

Chapter 0023

TRIGGER WARNING: THE FIRST PART OF THIS CHAPTER WILL INCLUDE MOTHER-ON-DAUGHTER DOMESTIC VIOLENCE THAT MANY COULD FIND UPSETTING.

(A few hours earlier)

(Lily POV)

On the rest of our way back to the packhouse, Rose and I worked out the details of our plan to leave West Mountain Pack for good. The plan was that we would leave right after Stephanie's memorial events; this was when most pack members would expect us to leave to go back to school anyway. Then, just before we crossed the border, we would say the necessary words to reject the pack. With that, it would be a done deal and no one could stop us.

Given my age and the lack of financial reliance on my parents, we would not have to come back to the West Mountain Pack unless or until we wanted to. To avoid becoming rogue, we would need to join another pack relatively quickly, but I had developed a good relationship with several Red Rock pack members, and I was hopeful that their pack would accept me. If not, Rose and I would research other packs that might be a good fit.

As we discussed the plan, my stomach continued to have

some painful knots in it, but I could not think of a logical argument against the plan. It was eerily simple, and truthfully I was really excited about it. In fact, Rose and I were already debating what drink I should order first on my 21st birthday.

I admit that the idea of leaving the pack permanently also felt a little bittersweet, but ultimately I knew that Rose was right: it was not healthy for me to stay here any longer.

I have grown a lot since I went to school in Red Rock. I have become stronger emotionally, and I have learned that much of my treatment at West Mountain has been unfair and inappropriate. Despite this growth and these realizations, however, something about being here at West Mountain takes me back emotionally to how I used to be. I may be stronger, but I am not yet strong enough to deal with the demons of my past. Perhaps one day I will get there, but not today.

It was about 8:00 am when I entered the packhouse. At this point, I had not eaten anything since I left Red Rock the day before. The packhouse was mostly empty, because most wolves were either off work or busy preparing for Stephanie's memorial events. I decided it was probably safe to go into the packhouse kitchen and snag something to eat.

I looked around to make sure no one was lurking around,

and then located an apple and a banana. I put them in my backpack and started to head upstairs to the beta suite.

Unfortunately, my mother was waiting for me at the top of the stairs.

"I saw you take that fruit," she told me. "What makes you think that you have the right to eat this morning? On the anniversary of your sister's death?"

I said nothing. Experience told me that there was nothing good that could come out of responding to my mother when she gets into one of her rages.

"Do you have any idea what Stephanie is eating right now? NOTHING. She is eating NOTHING because SHE IS DEAD. Because of you!"

With that, my mother slapped me hard across the face. I stumbled back, trying to avoid falling.

"And do you know what I had to do this morning?" my mother continued angrily. "I had to meet with Alpha Randall, Luna Jane, your father, and James to discuss James TAKING A CHOSEN MATE."


Something in me involuntarily recoiled at the thought of James taking a chosen mate. I thought my facial expression was subtle, but my mother noticed it immediately.

"Does the thought of James taking a chosen mate disgust you? IT SHOULD! IT SHOULD BE YOUR SISTER IN HIS BED,



NOT A CHOSEN MATE AND NOT THOSE WHORES HE USES AS A DISTRACTION. IT SHOULD BE YOUR SISTER!"

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