

## Chapter 0065

(James POV)

I am walking out the door of the packhouse, suitcase in hand, when I am stopped by my mother. Because of course I am.

"Where do you think you are going?" she demands.

"I need to get away for a few days to clear my head," I say dismissively.

"So where are you going to go?"

"Does it matter?"

"Yes. You are going to be the alpha of this pack soon. We need to know where you are, and we need to know that you will be protected."

"I will be fine, Mother."

"Who are you taking with you?"

"No one, Mother."

"That is not safe."

"I will be fine."

"Are you going to look for Lily?" she asks accusingly.

"Seriously, Mother? Do you think I want anything to do with her anymore? After all that she did? No, I am not going to look for Lily. I just want to take some time to clear my head."

My mother eyes me suspiciously. She is clearly not convinced by my lie.

"Margie and I have been talking..."

Oh, here it comes.

"Sheila Black was Stephanie's best friend."

"Yes, I know that, Mother."

"Sheila would make a good Luna, James."

I groan as I put my suitcase down and turn fully around. "What is your point, Mother?"

"Margie, Sheila, and I have been talking a lot about who your chosen mate should be. I think you should seriously consider Sheila, James. Margie and I think that —wherever Stephanie is right now— she would be very happy with you picking Sheila as your mate."

"Really? Why?"

"Because Sheila and Stephanie were best friends. Sheila will not try to replace Stephanie, and she will not try to erase her memory. Sheila will build on the future that Stephanie would have wanted for this pack."

"What about the future that I want for this pack?"

My mother glares at me. "Why would that be any different than the future that Stephanie wanted? The two of you were completely in sync when she was alive."

I sigh. I am not going to win this fight, nor do I have time to try. I have a flight to catch.

"I have to go, Mother."

"You are not leaving without telling me where you are going."

"I am not a pup, Mother. I am a grown wolf."

"You are my son, and I am still the Luna of this pack. I outrank you, and I can absolutely prevent you from leaving if I want to. Now, tell me, when will you be back?"

"When I choose to come back."

"Do not make me mind-link your father, James."

I check my watch. I really do not have time for this. "What do you want from me?"

"Tell me where you are going."

"Hawaii."

"HAWAII? WHY?"

"I think a little bit of sun would be good for me. I want to take my mind off of things here, and heal."

Suddenly, I hear a screeching voice come down the stairs. " I LOVE HAWAII!!!!!" Sheila shouts excitedly.

I groan. Of all the awful timing.

My mother smirks. "Well, then. Isn't that convenient. Sheila, why don't you pack a suitcase. You can go to Hawaii with James. I will mind-link Joey and Aiden; they can go with you as well." 1

"What? Joey and Aiden are the worst security guards we have, Mother."

"So they will not be missed," my mother responds triumphantly. "Go on, Sheila. Be quick about it. It looks like James is in a hurry."

Sheila saunters off before I can figure out what to say to stop this.

"We cannot bring Sheila, James," Luke links me. "You know how much Lily hates her."

"What do you want me to do?" I link him back. "If I do not bring her, we may not be able to get out of here at all."

"James, please do not do this. We cannot risk messing things up with Lily again. You did not listen to me before; please listen to me now."


"Relax, Luke. We have a connecting flight in Honolulu. We will find a way to lose them there. Besides, we can trust

Sheila.”

“No, we can’t,” Luke responds.

“Sheila has kept our confidences for years.”

“But Lily hates her.”

“Lily hates a lot of people right now, including me. I do not know that her opinion needs to be the one to control our decisions.” 

“It should be if we want to get her back!”

“Who said we want to get her back? We are just going to talk to her.”


I feel Luke recoil. “If you do not want her back, why are you going?”

“We need to talk to her. She may have answers to a lot of our questions.”

“You are an idiot, James. She is our mate. You punished her for years for something that you now know that she did not do. How can you say that you do not want to try to get her back?”

Because I do not think she will ever accept me after all that happened, I think to myself. I do not want to get my hopes up and have her reject me again.

Thankfully, Luke is not listening to my thoughts.

 +20 BONUS

"We will talk about it later, okay, Luke? For now, let's just concentrate on how we make sure to lose Sheila and the guards in Honolulu."

Luke groans and then retreats to the back of my head. He is not happy, but at least he is not cursing or threatening to leave me again.

Twenty minutes later, we are finally headed to the airport. I am worried that we will miss the flight, but Joey agrees to floor the gas to make up a little bit of time while I book additional airline tickets from my phone during the drive. Meanwhile, Sheila leans her head on my shoulder, acting as though she is my doting girlfriend. I want to push her away, but I do not. I decide that I will put up with her for now. I just hope that I am not making another huge mistake.

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