

## Mated in the Shadow of My Sister Chapter 261

### Chapter 0261

You may wonder why we chose to play the recordings instead of using an alpha order to command Bloch to confess. Truthfully, we did both, and doing both was really important. Playing the recordings publicly would do three things. First, it would help demonstrate that the alpha orders were not forcing anyone to say untruthful things, just in case anyone (Margie, Sheila, or Stephanie) tried to make that claim. Second, it would demonstrate that Margie herself really was the one on the phone directing the trafficking, as opposed to someone impersonating her. Third, Lily wanted to see how my parents and Robert would react to the audio, because that would give us a very big clue as to whether they were redeemable.

I listened to the audio recordings in between the meeting with my father and tracking down my stuff, so they did not surprise me. They did, however, shock and horrify my mother. I could tell that my father and Robert disapproved of the contents of the recordings, but their faces were largely unreadable beyond that. For their part, Stephanie and Sheila looked like the recordings were no big deal. Margie, on the other hand, looked like she was ready to kill someone... or rather, multiple someones.

When it was all over-and we clarified for the audience that Nick was working with us and never intended to actually do what Margie and Bloch proposed-Lily surprised all of us. She removed Bloch from the council -there was little way around that- but she did not remove his wolf, because Bloch's wolf was not ready to give up on him yet. Bloch would still have to face a trial in a few weeks, and would likely spend a significant amount of time in the dungeons, but Lily strangely held out hope for him.

With four members of the seven-member council removed, Lily now needed to replace them. Believe it or not, this was the part of the evening that Lily had been most nervous about. She knew right away who she wanted in three of the positions. Each of the three had proven time and time again that they believed in doing what was right, even when it could potentially cost them personally, and both of us trusted them.

The problem was that Lily was not sure if the wolves she had in mind would accept. Being a member of the council was not a full-time job, but it included heavy responsibility, a decent amount of travelling, and involvement in situations that were often drama-filled and dangerous.

Thankfully, when Lily announced her proposed replacements, none of the

three expressed any doubt or reservation. To our pleasant surprise, all three seemed incredibly honored and immediately accepted. That left just one spot that she would have to fill in the future.

Lily immediately swore in each of the new council members -using an oath that Rose told her to use– and the new werewolf council was announced and presented to the crowd:

Lily Brogan

Kevin Stoller

Peter Sampson

Dr. Jay Hyder

Dr. Ryan Miller

Alpha Brett Donaldson

[vacant]

As you might imagine, most wolves in the ballroom were thrilled and excited about the changes. The

applause given was loud and boisterous.

Many if not most of the wolves sitting in the boxes, however, were angry or upset. They knew that all the attention in the room would now be turned to them, and it was not going to be pleasant.

## Mated in the Shadow of My Sister Chapter 262

Chapter 0262

(Luna Jane POV)

I was shocked when several members of the council admitted to purchasing females from Margie, and when they admitted to being blackmailed to do her bidding.

I knew that Margie had blackmailed Randall and I, but I had done something to deserve it. Trafficking females and blackmailing council members went far beyond what Margie had done to Randall and I.

How could Margie... my best friend... do any of that?

As I listened to the confessions, I kept waiting for a logical explanation. When it was said that Margie had communicated with them by phone to avoid being alpha-ordered, I thought I had found what I was

looking for. Obviously, someone was impersonating Margie. Perhaps it was Sheila, or even Stephanie for

that matter. But clearly it could not be Margie.

But then Nick stepped forward and played the recent audio recordings. That is when my heart completely

shattered. I not only recognized Margie's voice, but I also recognized her

manner of speaking. She also mentioned details that Stephanie and Sheila would not know. I could not stop the tears from flooding down my face. How could my best friend -and our pack's beta female- do such things? How could someone that I had been close to all these years... someone I had relied on for advice on how to parent my son.... someone we basically allowed to control our entire pack.. be involved in female trafficking? And blackmail? And conspiracy? How could she seriously propose that her own son -who she knew was not gay and was still mated to Jenny- sleep with Member Bloch and record it?!?!?

