

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 21

Lily's POV

People with the kind of face and body that Aiden possessed were not supposed to be assholes. This was my first thought after the statement he made.

Despite his exterior beauty, there was an underlying darkness within him that slips out as easily as water through cracks. I hated him. I hated the way he used his good looks and physical presence to intimidate and bully others, making life a living hell for those around him.

Poor Mauve. He had broken her hand for trying to explain to him and I had seen the cruel curve of his lips as he watched her cry in pain. Like he was feeding off of it. Like he relished it.

He had to be the devil himself.

What's worse is that his cruelty didn't mar the beauty of his face. Even when his inner darkness is shining through, it's hard not to be entranced by his outer shell. He had an undeniable handsomeness about him. His spoiled rich boy, yet rugged features, muscular chest and arms, and mess of black hair complemented his piercing grey eyes.

Piercing grey eyes that were glassy with pleasure, obviously getting off on what his girlfriend was doing to him under the table. At least, I assumed she was his girlfriend. She was kneeling at his feet, her head bobbing up and down between his legs.

I scrunched up my face in disdain.

How could he even do that in front of so many people trying to have a decent meal?

I scoffed and his eyes suddenly slashed to mine. Silver clashed against emerald, and I froze.

There was so much hate in those eyes.

I held his gaze, despite feeling restless and uncomfortable, his earlier, degrading words making their way back to me.

“Maybe I can find some use for scum like you.”

What an a****e. All that good looks wasted on such a cruel creature.

Cade was an a****e, I remembered and even though my eyes welled with tears at Aiden’s referral to me as scum, I remained seated at the table instead of running away like he wanted me to.

I won’t give him the benefit of seeing me defeated.

We engaged in the stare off for the longest time even though I was sure it was just moments and when he saw that I was not going to flee, he rolled his eyes and finally looked away from me, and I heaved a sigh of relief, shifting in my sit and turning my attention to the girl beside me.

I had picked this seat for a reason. It was beside the girl that Ren had been talking with, the one with white hair that I suspected was his sister.

She was speaking to the person sitting beside her and when she finally turned to face me, her face suddenly went cool and her mouth pressed in a straight line as she stared at me, her teal colored eyes cold, beautiful and stern.

She was very pretty in that elegant, regal and ethereal way that Ren was.

Her long white hair was braided over her left shoulder and there were flower barrettes in her hair. She had snow white skin, peach pink lips and her nails were short and painted bright pink..

She looked like royalty and I was even more convinced that my thought about her being related to Ren was right. She had tweaked her uniform a bit so that her blouse, vest and coat were cropped, exposing a sliver of clear white skin around her slender waist and while that may be defying school protocol, she was a royal and she could do whatever the hell she wanted. She had beads and butterfly pins in her hair and chunky charm bracelets decorated her wrists.

I wanted to know what she sounded like and if she was kind like Ren was. I opened my mouth to greet her but her next words stopped me right in my tracks.

“You shouldn’t be here.” She said coldly and the excitement that I had to meet her suddenly died.

Of course she was a bully. Everyone on this table and none had stood up to Aiden except Ren so why was I expecting that she was going to be nice and sweet like she looked.

I pursed my lips and was about to turn around and stand up when she covered her hand with mine.

I looked at her, surprised.

“Okay, that came out wrong.” She huffed. “Hi, my name is Rhea and this is my best friend, Chelsea.” She gestured towards the girl sitting beside her and when the two of them smiled at me, I was surprised because I was not expecting the genuine warmth that I radiated from them.

“Nice to meet you, Lily,” Chelsea chirped, popping her black bubblegum and I waved shyly.

She looked intimidating in a dark way.

She had hair that was as dark as mine, with blue dye streaks that were the same shade as her deep blue eyes. Her style of dressing was definitely gothic. I saw it in her makeup; kohl lined eyes, black lipstick, and the way she dressed up her uniform.

There was a glittering choker around her neck, her vest and coat were black instead of the usual blue, the school badge resting on her breast pocket. She wore fish net socks and paired her uniform with big black boots. She had multiple piercings on her ear and a septum ring on her nose.

They were polar opposites to each other. While Rhea rocked the boho princess look, Chelsea slayed the goth girl look.

“We got off on the wrong foot.” Rhea continued and when I raised my eyebrows in confusion, she went on. “When I said that you should not be here, I didn’t mean it with ill intent. I was trying to look out for you because all is not as it seems.”

“Just get to the part where you tell her that Mauve is a b***h, Ri.” Chelsea said and Rhea laughed and shook her head, her smile very identical to Ren’s.

“Pardon me asking, are you and Ren...”

“Siblings? Yeah, what gave it away? Our hair or the fact that we look almost the same save our eyes?” She answered with a grin and I remembered how Ren had talked about his sister and how playful she was and he was right.

I liked her instantly.

“Both, I guess.” I said and she chuckled.

“Fair enough. So what my best friend, Chels is trying to say is that Mauve did not invite you over to this table with good intentions, Lily. “

That made me raise my eyebrows in confusion. Mauve had been nothing but sweet to me, even though I kind of wondered why and had chucked it up to her being naturally kind.

“What do you mean?”

“Think about it. Everyone knows that you got off on the wrong foot with Aiden. Ren could have invited you over here for lunch if he wanted, but he knows that you probably shouldn’t be in Aiden’s radar. Mauve knew what she was doing when she brought you here.”

Something cold and hard settled in the pit of my stomach. I didn’t want to believe it. I mean, things could have ended a lot worse but it still didn’t stop the fact that she knew Aiden hated me and still, she brought me right into his den.

Maybe Mauve is not as nice as I think she is. Maybe there’s a reason I feel uneasy about her.

But... but she’s dating someone like Ren and he seemed to be a good judge of character. And Aiden seems to despise her as much as he despises me. I felt a stupid sort of camaraderie with anyone Aiden didn’t like.

“Mauve feels threatened by you” Chelsea answered “She is very possessive of Ren but besides Aiden and the other royals, she has never had to worry about him making new friends because he never does.”

Oh. That still didn’t mean that Mauve was being mean right? She had practically stopped others from bullying me.

“And then suddenly, you come along and Ren is very friendly with you, something he has never done before. He has even mentioned you to me and trust me, Ren never talks about anyone in that manner.” Rhea said and my face turned red in a blush.

“And if there is one thing that Mauve hates...” Chelsea continued.

“It’s competition.” The two of them chorused and I let that information sink in.

“It’s competition.” The two of them chorused and I let that information sink in.

It felt almost impossible to believe that someone like Mauve would see someone like me as competition even though the girls looked like they were telling the truth. Ren would never leave someone like her for me, would he?

After what happened with Cade, I sure as hell was certain that he would not and I didn’t like the sinking feeling that I felt at that.

“But Mauve doesn’t have any reason to feel threatened by me. I’m a wolfless omega and it’s obvious that Ren has nothing but affection for Mauve.” I answered and the two of them looked at each other before they laughed.

“Oh, sweet Lily, the only reason Mauve prances around claiming to be queen of this f*****g place is because she’s mated to Rhea’s brother.”

Rhea nodded and turned to look at me.

“She’s also a wolfless omega, Lily and trust me when I say this, Ren has no affection of her. He’s just too kind and selfless to ever treat a woman badly and that of course extends to Mauve unfortunately. He doesn’t look at her the way I’ve seen him look at you. And that says a lot because Ren usually never cares about anything. Hell, he is the kind of person that will lie down and die if he thinks fighting for his life is going to be a drag.”

I didn’t like the way butterflies fluttered in my belly and I had to remind myself that Cade had hurt me despite being the nicest guy I knew. Maybe Ren would not, but hope was a dangerous thing.

“She’s right. If he was my type, I would have tried to steal him a long time ago.” Chelsea added and when Rhea rolled her eyes, she laughed.

I liked their friendship dynamic. It reminded me so much of what I had with Bia.

“Look, all I’m saying is that my brother is friends with Aiden, I know, poor choice of friends,” she cringed. “But that’s not the point. He never meddles in what Aiden does but I saw him stand up to Aiden for you. And that is a very big deal.”

Nodding shyly because I was not sure of what to say, I brought out my homemade lunch from my bag and was about to ask Rhea and Chelsea if they would like some cookies when someone snickered.

“Oh, look, she can’t even afford cafeteria food. A pity that the scholarship only covers tuition. Can’t leech your way out of this now, can you?”

I gasped and looked up to see that it was the girl that had been blowing Aiden under the table. She was now sitting on his lap and looking directly at me with a wicked sneer on her face, enjoying my embarrassment as her group of friends cackled at my expense.

I slipped and my eyes fell on Aiden. He was already glaring at me, his gaze cold and hard as ice. There was no amusement on his face, even as the girl leaned into his chest and he dragged a lazy hand down her silky blonde hair.

I swallowed and was about to hide my face in embarrassment when Rhea stretched out a hand to me.

“Shut up, Paige.” She hissed, before turning to me. “Ren told me how delicious your cookies are. I want one.”

Chelsea on the other hand stretched across the table and emptied Paige’s food on her clothes, causing her to stand up and shriek in shock.

