

## Mated in the Shadow of My Sister Chapter 156

Chapter 0156

(Lily POV)

James and I have fallen into a little bit of a routine since our first phone call. He will call me in the morning and we will talk for a 20 minutes or so before I have to get ready for work. Then we will briefly text at night before going to bed.

None of our conversations have been as serious as the night of that first phone call. I do not think it is because we are necessarily avoiding having serious conversations-goddess knows we needed to have the ones we have already had, and we will probably need to have more serious ones in the future. But I

is just as

do think that it important that we just get to know each other.

So far, I really like "Friend James." I also trust him... at least for now.

I put that caveat on it for one simple reason: if James marries Sheila, it is over. Forever. I will never talk to him again.

It will not matter to me whether he wanted to marry her or not. Nor will it matter to me if he was

pressured or manipulated into saying "I do." Giving that she-wolf the credibility and affirmation of being Mrs. James Anderson" for even five minutes is a bridge too far for me. At some point, a wolf -especially an alpha wolf-needs to stand up for what is right, even if doing so has consequences.

Now, I know that James said that he will never marry Shella, and you should know that I really do believe him.

The problem is that even the idea of James pretending to go along with a wedding and letting the masses

believe he will marry that evil excuse for a she-wolf makes me uncomfortable.

Plus, I know all too well

how quickly things can change and promises can get broken. Even if I am 99% sure that James will keep

his promise and not marry her-which I am-, that 1% chance that I am wrong is enough for me to want to

continue to guard and protect my heart!

And, unfortunately, the closer to the so-called wedding we get, the more I feel that way.

Perhaps that is why I finally accepted Charlotte's invitation to go out drinking and dancing tonight.

Charlotte is the team doctor's daughter. She reminds me a little bit of Brady, which may be the reason I like her so much. She has strawberry blond hair that is definitely more "strawberry" than blond; she is outgoing, likes to joke around, and likes to have a good time; and if you hang out with her long enough, you will see that she is just a touch spoiled. She can also be rather bossy at times, but I find her particular brand of bossiness to be more entertaining than annoying.

Dr. Moore introduced us on my second or third day of training with him. He wanted Charlotte to have

Thankfully, he was right. Charlotte and I are very different, but we hit it off right away. I like that she pushes me out of my comfort zone, and she seems to like that I balance her.

So far, we have hung out in pretty typical settings: coffee; lunch; manicures; that sort of thing. However, Charlotte has been desperate to get me to go out drinking and dancing with her. I usually have to work or I have some other excuse not to go. Tonight, though, I have no excuses: It is the weekend; I am not working at the girls' home tonight; I do not have to work at either of my jobs tomorrow; and I could use a distraction.

Charlotte was so excited when I finally said yes that she was waiting for me at my apartment when I got home from work. Her arms were filled with dresses, shoes, and makeup. She immediately rushed me into the shower while she created a workstation for herself in my combined living room/ kitchen.

When I was done in the shower, I dried my hair and put on the green party dress that I had worn the night Brady took me to meet some of his friends. I then walked into the living area to meet Charlotte. She took one look at me and shook her head "no."

"Nope. Not the one."

I looked down at my dress. "What is wrong with it?"

"Nothing if want to be paying for your own drinks all night."

"Charlotte, neither one of us are 21 yet. Human bars will not let us drink anyway."

Charlotte rolled her eyes. "That is why we are not going to a human bar. I mean, we are going to a bar that humans go to. But it is owned by a werewolf. We will not have to worry about silly human rules." 1

“O-kay. I guess that settles that piece, but what is wrong with my dress? I wore this to a club before and I got a ton of compliments.”

“Are you comfortable in the dress, Lily?”

“Yes.”

“That is what is wrong with the dress. We need to push you a little bit. Here, try this one on,” Charlotte said as she handed me a red dress.

I looked at the dress and gasped; in addition to being even shorter than my green party dress, it had a plunging neckline.

“Charlotte

“We are not going to fight about dresses, hmmm? Go, try it on.”

I sighed and went to change. Charlotte was not happy with the red dress, or with the blue dress she had me try on next, or with the silver dress she made me try on after that. I was about to get frustrated and give up when I heard my phone “ping” and let me know that I had received a text message.

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grabbed my phone off of the kitchen counter and saw that it was James.

James: “Hey, beautiful. Just checking in. Your day go ok?”

Me: “Not bad. Kind-of mellow, actually. But my friend Charlotte is here and we are going to go get some drinks tonight.”