I felt like my world was falling completely apart. I looked to Randall for comfort, but he seemed to be dealing with his own internal demons. In fact, Randall's face was as red as a tomato, and he was angrier than I have ever seen him before. I reached my hand out to comfort him, thinking that perhaps we could find comfort in each other.

Before my hand could even make contact with his, however, I pulled it back. I realized that Randall's rage- filled eyes were not directed towards the council members or Margie. No, Randall's rage was directed at James and Lily. As that additional reality began to hit me, I began dry-heaving. Guards brought me a bucket. Randall did not even seem to notice; that is how angry he was.

I suddenly began wondering whether it was just my best friend that was a stranger to me. Was it possible that my mate was too?

I somehow managed to pull myself together by the time that the new council members were announced. I was the only wolf in either of the boxes who joined the applause,

My applause earned me a dirty look from Randall. It was the first time that he looked at me since the wrongdoing of the council was revealed. I had never, ever seen Randall look at me that way before, but the look only made me clap louder.

Lily announced that the public meeting to discuss alleged wrongdoing at West Mountain Pack would now begin. Chairs were brought out for Lily and James, and they were placed in the middle of the chairs for the other council members. Just before sitting down, James looked at Randall.

"Father, during our meeting earlier, I commanded you to not disclose our earlier conversation or try to interfere with tonight's plans. I relieve you of those commands. It is only right

that you be able to fully participate in the discussion and investigation of your leadership.”  
Was the alpha command the reason that Randall was so angry at James and Lily?

Randall stood and addressed James and Lily. “There is no need for an investigation. I formally rescind my title as alpha of West Mountain Pack and name you, James Anderson, as my successor.”

“Thank you for making that part of the process easier, Father. I accept the position as Alpha of West Mountain Pack.”

## Mated in the Shadow of My Sister Chapter 263

### Chapter 0263

With those words, there was a subtle shift in the wind, and the transfer of power from Randall to James could be felt by all in the ballroom. A part of me felt proud that James and Lily could now be referred to as “Alpha James” and “Luna Lily.”

Once the wind settled down, James spoke again.

“Unfortunately, Father, your opportunity for a peaceful transition closed when you told me to f&&k off

earlier. There are wolves that have been waiting to address you and the others on stage. They also have

Questions that they want to ask, and that they deserve answers to

Had you been willing to man-up and admit your role in the horrors that have been happening in this pack, I

would have asked that the waiting wolves focus their complaints and questions on the others on stage.

However, at this point, your concession is a little too late.”

James then turned to Lily. “Sweetheart?”

“Alpha Aaron, you may now read the list of charges,” Lily said as she took her seat.

Alpha Aaron approached the stage again.

“Thank you, Luna Lily and Honorable Members of the Werewolf Council. I hereby accuse West Mountain

Pack and its former leadership of the following crimes:

- The abuse of females, children, the elderly, and other vulnerable persons;
- Abuse of the mate bond, and intentionally using that bond as a vehicle for torture;

-Unwarranted and inhumane punishment of pack members for petty sins without due process;

-Conspiracy to commit kidnapping, rape, blackmail, and trafficking.

I accuse everyone in both boxes of all of these crimes.”

Wait, what?

The trafficking had already been established as to Margie, and there had been some reference at Sheila’s wedding to what Stephanie and Sheila did to Nick’s mate bond, but was Alpha Aaron suggesting that more had happened? And that we all knew about it?

I looked at Randall. Unlike me, he did not seem surprised at all by the allegations. Instead, his hateful glares at Lily and James had returned.

Meanwhile, Stephanie and Sheila looked dumbfounded, as did the other pack members in the box.

Confused, I then looked at Margie. She was crying as Robert tried to hold and console her. He must have moved closer to her at some point and I did not notice it.

After a minute or so, while the room continued to process the weight of Alpha Aaron’s allegations, Robert stood up.

“Lily, enough is enough. I demand that you end this now.”

“It is Luna Lily, Father. And what do you propose that I end?”

