of regret and discomfort. Zane was the epitome of stoicism, yet even he couldn't entirely mask the tension in his clenched fists and the way his jaw set, as if bracing for impact. 2

"So," Axel finally exhaled, trying to maintain his usual composed demeanour but failing, "are you going to be as stubborn as you've always been?" His question, intended or not, had lit the fuse, and I felt myself combust internally.

"Stubborn? That's what you label my years of uncertainty, my

nights of crying myself to sleep, my days trying to dodge the whispers of others?" 1

The words came tumbling out, each one soaked in the bitterness of suppressed feelings and laced with years of frustration.

"I'd like to believe there's a good reason for your actions eight years ago. But before I even consider 'coming back,' as you so casually put it, I want answers."

As the words slipped off my tongue, I noticed a shift. They exchanged glances, like soldiers in a battlefield communicating through their eyes, fortifying each other for the revelations that lay ahead. Finally, they nodded almost simultaneously, each one visibly bracing himself for what would be a reckoning long overdue.

"First," I began, my voice shaky but resolute, "why did you kiss my sister that night on the balcony? You knew I was there, watching. Were you mocking me? Was it a cruel joke? What could you possibly gain from humiliating me like that?" 1

The memory, vivid as if it happened yesterday, stung anew. I could still feel the cool air of that night, could still see the shadows of their figures pressed against my sister, could still hear the muffled sounds of their lips meeting hers, each sensory detail an insult etched into my soul.

Damon's gaze darkened, as if reliving that moment pained him as much as it pained me.

"Phera, we—"

I cut him off.


"No, let me finish. If you think I've been stubborn, then let's talk about your womanizing ways." My voice rose in pitch and intensity. "How many women have there been? And don't even think of lying; I've lost count of the rumours. Was it some sort of deflection? Was it your way of pushing me further away?"

Axel, the most unflappable of the three, looked as if he'd been slapped. He opened his mouth as if to speak, but nothing came out. He sighed, his eyes struggling to meet mine, and in that silence, I heard the loudness of his unspoken guilt.

"And why didn't you ever tell me we were mates? Do you have any idea how hurtful it is to be kept in the dark, to be the last to know about something so life-altering?" My eyes moved between the three of them, as my voice trembled under the weight of my own vulnerability. "I was always the one who had to bear the scrutiny, the pity, the humiliation, while you got to parade around as these desirable, untouchable alphas."

I paused, taking a deep, quivering breath as I let the magnitude of my words hang in the air, feeling the sting of unshed tears blurring my vision.

"For eight long years, I've carried these questions, these

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insecurities, like an anchor tied to my soul. Do you have any idea how emotionally draining it is to constantly compare myself to my own sister, to feel like a second choice even to my own fated mates?"


The room went silent, the emotional weight of the past and the present colliding in a space that suddenly seemed too small to contain it. They looked at each other, then back at me, their eyes finally void of any pretense, filled instead with what looked like a mix of regret, realization, and perhaps a glimmer of hope for resolution.

The air was thick with anticipation, each of us aware that this was a critical juncture, a point of no return. It was a moment brimming with the potential for either reconciliation or irrevocable damage, and as I held my breath, waiting for them to speak, I realized that the next words uttered in this room would seal our fates, one way or another.

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