James: [Raised eyebrow emoji] “Drinks?”

Me: “Drinks.”

James: “I trust Charlotte is a she-wolf and not the nickname of some really hot male wolf that I need to be jealous of?”

I smiled.

Me: “Charlotte is a she-wolf and she is the best. [wink emoji]”

James: “Text me when you get home so I know you made it back ok?”

Me: [thumbs up, emoji] “Everything okay on your end?”

James: “It will be, I think. I will tell you a little bit when we talk tomorrow.”

Me: “Sounds good.”

“Who-ya texting?” Charlotte said from behind me.

“Oh, just a friend.”

“Do you smile like that when you text all of your friends?” Charlotte asked me suspiciously.

I chose to ignore her question and put my phone down. "Can I put my green dress back on now?"

"Nope. I have a few more for you to try. But here, I think this black one is going to be the perfect one."

I held the black dress up and took a look at it. "Oh, my Goddess, Charlotte. Where is the dress part of this dress?"

Charlotte smiled. "Just the fact that you have to ask me that question means that it is the perfect one. Hurry up, go try it on."

There was no sense in fighting her. I took the dress and went to go change. Charlotte smiled as soon as she saw me. "That one is perfect! Come, sit down here. We need to get your hair and make-up done."

"Don't you need to get ready yourself, Charlotte? I am sure I can handle my own hair and makeup."

"Give me a break, Lily. If I let you do your own hair and makeup, you will be walking out of here looking like a nun.... which would completely clash with your dress. I can get ready in under ten minutes once I am done with you."

I laughed and decided to cooperate.

"So tell me more about this 'friend' you were texting." Charlotte demanded.

"His name is James."

"So it is a male!!! I knew it! Wolf or human?"

"Wolf."

"Is he hot?"

I thought for a second. "Very."

"So he is not just a friend," Charlotte said matter of factly.

"Are you implying females can only be friends with ugly males?"

"No. I am implying that when a female blushes at the mere question of how hot a male is, they are not friends."

"I did not blush, Charlotte."

Charlotte gave me a side-eye look. "Uh-huh."

"How about you?" I asked. "You have never told me about any males in your life."

"Eh, most of the males our age around here are humans. It is hard for me to want to get serious with anyone who is not a wolf."

I saw sadness flash through Charlotte's eyes. "You grew up here, right?" I asked.

She nodded. "Yeah, my parents decided early on that they wanted to live a different lifestyle than normal. They wanted the community that you get with a pack, but they also wanted the freedom to travel and explore. They have always loved baseball, so when the Wolf Packers offered my dad a job, they jumped at it."

"Why do you seem sad about it?"

"I am not sad. I love it here. I do wish that I had more opportunities to meet my mate, but in the

meantime, the humans are yummy... especially the baseball players... And the nice thing about humans is that they do not take sex as seriously as wolves sometimes do. There are no crazy complications with possessive she-wolves and mating bonds. It is just... simple."

"Charlotte! You are not suggesting that you have actually slept with any of the players?!?!"

"No! Of course not. That would be against the rules. Wolf Packers baseball players are completely off limits."

"Charlotte...."

"But they are fair game until their first practice and upon being traded.."

"Charlotte!!!!"

Charlotte laughed. "I slept with two. Just two. And I probably will not do it again. Don't get me wrong, the players really were quite yummy and it was fun. It's just that... I don't know... a part of me wonders if I want a different lifestyle than that of my parents."

"You mean a traditional pack?"

Charlotte smiled. "Yeah. Does that sound crazy?"

I laughed. "I may be the wrong one to ask given some of my history, but I do not think it sounds crazy at all."

Right at that moment, Charlotte directed me to stand up. She then stepped back and admired her handiwork.

"Lily, my friend, I have to say.. I have outdone myself."

Before I realized what she was doing and before I could stop her, Charlotte quickly grabbed my phone, snapped a few pictures of me, and.... sent them to James.

"What did you do that for?!?!"

Charlotte grabbed a dress from the pile and headed to the bathroom. "Just making sure that 'friend' of

yours knows what he is missing. You are welcome.”  
I shook my head.  
Tonight was going to be an interesting night.

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(Lily POV)

What I expected when I agreed to go out drinking and dancing with Charlotte: a little craziness; a lot of fun and laughter; a happy distraction from the stress associated with James preparing to marry Sheila; and maybe having to fend off a little bit of male attention.