“Can’t you see what this is doing to your mother? Do you really need to publicly embarrass her? I admit

that she made some mistakes. A lot of mistakes. But she is not evil. She is simply acting out in pain,

after all the horrible things that have happened to her. Can you not show some mercy to your mother?”

Lily glared at him. “Where was the mercy that she showed me when she was beating me? When she told me that she wished it had been me that died and not Stephanie? Where was her mercy when I was forced to go days without eating? Where was her mercy when Stephanie was torturing me in the name of luna training?”

Again, what?

“She is your mother, for Goddess’ sake. She gave birth to you and she raised you. She loved you in her

own way. Yes, she made mistakes. But I did too. And you did too, Lily.”

“LUNA LILY.”

Robert sighed. “You made mistakes too, Luna Lily. She is your family. Family

forgives one another.”

“SHE PAID WOLVES TO HAVE ME KILLED!!!”

“She thought that you killed Stephanie! And that you stole Stephanie’s mate!”

“Neither of those things were true.”

“But she was confused. You are the Goddess’ chosen one. Can you not use your gift to see how much your mother has already suffered? Look at her, she is crying. Does that bring you joy? Is your revenge really more important than taking care of your family?”

## Mated in the Shadow of My Sister Chapter 264

Chapter 0264

“THIS IS NOT ABOUT REVENGE!”

“THEN WHAT IS IT ABOUT? TELL ME SO WE CAN END THIS!”

For a moment, the strength that I had seen in Lily cracked just a little bit. I saw the tears forming in her eyes.

“I always loved you, Father. I put up with everything and I ignored the pain. I considered you to be my superhero. I told myself that you did not know what she was doing, and that you would never allow it to continue if you knew. But here you are, defending her.”

“She is my mate and my wife! Of course I am defending her!”

“AND I WAS YOUR DAUGHTER!!!!!!”

Robert paused, not saying anything for a moment. His next words were spoken softly. But for our werewolf hearing, I doubt most in the audience would have heard him.

“Your mother has suffered enough, Lily. My parents mistreated her. I mistreated her. She lost Tyler, and then she lost your sister. Those kinds of things can take down the strongest of wolves. She is not as strong as you and I, or any of us. Please, Lily, I beg of you. As my daughter. as your mother’s daughter. think of the good times. Think of your family. End this public spectacle. Let’s get your mother into some therapy. I will go with her. I will even get some too. But please, do not continue this. It needs to end.”

Lily wiped a few more tears from her eyes, and James approached and hugged her from behind. She

leaned her head against his shoulder as she collected herself. For a moment, I thought she was going to agree to what Robert asked of her. But she didn't.

"This is not about me, Father. I put up with abuse and torture for ten years without complaint. If this was just about me, I would have accepted your suggestion. But it's not. It's simply not. I understand that Mother has suffered and I am sorry for that. But it does not excuse what she did. Nor does it excuse what she allowed to happen and what she encouraged to happen." Lily gestured to everyone else in the boxes, as she wiped more tears from her cheeks. "Nor does it excuse what you did, or what anyone else in these boxes did. There are real victims here, lots of them, and they deserve justice too. Sit down, Father. The meeting will continue." With that, Lily invited the first of many victims to the microphone to explain their stories. For the next three hours, we heard heartbreaking story after story. We heard from pack members that had long since left the pack and that I never thought I would hear from the Hoffman Family, and many, many, many others. By the end, I had thrown up so much that they had to briefly pause so that Dr. Miller could check on me.

At his request, the silver cuff was removed so that my wolf could try to heal me. He actually proposed to the other council members that I be allowed to leave and go to the clinic for an IV, but I quickly said that I did not want to go anywhere.

These atrocities had happened in my pack, under my leadership. I had always refused to hear complaints about Margie and Stephanie in the past, but that was because I did not know how bad things were. Now that I knew, I owed it to the victims to continue to hear them out. Ultimately, I am glad that I stayed. Because the worst was about to come.

