Chapter 0015

(Lily POV)

"I am not Stephanie, James. I am Lily."

James immediately lets go of me. He looks at me in confusion, and then takes several steps back. He begins to pace. I can tell that he is angry. From his facial expressions, I suspect that he is also talking to his wolf.

As I watch him pace back and forth, Rose is quiet. Too quiet.

I feel my heart slowly start to break into a million pieces. I am hurting both for Rose and for myself. I should have listened to that tiny voice in my head that said something was not right. Rose may have been blinded by the mate bond, but that is the nature of being a wolf. I, on the other hand, should have been able to see it. James does not love me. James could never love me.

After several minutes, James spins around and faces me again. His face is serious and determined. "This is not funny, Stephanie," James says quietly. "You have been gone for six years. You do not know what I have gone through without you. This is not the time for jokes. Stop pretending to be the Little Brat."

I take a deep breath. I cannot believe that for the second

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time in 12 hours, I have to convince someone that I am who I say that I am. And this time, it is my own mate.

"I am not joking, James," I say softly, as I try desperately to keep the pain out of my voice. "Look at me. I am Lily, not Stephanie."

"NO!!! You are lying!" James responds, suddenly angry again. "STOP LYING TO ME, STEPHANIE! You look nothing like Lily. The Little Brat is ugly. She has acne. She is flatchested. She has glasses. She is at least six inches shorter than you are. You. Are. Not. Lily."

His words are harsh. They feel like stakes being driven through my heart. I never realized that he saw me as ugly before. Annoying, yes. Ugly? No.

I take another deep breath. I do not want him to see how hurt I am.

"You are describing 14-year-old me, James. You are not describing 20-year-old me. I have grown up."

James runs both of his hands down his face. "How? How can Lily Brogan be my mate? It is not possible!"

I say nothing. I have the same question.

"ANSWER ME, D&MMIT!!!"

"What do you want me to say, James?"

"Tell me how this happened! Tell me how you of all people

are my second-chance mate! You do not even have a wolf!!!"

Again, I say nothing. What can I possibly say? I do not have any of the answers.

Suddenly James walks towards me again. This time, instead of love, I see nothing but anger and hatred in his eyes. "Did you plan this?" he asks me accusingly. His face is so close to mine that I can feel his spit as he talks.

"Did you kill off Stephanie just so that you could have me for yourself? Have you been obsessed with me all these years?"

"What are you talking about?" I ask in disbelief.

"You kissed me. YOU KISSED ME, LILY. I did not know who you were, but you knew who I was and you still kissed me! Your sister's mate!!!

You know, I never could figure out what your motive was for killing off Stephanie all those years ago. But I guess now I know! You killed her so that you could take me from her!!!"

Ok, that is it. Forget being hurt. Now I am angry.

could have killed Stephanie knowing that the Moon

"You know nothing," I hiss back at him. "You think I wanted this? You think I somehow PLANNED this? If you actually believe either of those things, you need to have your head examined. I was FOURTEEN when Stephanie died. FOURTEEN, you dumb&ss. And news flash, it is the Moon Goddess who picks our mates, not us. There is no way that I

Goddess would mate me to you SIX YEARS later! I am a werewolf, not a psychic!"

"You could have wanted me to take you as a chosen mate," he snarls back at me. Then he takes a couple of steps back and snaps his fingers, as though he has had a sudden realization.

"YOU! This morning's meeting with my parents and yours was all because of YOU! Oh, my Goddess. How did I not see it before?!?!"

"What meeting?" I ask before I can stop myself.

He ignores my question.

"I am right, aren't I? This whole 'announce a chosen mate' thing was your idea, wasn't it? You are the reason your parents want to pick a chosen mate for me. THEY WANT TO FORCE ME TO MARRY YOU! Well, guess what, MATE, it is never going to happen!!!! I will get married, but it will NEVER be to someone like you!"

I glare at James, trying to decide how much more of this nonsense I am willing to listen to.

"Aren't you going to say something, Little Brat?" James taunts me. "Go ahead. I cannot wait to hear you beg me not to reject you. Well, do not worry. I could never reject you. You are my second-chance mate, and having you around will bring me strength. And as an added bonus, it gives me the perfect chance to get my revenge on you for killing

Stephanie. Every single time I touch another she-wolf, you will feel it.

I have to warn you, LILY, I love sex. So you are going to be experiencing those betrayal pains ALL. THE. TIME. I have heard they hurt like hell. Best revenge ever. I get to hurt you without ever touching you. I hope you are ready. My guess is that you will be on your knees begging me to reject you within just a couple of weeks."

I turn to walk away. I am done with this conversation.

However, before I can leave, Rose shocks me by taking over my body. She releases some of her aura, letting James know she is there. "Human, my patience with you is running out. I want to talk to your wolf. Now."

Further shocking me, James complies with Rose's demand. I watch as James' eyes switch from blue to dark brown.

"Thank you for stopping my human. I am sorry for what just happened. He is not as bad as he seems. He just was not prepared for all of this. My name is Luke. What is yours?"

"I am Rose. Do not lie to me, Luke. I have seen how James has behaved for the past six years, just as you have. He is wrong about almost everything. He is about to make one of the biggest mistakes of his life, and that mistake is going to impact you and I as well."

"I know, I know. I'm sorry. Please give me some time to fix it. He just needs some space to process everything."

