

Hiding the Truth

"Why are you here?" Finn demanded to know, taking Liam's attention away from Lily.

Liam's eyes roamed over the three other men of the room before telling Lily, "I think this is a conversation best had without an audience." He could only have been ve or six years older than her, but the air of authority he carried made him seem much older.

Greg and Damien moved so they were on either side of Lily, leaving her protected on all sides. "Tell us what you want to do Princess," Damien said to her, loudly enough for Liam to hear as well. "We won't leave if you don't want us to."

Lily was grateful for their support, but she knew that they couldn't be there for the conversation that was about to take place. If the Council had found out about her secret, then the less people who knew about it, the better— getting involved with the Council wasn't something Lily wanted for her friends.

"Thank you," Lily told them both with a grateful smile. "But I think Finn and I should handle this."

"Okay," Greg said hesitantly. "We'll be right outside if you need us though," he said, as much to comfort Lily as to warn the werewolf from the Council.

"My mate stays," she insisted, speaking to Liam as the two other men left the gym. She tried to keep her voice strong and free from worry, but it was an impossible task.

"Fair enough," he replied with an easy nod. "The Council was made aware of a situation involving you and another werewolf— Kyle. I've been tasked with looking into his death," Liam explained, his assessing gaze honed in on Lily.

Despite the severity of the situation, she couldn't help but feel that the huge weight that had been crushing and suffocating her had been lifted. For those few terrifying moments, she had really believed that the Council had somehow found out that she was a Lycan. There was no telling what the Council might do if they knew what she was, but from what Shaun, Mr. Taylor's contact, had told them, it would most likely involve death.

"Can I ask why you need to look into his death?" Lily asked the Council member, trying not to sound too relieved over the real reason he was there. She was by no means out of the woods, but at least she wasn't about to be taken to the Council and killed for belonging to a race that was meant to be extinct. "It was self-defense," she pointed out to Liam.

"That's what I'm here to find out," Liam said. "We were told that it wasn't a matter of self-defense as you would have everyone believe. The Council wouldn't normally deal with these types of matters, but we were led to believe that you're dangerous."

"Who told you that?" Finn asked through a clenched jaw.

Liam's eyes narrowed on Lily's mate, but he replied to the question without resistance. "Kyle's parents," he told them.

"Don't you think they have reason to be a bit pissed off with the person who killed their son?" Finn pointed out with pursed lips. "They weren't even there that day."

"But you were?" Liam asked Finn with interest.

"Yes, I saw everything," Lily's mate replied. "And I can tell you that Lily didn't have a choice but to kill Kyle. There's nothing more to it," he insisted with nality.

Liam sighed and ran his hand through his straw-colored hair. "Look, I've only heard the situation from Kyle's parents. That's why I'm here— I want your side of the story," he told Lily. "I need to know what happened."

Memories of Kyle tugging her shorts off rose up in Lily's mind, and if it weren't for Finn standing next to her, holding her hand and grounding her, the memories might have taken over completely. The last thing she needed was to have another ashback of that monster.

"Kyle, he umm..." Lily tried to explain, but the words just wouldn't form on her tongue. Living through the event had been terrible enough but speaking about it to a stranger felt somehow invasive and degrading. She was saved having to complete the sentence when her brother unged the door of the gym open and stormed in.

"What the hell is going on in here?" he asked, directing his question to Liam.

"I'm from the Council," Liam explained.

"I don't care if you're from the Council, you can't just stroll onto our land without informing me of your presence and your reason for being here," Sam snapped back.

"Look, I understand your irritation, but the Council doesn't require permission to investigate when serious allegations have been made," Liam replied, not unkindly, but with some steel in his tone.

"And what allegation has been made about my sister?" Sam asked, stepping closer to Lily protectively.

"I'm here to investigate what happened on the day of Kyle's death," Liam replied, not fully answering the question.

Sam sted his hands at the mention of Kyle, and his reply was unsympathetic and harsh. "The guy that Lily killed? He used to be my best friend, but not a day has gone by that I miss him, or wish he was still here. He deserves to be buried with the worms."

Liam's eyebrows rose up in shock. "And what did he do to deserve death?" he asked.

"Kyle was a piece of s**t who nearly f****g r****d my mate," Finn told him, and the uniltered words brought tears to Lily's eyes. "The only reason he didn't was because Lily killed him before he got the chance."

"Is that true?" Liam asked her, his voice carrying a softness that it hadn't before.

Lily nodded, another tear slipping down her cheek. "He injected me with wolfsbane so I couldn't ght back properly," she told him, her voice wobbling unsteadily. "He took my shorts off, and he was about to..." she let the words trail off, unable to say what Kyle had wanted to do to her. "That's when I stabbed him." She hiccupped as the tears continued to fall.

