

## His Return

"Maybe this was a bad idea," Finn muttered to his mate as they walked out of the car dealership with the keys to her new Mini Cooper. "I can always just drop you off and pick you up from school. There's really no need for you to have a car," he tried to reason, petried that Dianna's vision might somehow come to fruition.

"Babe, you can't drive me around forever," Lily reasoned with him. "I'll just make sure that I'm always back at the apartment before the sun sets, and if that's not possible then I can just order an Uber."

"Do you promise?" he asked her, stopping them in front of her new silver car and searching her eyes for honesty.

"I promise," Lily insisted, cupping his cheeks with her hands and locking her eyes with his. "Nothing is going to happen, Finn," she told him. In Dianna's vision, she hadn't been too badly injured in the accident, but if it meant keeping Finn from worrying, then Lily would keep her promise and not drive at night.

"Okay," he sighed reluctantly. "Are you going to drive us back to the apartment?" he asked her, holding up the car keys— they had taken an Uber there so that they could drive back together.

"Yep," she chirped happily, grabbing the keys out of his hand and skipping to the driver's door.

Once she had adjusted the seat and the mirrors, there was one nal thing she had to do before she turned the key in the ignition. She opened her handbag and took out the keychain Finn had bought for her, hesitating for only a second before clipping it onto her car keys. She wouldn't let Dianna's vision darken the gift Finn, Eli and Sam had gotten for her.

"Okay, let's go," she said with a smile, putting the key in the ignition and carefully pulling out of the parking space. She had taken Drivers Ed at Hood River High, but it took her a few seconds to get used to the car and the feel of the brakes and the accelerator.

As she drove them back to the apartment, she could see Finn tensing up every time they turned a corner or when other cars got too close to Lily's car, inching and placing his hand protectively on Lily's upper thigh whenever there was just the smallest possibility of an accident happening.

"Finn, you need to calm down," Lily told him, placing her hand in his while they sat at a red trac light. "Everything's ne."

"I know, I know," he mumbled, dragging his other hand through his hair in frustration. "Sorry angel," he said as the light turned green. He squeezed her hand rmly before letting it go so that she could keep both hands on the wheel.

"What are our plans for the rest of the day?" Lily asked him, trying to take his mind off of his stress.

"I thought we could go shopping with that voucher my parents got us," he suggested. "Then we can unpack the rest of our stuff and maybe head out for some lunch. Anything you wanna do after that?" he asked her.

"I'm keen to go to the Seattle Aquarium," Lily replied with an excited grin. "Or maybe Pier 57 for the Seattle Great Wheel," she added.

"Why don't we do the Aquarium today and leave the pier and the Ferris wheel for a warmer day," Finn reasoned— it was true that it was a particularly cold winter's day, so his suggestion was denitely a smart one.

"Okay, great," Lily responded, pulling into the underground parking and using the card Luna Beth had given her to open the boom.

"See, nothing bad happened. I'm perfectly safe," she told Finn as they got into the lobby of the building.

Her words may have been about her driving, but it was like the universe was listening to her and wanted to laugh in her face, because standing there in the lobby talking to the Luna and Beta was none other than Liam Gold. Finn and Lily halted in their tracks, taken off guard by the appearance of the Council member.

"What's going on?" Finn asked, looking between Liam and Luna Beth.

"We were just keeping Liam company until the two of you got back," the Beta said, his mistrust for the werewolf from the Council evident in his tone. "He's here to talk to both of you."

"My investigation into Kyle's death isn't over," Liam explained. "I need to ask you some more questions."

"You can use the small meeting room," the Luna told them, gesturing to the glass-enclosed room further into the lobby that held only a boardroom-style table. "We'll wait for you out here."

The Luna and Beta wouldn't be able to hear what was going on in the room, but they would be able to see everything that happened in the room. It was a strategic move from her to show Liam that he wouldn't be trusted or given special treatment because of who he worked for.

"That will work ne," Liam replied, seeming unaffected by the lack of privacy the room would provide. He led Finn and Lily into the meeting space, closing the heavy glass door behind them.

"What do you need to know?" Lily asked him, condently taking a seat at the table and hiding her concern behind a mask of indifference. Finn sat down next to her, showing his support by placing his arm behind her back.

"I went to the island where the attack happened. I didn't think I'd nd anything, but I found a bag with this box in it near the beach," Liam told them, placing a small box on the table and opening it to reveal three syringes lled with a clear liquid. "Does this look like what Kyle injected you with?" Liam asked Lily, lifting up one of them.

"I don't know... I guess so," Lily replied with an uncertain shrug. "I didn't actually see what was inside of it— I only saw the empty syringe."

"What about you? Did you see what was in the syringe?" Liam asked Finn.

"No, I didn't see," Finn said, sounding tense.

"I tested a drop of it, and it does contain Wolfsbane," Liam told them, putting the syringe back into the box.

"Then I guess that's what Kyle used then," Lily responded, not really knowing where the Council member was going with all of that.

"That's what I assumed as well," he explained. "But there's just one issue with that theory."

"And what's that?" Finn asked, narrowing his eyes at the Council member.

"Well, with the strength of the Wolfsbane in these syringes, a single dose would be enough to not just incapacitate an adult werewolf, but to kill them," Liam told them. "You should be dead," he told Lily bluntly, "So why aren't you?"

Of course, Lily couldn't tell him the truth— that she was a Lycan and that's why she survived such a strong dose of Wolfsbane— so she tried her best to lie. "He obviously didn't inject me with all of it," she said, shrugging as if it were obvious. "Kyle didn't want me dead," she said truthfully, a shiver running down her spine at even just mentioning the monster's name.

"Then why ll up the syringes so much?" Liam pointed out with raised eyebrows. "If he didn't want you dead then why risk it?"

"Well maybe those syringes were meant for others," Finn said, making a valid argument. "For those he actually did want dead, like Sam."

"And what about you?" Liam asked him, sounding unconvinced. "Why wouldn't he have killed you when he had the chance?"

"I don't know," Finn mumbled after a long silence. "But I don't see how Kyle having that much Wolfsbane makes Lily guilty of killing him for invalid reasons. It was still self-defense, which means your case can be closed."

"I agree with you that Lily didn't have a choice in killing Kyle," Liam admitted, making Lily and Finn's eyebrows y up in surprise.

"Then why are you here? Why come all the way to Seattle to tell us that?" Lily asked him.

"Because even if I can see that you killed him in self-defense, I can tell that you two are lying about something," he told them plainly and simply. "You're hiding something, and before I close this case or leave Seattle, I want to know what."