What I did not expect:

-having to spend 20 minutes before I left reassuring James that I was not being reckless by wearing that black dress to a bar; that my plans for the night only involved a little bit of fun with Charlotte; and that I was not going out looking for male attention;

–having to spend one-third of the night watching Charlotte dance and make out with a famous hockey player that was in town; one-third of the night comforting Charlotte while she cried; and the final third dealing with everything else that happened;

–having to break the arm of a human who would not take no for an answer;  
–having to watch Charlotte’s face light up as she met her fated mate, only to have him call her a slut and walk away, T

-finding out that I have a doppelgänger who lives in Spain; and

-last but definitely not least-

–finding out that my sister may be alive. T

Yeah. Let’s just say tonight did not go the way that I expected it to.

Where do I even start to explain to you everything that happened? I am sure you would like me to start

with Stephanie, but I am still processing that little piece of news and whether I was just imagining things..

So... let us start with James and work our way forward..

**SURPRISE #1: JAMES & MY DRESS**

As you already know, Charlotte thought it was a great idea to snap a few pictures of me and send them to James. I really do think Charlotte meant well, but she was missing a few key pieces of information. Specifically, she did not know that James was my mate; she did not know that James was an alpha wolf, and she did not know that the state of my relationship with James was

fairly fragile.

Had Charlotte known any of these things-or had she spent more time in packs surrounded by hormonal trigger him.

Unfortunately, though, what was done was done.

And so, James ended up calling me within just a few minutes of getting the pictures. When I answered, I could tell Luke was very close to the surface. Now, before I tell you any more about how James reacted to the dress, I should back up a couple of steps. Despite what I originally said to Charlotte when I saw it, it was actually not THAT bad. It was form-fitting with a plunging neckline, but my cleavage was partially covered by mesh lace. The dress itself was much longer than my green one, reaching my calves. To the extent that the dress was scandalous, it was because of the multiple cut-outs up and down the sides of the dress, along with the generous slit that went up my right thigh.

So, was it s\*\*y? Yes. Did I feel naked in it? Yes. But was it “walking lingerie suitable only for the bedroom” as James described it? No. In fact, it technically covered more of my body than the co conut bra and grass skirt outfit that I wore when James saw me for the first time in Hawaii.

I made the mistake of saying that to James. It went over as badly as you might expect.

He started demanding to know whether I was dressing that way because I wanted male attention or if it was just because I wanted to frustrate the hell out of him.

At that point, I was getting annoyed, but Charlotte-who had been beside me in the kitchen while I talked to him- decided to jump in. This time, I did not mind as much. She took the phone away from me and told James that she had been hanging around me enough lately to know I do not seek out male attention, nor do I accept it when it is offered. She told him to get his jealousy in check so that I could have a fun night like I deserved.

Charlotte’s words must have made an impact on James. When she handed the phone back to me, he not only made an effort to calm down, but he also told me to go and have a good time. However, he did make me promise to call or text him once an hour to confirm that I was doing okay.

Something about James fighting his jealous instincts to make me happy warmed my heart.

**SURPRISE #2: CHARLOTTE’S WING WOMAN**

When Charlotte invited me out for girls' night, I expected to spend most of my time at the bar with her. You know, girls' time.

I believe Charlotte honestly had the same thing in mind... until she saw Cody Wilson. Cody Wilson is a famous hockey player in the United States. As soon as Charlotte spotted him, she started freaking out like a fan-girl at a concert.. She tried to get me to help her decide whether to beg for his autograph before or after she kissed him. When I gave her a dirty look, she told me that I should be grateful that he was not a baseball player.

Charlotte quickly realized that Cody was not alone, so she needed me to play the part of her "Wing- woman." I resisted, telling her that it would not be appropriate because I was with James.

The words were out of my mouth before I could stop them, and they triggered an immediate panic attack. Was I really admitting that I was now in a relationship with James? Was I ready to admit that?

What happened to taking the time to be independent?

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(Lily POV).

Thankfully, my panic attack was short-lived, because Charlotte was oblivious to it. She dragged me over to where Cody Wilson and his friend were sitting. On the way over, she explained that the best wing- women were those already in relationships. All I had to do, she explained, was talk to and distract the

friend; nothing more.

Of course, the glaring hole in Charlotte's explanation was how I might distract the friend without resorting to flirting, but I ended up not having time to ask.

Thanks to Charlotte's infectious charm, couple of minutes, we were sitting at a table with Cody Wilson and his friend Sergio.

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just a

Like Cody, Sergio was a professional hockey player. Whereas Cody played for a team in the United States, Sergio played for a team in Spain. He was just in town with his brother visiting.

