

## Mated in the Shadow of My Sister Chapter...

(A couple of hours earlier) (James POV) At 6:00 in the morning, an Omega knocks on my bedroom door.

# Chapter 0010

As though answering the question I had not asked, Rose again spoke to me in the link,

“These memories are to remind you that James is not all bad. He has been sad and grieving for the past six years, and he has been very misguided, but he is our mate. The Moon Goddess gave us to him to love and protect. We must trust that she had a reason to do so.”

Again, I want to protest. I know, deep down, that something is not right. Something has to be wrong. Something is wrong. Life does not flip on a switch. I must be strong, not only for me but also for Rose. Six years of heartache cannot be erased so easily. Rose is a wolf, and she is blinded by instinct and the mate bond. My role as her human counterpart is to help us see logic and reason.

But now James is just a couple of feet away, and the love in his eyes has only become more obvious. I have always dreamed of someone looking at me the way that James is looking at me right now. Maybe Rose is right. Maybe we should give this mate bond a chance. If we

cannot trust the Moon Goddess, who can we trust? James reaches out and gently strokes my cheek with his thumb. The sparks from his touch are my undoing. I lean my face into his palm.

“You are back!!! Oh, I cannot believe that you are back!!! How long have I hoped... and prayed that you would come back! And ... you are my mate,” he whispers, in a tone suggesting that he is just as shocked as I am. “You are so beautiful. How is it possible for you to become so much more beautiful than before?”

I blush as he pulls me into a hug, leans down, and buries his face in my neck. “You smell like chocolate and raspberries. My favorite scents in the entire world.”

I smile, my heart melting further. “You smell like vanilla and coffee beans,” I say softly.

I feel his lips stretch into a smile against my neck. “I do?” he asks.

“Yes.” I take advantage of the opportunity to run my fingers through his hair. It feels soft and silky.

“Chocolate, raspberries, vanilla, and coffee beans. I think that quite the compatible combination, don’t you think?”

I smile. “Yes, I think it is.”

After taking another big whiff of my scent, James stands up straight so that he can peer into my eyes.

“Have you gotten a little bit taller?” he asks curiously.

“A little bit,” I confirm.

He takes my hand and spins me around. “You have changed so much.”

I furrow my eyebrows, and he laughs.

“All positive changes, I promise. It’s just that you have been gone way too long. Please promise me that you will never leave for me for that long again. I cannot bear it.”

At this point, I am ready to make him any promises he wants. But before I can respond, he adds, “I must say, I always loved your blond hair, but the reddish brown really suits you.”

Wait, what?

“James, I ----”

“Sssshhhh. I know we have a lot to talk about. A lot has happened in the past six years, and I am sure you have a ton of questions, as do I. But you are here now, and we are mates, and we will work through it all together in time, okay?”

My stomach starts to hurt, serving as a warning to me that something is not right. But then

Rose pipes up again, “Mate is so dreamy. He is perfect.”

“James, we do need to talk. There is so much ---”

“Sssshhhh. Please, let’s just take a little while just to appreciate this moment, okay? We can talk later. We have all the time in the world.”

With that, James leans down and kisses me. His lips feel so soft, and the sparks are so strong, that I immediately forget what I was worrying about. His tongue runs along the seam of my lips, begging for entrance, which I immediately give him. The kiss quickly becomes more and more passionate and heated.

We continue kissing until we need to break for air.

“How is it possible that you have become such a better kisser in the past six years? That was... wow. I guess they are right about the mate bond.”

I furrow my eyebrows. “That was my first kiss --” James smirks proudly as he interrupts me. “It had better be your first kiss in six years. I cannot bear the thought of anyone else touching what is mine. And you, Stephanie Brogan, are mine. All mine.”

And that is the moment in which I felt my world crashing down all around me.