

Chapter 0084

I sigh. I do not know. Probably both. But, after everything that has happened, I think both are perfectly justified.

I cringe when James tells me that he wants me to be me and not Stephanie. When he says it, it is almost like a light-bulb goes off in my head.

"Do you know who that is?"

He looks at me surprised. "What?"

"You said you want me to be me. Do you know who I am?"

He does not respond.

"You can't answer that question, can you James? Not that I blame you."

I stand up and walk towards the ocean. I take off my shoes and put my feet in the water. James follows me.

"Lily, we are not humans. Werewolves typically meet their mates and mark each other within days or even hours. It is normal for the 'get to know you stage' to come later."

"Sure, for a normal couple. But there is nothing normal about our situation, James. You were in love with my sister for most of our lives. We have a history... a painful history. We do not even have a mate bond anymore... or at least not a complete one."

I stare at the water as it crashes against my toes. Glancing over my shoulder at him, I add, "Here you are, making a grand gesture, expecting me to believe that you really do care about me. And I want to believe you, James. You do not understand how badly my heart wants to believe you. But how can I when you do not even know me? How do I know that if I let you in, you are not going to get bored with me and flip to the next she-wolf in your line-up of quote, unquote arrangements?"

James growls. "You are nothing like those other she-wolves, Lily. Do not EVER compare yourself to them."

I turn around and smirk. "Do you mean that I am not as pretty as them? That I am not as sexy as them? That I do not know how to satisfy a male in bed like they do?"

James grabs my face, forcing me to look in his eyes. "No. I mean that you have self-respect. I mean you care more about people than you care about some superficial, fake image that you want the world to see. And I mean I feel things for you that I have never felt with any of them, and that I have never wanted to feel for any of them."

James lets go of my face, but he continues to stare at me. "You are right that I do not know you very well. But I know more about you than you realize. And I want to get to know you more, Lily. I really, really do. I want us to get to know one another."

"What if you do not like what you learn about me?"

"Impossible."

"What if I do not like what I learn about you?"

He gives me a sad smile. "Now that IS entirely possible. I do not even like who I am right now."

"And?"

"And if you do not like what you learn about me, then I will continue to work on myself until I earn your respect and your love. And if I can't... well then I will wait until you change your mind."

(James POV)

"I cannot promise you anything more than friendship right now," Lily tells me.

"I can accept that," I respond. I can more than accept that. In fact, I have to try desperately to keep the excitement out of my voice. Friendship is far better than anything I could have hoped for this morning.

"I also have to be honest with you. Brady is part of my new life." 1

"Okay."

"I have feelings for him, James."

Ouch. Well, there goes my excitement bubble. But it is

+20 BONUS

okay; I can deal with Brady separately.

"I understand," I force out.

"Friends?" Lily asks as she sticks out her hand for a handshake. 1

"Friends. For now," I respond as I shake her hand.

I glance at my watch. "So... friend... we missed breakfast. Can I buy you dinner tonight?"

Lily looks at me apologetically, and then I notice her eyes glance past me. I turn around to see Brady walking towards us. Seriously what is this guy's problem? It has not even been 45 minutes yet. I was promised two hours. We have barely scratched the surface of what we need to talk about. 2

"James, I would consider it, but I already have plans with Brady tonight." 2

Yeah, we will see about those plans. I pull out my phone and step away, just as Brady approaches Lily.

 Lady Gwen  Author

"*Buckle up your seatbelts... in two or three days, more big secrets will be revealed. Some you may have seen coming; some I am 99% sure you have not.*"

👁️ 13