"And you saw all of this?" Liam asked Finn.

"The whole thing," Finn whispered, sounding just as haunted as Lily.

"So why didn't you stop it?" the Council member asked curiously. "If it was just you, Lily and Kyle, surely you could have stopped him in time?"

After that day, Lily and Finn had decided to never mention Alpha Erikson to anybody but their circle of trusted friends and family, so they couldn't explain that he had been caught in a ght with the Alpha and that's why he hadn't been able to get to her in time.

"Kyle ambushed us and hit Finn in the back of the head," Lily explained, using the excuse they had come up with two months ago.

"But you claimed to have seen the whole thing, didn't you?" Liam asked Finn skeptically.

"I saw enough to know what he was about to do," Finn bit out in frustration. "Lily didn't have a choice," he repeated.

"I think you should leave," Sam said to the Council member, managing to sound menacing without even raising his voice. "You got what you came for, and as the Alpha of this pack, I'm telling you that Lily has done nothing wrong."

"Unfortunately, it's not that easy," Liam replied. "I'll need to interview more people and build up a real case. Right now, it's just a matter of your word against theirs. The Council will want more proof before I make a ruling."

"Okay, well while you do that, Finn and I are moving to Seattle tomorrow, so if you need anything else from us, that's where we'll be," Lily told the werewolf. "Good luck with your investigation Mr. Gold," she said btingly, irritated with the entire situation. She started to walk out of the gym, Finn and Sam in tow, but Liam had more to say.

"I believe you Lily— about it being self-defense," he called out to her, making her pause in her tracks.

"Then why are you still here?" she asked impatiently, turning to meet his curious gaze.

"Because I can tell you're not telling me the whole truth," he replied, making Lily swallow nervously. "You're hiding something, and I want to know what."

"I have nothing to hide," she replied, the lie falling from her lips with a surprising amount of conviction. "Now, if you'll excuse us, it's our last day in Hood River and we have things to do." Lily turned and walked out with her head held high despite the way the conversation had completely rattled her.

"Is everything okay?" Greg asked them. He and Damien had waited for them as promised.

"He's just asking questions about Kyle's death," Finn told them honestly. "Kyle's parents made a complaint to the Council."

"Are you okay, Lily?" Damien asked her, his eyes holding sympathy.

"I'm okay," she lied, shrugging it off. "Can we just go have that lunch?" she asked her brother. "I just want to get my mind off of it."

"Of course," he replied with a sad smile. "Finn do you want to join us?" he asked her mate, like he knew that Lily needed his support right then.

"Yeah," Finn replied, tucking Lily into his side. "I'm not leaving your side until we leave this godforsaken town," he whispered into her ear, saying exactly what she needed to hear.

"What the f**k are we going to do?" she whispered to her mate and her brother once they had said goodbye to Damien and Greg and were sitting in the restaurant. The two werewolves from the gym didn't know about Alpha Erikson or her being a Lycan, so she hadn't been able to speak freely in front of them.

"We do nothing," Finn told her. "We go to Seattle as planned and Sam just needs to keep Liam's attention on Kyle and that day. There's no reason for him to suspect you're a Lycan Lily," he explained. "Only our families know what you are, and they wouldn't betray you."

"You heard him though Finn," she argued. "He knows we're hiding something."

"I know," he replied with a frown, squeezing her hand to try and give her some comfort.

"We just have to make sure he doesn't nd out what," Sam said, his eyes holding concern for his sister.

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Finn couldn't sleep— not with the Council coming after Lily and not after being reminded of that day. He still had nightmares about it sometimes, only in his dreams, neither he nor Lily had been able to stop Kyle. He would wake up covered in sweat and with his heart beating wildly, and only when he saw Lily was safe in bed next to him would he start to calm down. He hadn't told Lily about those dreams, and he didn't know if he should. How would he even go about telling his mate that he had been hiding something if he should. How would he being r****d while he watched on heartbroken and could do absolutely nothing to stop it.

Finn hugged Lily closer to his chest, needing to feel her and know that she was okay— that she had survived it. She sighed happily at the movement, and the sound brought a small smile to his lips. Even when the whole world seemed to be against them, as long as he had Lily, he would be happy. He could only hope that Seattle would be the home that she needed, and that she would nally be safe. Lily was still so young, but life had made her into someone far older than her eighteen years. Looking down at the gold band that Lily had given him, he knew that he was the luckiest guy in the world, and he would do everything in his power to make sure that she nally got the life she deserved.