## Mated in the Shadow of My Sister Chapter 265

Chapter 0265  
(Lily POV)

After the victim statements, we gave each one of the accused an opportunity to respond to the allegations. Each would face a separate trial down the road,



but unlike the trials at Black Moon, the West Mountain trials would be private. Today would therefore be the only opportunity for the accused to publicly address the allegations and the victims that they hurt.

Randall chose to say very little. "I did what I had to do," was all he said.

My father, meanwhile, used half of his time to apologize to the victims on my mother's behalf, and the other half asking them to understand that my mother has mental health issues. Notably, he never said one way or the other how much he knew about what she had done.

For her part, Luna Jane was completely repentant. Of course, anyone with eyes could already tell that. Her regret did not make up for what she had done, and what she had allowed to happen, but it definitely went a long way towards easing some of the tension in the room.

The various guards and other workers on my mother's payroll made a few excuses about money my mother promised them or threats that she made. Almost in the same breath though, they each chose to quickly plead guilty to the allegations. They clearly hoped that quick pleas would spare them from stiffer

sentences at their upcoming trials.

The statements from Stephanie and Sheila were perhaps the biggest surprise. They neither apologized nor accepted responsibility. At the same time, they also did not talk about their love for James, their hatred for me, their pups, or anything else that might mitigate the heinousness of their crimes. Instead, they spent their entire statements pointing fingers at my mother and trying to paint themselves as additional victims.

(Perhaps none of this should have surprised me, but it did. For most of my life, and in so many of the stories of their bad acts, Sheila and Stephanie seemed larger than life. They were confident, calculating, and evil. To see them reduced to petty finger pointing, without any of the spunk or confidence or name-calling... it just came across to me as though Sheila and Stephanie were deflated balloons. It was sort of sad, really.)

My mother spoke last. She spent the first three minutes of her speech crying; one minute apologizing for her actions; and then almost 15 minutes talking about herself. Her mental health, her suffering, her childhood, her desire to be loved and appreciated, how wronged she had been by my father, Luna Jane, and others in the pack,

By the time she was done, I was exhausted, as was everyone else I am sure. I happily yielded the floor



“Thank you all for your patience here this evening. I know it has been long road tonight, and I promise that we will get to the celebration part of the night soon. We hope that tonight will offer closure for most of you. In the upcoming weeks, each of the accused will face private trials before the council. The punishments, once rendered, will be announced publicly, but the trials themselves will remain closed. We are doing this in large part because we want to ensure that we can move on as a pack and as a community.

However, before the accused leave the stage, I want to make sure that we do not leave anyone with unanswered concerns or questions. All of you, whether or not you were directly impacted by the crimes, were victims. Your pack funds were used; your leaders were distracted; and people around you struggled. We want to acknowledge that and do something about it. Moving forward, West Mountain Pack will be one in which transparency is not only expected but required. And that transparency starts today. In just a moment, I will alpha-command everyone on stage except Sheila to truthfully answer any questions that you might have. Sheila will not be subject to an alpha-command because she is pregnant, but Lily and I will talk to her wolf and get any questions answered that you might have for her.

If I could have Joey and Jessica please take the stage.”

As Joey and Jessica approached the stage, James and I exchanged knowing smiles. The two of them were aware that they were going to be leading the question and answer session, but they did not know why.

“Joey and Jessica are going to help facilitate tonight’s question and answer session. They will also be facilitating future question and answer sessions for pack members, which we plan to host every month. No one will be required to attend those sessions except for the alpha and beta couples, as well as anyone who wishes to talk to us about issues that are going on. Luna Lily and I will also maintain an open door so that the kinds of issues that went undetected in our pack in the past are not repeated.

Please understand that our Beta and Beta Female will have slightly different roles than in the past. As our Beta and Beta Female, Joey and Jessica will not stand in the way of pack members communicating with us, but they will instead serve as additional resources for you and the pack generally.”

James paused to allow Joey and Jessica to process the weight of his words. I smiled as I watched Joey start to become emotional as he put the pieces together.