The Moon Goddess must have been watching over me, because it turned out that Sergio

io was happily

married. While Cody and Charlotte got to know each other in more ways than one -alternating between

making out at the table and making out on the dance floor-Sergio and I talked

about Sergio's life in Spain, his wife, and his young daughter. When I pulled out my phone to send a quick text to James, Sergio did not flinch. Instead, he commented that he makes his wife do the same thing whenever they are apart and she goes out with her friends. Before I knew it, I found myself peppering Sergio with a variety of questions about his wife and his marriage. He told me that he has been married to his wife for 5 years, having met her at 18 and married

her at 19. He told me that they married so young in part because neither of their families were stable, and they wanted to give each other the stability that they never had. When I asked whether he ever regretted not giving himself an opportunity to grow up first, he smiled and said he could never regret anything having to do with his wife.

About 45 minutes in, I decided that I was ready to call a taxi and call it a night. Sadly, that is when sh&t really started to hit the fan.

### SURPRISE #3: BREAKING A HUMAN'S ARM

I excused myself to go I

to them: Once done, I started to head back to the table where Sergio, Cody, and Charlotte had been sitting so that I could order a taxi and say good-bye.

Unfortunately, that is when a large human male cornered me in the hallway.

"Hey, Daisy Baby," he slurred. "I did not know you were coming to Arkansas. I thought you were still in Spain."

"Wrong person," I responded as I tried to continue past him.

He grabbed my arm and pushed me against the wall. "No, not the wrong person. You remember me, don't you, Daisy Baby?"

I pushed him back. "No, I do not remember you. You have the wrong person. Now if you will excuse me

He leaned forward and tried to put his head in the nape of my neck, stopping only when I put my hand up. I could smell the heavy scent of alcohol on his breath. I started wondering why I had agreed to go out with Charlotte tonight; drunk humans were disgusting.

"Daisy Baby, you smell even better than you did the last time I saw you. You probably just forgot me because you spent more time looking at my di ck than my face. Perhaps if I show you...

I slapped him across the face. "I already told you. Wrong person."

To my surprise, the human smiled. "Oh, I get it now. Daisy Baby wants to play rough again."

I gave the human a dirty look. "Again, you must be confusing me with

someone else. I am not this Daisy person.

The human smiled even bigger. "Who would you like to be then, Daisy Baby? You pick the name.

He leaned in to give me a kiss, but I shoved him hard, this time borrowing some of Rose's strength. His back hit the opposite wall.

I started walking again, but he recovered quickly, came up from behind, and grabbed me. His grip was strong for a human, and I knew the only thing keeping me from being assaulted right now was the fact that I was a werewolf.

I was officially done with dealing with this guy. I whirled around me, grabbed his arm, and snapped it in half.

"Next time, you will take 'no' for an answer," I said angrily.

**SURPRISE #4: MY DOPPLEGANGER**

I stormed over to the table to tell Charlotte that I was leaving. I reached the table, but Charlotte was still on the dance floor with Cody. Before I could say goodbye to Sergio and go to Charlotte to let her know I would see her tomorrow, the human-still not satisfied apparently- came over and began shouting.

Sergio stood and looked at the human dismissively. "Franco, what the f&&k is your problem?"

The human pointed at me with his left hand. "This b&&ch here just broke my arm!"

"You know this guy?" I asked Sergio in disbelief.

Sergio sighed. "Yes. Franco is my brother."

My eyes widened in anger. "Well, your brother just tried to assault me in the hallway. I tried to shove him off several times and tell him that I was not who he thought I was, but he would not stop."

Sergio turned and glared at Franco. "What the f&&k is your problem, Franco? Did Mama not teach you better?"

"This is Daisy, brother!" he stated as he continued to hold his arm in pain.

"Daisy? As in Antonio's Daisy?"

"Yes!"

Sergio looked at me curiously.

"I am not Daisy! And even if I was, that does not give your brother the right to try to force himself on me!"

Sergio then glared at Franco again.

“Daisy likes it rough! I thought she was playing with me!”

“I AM NOT DAISY!”

“Here look, brother!” Franco said as he tried to quickly find a photo in his phone’s camera reel using one hand.

Once Franco found the picture he was looking for, he showed it to Sergio. Sergio frowned,

“This is not the same girl, brother. But... Lily... I have to tell you, you definitely have a doppelganger. I

understand why he was confused. Here, look.”.

Taking the phone from Sergio, I looked at the picture. My heart stopped.