“What the hell, you b-“

“Finish that statement and I’ll punch you so hard, you’ll be shitting your own teeth for days.” Chelsea said in a tone that made it clear that she meant every word.

She glared at her and then looked at Aiden, probably expecting him to defend her but he was already talking to a different girl, easily finding another toy to play with the moment he got sick of the current one.

Paige turned red in embarrassment and stormed out of the cafeteria.

Rhea high-fived Chelsea and when the two friends looked at me and smiled, I realized that I was already smiling too.

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 22

Lily's POV

I used to think that forty five minute recess was a really long waste of time but sitting at this table with Rhea and Chelsea made me want to hang out with them forever and ever.

It turned out that we had so many things in common, from songs that we liked, to artists and the movies that we enjoyed and a lot of other stuff.

Chelsea was thinking of throwing a party to kick off the school year and said that she would invite me whenever she decided to have one and suddenly, I truly felt like I was not an outsider anymore.

Bia would be so proud of me for making actual friends, besides Ren that is. I didn't know what to call what Ren and I had. It was nothing but Rhea had said all of those things and I was sure that it was what was playing with my head.

They found out that I used to go to school at Gold Crest and Chelsea started talking about one of her exes who attended Gold crest. I remembered him, because he used to be one of Cade's friends and she was still delving deep into the story of how the "a*****e" broke her heart when Ren and Mauve came back to the table.

I felt a sudden rush of excitement and sat up straighter when Ren sat beside me, his pant clad thigh accidentally brushing against mine. I fought the urge to hide my face under the table because I knew without a doubt that I was blushing.

"Hey," He leaned in close to whisper after exchanging greetings with his sister and other people on the table and when I looked at him, his smile was bright and genuine, nothing like the smile that I had gotten from Aiden when I saw him whispering with Paige. "I got you something," he said, sliding over a box of chocolate my way.

Stars immediately exploded into existence right before my eyes.

“Château? I love Château!” I gasped as I hugged the box to myself, trying really hard not to salivate all over the place. I haven’t had these since my dad died.

My heart suddenly dropped but before I could go down that rabbit hole of feeling sorry for myself, Ren nudged me with his shoulders. “Hey, none of that. Focus on the present, okay?”

I blinked, suspicion setting in again as I wondered if he could really read my mind. We hadn’t really talked about the extent of his powers and I didn’t want to invade his privacy because he didn’t look like he was comfortable talking about it.

I noticed how the others at the table seemed to ease up and nod kindly at Ren who returned their greetings. His laid back and graceful aura seemed to seep through the table and calm everyone’s nerves.

If there was one thing that I truly liked about Ren, it was how he seemed to make the entire environment feel more pleasant with his presence. Perhaps it was because of the abilities that he possessed or maybe it was just me that was projecting the way my body reacted around him.

Either ways, I was very happy that he had chosen to sit beside me.

Bia would not let me hear the end of it if she found out my actual thoughts about Ren and that she was probably right that I liked him more than I was letting on.

“Here,” I offered, splitting my lunch with him.

It was homemade chicken wrap that I wouldn’t share under normal circumstances, but hey! He got me chocolate.

“That is definitely not cafeteria food, is it?” He asked, taking the wrap in his hands and looking at it curiously. “Looks too rich and actually filling than what we are served here. What’s this?” He asked.

“It’s a chicken wrap. Actually, a meat wrap because there’s beef, bacon and sausage. But there’s mostly chicken.” He was silent and I suddenly realized something, letting out a gasp. “You’re not vegan are you?”

He laughed and shook his head and before I could get another word out, he took a large chump and chewed slowly.

I saw when the flavours hit the spot because he turned and looked at me with wide eyes, nodding in appreciation.

“This,” he gasped, “you made it yourself?”

“Well, yeah.” I answered, suddenly very shy. “The beautiful thing about being able to cook is that you can decide to add anything to your meal. It’s your food, your rules.”

“Well, damn. I might need you to cook for me from now on. How do I move on from this?” He answered with a boyish grin that made my heart stutter and I found myself shifting my plate towards him.

“Would you like some more? I have pasta and homemade-“

“I’m sure he would love to try it some other time, Lily.” Mauve suddenly interrupted me.

She moved from the chair to sit on his lap, giving me a smile that I now realized was very fake. “But thank you for the offer. And he’s probably too nice to tell you but he only eats food cooked by his chef because of his health cond-“

“Be quiet,” he silenced her, a stern look in his eyes. He looked at me and nodded towards the box of cookies that was in front of Rhea.

“If that happens to be your cookies, then I’d like to have one.” He said so politely, it was almost swoon worthy and I saw the way Mauve’s face changed when Rhea passed him the box of cookies. It was only for a split second but I had seen the way she glared at me.

Her smile returned in full force almost immediately and she wrapped her arms around Ren’s neck as she looked at me again.

“Lily, would you mind getting food and snacks for me and my friends?”

“I-“

“If it’s about the money, just tell them who it’s for and they’ll give it to you.”

Her tone was commanding and even if it wasn't, I was not sure that I wanted to do something like that. I opened my mouth to refuse when Ren beat me to it.

"You don't have to do it." He said, giving Mauve a warning glare and she raised her brows at him before looking back at me.

"It's actually a rite of passage thing, Lily. It's a one time thing. And it's something you have to do if you want to remain at this table with us."

"That's bullshit." Rhea growled ferociously. For all that cuteness her face portrayed, I had forgotten that inside her resided a ferocious wolf of the highest pedigree.

Mauve flinched and didn't reply but this time it was Aiden that spoke.

"Mauve is right. If you want to continue to eat with us as friends" He emphasized the words friends, his lips tilted up in a smirk. "Then you have to do what she asked."

"You don't have to do shit." Chelsea said under her breath and Aiden raised one dark eyebrow at her.

Tensions rose again as everybody stared at us. It felt like they were sitting at the edge of their seats and holding their breaths.

When I looked at Ren, he shook his head and I knew that he was telling me that I didn't have to do anything that I didn't want to, but it looked like Aiden was looking for another reason to kick me out of the table.

It was as simple as just helping them get food, right?

"You really don't have to, Lily." Rhea assured me and I nodded, rising to my feet.

"Sit back down," Ren suddenly ordered in a chilling voice that raised the hair on the back of my neck. The omega in me wanted to heel at the very commanding voice of an alpha.

He wasn't even looking at me, he was glaring at Aiden who smirked back at him. The dark prince was relaxed in his seat, affecting nonchalance but I could see that the muscles of his shoulders were tense, waiting for a fight.

The aura radiating off of Ren was violent. I have never felt anything like it before.

Even Mauve had slipped off his lap, inching away from him, cold fear in her eyes and while I've never seen Ren lose control before, I doubted it was something I'd like to see.

"Hey, I want to. It's fine." I answered gently, clasping my hand over his.

It was something I have never done before, voluntarily touching him, but it felt so right.

Ren stilled and slowly looked at my hand placed over his. I knew when the tension left his body because he turned his hand over, our fingers clasping together.

My... My heart.

Butterflies burst to life in my stomach, fluttering their restless wings around.

It's a miracle how I haven't turned to a cloud yet and floated away because my cheeks felt so hot, it felt like I was evaporating.

"I'll go with you," he said, moving to stand up but I squeezed his hand and firmly shook my head. "It's just a trip downstairs and back up. I'll be fine."

He sighed and relaxed back into his seat and I respected him for letting me have my way.

Mauve was still glaring at us, not even trying to hide her disdain anymore and when I cleared my throat at her, prompting her to get on with it, she grinned, giving me her order.

The others at the table excluding Rhea, Chelsea and Ren gave me their orders as well and I noted that Aiden's order was probably the most complicated but I rolled it off my shoulders. He was not going to have the last laugh.

Heading to the counter, I kept reciting everything that had been ordered, making sure to not forget a thing because the last thing I wanted was for them to have a reason to separate me from my new friends and when I reached the counter, I was so surprised by how expensive the meals and snacks were.

It was a strong reminder that Shadow cove academy was actually for the rich and well to do families and I stuck out like a sore thumb here.

After waiting on the line for a while, it was finally my turn and by the time I was done ordering, the pile was so high that as I walked, it was difficult to see what was in front of me.

I was already halfway to my destination when I bumped into someone and almost fell but thankfully the person grabbed me, saving me and the snacks from falling to the ground.

“Are you alright?” The male voice asked and I could not help myself, I looked around the stack of snacks to see who the voice belonged to.

And stopped. Stunned for a moment.

Dark and sinful were the right words to describe him.

His gorgeous face looked like it had been sculpted from cold marble, framed with stylishly messy hair as dark as ink. He was tall with lean muscles and a defined chest and defying the school’s dress code with his tie unknotted around his neck, his vest missing and some of his buttons undone to expose his chest. His jacket hung limply from his arm and there were tattoos peeking out of the sleeves of his shirt.

He had a scar on his eyebrow, the only thing marring his beautiful face and multiple rings decorated his fingers.

His hands that held on to me were freezing cold, practically burning into my jacket and I wondered how it was possible to feel like I was touched by ice.

What held my attention the most, however, were his dark eyes, because those eyes were staring at me like they had just seen a ghost even though I was sure I have never met him before in my life.

