

Chapter 0086

Just then, James comes walking back up. He looks upset to see me hugging Brady, but to his credit, he does not say anything.

"Alpha Brady."

"James."

"I was promised two hours. It has been 45 minutes."

Brady shrugs.

"I suggest that Lily make up the time by having dinner with me tonight."

"James, I already told you that Brady and I have plans."

James looks directly at Brady. "Yes, but I am sure that Alpha Brady would agree that, if he has to bail on your plans for tonight, he would rather you be with me than be alone."

Brady scoffs. "Hardly. But it doesn't matter. I have no intention of bailing on Lily. Unlike you, I saw her value from the moment I met her." 2

"If you are so sure you won't bail on her, then there is no harm in agreeing with me, is there?"

Brady rolls his eyes.

"Fine, whatever. I'll play your stupid game. If lightning strikes and I am forced to bail on Lily tonight, I will not prevent her from having dinner with you... provided you take

some of our security detail with you.”

“Deal.”

James smiles. “So now tell me, how long are you all planning to stay in Hawaii?”

“We leave tomorrow. I need to get Lily back to where she is living, and then I need to get back to my packhouse and catch up on the work I have been neglecting while being here.”

“Fair enough. I suppose I will leave tomorrow then too.”

For a moment, listening to the two of them, I wonder if they fell on their heads while my back was turned. Where was this ability to engage in polite conversation earlier?

And then it stops.

Brady’s phone rings. He glances down to see who it is, and then apologizes to me as he steps a little bit away. He is close enough that I cannot help but listen to his part of the conversation; it is the downside of werewolf hearing.

“Hey, Sammy.”

“Really? Me? Wow. No, of course I want to. I would be honored. Wow. Thank you. When is it?”

“Tonight? As in, tonight tonight?”

“No, Buddy. No, of course not. I will make it work. I will not disappoint you. I am looking forward to it.”

“Okay, I love you too. I will talk to you tonight.”

Brady hangs up the phone and walks back to where James and I are standing. James has an even bigger smile on his face, but Brady's face is 100% stoic. It is the face that I have seen him get whenever he is interacting with his team and wearing his "alpha" hat.

"Good news?" James asks, in a tone suggesting he knows exactly what Brady's phone call was about.

"I do not know whether I should thank you or punch you," Brady says in a flat tone.

"Probably both," James responds.

"You are probably right," Brady agrees.

I look at both of them with question marks. "James, what did you do?"

James just stares at Brady.

"Brady, what is going on?"

Brady just stares at James.

"One of you answer me!" I exclaim in frustration.

Brady gently touches my arm, while keeping an eye on James. "Lily, I am really sorry, but I have to bail on you after all. It seems that James has a pull with lightning."

I look at James angrily. "What did you do, James?"

"Nothing bad, I promise you. I just helped out your friend here so that he could help me out."



Brady rubs my arm. "As much as I hate the a&&hole here, he is right. It is not anything bad. I promise. I will explain everything to you later. But not here."


I put my hands over my face and sighed. "I am getting really d&mn tired of all the secrets."

James smiles. "So why don't we use our dinner tonight to talk through more of them. I'll meet you in the hotel lobby at four o'clock okay?"

I look at Brady and he nods. I nod in turn at James, and he walks away. 1

I have no idea what just happened.

 Comments

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Chapter 0087

(James POV)

I was waiting in the hotel lobby for her when Lily came down a few minutes before 4 o'clock. She was wearing skinny jeans and a green tank top. Her long hair was pulled into a ponytail, which exposed her long, beautiful neck and creamy skin.

Lily gave me a funny look when she saw the way that I was staring at her. She glanced down at her outfit and then back up at me.

"Is this okay? Brady gave me your message that I should dress casual and wear my hair up, but I can go and change"

"No. You look perfect," I told her.

"Then why are you looking at me that way?"

"Because every time I see you, you look more beautiful than the last time."

I was not exaggerating. Lily is beautiful without hardly trying, and her effortless beauty continues to shock and impress me. I am sure part of my reaction to her was the mate bond trying to rebuild itself, but I actually think more of it has to do with the fact that I had finally pulled my head out of my a&& long enough to really pay attention. Only a blind man could not see how beautiful Lily is, and I am ashamed to admit that I was blind for far too many years.

Lily frowned in response to my compliment. "James, this is supposed to be a dinner between friends."

"Well, we may have to re-think that. Friends don't give friends boners," I teased her as I tried to not-too-obviously adjust my pants. Yes, it was true; I was getting hard just looking at her even though she was fully clothed.

"I told you it still works," Luke mind-linked me.

"Shut up, Luke," I linked back.

"What? You ---"

I cut him off. "Not the time, Luke."

Lily gave me a disapproving look, but I chose to ignore it. Instead, I gently put my hand on her lower back and ushered her outside to the waiting cars.

Once outside, we had a minor scuffle with Brady's security team about seating arrangements. They insisted that Brady had ordered at least one of them to sit in the vehicle with Lily and I at all times, but I told them that I did not care what Brady wanted and it was not up for debate.

They continued to try to bicker with me about it until, at the end, I basically dared them to mind-link their alpha and tell him to get down here to tell me what he wanted himself. I made the dare suspecting that Brady had ordered them not to bother him except if there was an absolute, complete emergency. It turns out that I was right, and they backed off.

Once Lily and I were in my (rented) car, the conversation between us flowed surprisingly easily. We stayed away from

any serious or difficult subjects, talking instead about the weather, things she had studied in school, outdoor activities, and funny human interactions. I had no idea that she and I had as much in common as we did, and that we even seemed to share a very similar sense of humor.

Honestly, I think it literally may have been years since I laughed out loud. My body almost did not recognize the physical component of it. That Lily could help bring that part of me out was just further confirmation that the Moon Goddess knew what she was doing when she paired us.... and that I had been a complete and utter fool before.

Towards the end of our 25-minute drive, Lily teased me about whether it was my old age that had caused me to insist on leaving for dinner at 4 o'clock.

"No, not my old age," I smiled. "I insisted that we leave early because it will get dark around 6 o'clock, and I want you to be able to see at least some of the place we are going to during the daylight hours. Funny you bring up age though, because I would be shocked if we aren't the youngest ones there."

"You are scaring me a little, James. Are you taking me to a cemetery or something?"

I laughed. "No, nothing like that. I figured Brady has taken you to all the fancy places in Hawaii—he has always been a little showy like that—so I wanted to take you somewhere a little bit different. Somewhere that might remind you of some of the happier times that we had at West Mountain. I ... I know you had mostly bad times in recent years, but I was

hoping that this might remind you that there were at least some good times before everything went to hell. Plus, it involves something that I know that we have in common." 3

"And that is?"

"You will have to wait and find out."

Lily wrinkled her eyebrows as she tried to put together the puzzle pieces, and I could not help but notice how adorable her facial expression was. Unfortunately, it did not last long because we arrived at our destination.

 Comments

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