

## Chapter 0040

(James POV)

It has now been a month since Lily and I rejected each other.

I am currently standing outside my father's office, prepared to make a new series of demands on him. I have not been to this office since the meeting that we had before Stephanie's memorial. Being here brings back a lot of memories that I would rather forget, and many that I am still trying to understand.

I had woken up in a hospital bed roughly four days after the rejection.

Just before I woke up, there had been a fuzzy period of time in which my brain was starting to adjust to consciousness again. During that period, a part of me fought with my body about whether I should wake up at all. It was not that I wanted to die. It was that I was scared. Of what, I was not certain... but I knew that once I woke up, I was going to be forced to face a reality that I was not sure that I wanted to be a part of.

During the period of fuzziness, various memories flashed through my head. Although they were choppy, they were enough to remind me that I had made a real mess of things. In an effort to humiliate and intimidate my second chance mate, I had publicly bragged about getting blow jobs and

sexual favors from other she-wolves, apparently forgetting that we were at a memorial service for my first mate.

And, worse than that, I had gone ahead and accepted the Little Brat's rejection. I was vaguely aware that there had been good reasons for me to do so, but in my semi-conscious state, it was difficult for me to remember any of them. Instead, I could only think about the Little Brat's bright green eyes, her strength and confidence as she yelled at me in the crowded hall, and some of the words she spoke that suggested that much of my life had been built on lies.

Waking up and confronting some of those potential lies was the last thing that I wanted to do. On the other hand, a bigger part of me knew that I had to wake up, because what haunted my semi-conscious state most of all were the memories of how Nick and Robert brought Lily to the memorial unconscious, bruised, and absolutely battered. I could not help but worry, even while semi-conscious, about what condition she was in when they found her after the rejection. I also worried about how Lily had gotten all of those injuries in the first place. Was there someone in the pack who had purposely hurt her?

Ironically --even though my worries about Lily were what ultimately convinced me to open my eyes-- once I woke up, no one would tell me anything.

Apparently, my father had given a variety of alpha orders to prevent me from experiencing any level of stress until I was fully recovered. Honestly, I appreciated the alpha orders

that prevented the she-wolves from visiting my bedroom —I really did not enjoy those visits anyway— but the other alpha-orders irritated me to no end.

Nevertheless —given that the intent behind the alpha orders also prevented me from having to have a conversation with my parents about all that had happened— I was ready to file my irritation with the alpha orders away in my mental folder of grievances against my parents. I figured that Luke would help me find ways to work around the orders anyway.

The problem was that I then discovered that Luke was not there. Or, rather, that he was there... but that he was completely closed off and unreachable to me. I should have anticipated that Luke would retreat for a while —they give us all sorts of warnings about the impact of rejections in school— but I found myself caught completely off-guard.

Everything in me shifted when I realized that Luke was gone. His absence set me up on a roller coaster of emotions that I was not prepared to handle.



## Chapter 0041

Dr. Miller said that it was normal for wolves to block their humans for a while after a rejection, because they need time on their own to heal and process. Unfortunately, I knew that in our situation, there was more to it than that. Luke had begged me not to accept Lily's rejection, and in a fit of rage, I had blocked him out and done it anyway.

Luke and I were a team, and who we accept or reject as a mate is a decision that directly impacts us both. In my anger, I made the decision for both of us. I knew that it would be a while before he would forgive me for that, if he ever would. I could only pray to the Moon Goddess that, in time, he would understand that we had no choice but to reject Lily. There was no way that our pack would have ever accepted her as a future Luna, and sharing a bed with someone to blame for us losing the love of our life was a torture neither of us should have to deal with.

Ultimately, I spent a week feeling guilty about what I had done, and then I spent a week feeling angry at Luke for being too stubborn to see the mistake that the Moon Goddess had made by pairing us with Lily.

Then, in week three, I shifted to looking for someone else to blame. The Little Brat was, of course, the most logical target. I began to once again curse her in my mind, adding "wolf-killer" to her list of sins and murderous traits. I largely

set aside my initial worry about the Little Brat's condition, telling myself that her decision to show up bruised and battered to Stephanie's memorial was just as much a ploy for attention as her bizarre behavior at Stephanie's very first memorial event. I also began to day-dream about new ways to get revenge. Some of my better ideas included making her my personal maid whose responsibilities would include hand-washing the bedding that I would "dirty" multiple times a day, and/or hiring a painter to paint murals of Stephanie and I hugging and kissing on all four walls of the Little Brat's bedroom. 1

Eventually and unfortunately, during week four, the yo-yo of emotions running through me shifted again. Every time I thought of some new revenge plot, I felt Luke retreat further and further away. It sort of took the fun out of the revenge planning process.

Just as importantly, as much as I am ashamed to admit it... I had never been able to completely shake my ongoing, gut worry about whether Lily was okay. Without a wolf, and with all the extensive injuries that Lily had, I could only imagine that the rejection hit her far harder than it hit me. Were her parents and Nick with her to help her through it, like my parents were with me? Was she receiving the medical attention that she needed? Was there anything more that could be done to help her?

In my mind, I knew I should not care. The Little Brat killed her sister, and her decision years later to taunt me into

accepting her rejection may have cost me my wolf.

However, after finding myself unable to ignore the worry any longer, I started to rationalize it. The Little Brat may be a callous, unfeeling whore, but I am not. I am going to be the alpha of this pack in the next few years, and it is perfectly normal for me to worry about the well-being of my packmembers... even the misguided, murderous ones.

With resolve in my gut, I marched myself to my father's office for the purpose of demanding both that his alpha orders be lifted and that I be finally updated on how the Little Brat is faring.

Goddess help me, I knocked on his office door.

 **Lady Gwen**  Author


*" Oh, James. If you are a yo-yo of emotions now, how will you deal with it when the truth starts to finally come out?"*

*I will try to get another chapter up today; if not it will be tomorrow.*

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