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 23

Zac’s POV

I remembered the feeling I had gotten when I came down from the private jet, bodyguards marching down with me but also walking as far away from me as

possible so that they don't trigger my annoyance at having to be followed everywhere like a f*****g invalid.

I could see my mother waving at me from where she was standing, also heavily body guarded.

In her little black dress, stiletto and makeup, her smile so sweet and innocent, she fitted right in with the humans. You would not believe that she was a dangerous mafia heiress, capable of using all the types of guns and weapons that have been created by the humans. Or that she could turn into a gigantic wolf and chomp all of us whole but, I'm probably digressing from the point that I was trying to make.

I was back home in Shadow Cove even though every time I left, I never wanted to return. And behind my mother's smile, I could see the fear in her eyes as she welcomed me home because she knew too that one day, I might leave and never return. She had first hand experience with that kind of pain already.

Maria Talaverra cared about few things that weren't money and power. One of them was her only child. Her family, actually, but her husband could take care of himself.

When you're as deep into the underground crime world as my parents were, you attract a lot of enemies who come after what you treasure the most. For my parents, that was me.

Everyone but me was happy that I was back home and of course as I climbed on my bike as soon as I got home, I was met with the disapproving glare on mother's face.

"It's already noon, mijo and you've only just returned. Stay home today. School can wait till tomorrow."

"Encouraging truancy is a bad look on you, mum."

Her face pinched into a scowl.

I rolled my shoulders and shook out my hair before putting on my helmet.

"Why don't you take the car?" She tried again, conceding defeat.

I started the engine and tossed her a lazy grin, blowing her a kiss in answer like I always did to calm her down.

I was out of the estate in seconds.

The exhilaration I was hoping to chase by riding the bike at top speed today seemed to be lost, buried under a heap of anxiety and frustration that had been festering since I boarded the plane from Italy back here.

I was sure that it had something to do with being back in this place. It may be home to most. Shadow Cove was probably the safest place on earth for creatures like me. But to me, it was a prison, fortified with walls and defenses to keep you in.

I loved traveling and even though I knew that my parents had bodyguards follow me always, no matter where I was going to, even to the ends of the earth if they could, the one thing that I always enjoyed whenever I was out of this city, this f*****g place was freedom.

I was free to meet people who could care less about who I was; a son to one of the royal families in Shadow cove and not just any royal family, the Talaverras, one of the most feared mafia families in the west with their nose in every type of pie.

I was free to try new foods, f**k whomever I wanted, whenever I pleased and most important of all, chasing after my next high in extreme sports, drugs and alcohol, trying all I could to forget about the war that my defected wolf, Azrael raged daily in my head.

Coming back to Shadow cove stripped me of the one thing I desired the most in the world; freedom. And no matter what my parents said and how much I was loved, feared and respected by others because I was a Talaverra, this community, this city was nothing but a gilded cage. A beautiful one, but still a prison nonetheless.

As I took a sharp left on my bike, I could see a large jeep following me from a safe distance and a part of me wanted to try to outrun them, wanted to give them a run for their money, but what was the point?

I knew what would happen if I so much as abandoned my bodyguards. My mother would probably have a cardiac arrest if she didn't hear from them

about my whereabouts every minute of the day and as much as I hated being followed, I could not blame my parents.

They had nearly lost me once to their enemies... Flashbacks of how I had been betrayed, taken and lost my humanity hit me all at once. Blood red lips. Fanged smiles. Wicked green eyes. Venom in her veins.

I increased the speed of my bike, trying to outrace the memory. Trying to shake off the demons. I sighed and shook my head when I arrived at a traffic light. Nothing good was ever going to come from allowing the darkness to suck me in.

The only bright side to being back here was seeing my friends again. I was a s**t texter but they had been strangely quiet for the past few weeks and it made me worried that something was happening. Perhaps there was something going on at the school that was taking their time.

My parents usually kept me out of the loop of things that happen in Shadow Cove, probably because I have no interest in hearing them. So if I ever needed to catch up on the latest news in town, my best friends were the ones that filled me in on all the tea.

It was already time for lunch and I parked in front of the cafeteria, I removed my helmet and waited for my bodyguards to park right beside me. But as the one in the passenger's seat moved to come out, I raised a hand and shook my head, bringing out the charming smile that was my weapon.

"You don't need to come down, Savio." I said, walking over to him and resting against his car door.

He frowned at me, a vein ticking in his head.

"Your mother will not be pleased, Zac. We will not bother you. Ten feet away like always." It was Lucas who was behind the wheel that answered. He had always been the stricter of the two of them and perhaps I was barking down the wrong tree by trying to speak to Savio first instead of him so I smirked and walked over to the driver's side of the car.

"I'm not saying that you should leave, Lu." I said gently, mockingly, like I was speaking to a slow old man. "I'm just saying that you should wait here for me. The students are going to be uncomfortable seeing your big asses following

me around inside and I'm not going to be leaving here without my bike so you can stay parked right beside it."

Dipping my hands into my pocket, I brought out a wad of cash and dropped it on the dashboard of the car before patting his shoulder gently.

Savio was already smiling and I winked at him.

"Do not leave the school without us, do you understand me, Zac?" Lucas said, grudgingly.

"Clear as crystal." I answered and bowed dramatically before walking into the cafeteria to see that it was a chaotic mess like it always was.

Well, home sweet home, right?

"Hungry." Azrael suddenly growled into my head.

"You just ate." I reminded him of the doe eyed, strawberry blonde haired air hostess we fed on just a few hours ago. She was sweet and eager. It wasn't hard finding willing walking blood bags when you had looks and pockets like mine.

"Not enough. More."

"Not now, Az."

I tuned him off as I headed to the cafeteria lounge, the part of the cafeteria that had been made separate for my friends.

I was almost at the table when a prickling sense of awareness, like an itch behind my ear, Azrael's way of telling me to watch my back, made me turn around and just in time too because a girl holding a tower of snacks walked right into me.

I grabbed her shoulders immediately, stopping her from falling and her scent, sweet and flowery, hit me before I could even see her face.

"Hungry!" Azrael growled again, louder this time and I wrestled with him for control before I lose it in front of a crowd of witnesses.

Turning on the charm, I spoke first.

“Are you alright?” I asked, glad that I could always choose to be this Zac whenever I wanted, hiding the real Zac away behind a mask of charm, rizz and jokes.

She struggled to keep the snacks up, moving to the side to peer up at me and the smirk fell from my face, my entire body going still when I saw her face.

No.

It couldn't be.

What the f**k was going on here? This isn't possible.

But I blinked and there she was, looking exactly like all of my nightmares in one as memories hit me like a gunshot to the chest.

Blood dripping from wine red lips, wicked green eyes and evil fanged smiles and venom in her veins.

My bones felt like they were corroding all over again. My body felt like it was dipped in acid.

I kept chanting it was impossible, trying to shake myself awake but no matter what I did, the apparition in front of me wouldn't disappear.

There she stood, still staring at me like I was the mad one. Like she hadn't just stepped out of my f*****g nightmares.

And my eyes widened in horror because it meant that she was real and not a ghost. Not a figment of my horrific imagination.

The person that I was staring at right now was wearing the face of the first life that I ever took.

She was wearing Callista's face.

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 24

Lily's pov:

One moment, the boy in front of me had a smile on his face and the next, he looked like he was seeing an apparition.

I watched as the emotions of the gorgeous boy that held my shoulders changed from confusion to disbelief and then to sudden rage, his chasm like eyes darkening with anger as he looked at me and instantly, I knew that something was wrong.

His arms tightened on my shoulders until it was almost crushing my scapula and I winced in pain as he called a name that I had never heard before in my entire life.

“Callista.” He growled, his grip on me, tight. The look in his eyes, wild.

I tried to move away from him but it only ends in one of the milkshakes in my grasp slipping from my hand and spilling all over his shoes.

“You’re hurting me,” I gasped but instead of making him move away, his anger intensified as he sneered at me, his eyes darkening to a point that I was sure his wolf was going to jump out any minute and tear me apart.

“I thought I killed you, Callista. Why won’t you stay dead?” He snapped and my eyes widened in surprise because he called me that name again with so much conviction, I had to look around to see if there was anyone else besides me that he was speaking to.

Was he hallucinating? He probably was because I had never met him before and I did not have the slightest clue what he was going on about, which made me even more scared that this was happening to me.

“I don’t know what you’re talking about!” I cried out, tears streaming down my face as the pain in my shoulders became unbearable. “Please, let me go.”

He looked at me with a mix of confusion and disbelief, and for a moment, I thought he was going to release me. But then his expression hardened again, and he spoke in a voice that was barely a whisper, but laced with venom.

“If you’re not Callista, then who are you?”

“My name is Lily,” I managed to say, my voice shaking. “I don’t know what’s going on. Please, just let me go.”

He stared at me for a long moment, his eyes searching mine as if trying to find the truth.

I could see people already watching us and I wondered how long they were going to keep talking about this one because since I started at Shadow cove academy, it seemed like there was a magnet inside the badge of my uniform that always seemed to attract trouble wherever it was.