“Alpha James, are you saying-

“-that I want you to be the Beta of this pack? Yes. That is exactly what I am saying.”

“What... what about Nick?”

“We already talked to Nick. He agreed with us that this is what is best for the pack.”

Joey looked over at Nick, who was still on stage.

“I have a mate to track down, Joey. And when I find her, I think she is going to want to move to another pack anyway. This one has too many painful memories for her. Besides, you earned this. You and Jessica both did,” Nick said reassuringly. “You are much more of a beta than I am.”

“But I do not have Beta blood\_”

“I don’t think you need it. You kidnapped me from my own home. No one has ever been able to do that,” Dr. Hyder said, provoking mild laughter from those who knew him.

Joey then looked at me. “But after all I did to-

“Are you going to keep looking for excuses to say no or are you ready to just say yes?” I asked, giving him.

a mock pointed look.

Jessica put her hand on Joey’s arm. They looked at each other, and then they pulled James and I into a hug. “Yes. Yes, yes, yes!”

A couple of minutes later, Joey took the microphone.

“Ya’ll ready with some questions? Let’s finish this so that we can finally get to celebration.”

## Mated in the Shadow of My Sister Chapter 266

Chapter 0266

(Joey POV)

I am going to be Beta of West Mountain Pack. Me. ME.

Goddess, no matter how hard I worked the past few months, I never expected this. Nor did I think! deserved it. High school Joey was lazy, rude, and a bully.

But now I am going to be Beta. Holy Goddess.

If it wasn’t for the seriousness of the situation, I would be jumping up and

down. But alas, I had a job to do.

The first wolf to approach the microphone was Olivia Grace.

“My question is for Alpha Randall. How could you let everything get so out of hand? Why didn’t you do anything?”

Randall took a deep breath as he tried to fight the alpha command. His resistance was futile.

“Luna Jane caused Margie to have a miscarriage before Stephanie was born. Luna Jane felt guilty about it, and she wanted to do everything she could to make it up to Margie. That worked for a while, but Margie began threatening me that she would turn Jane into the werewolf council. I love this pack, but I love Jane more. Much more.”

“Why didn’t you just order Margie not to go to the council?” Olivia Grace asked in confusion.

“I do not have the ability to alpha command someone not to talk to the council. Alpha commands do not reach that far.”

Anita, one of the omegas who worked in the kitchen, then stepped forward.

“My question is for Margle don’t understand your trafficking business. How long have you done it, and why?”

“I started it after Robert cheated on me the first time. I wanted to leave him, but I did not have any money to do so. I fell into it sort of by accident. It started off really small; just a girl or two a year. It only started to become a bigger thing in the past 12 years or so.”

“Where did you get the girls?” the next wolf asked.

“Runaways mostly. That was how the business started. I came across a teenage runaway wolf while I was shopping in human territory. She asked me for help. I agreed to take her home with me, but before we got in my car, a male approached and offered me \$2000 for the girl. I didn’t think twice; I just handed her over. After that, I always kept my eyes peeled for runaways. When I did not have enough of those, I would sometimes kidnap girls. Usually they were human girls or wolves from orphanages, but for the right price, I would secure any type of girl requested. Thanks to some powerful drugs, most of the

I ran my hand down my face. The nice thing about alpha orders was that you got the truth. The bad thing about alpha orders was that you got the truth.... the full, disgusting, honest truth.

“What did you do with the money? Where is it now?” asked the next wolf.

“I have \$500 million dollars in account in Switzerland, and \$350 million dollars in an account in Belize.

The \$350 million includes \$100 million that I started to embezzle from the pack when James started to act crazy. It was an insurance policy in case the pack folded.” Margie covered her mouth with her hand. Ok, never mind what I said. I love these alpha commands. A guard named Nora approached next. “Why was it necessary to torture anyone as part of Stephanie’s luna training? Especially Lily?”

