You Are Cordially Invited

by Akinasky

Summary

After Stiles gets to college he ends up text-dumped by Lydia who goes back to Parrish and less than a year later decides to marry the guy and all Stiles can think of is that he doesn’t want to show up to the wedding alone and he can’t think of anyone else to call but Derek Hale. Sour wolf extraordinaire and apparently stalker wolf.

He had no idea the guy would actually come and offer to go as his plus one.
You've Got Mail

Stiles looked down at the invitation in his hand and groaned; slapping his hand over his face before he dropped the piece of heavily gilded cardstock on the table and slumped into one of the chairs and almost missed. He staggered sideways for a second and was thankful that his roommate wasn’t there to see it. He closed his eyes and pinched the bridge of his nose but nothing helped; the words pounding behind his eyelids.

_Fuck!_ He didn’t let the word out but seriously a litany of curses weren’t going to change anything. The words weren’t going to change. It was still going say the same thing.

Lydia Martin and Jordan Parrish.

He felt the disgust rise up in him, his stomach clenching with a desire to hurl all over his living room floor. Then again, he didn’t want it to be on his shoes, maybe if he could puke on Parrish it would be better. He couldn’t believe she went back to her illegal and illicit affair from high school. Parrish was still one of his father’s men, at least seven years older than Lydia and even after high school, he’d always been sniffing around so it wasn’t a surprise that he kept trying after Stiles had left Beacon Hills. The surprising part had been when she said yes. After their kissing after the Wild Hunt, Stiles and Lydia decided together that they were going to wait until they both returned home to Beacon Hills to possibly try dating again since everyone knew that the long distance thing was the shit and never worked. They kept in contact of course and Stiles had been hopeful up until she called him about six months ago to say that she was dating again.

Dating Jordan Parrish. Long distance after they decided it wasn’t going to work for them.

Now they were getting married and Stiles was left wondering if she’d never said she loved him for the same reason he said it all the time, because her silence had been the truth. Maybe she just pitied him or wanted to see if there was really something there and then the timing had been all wrong again. Maybe she didn’t say it because then she wouldn’t have to take it back. In the heat of getting Stiles back she tried to make it work with him but once they were away from each other—the passion dulled into whatever it had always been to her. Mutual respect and admiration maybe, perhaps even a long abiding friendship but that would be all it was to her.

And here Stiles was once more staring into the face of truth. She didn’t love him back and all that time he could have been moving on and finding someone else had been wasted on someone who never planned to be more than a friend. And of course she was getting married this summer while he was going to be home for two and a half months, he would get to see her and the others back home, Scott would be there and the baby betas but he would see her everywhere.

She was already done with her semester at MIT from the last time she’d updated her Instagram and
heading home to prepare. At the time he hadn’t known what she was preparing for but now he did. He guessed now that the bell emoji should have been a clue but he hadn’t been thinking about anything like marriage for her.

“Fuck!” he muttered aloud this time. He flipped the invitation to see the RSVP, with or without a plus one and he knew he was going to have to go but he didn’t have to go alone.

He grappled with his phone in sudden and desperate inspiration and looked at the screen and wondered who he might be able to call. His roommate, Jesse was going to be back soon and he didn’t want to do this with an audience but the suckfest truth was that he had a few friends here but not really. He’d been spending all of his time in classes, taking a full workload plus several extra classes because he wanted to get on to the next thing as quickly as he could, he wanted into the FBI so the sooner he had his degree the better it would be. Plus there were several work-study jobs that he was working as well as some evenings in a coffee shop to make extra money.

Stiles kept clicking through the names on his phone, most of the contacts were from Beacon Hills and then he paused over one name in particular. He flicked his thumb over it, sending the name up then down because he didn’t even know if the man would answer but he couldn’t help but push the contact and bring the phone to his ear.

It rang a couple of times then went to voicemail like it always did and it was the generic automated message it always was so Stiles left a short message, “Hey Sourwolf, I know that you are off in the wilderness doing your thing but I could use your help.” He paused for a second, “Look it’s not life and death or anything. Just could be nice to not be alone in this.”

