

## Chapter Three: Going Home Part One

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Phera POV:

"Sweetheart, your sister's mating ceremony is this weekend, along with your brother's accession ceremony to beta."

Were mom's words as they replayed in my head over in a loop.

Newmara's mating ceremony?

Mom hadn't mentioned if she had found her fated mate or if she had taken a chosen. The gut-wrenching feeling that maybe the triplets had chosen her as their mate and luna. Even though I felt that the triplets were my mates, I wasn't sure. It was just my instincts telling me that could be the case, but I had never returned to the Red Moon Pack on or after my eighteenth birthday. The thought of it being true and then probably getting rejected because they preferred my sister over me would have been the last straw. I would've dived so deep into an abyss that I wouldn't have been able to come out. Even though it was stupid of me to assume things, I didn't want to risk it. I always believed the triplets knew of my feelings for them. Hell, even they at times seemed to show affection more than they would to a best friend's younger sibling, but it could have been my delusional teenage mind convincing me that was the case. Whatsoever, it's been years, and no matter how fresh or old the wound inside me was, I would never admit that night still plagued my mind. Not like anyone knew either. The triplets and Newmara were alone on that baloney. Not even Nate was anywhere close by. Newmara and the triplets broke my heart in such a way that even if it was conrmed that the triplets were my mates and I their Luna, I don't think I would have it in me to accept them.

"You okay there, beautiful?" I heard Josh say from beside me in the seat.

His voice broke me out of my thoughts of my miserable teenage day. Despite arguing and making a gazillion excuses to mom and even dad, they didn't relent and forced me to come back for Nate' and Newmara events. And, being the scared little person I was when it came to the probable chance of facing the triplets, I dragged Josh with me. His pack is neighbours with my pack anyway, so it wasn't hard to convince him. Even though I was going more for Nate than Newmara, the journey and stay was still something I was dreading. From what my parents told me, Red Moon had become the most feared and powerful pack after the royal pack, which was run by the alpha king and queen in the wolf multiverse. According to dad, the triplets had become ruthless over the years, and wolves and packs feared them. And, with Nate ascending to beta, that meant the triplets would be present. If they were mating Newmara they'd be denitely there as well, but the point was the chances of hiding out and not being seen by them were slim to none. For all the tough s\*\*t I say at the academy and act all high and mighty because I'm top of the warrior class, that whole macho shimmers down to as tiny as an ant when the thought of me confronting the triplets come to mind. Goddess! I wish they didn't have such an effect on me! But my luck was absolute trash when it involved them.

"Phera, Phera," Josh said, snapping his ngers in front of my face bringing me back to reality once again.

"Lost you there again, beautiful. You okay?" Asked Josh as he put his arm around my shoulder.

He stared into my eyes for a bit, and then a spark of realization sparked in his eyes as he gave my shoulder a comforting squeeze.

"It's them, isn't it? The triplets. You're scared about coming face to face after so many years." Asked Josh, seeing right through me.

I hadn't hidden anything from Josh, he was my best friend before my boyfriend, and he knew how much I cared and wanted the triplets. And then how mercilessly they and Newmara broke my heart and never looked back. Even though I had told him constantly that I wouldn't be able to love him like I did the triplets, Josh never seemed to care. Though he was cool with it, I wasn't. Josh had been hurt before when he found his mate, she had rejected him because she was human and too scared of our world. At the time, I was there to help him pick up the pieces, and I didn't want to be the cause of his heart shattering again. Because if my mate showed up and it wasn't the triplets, I would be accepting him. There's no bond like the mate bond, and as outstanding as Josh was, I don't think I'd be able to choose him over my mate. But, he was willing to take the chance and even said that if I found my mate and wanted to leave with him, he wouldn't stand in the way. Goddess! I always ask the goddess why couldn't Josh be my mate. He was perfect in every way! Feeling Josh squeeze my shoulder, I looked at him and gave him a small smile, not denying or agreeing with his question. And, being the amazing boyfriend/best friend he was, he immediately picked up on my feeble try and sighed.

"I get you're scared or more like nervous but don't be Phera. Years have passed, and they haven't once asked about you or tried to contact you. I doubt they'll do it now. Plus, don't think about all this. What's supposed to happen is gonna happen. Why plague your mind about it now and torture yourself? You just focus on being there for your sister and brother, despite how much you don't want to be there." Said Josh.

This time I gave him a genuine smile, pecked his lips, and laid my head on his shoulder. He was right! The triplets hadn't even bothered looking or getting in contact with me, and they even happily signed off my request to study at the academy. They wouldn't be wasting their time on me when I magically decided to return to the pack. Plus, Josh had a point, I should focus on my siblings. I was thrilled Nate was nally ascending. He denied taking the title when the triplets did, saying he wanted to train at the royal pack and complete his studies before ascending. This was a big thing for him and our family, and not being there because of something that was no one's fault but mine was being selsh. And, even with what Newmara did after knowing her baby sister's feelings, I still didn't wish for anything bad to befall her. Chosen mate or fated, I just wanted her to be happy.

"Alright, we're here. Have your pack sigils and papers out before you get to the portal. Warriors will be there to check all necessary paperwork and allow you to pass to the wolf multiverse." The driver boomed over the speaker of the bus.

Getting down from the bus with Josh right next to me. I held my pack sigil necklace tight in my palm and the pack aliation papers in the other, looking deep into the woods where the tiny sparkles of the portal could be seen.

It's now or never, Phera.