

Chapter 0018

"I do not feel strong anymore, Rose. I am really sorry. I want to be strong for you, but I think the Moon Goddess made a bunch of mistakes when it comes to me."

"The Moon Goddess does not make mistakes, Lily," Rose responds reassuringly.

"My own mate does not want me!" I exclaim. "All he wants is Stephanie. Stephanie, Stephanie, Stephanie. Everywhere I turn in this pack, it is all about Stephanie. She was my sister, and I loved her, but I cannot help but want people to forget about her and move on. And every time I feel that way, I feel guilty. Good people do not wish the dead to be forgotten, do they? Maybe I am not a good person, Rose. Maybe that is why all of this is happening to us."

Rose is silent for a minute, as though she is taking in my words.

"Maybe we should leave this pack. For good this time," Rose offers.

I stop walking when she says that. "What?"

"I mean it, Lily. Listen to you. We have been in this pack for less than 12 hours and you are already doubting yourself again. This is not who you are when you are at Red Rock, and it is not who I want you to be anywhere."

"I thought you wanted to fight for our mate? And fight for the mate bond with James? You told Luke that you would give him time to fix it."

"I am re-thinking that. I want to fight for you more. I NEED to fight for you more. This place is not healthy for you, at least not right now. Maybe one day we can come back. But I am starting to realize that we cannot stay here."

"Are you proposing that we reject James?" I ask, surprised.

"No. At least not yet. I am just suggesting that we move, permanently, and we stop coming back for these memorials. Maybe next year we should actually celebrate our birthday. You will be 21 next year. That is a huge birthday in the human world. We can go out to a human bar and have some fun."

For a moment, Rose's idea starts to really appeal to me. But then I remember two things. First, we are under an alpha order to return for every one of Stephanie's memorials. Second, James has threatened to sleep with other she-wolves. If we do not stay and fight for him, and we do not reject him, the betrayal pains could eventually kill us.

"Do not worry about either of those things," Rose tells me. "You cannot alpha order someone who is not a member of your pack. Once we reject the pack, we will be immune to alpha orders. Which I am anyway, regardless of whether we are pack members or not."

"You are immune to alpha orders? Why have you not told me that before?"

"Surprise? I never told you because it was not really relevant. But now it is. I do not want you to worry about Alpha Randall. If you want to leave the pack and never return, we will leave the pack and never return."

"What about the betrayal pains? How are we going to deal with those?"

"I will take those on so that you do not feel them. You may feel some discomfort, but I will take on the pain."

I gasp through the link. "Rose, I cannot let you do that! You heard what they taught us about betrayal pains in school. If a wolf does not share the pain with its human, the wolf will die much faster than if the human and wolf share the pains. I cannot let you die! I need you!"

"Lily, Lily, Lily, calm down. Yes, betrayal pains can kill most wolves. But I am not most wolves. I am different. You know that. If it ever gets to be too much for me, I will let you know and we can come back and reject that a&&hole. In the meantime, let me do this. For you and for me."

I sigh. Rose's plan sounds like it will work, but I once again have that pain in my stomach telling me it may be too good to be true. But at this point, what more do I have to lose?

Unfortunately, I knew as soon as I asked myself that, that those would be my famous last words.