

Lily 1

The chapter opens with Lily reflecting on her strained relationship with her father, who had always wanted a son. Despite her attempts to connect with him, such as sharing trivia about a Rolling Stones song, he remains distant and dismissive. Lily's mother, Ava, offers a contrasting source of support, calling her a "hero" as they embark on a move from Point Reyes to New Hampshire for a fresh start. Lily, however, remains skeptical, haunted by her past struggles, symbolized by the scars on her wrist, and wonders if this new beginning will truly change anything.

Lily's narrative shifts to her present life in New Hampshire, where her boyfriend, Asher, promises an early Christmas gift, sparking speculation from her friend Maya. Lily feels a deep hunger to know every part of Asher's life, especially the years she missed before meeting him. She takes pride in being the one he chose to sketch intimately, a contrast to Maya's childhood memories with him. As Lily prepares for Asher's arrival, she admires her reflection, embracing her appearance despite the scars, which Asher claims don't matter—though they still weigh on her.

The chapter also highlights Lily's mother, Ava, a formidable figure with unique skills, such as tracking and mnemonic tricks. Ava's sharp observation of Asher's boot print reveals her attention to detail, while her playful teaching methods, like the zodiac sentence, showcase her quirky yet nurturing side. Lily's admiration for her mother's resilience and strength is evident, contrasting sharply with her father's disapproval. Ava's presence serves as a grounding force in Lily's life, offering stability amid her emotional turmoil.

The chapter concludes with Lily's internal conflict between hope and skepticism. While her mother sees their move as a "second chance," Lily grapples with whether she can truly leave her past behind. Her scars, both physical and emotional, remain a reminder of her struggles, yet Asher's acceptance and her mother's unwavering support hint at

the possibility of healing. The chapter captures Lily's complex emotions—longing, doubt, and tentative hope—as she navigates her relationships and her own identity.

