

## Chapter 8 – The Locker Room Confrontation, Part Two

"Please, the way Ella used to practically slobber all over me, there's no way in hell she ever liked you over me, Liam," Noah said, crossing his arms over his chest. His face suddenly looked shifty.

Liam tiskted at Noah. His arm was still tight around my waist, holding me close. "Now, Noah, you know that's not true. Ella used to have a crush on me when we were kids, before you lied about me just to purposefully keep us apart."

Noah's eyes widened. "That's, that's not, that's—" Noah stammered.

"Say it isn't so?"

I turned to Noah, my eyes wide with surprise, and hurt. "I did first have a crush on you, Liam. But Noah used to always talk badly about you, saying you were jealous, arrogant and even dangerous. And that really made me stop liking you."

Liam shrugged, "I wasn't the jealous one. That was Noah. He couldn't stand that I was the one people naturally gravitated towards. When he saw that his crush was also drawn towards me, that drove him crazy."

"Shut up, Liam!" Noah said. He looked furious, his eyes burning with rage.

Noah had always made it seem like I was lucky to be in a relationship with him. Even if it was a secret one. And I believed him. But here I was just finding out that he had a crush on me first. But he was too proud to admit it.

"Why should I, Noah? You're a coward, you know that?" Liam said. I could feel his body shake as anger rose in him. He really couldn't stand what Noah had done. "I'm glad that Ella caught you cheating the night of your party."

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I turned to Liam then, hurt. "What? Are you serious, Liam? That night was, incredibly humiliating for me."

How could he say something like that? He knew how hurt I was. And here Liam was, bringing that night back in front of his teammates as a reminder. He wasn't any better than when Noah had made fun of me in front of his teammates.

I tried to remove myself from Liam's grasp, but he wouldn't let me go, "I'm glad she caught you cheating," Liam repeated, "Because if that had not happened, Ella and I wouldn't have slept together. And I would never have learned that she is my fated mate."

Cries of shock rang out from Liam's entire team.

"That can't be true," One of his teammates said aloud, before looking nervously at Liam. "Not that... I'm calling you a liar or anything."

Another teammate rushed in to try to smoothen out the situation, "It's just that, humans aren't fated mates to werewolves."

Liam's eyes went hard. When he spoke next, his voice was deep and steady, "Actually, it's rare, but it's possible. And trust me. The feelings I felt when Ella and I came together that night was...like nothing I've ever felt before."

The team looked at each other in shock. I glanced over at Noah. It wasn't shock that I saw on his face though. It was pure, unadulterated anger. And jealousy.

"Oh, and we're just supposed to believe you?" Noah asked.

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"I mean, why would he lie about something like that? He's an Alpha." One of their teammates said. Noah cut him a look and the teammate shrunk back, trying to disappear amongst the rest of the team.

"I don't give a shit whether you believe me or not, Noah. Like I said, Ella is my fated mate. And you, are nothing but a lifelong loser and a liar."

Noah wanted to say something, but Liam let out a low growl of warning. After that, Noah fell silent.

"We're done with this spectacle you've forced Ella into. We have an important league game coming up. And I want all of you to get back to work. Now," Liam said.

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I left their practice after Liam had ordered everybody to resume training. A couple hours later, I was seated in a hidden corner of the campus lawn trying to get some of my homework done. If I didn't see any of those hockey players, it would be too soon.

"Hi, Ella," Liam said, as he lowered himself onto the ground next to me.

"Liam. What are you doing here?" I asked. I scanned my head around the lawn, hoping that nobody had seen Liam sit next to me.

"Wow Ella, I can't believe you're embarrassed to be seen with me," Liam said, a little smirk on his face.

I started packing my books so that I could get up and leave, but I had to get something off my chest first. "Why did you lie about me being your fated mate?"

Liam glanced past me. He paused for a couple seconds before finally speaking, "I did it to protect you."

I rolled my eyes, "Oh, please." I started collecting the rest of my books, but Liam placed his large hand on top of the pile I had created, refusing to let me go.

"I'm serious, Ella. Claiming you as my fated mate is going to save your reputation."

"In what way exactly?"

"You're not going to be the "daydream girl" with delusional fantasies of a werewolf falling in love with human girl. Because that kind of relationship you wrote about in your book is now true."

I narrowed my eyes, "Huh."

"Now, you'll be known as the lucky human girl whose dreams came true."

I looked deep into Liam's eyes, trying to see if this was all a game. If he was back to being the playboy werewolf I'd always known, or at least, thought, he was. "And this doesn't have anything to do with you trying to save face and hit back at Noah?"

"I swear," Liam said, a genuine look on his face.

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And like Liam said, I was now known as his fated human mate. Of course, Liam had been more optimistic about how people would see me once the word got out. Werewolves were not exactly pleased that I was now with Liam.

And that's exactly what it looked like because Liam had insisted that in order for people to believe that I was his fated mate, we had to pretend to be in an actual relationship.

I had tried to protest, tried to get out of agreeing, but Liam wasn't having it.

"It will only last until the end of the semester," he'd said. And so, I agreed.

But that didn't mean the two of us had to be attached at the hip. I did my best to maintain minimal contact with Liam. I didn't want to flaunt our "relationship" in front of everyone's face, especially the she-wolves. I wanted to stay under the radar as much as possible.

I sat in my history class, the one I couldn't get into last semester, waiting for the professor to finish organizing his notes so that he could start the class. Behind me, I could hear two she-wolves whispering.

"Are they seriously fated mates?" One of them said.

"Yeah. I know. But it's true. Just look at Liam's social media. She's all over it. Pictures and sub comments about how much he can't get enough of Ella." ©ww.nóvelw@rM.c@m

My cheeks burned. I too had seen Noah's socials and I felt like he was doing way too much to convince people that we were a real couple. But Noah didn't think so. He said we had to make things look as real as possible.

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Professor King cleared his throat, "Alright class, let's get started on chapter —"

Just then the door swung open, and Liam walked in. My heart began to flutter faster in my chest. What was he doing here? Liam looked right at me then, and started making his way towards me.