

Mated in the Shadow of My Sister Chapter...

(Lily POV) As I walked back to the packhouse after the fight with James, Rose was silent. That left me alone...

Chapter 0009

(Lily POV)

There are a million different emotions running through my body as I continue to stare at the werewolf in front of me.

“Rose, please tell me this is a joke,” I whisper through our link.

“I can’t,” she whispers back. “This is real. He is our mate.”

I do not know why either of us are whispering, other than the utter shock of the situation.

“How? How can this be? It does not make any sense!” I whisper-yell to her.

“You did ask the Moon Goddess to bring him a new mate.”

“I did not mean me!!! I meant a mate that he could be happy with, and one that he could love!”

“He looks pretty happy,” Rose tells me.

Rose’s words take me by surprise. I had been so shocked and overwhelmed by my own emotions that—even though I was staring at him—I had not bothered to take in how James

was reacting. By the time Rose said something, James had moved much closer to me, and we could now see his eyes and the look on his face. To my utter shock, Rose was right. James looked... happy. No, not happy. James looked thrilled. He stared at me with astonishment, amazement, and... love?

“Rose, how is this possible? James hates me. He loves my sister. How could he be our mate?

And how could he possibly be happy about it?”

“The mate bond is a powerful thing, Lily,” Rose responds.

Okay, Rose is right about that. As much as I hate James for all that he has done to me during the past six years, I feel a strong, powerful draw to him right now. It is almost suffocating. I cannot help but notice how handsome he looks, with his dirty blond hair that is slightly too long on the sides, his strong jawline, his amazing blue eyes. I want to know what it feels like to run my fingers through his hair, and everything in me begs to know what it feels like to have him wrap me in his strong, muscular arms. I shake my head, trying to clear the thoughts running through my head. This is not right.

Something is wrong here.

“Okay, I admit that the mate bond is powerful... but why me?” I manage to ask Rose. “Why

is James our mate? Why would the Moon Goddess do this? He was supposed to be Stephanie's mate."

"He is ours," Rose says possessively. "He is not Stephanie's. HE IS OURS. Neither you nor I have ever felt right about Stephanie being described as his mate and future luna. This must be why."

I take a moment to let Rose's words sink in. I want to protest more... I want time to process and sort through the craziness that is this

situation... I want to ask how I can be mated to the male that everyone believed belonged to my sister... how I could be mated to the male that has loved and grieved for my sister for the past six years... how I could be mated to the male that has spread rumors about me and caused me to be tortured and shunned...

... but James keeps coming closer to me. And the closer James comes, the more his scent and the mate bond overpowers any sense of logical thought in my brain. He is now just twenty feet away, and I feel like I am in a trance. My heart is racing, pounding out of my chest, and I am feeling a heat in my body that is begging and pleading for his embrace.

I try to remind myself once again that this is wrong, and that this cannot and should not be

happening. However, my brain responds by suddenly sending me memories of James that I had long since forgotten.

For example, when I was 10 years old, I fell off my bike and broke my arm. No one else was around, and I started crying, desperately wanting my daddy. James had been in the middle of training a half mile away, but he somehow heard my cries and came running to help me. He mind-linked my father and then carried me bridal style all the way to the medical clinic so that I could get treated. I remember feeling so safe and protected.

Then there was the time when I was 12 and James was having dinner with my family in the beta suite. My mother had baked a chocolate raspberry cake for dessert, which was my absolute favorite. Unfortunately, I had to finish a project for school, and my parents' rule was that we could not have dessert until all of our schoolwork was done. By the time I finished my project, all of the cake was gone. James must have seen the disappointment on my face, because he immediately offered to share his slice with me... and then let me eat 60% of it.

These were just two of the memories. I know James had always seen me as Stephanie's

annoying little sister, but he still managed to be kind to me until Stephanie died. I had several positive memories as proof.