Once again, Margie tried to resist. This time she held her hand to her mouth as tightly as she could, but ultimately she had to answer. “I included torture in Stephanie’s luna training by accident. She walked in on me teaching one of the trafficked human girls a lesson; the girl had stolen money from me and tried to escape the home of one of our johns. Stephanie asked me what I was doing, and I panicked. The first excuse that I came up with was that I was setting things up for her luna training. I eventually told Stephanie about the trafficking business, but that was several months after I told the original lie and I was stuck... especially because Stephanie really enjoyed the torture activities.

## Mated in the Shadow of My Sister Chapter 267

### Chapter 0267

I did not know that Stephanie was torturing Lily, but I would not have cared if I had known. The ability to torture is an important life skill, and the ability to torture someone close to you is a demonstration that you have mastered that talent.”

“I also have a question for Margie. I was friends with Lily in elementary school. You seemed to love her back then. How could you later hate her enough to want to kill her? What did she do?” a wolf named Anna asked.

“It is true that I used to love Lily. When she was younger, I never personally abused her. But I also never felt connected to her the way that I did to Stephanie, and my love for Lily died over time.... especially after Stephanie died and even more so when she and James discovered that they

were mates. I began to hate her like I hated myself.”

“But why?” the next wolf asked. “Why couldn’t you be happy that James and Lily were mates? You would still have a daughter in the luna role.”

“No. It should have been Stephanie. Lily being mated to James did not make sense. I did not invest in

Lily; I invested in Stephanie. Stephanie was the one who deserved the role.”

Ultimately, we continued like this for about an hour, with most questions being aimed at Alpha Randall

and Margie. The questions soon became circular and repetitive, with everyone trying but failing to make

sense of all that had happened.

The longer the questions went on, the more I realized that no one was ever going to be satisfied with the

answers that we were getting. And that was because we were trying to put logic and reason where there

was none. Sometimes evil is just... evil. Poorly thought out, selfish in different ways at different times,

and often inconsistent even with itself.

Finally, we got to the last two questions. How I wish we had started with these.

The first of the two was asked by Alexa, a 24-year-old hairdresser.

“Alpha Randall, I was one of the ones who was drugged and kidnapped from my bedroom and then raped repeatedly. I was just 17.

It just so happened that I had cameras installed inside and outside my room, because I had an ex-

boyfriend that had been stalking me and my parents were worried he might do something. The camera

footage clearly showed that Margie injected me with something and then carried me out of my house

unconscious.

The next day, I woke up in my bed hurting badly in my private areas. My parents checked the camera

We took Dr. Miller’s report and the camera footage to you. You told me that I had to talk to Margie about

it and

you

tried give us an alpha order not to talk about it with anyone else. Before you could give me the order, I pushed play on the video and forced you to watch Margie drugging me. Do you remember what you said next?"

"Yes."

"Me, too," Alexa sneered. "Why don't you tell everyone?"

"Margie does not have the body parts necessary to commit rape. A video showing Margie giving you an injection proves nothing. And the evidence of so-called rape is just a guess. It could just as easily be evidence of rough sex with your a&&hole ex. It was your fault for dating before you met your mate."

"Correct. And then you gave us the alpha order. You told us to not even think about going to the

werewolf council, because they would not believe me and even they did, you would have us out of this

pack and our homes sooner than we could blink.

The only reason I can talk about it now is that you are no longer alpha. I could not even tell my mate.

Do you remember what happened three months later?"

## Mated in the Shadow of My Sister Chapter 268

Chapter 0268

"Yes."

"I discovered that I was pregnant. I came to your office with the pregnancy test. You threw \$500 at me and told me to have an abortion. I want to know Alpha Randall... why you did do all that? I was not the first one or the last one who was raped. Today you have made it seem like your only crime was putting your head in the sand.

But you that isn't true. YOU KNEW. Maybe not everything, but enough of it. And I want to know WHY.

WHY DID YOU DO NOTHING?" 1

Alexa's voice cracked in pain.

"The abortion was in your best interest. The pup would have been an unwanted, hated bastard. And I already answered your last question. I love Jane more than I love the pack. She was threatened, and that was all that I could think about. I ignored everything else, and I even lied to myself about what was going on so that I could sleep at night."

