

Liam Gold

On their last day in Hood River, Finn and Lily were cuddling in bed when Matt disturbed them yet again.

"Come on guys! It's your last full day here, so there's no time to waste!" he shouted loudly, probably waking up the entire apartment building.

Finn shook his head in annoyance, "It's ocial– he's going to die today."

"He's gonna miss his big brother," Lily explained sleepily. "Let him have his moment."

Finn sighed. "I'm going to miss him too, but I'm denitely not going to miss him interrupting us while we're in bed," he said with a wink.

"At least this time we weren't actually doing anything," Lily pointed out with rosy cheeks.

"Not yet anyway," Finn replied cheekily, but he hopped out of bed to go let his brother in.

Lily got up and slipped into her light blue silk robe. She tied it securely around her waist and then joined the two Taylor men in the living room.

"Hey Matt," she greeted through a yawn.

"Hey Lily pie," he replied from the couch. All of Lily and Finn's stuff had been packed into boxes, but the furniture had come with the apartment, so luckily, they still had a place to sit. "I was just asking Finn what your plans are for the morning while he and I are galivanting around town," he explained.

She had made plans to say goodbye to all her friends and family throughout the day, while Finn spent it with his family, which meant her day would be jam-packed. "Well I'm meeting Amanda, Eli and Bella for breakfast, then grabbing some coffee with Dianna, and then it's lunch with Sam," Lily told him, sitting on the couch next to Finn.

They would be having a big get-together at the Taylor's house to say goodbye to their friends in the pack, but Lily wanted one-on-one time with the Stevenson's and her brother, and Dianna was a human so wouldn't be at the farewell party Finn's mom was throwing for them.

"Sounds busy. How's Bella handling you guys moving away?" Matt asked them.

"Not great," Lily admitted with a sigh. Telling the young girl that she was moving had been dicult as hell, and Bella would probably be the hardest person for her to say goodbye to.

"But we promised we'd visit as often as we could, and Amanda and Eli are keen to visit us in Seattle soon as well."

Finn pulled her into his side and rubbed his hand up and down her arm comfortingly. "She's a tough cookie," he reminded her. "She'll be okay."

"Yeah, it's just really hard to say goodbye when they were the only real family I had for so many years," Lily explained sadly. "I literally watched Bella grow up."

She had imagined herself running off to Seattle plenty of times in the past, but actually doing it was a lot harder than she had expected. Unlike her imaginings though, her mate was moving there with her, which meant she would be far from alone, and she wouldn't be leaving her whole family behind. Because that's what Finn had become– her family.

"I'm sure we'll see them again soon," Finn promised her. "We'll be coming back here for Matt and Penelope's mating ceremony in a few months, so you'll denitely see Bella then."

"Yeah, that's true," Lily replied with a smile. "Anyways, I better go get ready to head out," she said, untangling herself from Finn's arms and going to shower and get ready for the day.

All of her clothes had been packed away into a suitcase except for what she had planned to wear on that day, so she grabbed the high-waisted jeans, lilac sweater and grey boots from where she had left them on top of a box and went into the bathroom. Once she was done, Finn and Matt had nished their coffee and were ready to leave as well.

"Amanda said they're ve minutes away," she told her mate. "No need to wait with me."

"Are you sure you're going to be okay?" Finn asked her with a frown.

"I'm just meeting my family and friends," Lily pointed out to him with an amused grin. "I'll be ne."

"After Dianna's vision, or whatever it was, I just don't want to let you out of my sight," he sighed.

Dianna hadn't been able to tell them much more about what she had seen, but since Lily had been in the driver's seat and it had been at night, she knew they didn't need to worry about it until they got to Seattle and she had started driving herself around.

"Finn, you have to stop worrying so much," Lily sighed, stepping up to him and cupping his face in her hands. "The accident was at night, so like we said, I can just avoid driving once it's dark altogether. That way we know the vision can't come true," she told him. "Besides, Dianna said I was just injured, nothing fatal," she reminded him.

"Yeah," Finn agreed, but he still didn't look happy. "I'll meet you a bit later at the gym later, like we discussed, okay?" he asked her.

"Yeah, Sam and I are going to the pizza place right across from there, so I'll meet you at the gym after coffee with Dianna," Lily told him.

She would have some extra time after her coffee date with Dianna and before lunch with her brother, so they had planned to meet at Greg's gym for a short training session. They had been slacking off a bit during the holidays, and Lily needed to be ready in case Alpha Erikson made a reappearance.

"Great, I'll see you then babe," he replied, kissing her sweetly on the forehead and then on the lips. "Call me if you need me," he said, before he and Matt left the apartment.

Two minutes later, Lily was in Eli's car and they were on their way to a café for breakfast. Bella was subdued and upset, but after some coaxing she chirped up a bit so that by the time they had ordered breakfast, she was telling Lily all about a boy in her class who she was having a playdate with the next day.

"Seth is the tallest in the class," the little girl explained with wide eyes. "Even taller than Henry," she said as if that was a very impressive thing to accomplish.

"Wow," Lily replied with enthusiasm. "Do you think he'll be taller than Finn one day?" she asked Bella.

