

# Lily 6

The chapter opens with Lily startled by screams, only to discover her mother watching a video of two lynxes fighting in the forest. Her mother, a wildlife enthusiast, explains the animals' behavior as "pent-up kitten energy" and proudly shares that she filmed the encounter. Lily, preparing for a date with Asher, notes her mother's pointed comment about his frequent visits, hinting at their growing closeness. As she leaves, the sounds of the wildcats' screams linger, mirroring the intensity of her own emotions.

Asher arrives, displaying his usual attentiveness, opening the car door for Lily and showing a newfound sensitivity to her needs. Their relationship has deepened since his possessive outburst weeks earlier, and he seems determined to prove his growth. However, during their drive, Asher appears unsettled, eventually revealing he has a secret: he secretly visits his estranged father in Massachusetts. This monthly meeting, hidden from his mother, stems from a desire to fill an emotional void left since childhood.

Asher explains that he reconnected with his father a year ago after years of estrangement, driven by curiosity rather than forgiveness. He describes their meetings at a Chili's restaurant, emphasizing his father's eagerness to meet Lily. The revelation underscores Asher's vulnerability and trust in her, as he shares details about their relationship, including how he told his father he loves her. Lily is deeply moved, her affection for Asher overwhelming her ability to respond verbally.

The chapter closes with Lily physically expressing her emotions, leaning against Asher as they drive. Her internal monologue reveals her own secrets—unshared truths she keeps guarded—while she marvels at Asher's openness. The moment captures the asymmetry in their vulnerability: Lily is falling deeply for him but remains unwilling to reciprocate with her own confessions. The journey to meet his father marks a pivotal step in their relationship, blending intimacy with unspoken reservations.