“I am not Callista or whoever you think you are seeing. Please let me go. My name is Lily and if you are doing this because I bumped into you then I am very sorry. Please, please release me. I am Lily. I am not Callista.” I said in a rush of pain and desperation as I struggled in his hold and when he released his hold on me, I honestly thought he believed me and was ready to let me go, but as I moved to walk past him, struggling with the burden in my hands, he blocked me and growled again, his face still filled with anger that made me take a step back.

“I don’t care what you claim your name is or who you claim to be masquerading around as now and I’ll leave you be with your pretense. But first you will clean up the mess that you made.” He said, gesturing to his shoes.

Pink slush had splattered on his black vans.

I swallowed.

“It was an accident and if you had let me go, this would not have happened.” I answered as reasonably as I could but it only seemed to annoy him more.

“Let you go?” He said in a dark voice that made me take a step back. He grinned at me, his smile filled with menace.

I took a step back. “I- I don’t know what you want me to do.” I gestured helplessly. “I don’t have a rag or-“

“Lick it off.”

I looked at him, shocked. “What?”

“Did I stutter?”

“I don’t-“

“Use your tongue to clean up your mess.”

I heard whispers around me from those watching but the one thing I heard loud and clear was his name.

“She just had to go and mess with Zac Talaverra after messing with Aiden. Talk about a walking trouble magnet.”

My eyes widened to saucers as it sank in, realizing the gravity of this entire situation.

I was standing in front of the Zac Talaverra, the last lycan prince of Shadow cove. I had heard so much about him but he was so mysterious, even people could not exactly say they knew anything about him besides the fact that his family was the most ruthless in the human world and ours. The Talaverra name was enough to instill fear in even the mightiest of men.

God, I had the shittiest luck. Why could I not run into someone less threatening? First it was Aiden, and then I ran into Ren who was nice to me. Zac seemed to fall in the other category, the Aiden category and I could feel my hands that were still filled with the snacks begin to shake.

“I’m so sorry for the spill. Perhaps there is something that I can do...”

“You can kneel” was his response and he grabbed me and forced me down to my knees in front of everyone who was already more engrossed in the show than their meals.

The snacks I had tried my hardest to bring back in one piece fell and scattered all around us.

He shoved his shoe in my face and my eyes were filled with tears.

“I don’t have all the time in the world, poison, regardless of what it looks like. And you’re wasting it. Trust me, you don’t want to waste my time or you-“

“Get away from her!” That was Rhea’s voice.

My gaze focused on Rhea, Ren and Chelsea, making their way over to us.

“Princess,” Zac said, with a sneer. “Stay out of this.”

Rhea and Chelsea paid him no mind and helped me up to my feet, Rhea collecting the snacks from the floor and giving it to another girl to take it back to the table.

“Zac, that is not who you think it is.” Ren said, standing in front of him as he tried to block Zac’s view of me.

“She looks exactly like Callista.” Zac growled.

“But she is not, okay?” Ren said, a cold edge to his voice. “Drop it.”

“I’ll drop it when she drops dead.” He said in a voice that was so cold and menacing, I shivered.

“Stop being such a dumbass.” Rhea grumbled, rubbing my back gently and I just wanted the ground to open up and swallow me.

“Stay away from me,” he warned, his voice cold and detached. “If I see you anywhere around me, I will kill you myself and this time, I’ll make sure you stay dead. Doppelganger or not.”

Those words... The look in his eyes. He meant it. He meant every word.

And with that, he turned and walked away, leaving me standing there, shaking and terrified, wondering what the hell had just happened.

The embarrassment was too much for one person to bear at this point. When was this going to end?

One of the guys that I knew was in Mauve’s clique walked over to him, shoving his hands in his pockets and giving him an easy grin.

“Welcome back, Bro. And yeah. That girl is Lily Beauregard. I’m sure her surname is familiar, right? That’s because she is the daughter to Edgar Beauregard, the traitor that was executed for his crimes. She is on scholarship here with us and you have to be nice, yeah, I mean she is not well to do like the rest of us, but she has proven herself with bringing us snacks that she wants to belong so we have something special planned for her.” When he finished speaking, he looked at me with a smile that I didn’t understand but didn’t bother to question since he had technically defended me by saying the truth about how I wasn’t some other girl that Zac obviously had a score to settle with.

Zac turned stared at me again, his face twisting into a disgusted sneer. Like he was looking at trash. “Get out of my sight.” He growled. “I’m going to throw

up if I have to look at that ugly face again.” He looked at me like he truly was going to throw up.

His words felt like a slap to the face and was only compounded by Aiden’s laughter as well as the laughter of the people around him as he added

“Seriously,” Aiden guffawed, “She’s the ugliest b***h I’ve ever seen.” He said, cackling hard, the other people sitting around him doing the same thing.

The tears that I had been struggling to hold fell and even though Rhea and Chelsea tried to hold on to me, I shrugged them off, casting one last look at Ren’s sad face.

“Lily,” he reached out to me.

I turned around and fled.

The sound of laughter at my expense as they welcomed Zac back to the table was the last thing I heard as I ran out of the cafeteria, tears staining my cheeks.

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 25

Ren’s POV

I could say that I would die for my best friends, Aiden and Zac without hesitation any time and any day but today was the very first time that I actually felt embarrassed about their behaviour.

Lily had done nothing to them to warrant this kind of behavior and no matter Aiden’s convictions that she needed to pay for her father’s sins because of what happened to his parents, I didn’t believe that anyone innocent had to pay for the crimes of their loved ones.

And now Zac was being cruel to her because she looked like someone that he hated with vitriol.

We were beings that could turn into gigantic wolf creatures and yet, the fact that Lily could be a doppelganger flew right over his head. Callista may be the source of his nightmares but we all knew she was dead. We had all seen her bleed out her miserable life.

Perhaps I shouldn't be so hard on him because I didn't want to invalidate the horrors he may have faced at her hands, especially at such a young age, the irreversible damage she had done to him, but it's starting to look like when it comes to Lily, I'm more biased in my judgement.

I had to make this right. I couldn't just let her go thinking that everyone here completely felt the same way about her.

The part about being ugly was a clear lie, meant to hurt her and Aiden and Zac had succeeded.

I saw the other boys laughing and welcoming Zac back and the back of my neck itched with annoyance and righteous rage.

There was zero remorse. There was zero consequences for their actions. They were being hailed as kings for hurting an innocent girl.

I have never felt so feral in my entire life.

Rage clouded my judgement and I was seeing red as I marched over to him and I wasn't even thinking straight when I grabbed him by the collar and shoved him against the table.

Everyone stood still, frozen fear on their faces but I couldn't hear anything through the blood roaring in my ears.

Aira, who rarely ever stirs from his sleep was eager and ready to take control if I let him, and that would be disastrous for every one of them gathered here.

"You went too far!" I growled.

Zac didn't even look perturbed by my outburst, an excited gleam in his black eyes, probably because his defective wolf was thirsty for blood. "Ask me if I give a flying f**k."

"You will, when I beat the s**t out of you."

"You think you can beat me?" He asked, earning a few nervous snickers. His lips stretched into an even wider grin, so wide that I saw his fangs slid out with the promise of blood shed.

"Show me what you've got, Ghost." He had probably said that dreaded nickname as a jab but it only made me more enraged and my powers blasted

out of me before I could stop myself, knocking him against the brick wall of the lounge and earning terrified shrieks from the others gathered around.

He sat up through the rubble, a bloodthirsty look in his eyes.

I started to stalk towards him when suddenly, ropes of darkness latched around me, halting my movements, threatening to break my bones in half.

I glared at Aiden whose eyes had gone pitch black as he used his powers to restrain me. It only took a second of eye contact to have him collapsing on the ground, fighting for breath and as soon as his concentration slipped, I marched towards Zac again, grabbing his collar and lifting him up.

His irises had turned blood red the way it usually does when he conjures up his own powers and the excruciating pain began deep in my chest until it felt like my skin was trying to peel off my bones.

“Ren! Zac! Stop this!” Rhea suddenly yelled, stepping between the two of us, putting herself in harm’s way. “You’re being unreasonable. You both!” She chided.

I glared at Zac whose irises had turned back to normal. He still had a ruthless smirk on his lips that I wanted to wipe off his face.

I shoved him away, turning around and making my way out of the lounge when Chelsea and Rhea caught up with me.

“What the f**k, Ren?!” Rhea demanded. “After we’ve tried so long to keep your powers a secret, you go and pull that out of your a*s?!”

I stopped and turned to look at her, her livid teal blue eyes, disappointment etched over her features. Rhea never cursed. Never said such crude words.

I looked at Chelsea who was beaming at Rhea proudly. “You,” I pointed at Chelsea, “you’re a bad influence on my sister.” I looked back at Rhea, “And no. I don’t regret it. I’d do it again if I think he deserves it.” The thought was exciting. Exhilarating. I had been prepared to do whatever it takes to make him feel a sliver of the pain Lily was probably feeling right now.

Lily. I should go find her.

I turned around, about to go after her when Chelsea stopped me.

“I’m going with you.” She said, her tone leaving no room for argument and I was about to object because I didn’t know if Lily would appreciate more than one person coming to find her when she raised her eyebrows at me.

