

## Part of the Pack

The Seattle pack was a lot bigger than Lily and Finn's old pack, so standing in front of them and being introduced by Luna Beth felt all kinds of intimidating. Lily swallowed nervously as over four hundred sets of eyes fell on her and Finn, and she knew that the werewolves in the room only represented a portion of the whole pack.

Despite her nerves though, Lily couldn't see any hatred or disgust on her new pack mates' faces, only curiosity and friendliness— it seemed too good to be true. Just like it had seemed too good to be true when Lily and Finn had been greeted with warm smiles by the werewolves they passed on their way into the meeting room.

"Please welcome Lily and Finn into our pack and make them feel at home," Luna Beth nished saying, to which there were murmurs of agreements and nods from most of the gathered werewolves.

At Beth's nod, Lily and Finn sat back down in their seats, which were in the front row in the vast auditorium style meeting room. The Seattle pack was so big that sitting and standing around a table, like the Hood River pack had done, was impossible.

"As you all know, my mate is travelling at the moment, so Beta Drew and I have been overseeing his duties. We'd like to bring up some issues we found with our safety protocols for if our pack or any member of our pack is ever attacked," the Luna explained, gesturing to the young Beta who stood next to her.

"We've decided to install panic buttons in every room," the Beta said, projecting his voice in a way that made it clear to Lily that, just like Luna Beth, he was used to speaking at pack meetings. "Our old system of informing security of an attack is outdated and inecient, and in the event of an emergency we need to be able to alert our pack warriors that there is a problem."

"Exactly," Luna Beth agreed with a nod. "It will be costly, but we have the funds to do it for all three of the apartment buildings owned by the pack."

Lily had learned from chatting to Beta Drew before the meeting, that the Seattle pack owned the two apartment buildings on either side of the one they had moved into. The whole pack was far more densely packed than Finn or Lily had realized or had been led to believe. The more they learned about their new pack, the happier they were with their choice to move there.

"Dillan, the leader of our pack warriors has also asked that if anyone is interested in combat training or in becoming a pack warrior, that they stay after this meeting," the Luna added after she and the Beta had intricately outlined the procedures that would be followed if a panic button was pushed. Lily was pleasantly impressed with how prepared the pack was for an emergency. "He will answer any questions you may have and will give you the necessary information."

Lily's ears perked up at the Luna's words. She hadn't ever considered or thought of becoming a pack warrior, but she was denitely interested in doing combat training in addition to the lessons Finn could give her. The more training she could do to prepare herself, the better.

"Let's stay after the meeting," Lily whispered in Finn's ear while the Luna drew the meeting to a close.

Finn's eyebrows rose in surprise at her request, but he nodded in agreement, waiting until the pack was drifting out of the two exits before he asked why she wanted to stay.

"I think it's a good idea for me to do even more training," she explained to him, keeping her voice lowered. "If Alpha Erikson could hold his own against you, then I don't even stand a chance."

"You're right, angel," he sighed, his eyes losing some of their spark. "You just won't be able to take part in any training in your wolf form," he reminded her.

"s\*\*t, I didn't even think about that," Lily muttered. She had only been thinking of training in her human form and hadn't even thought about whether she would have to train in her other one. "Do you think I'll be able to get out of those sessions somehow?" she asked her mate with furrowed brows.

"Yeah, I actually have an idea for that," Finn told her with a wicked smile. "Let's go sign you up for some combat training, babe," he said, taking her hand and walking with her to where Beta Drew was standing with a large and erce looking man. A few others were lingering behind, but none of them had approached the man, who must have been Dillan, yet.

"Hey," Finn greeted the intimidating werewolf.

"Nice to meet you two," Dillan greeted them back, shaking both of their hands. He looked to be in his late-twenties, and was clearly no stranger to the gym. In fact, he reminded Lily of Shaun, Mr. Taylor's contact, who had been the one to explain the Lycans' history to her. "How can I help you?"