## **Mated in the Shadow of My Sister Chapter 160**

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(James POV)

It is now three o’clock in the morning, and I am talking to Lily on the phone. Lily just finished telling me everything that happened at the bar with Charlotte tonight.

It was hard, but I did my best to listen without interrupting her. I managed to get through most of it; I only interrupted her when she told me what that a&&hat Franco did to her in the hallway.

Once Lily was done telling me everything, I took a deep breath and began to pace around my bedroom. Luke desperately wanted out, but given everything that Lily just shared with us, Goddess only knew what he would do or who he might kill.

Luke’s revenge would have to wait. First, I had questions... SO MANY QUESTIONS.

After a few minutes of mulling the questions around in my head, I decided to start with the three most important ones.

“Are you sure that you are okay? That a&&hat did not hurt you?”

“I am fine.” Lily confirmed for the tenth time.

“And no one else touched you either?”

Lily sighed. “No one else touched me, James.”

“What was Cody Wilson like?”

“What?”

“What was Cody Wilson like?” I repeated.

Lily did not say anything. I waited for a while, but still I got no response.

“Lily? Are you still there?”

“I am here,” she confirmed.

“Why did you not respond?”

“Sorry. I was looking at my phone to make sure it really was you that I was talking to.”

“Why would it not be?”

“Oh, I don’t know. Maybe because I just told you that I think my sister may still be alive, and instead of

“Yes.”

“Yes?”

“What do you want me to say? I think the Cody Wilson part of tonight’s events are far more interesting than anything having to do with your sister.”

“I am not crazy, James. And I am not making this up. I really do think that the ‘Daisy they showed me in that picture was Stephanie.”

“Lily, I believe you. I really do. I guess I am just not that surprised.”

It is true. I am not.

“What??”

“Ever since you told me what happened the night Stephanie supposedly died, there has been a little voice gnawing at me. The more that I find out about who she really was, and how messed up your mother is, the louder that voice becomes.”

“Why... why have you not said anything?”

“Because I did not know for sure. It was just a gut feeling that something was not right. I mean, there was a ton of blood and hair everywhere. It looked and felt like a murder scene. No one has heard from her in over six years, and the trackers were unable to find any sign of her anywhere despite searching for a long time. And I cannot think of a single reason that she would leave voluntarily, much less with a group of rogues.

But... at the same time.... the trackers were unable to find even a scrap of bone. That is really strange. We wrote it off back then as just being part of the brutality of the murder, but it could also mean that she was not killed after all and that the scene was just staged to look that way. The biggest thing, at least to me, is why the rogues would kill Stephanie and leave Sheila unharmed.”

“But Sheila held a knife to Stephanie’s neck. I saw it!” Lily protested.

“I know... and that is the other piece that confuses me. But I am telling you, Lily, the more I find out about the two of them... the more stories I hear...

Sheila and Stephanie were partners in crime. Sick, twisted, disgusting partners. I find it hard to believe that Sheila would intentionally kill off her partner. I cannot think to save my life what her motive would have been.”

“You. Sheila wanted you,” Lily responded softly.

“I thought about that, but if that was the case, why wait six years to force a wedding? Surely Sheila could

“I guess that is a good question. But how else do you explain it?”

“Your guess is as good as mine. I feel like there are still a few puzzle pieces missing.”

“I really do think Sheila wanted Stephanie out of the way so that she could marry you and become Luna.”

I sighed. Lily has not said anything to me, but I know the upcoming wedding is bothering her. I can hear the hurt and fear in her voice.

“Sheila will never have me, Lily,” I said firmly.

“You are supposed to marry her in two days,” Lily protested.

“No. Sheila has PLANNED for me to marry her in two days. I will never make it down that aisle. I promise you. I have plans for her, and for your mother, and for anyone else who is involved.”

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I heard Lily take a deep breath. I find it interesting that she has never asked me what my plans are. I am

not sure if that is because she trusts me or because she is afraid.

“James, what are we going to do if Stephanie really is alive?” Lily asked.

“Pray to the Moon Goddess that she has the good sense to stay away. She has been gone for six years already. There is no reason for her to come back now. She can stay in Spain or wherever the hell she is

for the rest of her life for all I care. But if she is alive; and she comes back, she will pay for her sins just like the others.”

Lily was quiet, still processing my words.

“Now, will you PLEASE tell me more about Cody Wilson? And Derek Abbott too?”

“You are impossible, James.”

I smiled. “Yes. But... please?”