“She has had enough royals for one day, Ren, don’t you think so?” Her tone was heavy with disapproval and she looked back at Aiden and Zac who were back to conversing easily amongst themselves like nothing had ever happened, before looking at me as if to prove her point.

Well, she had a very fair point and I was ashamed by their behaviour but I was not going to sit back here and let Lily think that I didn’t care about what happened with her.

Rhea stared at me and she must have seen the strong conviction on my face because she took a step forward and held Chelsea’s hand, causing her to turn around and look at her.

“Just let him go alone, okay?”

“But-“

“Trust me. Besides, saying that my brother is the same as those assholes is very appalling by the way. He’s a literal angel.” Rhea said and I gave her a grateful smile when she glanced at me.

If there was one person in life that I would forever be grateful for, it was Rhea. I had no idea how I would have survived my entire life without a little sister.

Chelsea warned me with her kohl lined eyes and I had to give it to her because it was necessary to have a steel backbone when associating with the royals and elite of this school, something that someone as sweet as Lily did not possess and was already bearing the consequences of.

Nodding at the two of them, I was already at the exit door when someone grabbed my arm and when I turned around, it was Mauve and the fake smile that she had been parading around all day was off. Of course, she only pretended to be a human being when others were around and unfortunately, I didn’t belong in that category.

“And where the hell do you think you are going?”

“Not now, Mauve,” I answered and tried to leave but she screeched and that stopped me.

“Some boyfriend you are. Look at you, running off to chase after some girl, while doing nothing after your best friend almost broke my arm. Your girlfriend’s arm, Ren! Me! I’m your girlfriend! Your mate! You started a fight you couldn’t even finish, running away like the coward you are because running away is what you do best. You’re too much of a coward to face the people that insulted your precious Lily, too much of a coward to face Aiden for assaulting me, too much of a coward to face the fact that you are hiding behind the mask of being a goody goody because you can’t stand up to your friends who are better than you, I must say. I wish I was mated to Aiden, because I mean he has more balls than you will ever have!”

Like sharp knives piercing into every part of my body, her words opened up old wounds that I had thought were long healed, triggering memories that I thought were long buried but I was done right now. Mauve was always going to be like this. Nothing I could say to her would change who she was no matter what. And my priority right now was Lily.

“You will have to find a way back home on your own today, Mauve. I’ll be too busy to drive you back home.”

Her mouth fell open in shock and she screamed but I didn’t wait, leaving the cafeteria and trying to find Lily by scent.

After several minutes, I finally find her in front of the bus pass machine trying to swipe her bus card and secure herself a bus ride home and I was about to rush to her but stopped, watching for a moment as her body shook with tears and the card kept falling from her hands every time she tried to make a swipe.

Her pain was so raw and it hit me like a freight train, pausing my movement because I didn’t have a clue on how to make things right.

This gift was a blessing and at times like this, I wondered if it was a curse to be able to feel just how much hurt my friends had inflicted on her.

Just try, Ren.

I took slow steps forward, but as if she sensed that someone was watching her, she turned around and when she saw that it was me, she started shaking her head immediately.

“No. No. Enough. I’ve had enough of you guys. Please leave me alone.”

“Lily-“

“No, get out of here, Ren. Please. Leave me the f**k alone. I don’t want anything to do with you or anything that pertains to you. Get out.” She screamed and I stopped moving, unsure of what to do.

She had every right to not want me here but I didn’t want to leave her alone either. Confused, I could only watch as she continued to angrily try to swipe the card, hating that I could not turn off the gift that allowed me to feel emotions the way I could turn off mind reading.

Wait. Maybe reading her mind this once would help me know how to help her.

“What are you still doing here?” She whispered, not looking at me but with my mind reading back on, I heard everything that she was not saying.

Please don’t leave me.

I’m so scared. And so tired.

I’m so alone. So f*****g alone. Please stay, Ren.

“I want you to leave me alone, Ren. Please go away.”

Relieved that I knew what she was truly thinking, I didn’t hesitate to grab her and pull her in for a tight hug, crushing her to my chest. She tried to move away but I shook my head and buried my face in her hair, hugging her even closer. Close enough to let her know that I will never leave her.

“I’m not leaving you, Lily. You’re here. You’re safe. I’m not going anywhere.”

She stopped fighting and looking up at me with tear stained cheeks and teary hazel green eyes.

“Ren,” she whispered in a voice that sounded like heartbreak. “I’m so sorry, Ren.” She cried and it broke me that she would be apologizing even when she was the one that was hurt.

“There is nothing to apologize for, Lily. Nothing.” I whispered, wiping her tears with my thumb and hugging her again as she cried.

With her in my arms, everything felt like it was right in the world again. Aira settled back into me, slipping into the recesses of my consciousness, content and sated. My powers stopped their frazzled assault on my senses. She calmed me as much as I calmed her.

I didn't know how long we stood there but I didn't care either. I didn't want to let her go. I was going to be here for her and I knew that it was not going to be a one time thing.

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 26

Lily's POV

I didn't know how long I stayed crying in front of that machine but Ren held me through all of it, from when I was sobbing like a train wreck to when my cries were quieter and by the time I was done, I was more than embarrassed than I had been crying like that.

No, the real embarrassment was the fact that Ren had watched me weep like someone had died and I had used his handkerchief to clean my runny nose. His shirt was probably wet from having to put up with my sobbing against his chest.

"Here," he said with a gentle smile, offering me his hand and I hesitated, looking up at him. His smile widened and my heart did serious backflips. He was so gorgeous, so ethereally beautiful, he couldn't be real. Golden brown eyes, soft pink lips, delicate facial bone structure and soft white hair.

I swallowed and he nodded at me that it was alright.

Wanting the ground to open and swallow me, I took his hand and as we started walking away, I realized that since I started school here, Ren had always seen me at my worst moments and he was right there, trying to make everything seem better. He was always there trying to pick up my broken pieces. Piecing me together in a way nobody ever has.

Cade.

The voice was a harsh reminder that made my blood turn cold. I shook my head, refusing to give it too much thought. Ren wasn't Cade and he wouldn't treat me the way he had.

Right?

I stole a glance at him again, his beauty, almost blinding in the harsh sunlight.

He must really think that I was a total loser right now, I thought and the embarrassment that I felt quadrupled. Standing next to someone that looked perfect like him, I must look a total mess.

“I’m sorry for ruining your lunch.” I said softly. “You didn’t have to come look for me, but you did.”

“And I don’t regret it, Lily.” He squeezed my hand. “Plus, you did not ruin anything. This pretty much just means that you owe me not one, but two lunch dates now and no, I will not be taking no for an answer.”

That made me smile and I nodded

“It’s a fair deal.”

“I saw that you were trying to get a bus to leave school and I know that it’s not much but I can drive you home if you want or to a quiet place. Away from all of this.” He gestured towards the air and my smile widened as I nodded.

“A quiet place,” I agreed, not feeling like going home and moping around all alone. I really want to hang out with him.

He grinned, linking his fingers through mine as he led me towards the car park and I felt my stomach flip, sudden excitement that we were leaving school even if it was in the middle of a school day.

My eyes widened to saucers when we got to where his car was parked. A spotless white Porsche glistening in the sun. He opened the door for me like the perfect gentleman he was and as he helped me fix my seat belt before jogging to the driver’s side of the car to enter, I felt restless.

This car reeked of wealth and the last time I was in anything that was as expensive as this was when I was dating Cade, if you could call what Cade and I had done dating.

I was sure that he didn’t see me as anything but an easy lay, a bet that he needed to cross off his bucket list.

I shivered, a dark feeling washing over me as I thought of all we had, all we shared. I had bared my body and soul to him and it left me with egg on my face.

“Are you alright?” Ren’s voice dragged me out of my pathetic thoughts and when I feigned a smile, he nodded and started the car.

I could not help it but everytime I was with Ren, I wondered if he was like Cade and if this was nothing but part of a bigger ploy to make me loosen my guard. Cade was a royal and he had enough time and energy to deceive me until I was hanging off to his every word like a fool and Aiden and Zac looked like they were more than capable of doing something that was as demented as that.

Was Ren like that?

No, he stood to gain nothing by being nice to me when his friends were the exact opposite and in fact since he met me, he had been nothing but nice, polite and gentle, not even asking for anything in return.

He had even stood up to his friends because of their attitude and Rhea had told me about how he was at odds with Aiden because he had made me a target on the first day of school. I had seen and felt the tension between them in the cafeteria myself and it sounded like something Ren would do.

He was not like Aiden who was in a class of his own especially because he had no problem hurting Mauve, his best friend’s mate.

I gasped when I remembered that Mauve had been hurt too and instead Ren was here with me. She couldn’t have been happy knowing that he was coming to find me instead of staying with her and my embarrassment turned to guilt because before I entered Ren’s life, he did not have any need to be at odds with his friends and now he was not even with his mate but busy trying to make me feel better.

Perhaps Aiden was right. Maybe I was a walking breathing embodiment of bad luck since bad things seemed to happen to me and I wasted no time sucking people around me in too. Maybe I was better off dead.

“You really should stop thinking like that, Lily.” Ren hissed through gritted teeth. “You are not dragging me into anything. I have a mind of my own and

I'm choosing you. I'm choosing this moment right here, right now. I choose you, Lily."