"Hmm," Bella said, lowering her eyes to the table and thinking hard about the question. "Yes, I think he'll be taller than Finn," she replied after a few seconds. That's when Lily knew that Bella was getting over her crush of Finn and had found a new target for her adoration– Seth.

"Don't let Finn hear you say that," Lily whispered to Bella like it was a secret. "You might hurt his feelings."

"Oh okay," Bella replied with a serious nod, pretending to zip her lips up.

"Have you and Finn got everything packed and ready for tomorrow?" Eli asked her when their food had arrived.

"Yeah, we're all set," Lily replied. "All the furniture came with the apartment, so there's actually not much to take with us. All the boxes will t in his jeep," she explained as she cut into her omelet.

"We're going to miss you so much," Amanda told her with a sad smile. "I know this is what you need though," she reassured Lily. "This town and this pack were never good enough for you."

"After your mom died, this town stopped being your home," Eli agreed. "Having Sam as our Alpha has really helped though," Eli noted. "The pack has been doing a lot better with him as the leader. That new program he's putting into place to train young werewolves was a great idea."

Sam had made it compulsory for all werewolves, boys and girls, between the ages of fteen and eighteen to undergo training, and had also opened up an optional training for werewolves who had undergone their shift and wanted to become pack warriors. Under Alpha Mason's leadership, the Hood River pack had become weak, but Sam seemed to be turning that around.

"Your brother is doing a great job," Amanda agreed. "Has he said anything to you about who he's going to choose as his Beta?" she asked.

Sam still hadn't replaced Beta Davidson with anyone else because he hadn't found someone that he trusted for the job yet. "He did mention to me on Christmas that he had someone in mind," Lily told them. "Nothing's nal yet though." Lily had an inkling of who it might be, but she wasn't a hundred percent sure.

"Beta Davidson's doing a great job, but I think Sam needs someone closer to his age," Eli said.

Lily could only hope that Sam had chosen someone moral and kind, and if he ended up asking the person that she thought he might, then he had denitely done that.

"Lily, do you and Finn sleep in the same bed now?" Bella asked completely out of the blue, making Lily choke on her water.

"What?" she spluttered. "Why are you asking?"

"Well, Lizzy told me that bonded mates sleep in the same bed. Is that true?" she asked with a wrinkled nose.

"Ummm... yes, pumpkin, that's true," Lily replied honestly.

"I don't want Seth and I to ever become bonded mates then," she stated. "He can sleep in his own bed," she told the whole table condently.

"I'm going to miss you so much pumpkin," Lily said through her laughter.

"I'll miss you too Lily," Bella said, her smile fading.

Lily got up from her seat and kneeled down in front of Bella. "You know I'll come and visit as much as I can," she told the young girl. "And you can come to Seattle and visit as well."

"Yeah I guess," the girl said sadly.

"I love you, pumpkin," Lily said softly, hugging Bella to her. "You're my bestest."

"You're my bestest too," Bella replied, and even though she said it to just about everybody, the words warmed Lily's heart nonetheless.

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Coffee with Dianna had been a strange experience, both her and Lily feeling a bit quiet and subdued as Dianna's vision hung over their heads like a dark and ominous cloud. The older woman had cried when they said their goodbyes, which meant that Lily's eyes were a bit bloodshot when she walked into the gym– it was hard not to cry as well when Dianna's eyes had misted over with tears.

"Hey babe," she greeted Finn when she saw him standing with Greg and Damien. "Hey guys," she said to the two other men once she had given her mate a hug that she desperately needed after the emotional goodbye.

"Hey Lily," they replied with smiles.

"I see you guys have started to pack up," Lily noted, looking at the boxes outside the oce, and the stacks of equipment they had started piling up."

"Yeah, we close in two days ocially, but business has been really slow because of the holidays, so we got a head start," Greg explained. They were only heading to Seattle the next week, so they had a bit more time to get themselves organized.

"Finn told us you're having a training session," Damien said. "Is it okay if we watch?"

"Yeah of course," Lily replied with a nod. "Maybe you can give me some tips afterwards for how I can nally take him down," she muttered, still a bit annoyed that she had yet to defeat Finn in her human form. She dominated training when they practiced in their wolf forms, but he still bested her every time when they trained in the gym.

"You've got it," Greg told her with an amused grin.

Half an hour later, and Lily was pinned underneath Finn yet again. She glared up at his smug face. "I hate you," she told him grumpily.

"Nah, you love me," he replied with a grin.

Lily sighed. "Yes, I really do," she admitted, not sounding at all happy about it though.

"Harsh," Finn chuckled, but released her and helped her stand up.

Someone opened the gym door, turning everyone's attention to the young man who walked into the building. Lily could immediately tell that he was a werewolf, but he wasn't any werewolf she had ever seen in Hood River before.

"Who the f**k are you?" Finn asked aggressively, stepping in front of Lily protectively.

"No need to get nervous," the man replied, holding his hands up in the gesture to show that he meant no harm. "My name is Liam Gold, and I'm looking for Lily Mason," he said, his light brown eyes icking over to her with keen interest. "I'm from the Council," he explained, making Lily's heart freeze in terror.