He hung up the phone and wondered what the hell he was thinking, calling Derek Hale about this but then again he missed the man. He’d been sending the werewolf updates about him and the gang for a while now, not that he ever responded. There was something about letting the former alpha know about them had always felt important, like when he got accepted to George Washington. It had felt real with his dad though nothing else had really felt like anything after being forgotten for so long but when he came back and told Derek that he’d been accepted it suddenly felt like he was moving on to something better and he’d been happy. He knew the number was still working because it was only about six months old, Derek might never get into contact with him about anything he messaged the werewolf about but whenever he changed phones, he would always use a burner to send the next phone number to a few people, Scott and Deaton were on the list as was Stiles. He always appreciated knowing he could get a hold of the sourwolf and he didn’t know why he’d actually asked for help this time but who knew what would actually happen.

Stiles couldn’t help but think of all the things they had gone through together, first there was Peter and the Kanima and the Argents. There were countless times that Stiles and Derek were made stronger by the other even if they were through snarky comments and snarling grunts. He knew that they also had countless times made each other crazy as well but that had become a part of their charm. So now when he was far from home and Scott wasn’t here and his ‘girlfriend of two seconds’ was going to be getting married to some other jackass, he wanted someone he could count on and despite his and Scott’s consistent youthful stupidity Derek had always been there for him.

And in the meantime, he had to get to class because he still had three more weeks before finals then he could head home. He’d done really well, his grades were scholarship worthy despite the extra work load which he was thankful for because his dad had barely been able to give him the first years tuition and Stiles had taken loans for the rest. If he got enough in scholarships and grants then he would be able to give some of the money back to his dad, which was the plan because his dad deserved to be happy and unconcerned about losing the house after everything they’d gone through together. The Sheriff of Beacon Hills had been dragged along into the supernatural world because
his spastic son couldn’t leave well enough alone. He shook it off and stood, looking around for what
he needed.

Stiles grabbed his laptop and shoved it into his bag, looking back at the cardstock and the envelope
on the table before he headed out determined to ignore the problem until it went away because _that
had always worked_ he thought as he rolled his eyes. He would call Scott later and see if he was
taking someone with him to the wedding though the answer was probably no since last time he
talked with his best friend, he’d been going along with the ‘no strings sex’ approach to life these
days. Kira leaving him hadn’t been the greatest thing to ever happen and though Stiles knew she was
doing okay, probably heading back for the wedding as well in the next month or so. She wasn’t the
only one either, Stiles was in contact with a lot of people who’d left Beacon Hills because he was
near the action but not Scott. Isaac called him every once in a while just to talk, stating he couldn’t
talk to Scott because of the shared agony of losing Allison but speaking to Stiles was like coming
home. Though Chris Argent was currently in Beacon Hills attempting to have a life with Mrs. McCall
he was also working the supernatural scene in town with the sheriff and the baby betas so he knew
that Chris checked up on Isaac as well.

Danny and Ethan called every once in a while, though the former lacrosse player had said once upon
a time that he didn’t want to date a werewolf, the two of them seemed to have found each other in
the aftermath of leaving town. Danny was doing well in school, he and Jackson skyped a lot with
each other and Ethan was doing well despite the loss of his brother and a pack.

Even Jackson checked in every once in a while, mostly to grumble about the fact that Lydia had
moved on to Stiles Stilinski in his absence. He loved to bemoan her taste in men. Stiles usually let
the other werewolf bitch and moan for a few minutes before he hung up on him or frequently just let
the guy text him without answer but sometimes Stiles thought that Jackson needed something more and
he didn’t know how to ask. Stiles didn’t know how to help the douchebag or even if he wanted to
most days but he hadn’t blocked the guy so maybe there was a chance someday of them being more
than unwilling people in the same ‘pack’ but not right now. Jackson had found a pack in London that
he’d bonded with, they were helping him with control and living a quasi-normal life because much
like most others had found out: turning into a werewolf hadn’t been a magical fix for Jackson’s
struggles. Stiles knew the asshole still carried the fear of never being good enough but the pack had
been good for him and Stiles could tell sometimes Jackson wanted to say more so he kept picking up
the phone.