My heart fluttered, racing at his chidding tone but heating up at his words.

"And don't say you're unlucky either. Trust me, meeting you has been one of the most interesting moments of my life and I wouldn't change it for the world."

My eyes widened in surprise and when he glanced at me, he shook his head.

"No, I'm not sifting through your thoughts right now. Usually I can turn off my mind reading but the way you're feeling right now, the thoughts in your head, they're are so strong that I'm having a hard time concentrating on anything else. You're literally throwing them at me."

"Oh." I answered and looked at him curiously. From what I knew about him now, he could heal and he could read minds and feel emotions. What else could he do? Wait, if he could read my thoughts, did that mean he heard everything that I was thinking of since I met him.

"Oh." I answered and looked at him curiously. From what I knew about him now, he could heal and he could read minds and feel emotions. What else could he do? Wait, if he could read my thoughts, did that mean he heard everything that I was thinking of since I met him.

How embarrassing!

"I like to turn off my powers so don't worry about what I might have heard. I can assure you that most of our conversations have been authentic." He said with a soft laugh and I was about to ask just how he had heard what I was thinking about then when he continued

"Usually, I can pick and choose what thoughts I want to hear but I've realized that some people think more loudly and feel more strongly than others and all these things affect how easy and strongly I can pick up on these things. I can keep my powers on a tight leash but I struggle when the emotions or thoughts of the other person are too loud or too strong."

Nodding in understanding, I turned to really look at him, even more intrigued by the abilities he had.

"And your healing? How do you navigate that?"

“I think it has to do with my fae ancestry. Usually, werewolves from the silver moon pack heal faster than others and are good with herbs and medicine, but I’m the first of my kind that I know of who can transfer my healing powers to someone else and I can freely use my abilities because everyone is just going to tie it to my fae ancestry. I prefer to keep my other powers hidden though and try to avoid using them if I can, until I understand why I even have them.”

Listening with rapt attention, I couldn’t help but marvel at how gifted one person could be.

“I wish I had powers too.”

He shrugged “Having powers is cool, I guess. There’s the good parts. The soul seeing and mind reading... but then there’s the dark side that I don’t like to talk about.”

“Like what?” I asked and he hesitated before he answered.

His hands tightened on the steering wheel for a moment. “If I want, I can control a person’s sensory and motor control, stop hearts from beating, stop lungs from functioning, obstruct pain pathways and trap a person in a state of eternal oblivion by knocking out their senses. As long as it’s part of the brain functions, I can manipulate it.”

And then his face turned grim as he added. “I... I almost killed someone before, an innocent. She had a family. Kids. It was a mistake that I don’t want to repeat with someone else.”

He looked like thinking about it caused him pain and I fought the urge to reach for his hand. He had a girlfriend. I needed to get real.

I chose to ask another question.

“Are you the only one with abilities that you know about?”

He looked at me and shrugged and even though I knew it meant that he was avoiding the question, I decided to let it go.

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 27

Lily’s POV

We sat in the car for the rest of the ride in comfortable silence as I pondered on everything he had told me about his abilities and how it had made me feel even closer to him now that I knew all these things about him.

It made me feel almost special. Almost.

I had to remember that Ren had a mate that was waiting for him when we got back from this escape world that I had asked him to create for me.

I needed to not be carried away by how sweet and kind and transparent he was and get my priorities straight that he was just being a kind person. But why did it feel like there was more sometimes? Or was it just me that was wishfully thinking of all of that?

“We’re here.” Ren said, his voice as gentle as always, pulling me out of my thoughts and for a second, I panicked, wondering if he had heard what I thought about just now but when I looked at him, he was gesturing towards something in front of us.

“What?” I asked and turned in the direction of his gaze to see that he had parked in front of a quaint diner.

“I was thinking that you might want to eat something. Don’t worry the place is usually very quiet by this time. Not that I skip school a lot, please don’t say that to anyone or I’ll deny it.” He answered and I laughed, my thoughts all but forgotten.

“Don’t get down.” He said and before I could ask why, he had gotten down from the car and closed the door, only for him to jog around to the other side and open the door for me.

“That’s why you asked me to remain in the car?” I asked in shock and when he nodded with an innocent grin, I could not help the butterflies in my belly. Getting down from the car, I felt my heart jump when he took my hand and led me into the diner that was as adorable inside as it was outside, leading me towards a booth at the extreme end beside the window, which had a great view by the way and helping me sit comfortably before he sat across from me, never letting go of my hand.

“My sister and I have been coming here since we were kids.” He said with a smile and I nodded.

I didn't know why but I could not help but feel intense glee that he had not let my hand go, not even when the waitress came, who was blushing incessantly when she realized who he was as he ordered the burgers and fries for us.

I fought the urge to blush when he had asked what milkshake I would like before proceeding to tell the waitress, hand still wrapped around mine on the table.

The food came in about ten minutes and even though I knew that he had to let my hand go to eat, my hand suddenly felt cold from the loss and as we ate, I realized that our eyes met more than once, meaning that he was staring at me just as much as I was staring at him.

Just as we were about to finish eating, an elderly woman, looking to be in her sixties or seventies walked towards our table, a big smile on her face and Ren rose to his feet, towering over her as he pulled her in for a hug.

"My boy. Happy to see you, sweet child." she said when he released her and sat down.

"Olga, it's a pleasure to see you." He answered with a smile before turning to look at me.

"Lily, this is Olga, she's the owner of this beautiful place"

"Oh, you flatter me too much. It's nice to meet you Lily." She said with a chuckle, taking my hand and shaking her head when I tried to stand.

"Hello, Olga. It's so nice to meet you." I said and she grinned, nodding her head as she assessed me with her eyes.

Turning to Ren, she raised her eyebrows.

"Is this your new girlfriend? Finally! I knew you could do better than that lousy girl, Mauve, thank the goddess. She is way prettier and more decent than that girl. You know I never liked her."

My eyes were wide and face red as she took my hands and continued.

"This boy here is the literal sweetest. He will take good care of you, don't worry."

And then she called the waitress over and gestured to me.

“Get her another milkshake. Let’s make her even happier and healthier, why don’t we? Do you want anything, son?” She asked Ren who was also as stupefied as I was but he smiled and shook her head and she sent the girl off, still holding my hand.

Reaching out to pat my cheeks fondly, she finally released me and turned to face Ren.

” What about the boys, Rennie boy?”

I almost snickered at her nickname for him until she mentioned those dreaded names.

“Aiden and Zac? Are they doing okay?”

The smile on Ren’s face disappeared but it was back in an instant and he nodded.

I could not help it and even when Olga finally left and the waitress brought the milkshake, I could not get over how his smile had disappeared when she had asked about his friends.

I could not help it and even when Olga finally left and the waitress brought the milkshake, I could not get over how his smile had disappeared when she had asked about his friends.

Why were they such horrible people? Didn’t they know that it was hurting their friend? Even if they didn’t care about me, what about Ren?

“Again, I’m sorry about Zac and Aiden.” Ren whispered, thinking my change in mood was because of them but I shook my head.

“You’re so good and nice. I just can’t imagine why you’re friends with them. They’re not good people, Ren.”

He shrugged and relaxed back into the seat.

“They’re not always horrible, Lily.” He answered and I would have argued but his tone was not defensive. He sounded almost certain.

“Why do you say that?” I asked.

“I can see people, Lily. Remember how I saw all of you in those colors? I can see my friends too and even though they are acting like this, I know there is good in them, even though they don’t seem to believe it themselves.”

Our hands brushed on the table and I froze, the sparks sizzling between us.

If he felt it, he didn’t show any emotion and when he continued, I realized it was because he was still trying to answer my question.

“When I was little, I was terribly sick, something unheard of in wolves and imagine a werewolf being sick? My illness was attributed to a rumour that I was cursed. I was weak. Terribly, Lily. The healers had already said I wouldn’t make it past my tenth birthday.

“And you know how bullies are attracted to those that they see as weak, don’t you? Zac and Aiden saved me. I know that my personality contradicts the fact that I’m best friends with the biggest bullies in school but trust me, they didn’t start out like that. I know them in a way that no one else will and they know me in ways I don’t even know myself. They will always have my loyalty.” He finished and I couldn’t help it, I reached out first to take his hand.

Being bullied was one of the most awful feelings in the world and it surprised me because I had always thought that the princes would have led a very different life. I always thought they’d have it easy. I was wrong.

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 28

Lily’s POV

For the first time since Cade, I was brave enough to admit to myself that I enjoyed the company of a boy truly and was not so on guard that I was worried about running every five minutes.

After Ren shared that part of himself with me, a part that he knew I could understand, it was easy for us to move to easier topics and Olga was all too happy to keep feeding us until we left because now she had sent over pancakes, ice cream and a small dish of fruits.

At one point, I had been skeptical about the bill and when I said it, Ren raised his eyebrows at me and shook his head.

“You can treat me another time. I brought you here, so next time, when it’s your turn, you can cover the bill.” He had answered and I loved how he did not just dismiss my worry and throw the fact that he was richer than me by a lot and would never worry about petty things like money for the rest of his life.

