

Mated in the Shadow of My Sister - Chapter 3

Chapter 3: Lily Meets Rose

(Lily POV)

I am barely 14 years old, and so I have not been to very many funerals. I did not know all the rituals involved, and I did not know how long it takes to go through them all.

The funeral began at 2:00 PM, so I had anticipated that the ceremony and rituals would be done or at least mostly done prior to dark. I did not realize my mistake until it was too late, after I was seated next to my mother in one of the most visible places in the entire amphitheater. Had I realized what all was involved, I would have tried to find a seat in the back or on one of the sides. Doing so would likely have upset my parents, but not as much as begging to leave in the middle of Stephanie's final rites.

I have never seen so many negative emotions from my parents before. My heart ached as I watched them hold on to each other and cry. I may not have seen Stephanie in the same light as they did, but I loved her. Most importantly, I loved and love them. I would do anything to make my parents' pain go away.

On the bright side, perhaps making them angry with me was a good distraction. Instead of feeling sad, they could feel anger.

Not that I had a choice. The darker it got, the more my body began to hurt and ache. I felt feverish and dizzy, and despite doing everything in my power to get comfortable in my seat, I knew from what my friends told me, and what I had seen, that I was minutes away from making a spectacle of myself. I needed to get out of there and fast.

Any hope that I had had of anyone being there with me when I shifted was gone. I knew I was on my own for this.

As I got up, I felt angry eyes on me. I couldn't help but turn to see who was staring me down. Unsurprisingly, it was future alpha James. We briefly locked eyes and then I scurried away.

Today was not the first time that I had caught James looking at me, but it was the first time I had seen such anger and resentment in his gaze. I had no idea what that was about, but I told myself it was probably just the way that James was choosing to grieve.

Clumsily, after knocking over a couple of flower arrangements on my way out the door, I finally made it out of the venue. I hurried myself to the nearby forest. At first, I started to head the direction I had gone with Stephanie just last night, but I quickly realized that was a bad idea. I decided to head in the opposite direction, towards a waterfall.

I still do not know why Stephanie was so insistent on me meeting her in the forest last night. She told me before she went downstairs to watch a movie with James that she had something special she wanted to show me at midnight. I tried to tell her that I did not want to meet her that late because I needed to save my energy for my first shift, but she was being stubborn... and I knew all too well what happens when Stephanie was being stubborn or felt like she was being challenged. Plus, naive me thought there was a possibility that Stephanie wanted to give me a present or do something nice for me for once.

Another flash of pain distracted me from thinking any more about last night, and I fell to the ground.

Suddenly, I heard a voice in my head. “Keep going, Lily. Keep going. Get to the waterfall.”

I was not sure who the voice belonged to, but I knew that I needed to listen to it. Struggling, I climbed to my feet... only to fall to the ground again as another flash of pain hit me. Everything in me wanted to give up and pray that I joined Stephanie wherever she was. However, the voice spoke again.

“Lily, I will help you through this, but I need you to move. Please. Crawl if you have to, but you need to get to the waterfall.”

Slowly, I got myself on all fours and crawled as quickly as I could through the forest towards the waterfall. My hands and legs were getting scraped up, but the scrapes were nothing compared to the pain that I was feeling as my body prepared for its first shift.

It must have taken me at least 10 minutes —although in my head it felt more like a couple of hours— but I finally made it to the waterfall. Once there, I collapsed. The pain continued to come at me in huge waves, and a few times I was sure I was going to stop breathing.

“Hold on, Lily. You are going to be fine. I need you to clear your mind and just focus on letting go.”

The pain hurt too much to fight or question, so I closed my eyes and just did as I was told. I heard and felt the sound of bones breaking, and I felt like my body was essentially self-imploding.

Finally, after several more minutes —which again seemed to pass in slow motion— the pain suddenly stopped.

“Good job, Lily. You did good,” the voice said.

The pain was gone, so I could finally ask questions. “Who... who are you?” I asked.

“I am your wolf, silly. My name is Rose. Are you ready to see what I look like?”

“Y-yes.”

“Good. Now open your eyes.”

I opened my eyes and immediately noticed that I was not human anymore. My feet and hands were paws. I then looked into the water that pooled at the edge of the waterfall, and I saw my reflection... or rather the reflection of Rose. My heart stopped.

There are many different types of wolves —alpha wolves; beta wolves; gamma wolves; warrior wolves; silver wolves; white wolves; red wolves; omega wolves. And even within those categories, there are varying sizes and colors and markings. We learn about the types of wolves in school.

“Expect the unexpected” was a phrase that was often said about the first transition, but in reality your wolf generally follows your lineage: the children of alpha wolves will generally be alpha wolves; the children of beta wolves will generally be beta wolves; and so on. Typically, the big excitement —especially with children of ranked wolves— centers on the size, color, and personality of the new wolf.

Looking back at me in the reflection of the pool was a type of wolf I had never seen or learned about in school. Rose’s fur was a beautiful bluish-silver color that almost glowed. On the right side of her rump was a large black crescent moon symbol, and the black coloring of that symbol matched her solid black paws and black tail. In addition, I noticed that Rose was huge. Although it was tough to tell, it appeared to me that Rose was at least as large as some alpha wolves.

“What type of wolf are we, Rose?”

“A special type. You will learn more as time goes on, but know that the Moon Goddess has blessed you and I, Lily.”

I did not say anything; I was not sure what to say.

Rose and I sat by the waterfall for a while longer, until I remembered Stephanie’s funeral. “We need to get back!” I told Rose in a panic.

Rose guided me through how to transform back to our human form, and I frantically searched the nearby trees for clothes. I found a men’s t-shirt and shorts. Both were far too big for my small frame, so I opted to just put the t-shirt on.

I also grabbed my eye-glasses off the ground and put them on; thankfully they did not break during the transition. Now that I had Rose, I would not need the glasses anymore because she would heal my eyes. However, Rose warned me that —for now— it was best that I continue to wear the glasses and let the pack believe that I did not yet have my wolf. I thought it was a curious thing for her to say, but I had no reason to not trust her.

I hurried back to the packhouse and entered the beta suite, hoping to quickly change clothes and re-join the mourning crowd.

Unfortunately, once I entered the suite, I was met with the angry, accusing eyes of my mother.

“WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? HOW DARE YOU MAKE A SCENE AT YOUR SISTER’S FUNERAL! HAVE YOU NO SHAME? ARE YOU SO SELFISH AND SELF-CENTERED THAT YOU CAN THINK OF NO ONE BUT YOURSELF?”

I said nothing. What could I say?

My mother then did something that, in my 14 years, she had never done before. She slapped me. Hard. And the beating continued from there.