"I'm interested in doing some combat training," Lily explained, licking her lips nervously.

"Do you want to become a pack warrior?" Beta Drew asked her with raised eyebrows, looking down at her with mild surprise.

"Well I'm still in high school, so that wouldn't actually be an option for me yet," Lily pointed out. "I just want to be able to defend myself for now."

"That's denitely something we can help you with," Dillan replied with a small smile. "Do you have any experience with combat training or self-defense?"

"A bit. Finn's been training me for about three months," she admitted. "I still need to do a lot more work before I can defend myself properly though."

"She's a lot better than she gives herself credit for," Finn interjected, smiling down at Lily proudly and making her blush.

"Training starts at six in the morning every day in the gym," Dillan explained after chuckling lightly. "You're welcome to join in on any days you want to. Those who want to become pack warriors are required to be there at least ve times a week, but you're welcome to come as little as once a week if that's what you want to do."

"Awesome," Lily enthused with a broad grin. "I'll be there." It would be a struggle to wake up that early, but

"There's just one thing," Finn said to Dillan. "Will there be any times that Lily has to train in her wolf form?"

"We only do training in our wolf forms on Wednesday and Saturday mornings," Dillan explained. "Why?" he asked with a quirked eyebrow.

"Well, Lily doesn't really like to shift in front of others unless it's really necessary," Finn said with a wince in his mate's direction, making Lily's eyes widen in worry— she had no idea where he was going with his words. "She just gets a little bit embarrassed because her wolf is just a little, uhh...small," he nished with a guilty glance at Lily like he wished he didn't have to say it.

Lily's cheeks reddened at his words, which probably only made what he said more believable. Having the Beta and the leader of the pack warriors think that her wolf was petite and weak was kind of humiliating, but if it meant protecting her secret, then it was well worth the embarrassment.

"If it's okay, I'll just skip the Wednesday and Saturday classes," Lily told Dillan with an awkward smile.

"Yeah, that's no problem," Dillan responded. "But Lily, there's really nothing to be embarrassed about. Your wolf is an extension of you, and you shouldn't be afraid to show others that part of yourself," he said, being surprisingly insightful and sweet.

"I'll think about it," Lily replied, with a genuine smile that time, though she had no intention of shifting in front of her new pack. "But I'll denitely see you tomorrow morning," she promised, excited to get started.

"Great. Be down in the gym at quarter to six and we'll get you into the right group for your skill level," Dillan told her before he went off to talk to some others.

"So, my training just isn't good enough for you, hey?" Finn teased her as they walked out of the meeting room.

"Don't be like that babe," Lily scolded him with a laugh. "You know how much your training has helped me."

"Yeah I know," he agreed, taking her hand and squeezing it affectionately as they stepped onto an empty elevator in the lobby. "I want you to be as safe as possible, angel, so I love that you want to train more. I actually think I'll join you on most days to get in some extra practice as well," he said.

"I was actually thinking..." Lily started hesitantly, not knowing what her mate would think of the idea. "You would make a really great pack warrior Finn," she said, looking up at him to see his reaction.

His eyebrows lowered as he considered the idea. "I never really gave it much thought when we lived in San Francisco because our old Alpha made it really hard for my family. It was never really an option for me there," he explained.

"Now that it is an option though, what do you think?" Lily asked him. "I know that you have the gym and all that to worry about, but you could always talk to Dillan about it tomorrow and see if you can still work it in."

Lily knew that she wasn't the only one who hadn't felt quite at home in Hood River. Finn hadn't been completely happy as a teacher in the high school, and something told her he needed more than just the gym to feel satised about what he was doing. Finn liked to help people, and she knew that if he were a pack warrior, he could do exactly that. She wanted her mate to be as happy in Seattle as she was, and she hoped that her idea could help achieve that.

"Yeah," he replied, his lips twitching up into a grin. "I think I will."