Ren told me about his childhood and even though I realized that he did not speak so much about his parents, he spoke a lot about his sister Rhea. Separated by only a few months, many would actually think that they were twins at first sight and that was how close they were.

It was easy for me to tell him about myself too and even though I refrained from straying anywhere too close to my father, I told him about my mother, about most of my childhood and when I told him about how I was homeschooled for a period of time before coming to Shadow Cove, he raised his eyebrows at me, his arms folded in a way that made me eye his biceps covertly.

My hands were hidden under the table and I had to hold them together to stop myself from wanting to reach for his hand.

He was Mauve’s boyfriend. Not mine. I needed to really remember that.

“Homeschooled? Why what happened?” He asked and I shrugged, already feeling the memories of my time at Gold crest begin to creep up on me.

No, I didn’t want to tell him about such a horrible point in my life and have him pity me again. He was already privy to the train wreck that I was. He didn’t need to know that I was also deceived, used and discarded like an object crossed off a bucket list.

“I was hurt badly and home schooling was better for a time. My mother was averse to me stopping homeschooling though when I told her that I wanted to apply to Shadow cove.”

My mother was furious and didn’t speak to me for the entire day and even now, she watched and asked about the school with eagle eyes. I couldn’t let her know that I was being bullied or she was going to force me to leave.

Seeing that I didn’t want to talk about why I was homeschooled, he nodded and asked another question.

“Then why did you insist on coming to Shadow cove?” His tone was silent but I could see it in his eyes, the question about why I endured all of the horrors and still showed up everyday when I could be homeschooled and be free of the bullies.

“You already know this but the name Beauregard around here is not really treated with kindness. I don’t want to remain in Shadow Cove all my life because it’s clear that I’m not wanted here and there is also the fact that I believe that a whole world is just waiting outside of this community for me to explore. I want a ticket into an Ivy league and in the future, into a well paying job and the academy is the fastest and most legit way to get started. More than anything, I want to succeed and since Shadow cove is the answer, I’m not about to chicken out because of people that do not like me.”

That was why no matter how I went back home, whenever it was time for school, even if I had to drag my a*s to the academy, I made sure that I was in the school because my future was counting on it. I had bet my entire life on this one chance and I was not going to allow anyone take that away from me.

“I think that’s admirable. Very much so. It makes me feel like I should be thinking better and working harder. I can study with you if you want, anything you need to make sure that you’re a step closer to achieving your goal.” He said solemnly and if it was any other person, I might have been skeptical but I believed him.

I proceeded to tell him about Bia, Theo and the flower shop and as we both laughed over our different childhood experiences, I felt a sense of calm and peace with him that I didn’t think I had ever felt in my life. It was like I had known him my entire life.

We moved smoothly to the topic of song preferences and when I eagerly brought out my phone and started untangling my wired earphones, my eyes nearly fell from my sockets as he brought out his.

Of course, it was the latest model of phone in the market and had sleek airpods that were in the same color.

I swallowed nervously as he came to sit beside me, his scent of bergamot and cardamom washing over me, and when he looked at my phone and took one of the wired earphones, placing it in his ear, he grinned at me.

“Why am I not surprised that you’re using a relic like the classic babe you are? Besides the last time I think I’ve seen anyone using wired headphones was in a commercial on television. You’re prettier than the model they used by the way.” He said and I grinned, puffing up my chest with pride.

“I bought it with the savings that I earned from working really hard. And of course I’m prettier than the model, there’s a reason my middle name is Aphrodite, you know? Put some respect on my name.” I said.

“That’s your middle name?” He asked and I nodded. “Wow. I can see it. You must be blessed by the goddess herself,” he said, his face serious before he broke out in a wide smile that made me weak at the knees.

We bantered about our favourite bands and popstars and it was clear that we had very drastic differences in taste because while I preferred mainstream pop artists and alternative r&b artists like Lana del ray, the Weeknd and Chase Atlantic, Ren preferred dreamy Indie pop and intimate folk music artists like Conan Gray, Taylor Swift and Angus and Julia Stone.

It didn’t stop us from swapping songs and promising to give each other’s faves an honest listen and review whenever we were done listening.

I left the diner feeling like a heavy weight had been lifted off my chest.

It felt like it had been a day ago that Ren had found me crying my eyes out trying to swipe my bus card and as we entered the car and I told him to take him to my bus stop since I insisted on that instead of driving me home—I was not sure I was ready to show him my home just yet— we exchanged numbers.

“Today was good right?” He asked, an intensity in his eyes like he was trying to hang on to every word I was going to say. Like he was going to tear it open and pick it apart to find the truth in it.

I had a sneaking suspicion that if he got the feeling that the day was less than good for me, he was going to go out of his way to make it even better. In that moment, he looked like he could give me the moon if I asked for it.

I smiled and nodded, “yes, Ren. Today was wonderful, thanks to you.” I whispered, without any doubt in my heart.

The last few hours made up for any s**t I had been through today.

A relieved smile stretched his lips as he started the car.

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 29

Lily's POV

I was sure that the person beside me in the bus would be wondering why I was in such a good mood because everytime our eyes met, I smiled at the woman brightly.

I could not explain it to her but I knew that it felt like I was floating. Today had turned out to be one of the best days of my life this year and it had not even started like that. It was because of Ren.

It was thanks to him, that sweet gentle nice handsome boy.

Plugging in my earphones, I immediately picked out one of the songs that Ren had recommended for him from his playlist and pressed play.

It was titled Chateau by Angus and Julia stone and even though it was the first time I was actually trying to listen to this genre of music which made me incredibly skeptical, it was such a beautiful listen with soulful lyrics and a lush, romantic rhythm that reminded me of falling in love.

The lyrics hit so close to home, reminding me so much of Ren and I's friendship and how today had gone. I couldn't help putting it on repeat, drowning in the song.

I don't mind if you wanna go anywhere

I'll take you there

Every day, the weekend, I'm tryna be your best friend

Trying just to figure it out

After playing it on repeat three times in a row, I unlocked my phone and shot Ren a text, tell him what a beautiful song I thought it was.

Me: This is actually so lovely and I'm kicking myself for not finding this music sooner.

I had just texted and I was wondering if I was already doing too much or being too forward when his reply came a second later.

Ren: don't go beating yourself up now, I just listened to Young and beautiful and it's been on replay since I had it on.

I squealed and jumped up and down in my seat, doing an excited little dance.

Me: We should listen to it together. It's one of my absolute faves and Bia doesn't appreciate the superior music taste I have.

Ren: Are you asking me out on a song date, Lily Beauregard?

My cheeks heated up as I immediately realized what that sounded like. Like I WAS asking him on a date. I facepalmed myself.

Gosh, Lily. Really?

But my phone burped again with his text:

Ren: a platonic date, of course.

Of course. Friends go on platonic dates all the time. I'm really going to give myself a heart attack if I don't stop overthinking these things.

Ren: And yes, I'd love if we listened to our playlists together. It's not everyday I get to meet someone with superior music taste. Might as well appreciate it.

My cheeks were going to explode. I imagined him typing this with a smile and quickly fired a reply.

Me: you better not driving and texting, smartass.

Ren: And if I was? Would you get down from the bus and come and scold me?

Me: maybe. Will you say please?

Ren: I'll do anything to be scolded by a pretty girl.

I laughed so loud, the couple in front of me had to turn around to see if everything was okay.

Quickly apologizing but still smiling, I replied immediately.

Me: This pretty girl is just worried about you and wants you to get back to school or home in one piece. There are so many dire consequences of texting and driving.

Ren: Your worry is deeply appreciated, pretty girl. And I'm not texting and driving. So you don't need to worry your pretty little mind.

He had just called me pretty, twice!

It made me want to scream out loud and tell the world. Just then, my bus finally arrived at my bus stop and I quickly got down before proceeding to send a quick reply.

Me: Just got down and heading home. I'll talk to you later. Thank you for the lovely day.

And then even though I wanted to just keep standing there, waiting for his reply, I pocketed my phone and headed to the house but just as I brought out my keys and fixed the key into the keyhole, I felt a sense of dread suddenly wash over me.

A dark feeling that made my anxiety start crawling back.

Immediately I entered the house, I proceeded to take a look around the living room and headed to the kitchen. The key hole was perfectly fine so why did I feel like someone else besides my mother and I had been in this space today?

I rolled my shoulders, shrugging it off.

"Mum" I called out, my voice hesitant and shaky and when she didn't answer, I placed a call through to her, only to hear her phone ringing on the kitchen island.

It was my mother's day off and the fact that she did not take her phone with her meant that she didn't go very far, perhaps it was the groceries that she had spoken about buying that she went to get.

I dropped my bag on the couch, only to see a black furry creature dart out of its hiding place and run towards me.

Fiona! I squealed as she circled herself around my feet, purring and meowing. I picked up my beautiful pet, running my hands through her black poofy hair as her bright green eyes peered up at me.

“You’ve been a good girl, haven’t you?” I cooed, raising her to my face and nuzzling her nose, my earlier anxiety long gone.

Hugging her tightly, I walked over to get a bottle of water from the fridge, settling her down on the counter.

Fiona was once a stray cat that usually paid my mother and I visits because I kept leaving food outside the house for her. She was shy at first but with time, she became bold enough to let me stroke her fur.

