

## Chapter 0027

(Lily POV)

There is only so much suffering that I can be expected to deal with, and there are only so many lies that I can be expected to tell myself to make it all okay.

I refuse to be punished any longer.

I am not Stephanie. Who f---ing cares! No one in this pack knew her the way that I did anyway. Perhaps if they did, they would be glad that I am not her. Or... perhaps they would still miss her. Who knows. At this point, I am not sure that it matters anymore. At least it does not matter to me.

As of this moment, I will no longer live under Stephanie's shadow. I will no longer allow my insecurities to convince me that I must accept the blame.

I am done.

I do not think that James has any appreciation for what he has done, or for what his so-called revenge is about to cost him.

Even after my mother gave me the absolutely worst beating of my life, I was willing to leave the pack quietly and peacefully.

Even after I discovered that my beloved father thinks that I

do not have what it takes to be a Luna, and that I could only ever be a burden to a male werewolf, I was willing to leave quietly and peacefully.

Even after I was forced —while bloody, bruised, and only half-conscious— to attend yet another one of Stephanie's memorials, I was willing to leave quietly and peacefully.

And even after I discovered that James planned to take a chosen mate and use Stephanie's memorial to taunt me with that fact, I was willing to leave quietly and peacefully.

But then... then James went a step too far. For him to seriously and publicly suggest that SHEILA BLACK could be a suitable Luna? A she-wolf who was ACTUALLY involved in what happened to Stephanie?

No.

No, no, no, no, no. In the name of all the pack members who have silently suffered because of the actions of Sheila Black, I will not go quietly.

And I will not go peacefully.

Nor will I wait for Rose to heal me. I will stand against this injustice on anger and adrenaline alone. My legs may be wobbly, but my voice will not be.

"I, Lily Brogan, forgotten and neglected daughter of Beta Robert and Margie Brogan, hereby reject you, James Anderson, future alpha of the West Mountain Pack, as my mate."

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(James POV)

As Lily says the words of rejection, I clutch my heart and fall to my knees. The pain that I am feeling is unlike anything that I have ever experienced. I feel as though half my heart has literally been ripped from my chest.

I do not understand what is happening. The female before me is bloody and beaten. Now that she is upright, I can see that at least one of her arms is broken, and her right leg appears to be broken too. How is she standing up, unsupported?

More importantly, why does it seem like the rejection is hurting me more than her?


As I continue to clutch at my chest, I reach out to Luke. I know he is angry with me, but I am confused and I need him. Thankfully, he responds.

"Luke, is.... is this Lily's wolf in control?" I ask.

"No. This is 100% her human part. She is angry. I think she is operating on adrenaline."

"Adrenaline from what?"

"I do not know for sure, but I would guess the adrenaline is coming from her anger at what my dumba&& human has been doing all day."

 +20 BONUS

URGH. Of course Luke would say that. I should not have asked.

"She has no right to be angry!" I fire back. "She deserves everything that I have given her. In fact, she deserves much worse!"

Strangely, the pain in my chest increases as my words travel through the link. It is almost as though my body is siding with Luke.

Ignoring the pain, and tuning Luke out once again, I force myself to lift my head. When I do so, I lock eyes with Lily.

With our eyes locked, everyone else in the event hall fades away. As far as my heart and my anger are concerned, Lily and I are now the only ones here.

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