"I guess I take back what I said a moment ago. You don't know everything.

Because if you did, you would know that that bastard pup of mine was very much wanted, is very loved, and he is an amazing little boy named Donny.”

With that, Alexa dropped the mike and walked away, leaving everyone in the room speechless. Well..

everyone except Luna Jane.

She stood and glared at Alpha Randall. “I, Jane Anderson, hereby reject you Randall Anderson as my mate.” 1

“I will not accept that rejection, Jane,” he replied, pain evident on his face.

“I do not care. Just know that I will do everything in my power to cut ties with you, even if it is the last.

thing that I do. I do not need love like yours.”

With that, Luna Jane gestured to a security guard to take her to the dungeons. However, she froze in

place when Nick approached the microphone with a question of his own for Margie.

“Before Luna Jane leaves, I would like to know... and I think Luna Jane deserves to know.... Did she really.

cause you to miscarry Tyler?”

“Yes,” she responded adamantly. “And no.”

“Explain.”

We watched as Margie tried to fight the ongoing alpha command with every ounce of energy left in her. Eventually, the words came flooding out of her mouth.

“A week and a half before the miscarriage, I went to see a doctor in another pack. I did not like Dr. Miller and I did not trust him, so whenever I could find an excuse to see someone else, I did. The doctor did a routine ultrasound and told me that Tyler did not have a heartbeat. I accused him of lying, and begged him to tell me that it was a mistake. He said that sometimes the pup can be positioned such that the machines cannot pick up heartbeats, but it was very very rare.

He said that, more than likely, it was not a question of if I would miscarry Tyler; it was a question of when. He offered me a procedure to go ahead and remove Tyler from my womb that day, but I refused. I held on to the hope that Tyler would make it, and that we would be the .05% of cases in which the machines were wrong.

The longer I held on to Tyler, the more hope that I had. And then I ate the strawberries, and all hope was lost.”



Luna Jane gasped. "It was all a lie."

THE END

(until the much happier epilogues)

## Mated in the Shadow of My Sister Chapter 269

Chapter 0269

(Lily POV)

It has now been five weeks since the pack and council takeovers. Since then, there has been a whirlwind activity both inside and outside of the pack.

of

Randall and Jane's belongings were boxed up and moved to (separate) storage units, and James and I moved in to the alpha suite. Meanwhile, the belongings of my parents and Stephanie have also been packed up so that Joey and Jessica could move in.

All photographs and shrines to Stephanie have been taken down and repurposed, and the Steffie Garden has been given a very not-s\*\*y new name: "Staff Break Room." Additional tables and benches have been added to accommodate the re-purposing of the space. Similar changes have occurred throughout the pack

The individual trials are well underway. My mother's trial was first. I decided to recuse myself from any decision making related to her punishment, both because I am both her daughter and one of her victims. I

also decided not to attend the trial, sending James to observe in my place.

The trial ended with the committee recommending that my mother spend the rest of her life in the

dungeons without the possibility of parole. They also recommended that her wolf be freed, which James

confirmed was something her wolf desperately wanted. I will do the freeing ceremony once all the trials are completed.

All of the money that my mother had hidden away has been seized, and we plan to distribute it to victims

as restitution as soon as criteria can be developed to do so.

The trials for James' parents will occur at the beginning of next week, and

Stephanie's trial will occur the week after that.

Interestingly, Stephanie has sent me a letter every day since the takeovers begging to see me. So far, I have refused to see her.

Charlotte thinks I am crazy. She came running up to me at the end of the party and told me that she was disappointed that there was no big showdown between myself and Stephanie, between myself and Sheila, and between myself and my mother. She practically wanted to drag me to the dungeons right then and there so that we could have those confrontations.

Thankfully, Jessica convinced her to back off a little bit. I think my perspective has been easier for Jessica to understand because she lived in the craziness with me for so many years.