When I really saw her as more than a stray that only came for the good I gave her was around the time when Cade broke my heart and I needed a friend and Fiona had stayed with me, coming everyday even when there was no food and given me the furry companionship that I needed. I loved Fiona with all of my heart and considered her to be one of my best friends.

Quickly taking a picture of the two of us together, I dropped her down gently and proceeded to try and make a meal for her and sent the picture to Bia and Ren.

Bia called immediately and I placed her on speaker as I tried to whip up fiona’s food.

“She’s so adorable, Lily. How about you finally agree to my offer to bring her to the flower shop so that we can dress her up in a cute bow and gain tips. She can be our mascot.” She said in a rush and I just shrugged and tried to smile at her.

“No, Bia, with all due disrespect” I added and we exchanged greetings, laughing before I ended the call and served my beautiful pet her lunch.

Quickly opening Ren’s reply to her, I froze on the first step of the stairs, the smile on my face dying as my eyes focused on Ren. There was a furry white cat sitting on the very naked chest of a very shirtless Ren.

Heat rushed to my cheeks as I stared at it.

I was sure that he had taken this picture to show me the cat but I could not stop staring at his clean cut abs, evenly toned skin and that charming smile that made me want to abandon everything and run.

As I was trying to text Ren a reply, he sent me another text that made me smile wide.

Ren: Cat cute enough to get a reaction?

Me: Of course! She looks adorable. Is she yours?

Ren: well, yeah? She belongs to Rhea and what's mine is hers right?

Me: Right 😊

Ren: I only wanted to earn extra points with you by proving we have feline friends in common. Did it work?

I nodded, my grin growing even wider before I remembered that he could not see my smile so I fired off a reply and the minute I arrived at the entrance to my bedroom, I knew that something was very wrong.

I opened the door and my mouth fell open in horror at the scene in front of me.

All the good vibes and bad energy I had felt today dropped to my feet and shattered to a thousand pieces.

My entire room had been trashed, picture frames of me and my parents that I had had since I was little had been broken to pieces on the floor, my mattress and pillows torn apart. The word w***e was written in red paint on the wall and nudes that Cade had taken of me the last night we shared were scattered on my bed and hanging on the walls.

Fear, pain and hurt burned behind my eyelids and festered in my chest.

Falling to my knees in terror, I could feel my entire body shake as a sob broke out of my mouth and all of the things that happened today began to play out in slow motion.

Why? Why can't I just have this day? This one day where I get to go to bed happy?

Ren thought that I deserved to be happy. Unfortunately, he was the only one among very few who truly believed that I could ever know joy.

Bullied Mate Of The Lycan Kings – Chapter 30

Lily's pov

A nightmare. I was stuck in a nightmare.

I could hear the front door open downstairs and my mother calling out my name but I could not move from where I was laying on the floor, rocking myself forward and backward as I tried to stop crying and failed.

My home has been infiltrated. My safe space. My abode. There's nowhere safe for me anymore.

How could this have happened? When did this happen? Why was someone out to make my life miserable?

I stared up at the nude pictures of me that were strung up on the wall and saw one where I had been smiling.

So foolish. I was so foolish and naive to have believed back then that someone like me deserved to be loved. .

But why? What had I done to earn such cruelty? All my life, I had tried to fit in and then when my father died, I had been hated so much that stepping outside on some days felt like a death sentence.

The only place that I had felt safe was my house. It was my sanctuary against all of the horrors that I usually faced outside of these walls and now someone had taken this away from me too.

Someone had decided that even my home would not be a safe space for me to be in. Someone had decided to make sure that whatever hell I was experiencing would find me at home.

Nowhere was safe for me any longer. Not even my own bedroom.

"Lily?" I heard my mother call out again, her footsteps gaining on the room and if I didn't feel so physically drained, I might have tried to lock the door so that she would not see what had happened to her daughter.

“Sweetheart?” My mother said as she entered the room and her eyes widened in panic when she saw me on the ground and she rushed to where I was, kneeling in front of me, her eyes wide with panic as she touched my forehead, barely registering the state of disarray that my bedroom was in, thanks to those intruders.

“What’s wrong, sweetheart? Are you sick? Are you hurting anywhere?” She asked and even though I was looking at her, I didn’t even see her. My eyes were stuck on the ceiling above her head.

“I’m going to get you some water and advil, okay?” She said, jumping to her feet and when she turned around, her eyes finally taking in the disaster that was by bedroom, her mouth fell open in a gasp.

“Oh my God!” She cried and I watched, numb as she started tearing down the pictures from the wall and picking up the ones from the bed, tearing them to shreds.

I could only watch as she kept tearing paper after paper and then she rushed to me and pulled me in for a hug, her body shaking furiously with tears as she kissed my head.

“Oh my sweetheart, I’m so sorry. I’m so sorry, my love. You won’t go back to that God awful place, okay? I will make sure I find those who did this and they will pay severely for it, but you are going to continue to be homeschooled, okay? I’m sure it’s those academy people and even if it is not, it has to be from your former school. They will all pay for this severely, I promise, okay?”

The mention of the academy and that I won’t be going back was what finally snapped me out of my shock and I moved to stand up, shaking my head almost immediately.

“Mum, I can’t not go back to the academy.”

Yes, this was one of the worst days of my life. Yes, people had come into my home and called me a w***e, plastered it on my walls like they owned the place, like they had the right to, but now more than ever, I knew that not going back to the academy was not an option.

I was going to do everything possible to escape this life and Shadow cove academy was the safest one way ticket out of this hellhole. How could my mother not see that?

Exactly like I had predicted, my answer brought a frown to my mother's face and she rose to her feet, her eyes filled with anger as she spoke.

"What do you mean that you can't? How naive can you get? Do you think they really want you there? You think that you got that scholarship out of the kindness of their heart? Look around you, Lily. Is that not enough for you to realize that I'm right? Or is this because of some boy? And don't you lie to me, because it could not have been some girl that made you wake up in the morning to make cookies. Have you learned nothing? You did not learn your lesson with Cade? Are you really that stupid, Lily?"

Her outraged response snapped something in me and I screamed, done with everything.

"Naive?" I scoffed "Stupid? Whose fault is it that we are being treated like the dirt beneath people's shoes? Whose fault is it that people don't even see me as human? It's yours, mother. Yours and no one else's. You talk to me about boys and yet you married a traitor and murderer and did not even know what he was planning and could not stop him, so who are you to advise me about lessons learnt? You and father are the reasons why my life is the hell that it is." I screamed and gasped when my mother closed the distance between us and slapped me hard, my face turning to the side from the force of the hit.

The silence in the room as we stared at each other with wide eyes was palpable and I saw the anger in her eyes change to regret as she started to shake her head immediately. She took one step forward, but I took two back immediately, my hand still holding my cheek. My mother had never slapped me before. Well, there was a first time for everything now, it seemed.

"Oh my God, Lily, I'm so sorry."

Snapped. I just snapped.

"Sorry?" I whispered, dragging in a strained breath. "You're sorry?"

"Lily-"

"I guess I'm the resident punching bag for everyone to use as they seem fit." I glared at her, my tone cold and dead. "Right now, there's no difference between you and them."

"Lily, Don't say that," she whispered, her voice breaking like she was hurt.

She had the audacity to stand there and play the victim.

“Please leave mum. I’m tired. Please.”

“But...”

“Just go.” I pointed towards the door, heart breaking when I saw the shattered look on her face as she nodded and walked out and I could not help the tears that trickled down my face as I slammed the door shut and locked it, turning around to stare at my destroyed room.

Somebody seemed to have come here swinging with a baseball bat. All my pictures were knocked off my dresser. My lamp, lay shattered on the floor, its broken pieces scattered like shards of hope. The once cozy atmosphere of my sanctuary had been replaced by a chaotic mess that mirrored the turmoil inside me.

I stumbled forward, navigating through the debris, and collapsed onto the edge of my bed. The weight of the recent events crashed down on me, threatening to suffocate my every breath. How did it come to this? I never imagined that love could wield such a destructive force, leaving behind a trail of shattered dreams and broken promises.

My mind replayed the entire day, the brief commercial break of happiness I had with Re-

I stopped. Ren...

Of course!

All this must have happened during my ‘getaway’ with Ren. He wasn’t helping me. Wasn’t on my side. He was helping his besties distract me while they ran amuck in my home.

I wiped away the tears with trembling hands, my gaze hardening, clarity crystallizing my blood and hardening my heart.

With a newfound determination, I rose from the wreckage and began the process of healing. I started by picking up the broken pieces, not only those scattered across the room but also the fragments of my own shattered heart.

My phone vibrated in my hand and when I checked, I remembered that I had been in a conversation with Ren and he had left a couple of messages in response, wondering if I was okay, but instead of feeling relieved by his messages, all I could think about was how Cade had slithered into my life like the snake that he was and hurt me.

Ren was probably the same and for all I knew he could have been responsible for helping sure I was kept away from home while his friends thrashed my room.

My mother was right. I was naive to trust anyone after Cade.

Sending him a message to leave me alone, I blocked his number immediately and flung my phone on the bed.

Never again, Lily. Once bitten, twice shy.