

Welcome Home

"Is that everything?" Finn asked Lily as he placed the last box in his Jeep.

"Yeah, I did a nal check, and that's the last of it," Lily told him, placing her handbag on the passenger seat. "We're all set to leave."

Finn closed the trunk and made his way around to her. "How are you feeling?" he asked, pulling Lily in for a hug.

"I'm really excited," she said with a broad smile. "Moving to Seattle has been my dream for as long as I can remember."

He hugged her harder against his chest and kissed the top of her head affectionately. "It's going to be amazing," he promised his mate.

"It will be," she agreed, standing up on her toes and wrapping her hands around the back of his neck to kiss him. "As long as we have each other," she told him as the kiss ended.

"Always," he replied with a smile.

"Alpha James and Luna Beth know we'll be there just before twelve, right?" Lily asked him as they got in the car.

"Yeah, they're expecting us," Finn responded. "Luna Beth sent me a message a few minutes ago with some last-minute details." The Luna had been the one who had helped them with everything, making sure they had an apartment to move into and she had even given Lily recommendations on which high school to enroll in. "She said that the apartment was repainted and all that yesterday, and we got parking spots number twenty-six and twenty-seven," he said as he reversed out of the parking space.

"Sounds good. We'll just have to go pick up my new car, so I have something to park there," Lily chuckled.

"We'll pick it up rst thing tomorrow morning," Finn promised her, taking her hand in his.

They lulled into a comfortable silence as they drove out of the town, leaving Hood River and all of its awful memories behind them. Lily gazed into the side mirror, watching as the town that she had come to resent, faded into the distance, sad that she was leaving behind her family, but excited for what the future would hold away from the place that had never been, and could never be, her safe haven.

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There was only one highway running through Hood River, and if you followed it to the west you would end up in Portland before you could turn north onto Interstate 5. That's the quickest way to get from Hood River to Seattle, but it was obviously not the route that Finn and Lily chose to take. Heading east out of the town only added an extra hour or so to their drive, meaning that they still arrived in Seattle before noon.

"Finn! Look!" Lily squealed, pointing out her window at Space Needle as they passed right by the iconic observation tower.

"I see it," he said with a light laugh.

"I can't believe we're going to be living so close to it," Lily chirped happily. The apartment building that they would be moving into was one of a few in the Belltown neighborhood owned by the Seattle pack, and only pack members lived in it, which was why it was a safe place for her. Lily and Finn would be surrounded by werewolves that they hoped would become their allies.

"It's pretty awesome, babe," Finn agreed. "Wait until you see the view from our apartment though," he said to her with a cheeky grin.

"But you told me that we got an apartment on the fourth oor," Lily said with a frown. "And in the pictures you showed me it just looked onto another building."

"True, but the Luna bumped us up to a higher oor two weeks ago when a family moved out of the building.," Finn explained.

"Why the hell didn't you tell me," Lily asked in outrage.

"Because I wanted it to be a surprise," Finn replied with a shrug. "Now when you see the view, it will be in real life instead of on a screen."

"Well now I can't stay mad at you," Lily said, shaking her head in amazement. "That's so sweet."

"I aim to please," he told her with a wink, his blue eyes sparkling with happiness. "Here we are," he announced as he turned into the underground parking lot of The Crescent apartment building. Since they didn't have their card for the parking yet, Luna Beth had given them a temporary code to get in.

Finn parked in one of their assigned parking spaces and they decided to leave everything in the car until after they had met the Alpha and Luna.

"Are you ready for this?" Finn asked her after they had found the elevator and were on their way up to the lobby.

"Never been so ready in my life," Lily told him with a huge smile. "After we put the boxes in the apartment, why don't we go to Pike Place Market for lunch?" she suggested.

"Sounds great," he replied, tucking her into his side. "I also bought us tickets for Space Needle tonight. If we get there early enough, we can watch the sunset."

"You're amazing," Lily told him, kissing his stubbled cheek obnoxiously loudly. "Love you, babe."

"With everything I have," he replied, looking into her happy green eyes, so glad that his mate was nally in a place that she might be able to call home.

The elevator doors dinged open just then, breaking the sweet moment between the two of them and alerting them that they had reached their destination. They stepped out together, hand in hand, to nd themselves in a modern-looking lobby with light grey walls, a white marble reception desk and a dark wooden coffee table surrounded by three white couches. A beautiful brunette woman and a handsome light-brown-haired man, both of whom looked to be in their mid-twenties, stood in the center of the room and turned to face them as they exited the elevator.

"Finn and Lily?" the woman asked with a kind smile.

"That's us," Finn replied.

"You must be Alpha James and Luna Beth," Lily said. "It's an honor to meet you."

"I am Luna Beth, but this is Beta Drew," the woman explained with a wince, gesturing to the man next to her. "My husband's been travelling, and it looks like his trip has been extended."

"Oh," Finn said in surprise. "Where is he travelling?"

"He's on the East Coast," the Luna replied vaguely, not giving much away. "He should be back in a week or two, but for now Drew and I are in charge of the pack."

"Well, thank you for all your help in us moving here," Lily told her. "We're so excited to become part of the Seattle pack."

"And we're excited to have you," Beta Drew responded with a friendly grin. "The Seattle pack is always happy to have new members join us."

"We thought you might want to just settle into your new home today, and tomorrow morning we can introduce you to the whole pack," the Luna explained to Finn and Lily.

"We're having a short meeting at seven to discuss our safety protocols."

"That sounds perfect," Lily told her with an eager nod. She wanted to meet her new pack, but she'd prefer to do it when she hadn't just been stuck in a car for four and a half hours, and after she and Finn had had a chance to see a bit of Seattle.

"Fantastic. These are your keys for the apartment. It's number 205," Luna Beth said, handing each of them a key and a card that they could use to get in and out of the parking garage.

Knowing the building was twenty-two oors, Lily was shocked that they had been given such a great apartment. "Thank you," she told the Luna and the Beta, looking down at the key in her hand like it was made of gold. The Luna had no reason to show them such kindness, but she kept going out of her way to help them.

"We're really grateful for everything you've done for us," Finn said, speaking Lily's thoughts exactly.

"It was a pleasure," the Luna replied sincerely. "If you need any help moving your belongings upstairs, Drew can help you, but I need to get going," she said, looking down at her watch. "I have a meeting with a Luna from another pack. It was great to meet you though, and I look forward to introducing you properly to the pack tomorrow."

"Thanks so much," Lily repeated as the Luna left them with Drew.

"Don't worry about helping us with the boxes," Finn told the Beta. "There's not much to carry up, and we're actually just going to head up and check out the apartment rst before we start unpacking."

"Okay cool. Well, I'll see you guys around, and let me know if you need anything. Luna Beth sent you my number, right?" he asked.

"Yeah, I've got it," Finn replied, and with that the Beta wished them good luck left them to go see their new apartment for the rst time.

Lily and Finn took one of the elevators up to the twentieth oor and after unlocking the door to their apartment, Finn covered Lily's eyes with his hands and guided her into their new home.

"Okay, stop here," he told her once they had walked several steps.

He uncovered her eyes and what greeted her was a view of downtown Seattle on the left and a small section of the Puget Sound on the right. But best of all, in the distance, under the clear blue sky, Lily could make out the snow-covered slopes of Mt. Rainier.

"Oh my god," she whispered in awe as Finn hugged her from behind.

"Welcome home, angel," Finn said, a smile tinging his voice with happiness.

And that's exactly what it felt like to Lily- wrapped up in her mates arms and looking out over the city she had dreamed of for years, it felt like home.