Basically, the way I feel is this: I lived in Stephanie's shadow for many years. Everything about Stephanie me, for years,

the pack and I both forced to live and breathe nothing but Stephanie this and Stephanie that.

Given that context, for me, there really isn't anything more empowering than caring so little about

Stephanie that a confrontation with her no longer matters to me.

It took me a long time to get there, but there was something about seeing Stephanie on that stage

fumbling and shocked, pointing the finger at my mother and others, refusing to accept any responsibility-

that took all the steam out of any desire I had left to confront her. She and Sheila reminded me of deflated balloons; now that the air had been let out, they were nothing but a sad, pitiful mess.

That does not mean that I want to allow Stephanie to get off without a punishment or that I want her to get another opportunity to hurt people; I will bend over backwards to make sure neither of those things happen.

But it does mean that Stephanie simply does not matter to me anymore. I think that is where the pack is

too, and why they did not have many (any?) questions for her and Sheila.

In effect, from where I stand Stephanie went from sainthood to nothingness. It

is the ultimate fall.

That sentiment may not make sense to outsiders or others who have not lived it, but it makes sense to me. Even without the closure that others think I should have..... even without all the answers.... the takeover night represented the ending of my first story and the beginning of my next.

## Mated in the Shadow of My Sister Chapter 270

### Chapter 0270

Am I done dealing with the past? No. There is more work to be done and issues to be dealt with-

Including Sheila's pup; Stephanie's pup; my father; and Evelyn.

But for now I will take a short break from the drama and celebrate.... because tonight is an important night. It is both my mate's birthday, and Brady and Charlotte's pre-wedding bash.

(James POV)

If you told me a few months ago that I would be spending my birthday voluntarily enjoying a beer with

Brady Hyder, I would have checked you into a mental hospital.

And yet here we are. Joey is here too. The three of us are currently at the bar, watching our mates on the dance floor, taking bets on which one of us is going to cave and go to them first.

It is amazing how things can change.

It is also amazing how much I actually like Brady now... at least most of the time. Of course, it helps that

our mates are such good friends. It has forced us to learn to get along.

Lily, Charlotte, and Jessica have all practically adopted one another. They are as close as any sisters that

I have ever met. I seriously do not know how they have found the time to socialize given everything that has been going on at both packs, but they have, The wonders of technology I suppose.

"So tell me again why you are getting married tomorrow? Joey asked Brady, pulling me out of my thoughts.

"Because Charlotte will not sleep with me again until we are married."

"Again? So you slept with her once and it was so bad she won't f&&k you again without a ring finger?"

on her

Brady gave Joey the middle finger. “No, Beta, I made a stupid comment and she is punishing me. I’m tired of being punished; I know she is the one; and I’m not stupid enough to let her go. So... yesterday I decided to call her on her bluff. I suggested that we fly to Vegas after James’ birthday shindig and get married. She said yes, which I am pretty sure means she has been suffering as much as I have.”

I laughed. “I don’t know, Man. I am with Joey on this one. Ever since Lily and I first... you know... I’m lucky if she can go 24 hours without it. No way could she go six weeks.”

Brady gave me a look.

“Too soon?” I asked, tipping my beer at him.

“Too soon,” he confirmed.

“When are you going to make an honest woman out of Lily?” Joey asked me. I gave Joey a mischievous smile. “Funny you should ask me that, because I got myself a little birthday present.”

I

made sure Lily wasn’t looking and discreetly pulled the ring box out of my pocket.

“For you?” Joey asked.

I rolled my eyes. “You may want to lay off of the wolfsbane vodka, Joey. The ring is for Lily. Assuming she says yes, that will be my birthday present.”

“Oh, she will,” Joey said confidently. “She looks at me the same way Jessica looks at me.”

“Speaking of weddings... have either of you heard from Nick lately?” Brady asked.

“He texted me happy birthday this morning. I replied asking him how he was doing and he said that he has figured out where Jenny is, and he is on his way there. He seemed hopeful.”

A moment later, I caught Lily looking at me. I laid a \$50 bill on the counter. “I lose,” I said as I headed her way.