Knowing he had somehow ended up the connection for all of these supernatural people, he’d called
Deaton one day out of the blue and asked him what he was supposed to do since Stiles was loyal to
Scott and all these people were calling him so they could be close but they didn’t want to talk to _Scott_
specifically. The veterinarian hemmed and hawed for a moment then simply said, “Be what they
need Mr. Stilinski, the guiding light that stands to the right of them. If that means you answer the
phone and allow them closeness then that’s what you do. It will all mean something in the end.”

_Cryptic son of a bitch!_ Stiles thought at the time of the call but kept answering the phone when he
could, all the while continued on with his personal new life which included and focused on his
school work load.

He worked through his afternoon classes, went to the library for his shift there for the next couple of
hours. It was late like usual by the time he was walking back to the dorm, having left Roscoe with
Scott he had no choice but to walk. He knew he wouldn’t need to though because he did everything
on campus. He thought about all the work he needed to finish in the next couple of weeks, he had
a couple of paper and final projects. Thankfully he had a several outlines already completed and most
of the research done for several of the bigger projects but it had been a crunch at mid terms and now
he was already feeling it now for finals. It was going to be interesting but it was probably better than
taking it easy and thinking about all the girls and a couple of boys he turned down since he got here because of Lydia fucking Martin. He’d always been waiting for her and now it seemed that is what he is always going to be doing with her unless he decided to stop for real and forever this time.

And he was done waiting around for someone who didn’t think he was worth the wait.

Stiles started to mentally plan his weekend, he had a couple of library shifts as well as one coffee shop shift into the late evening but he still had plenty of time the next three days to get started on the workload he had and three weeks were going to fly by and then he will have completed his first year at George Washington. If he could just buckle down and deal with this finals push he would be one step closer to being able to enter into the enrollment for the FBI.

None of this shit with Lydia would matter because Stiles had other things to do. Her wedding to Deputy Do-Wrong wasn’t going to change anything except rip what was left of Stiles’s love for the red head right out of his chest and stomp it into the ground.

“Stilinski!” someone shouted and he looked around, seeing his roommate loping towards him from the front door with someone lurking close behind him, staying in the shadows. Stiles frowned.

“What’s up Jes?” he asked, “I have to get some work done man so don’t even think of asking me to DD for you. Next time I go out I am going to get shit-faced.”

“That sounds like a great idea man but first off, this guy says he knows you,” Jesse said and pointed to the other guy who was still lurking in the dark of the building.

Stiles frowned and waited as he came a little more into the light of the lamppost and his eyes widened and his jaw dropped in shock, “Derek Hale, what the hell are you doing here?”

Jesse was clearly pleased that Stiles did indeed know the guy and he wandered away with a wink and a laugh, “Don’t do anything I wouldn’t do Stilinski.”

Stiles waved haphazardly as he took another step towards the werewolf who was just standing there with his hands in his jean pockets, looking miserably confused about his own life decisions and what brought him to the dorm building of Stiles’s campus. He waited until Jesse was far enough away to speak, “Hey Sourwolf, kinda surprised that you’re here right now.”

“You called,” Derek said with a shrug.

Stiles grinned, “Yeah but like only a couple of hours ago and I have called before only to see or hear nothing. You’ve never come to me before, you never came back to Beacon Hills when we needed you before, why the hell would I think this time would be any different?”

Derek looked around cautiously, “Can we go somewhere private?”

“Yes, lets go up to my room. How did you get this far anyway? Like to the front of my building, asking my roommate about me? Why didn’t you just call me back?” he asked as they walked up to the door and inside.

Derek just tapped the side of his nose and Stiles rolled his eyes, “You sniffed me out? On a college campus and the dorms full of hormonal smelly college students? Pretty impressive.”

The werewolf flushed as they walked inside, headed up to his floor and back to his room. Stiles closed the door behind them before Derek said anything, “I’ve been in town for a while actually, since about January. I didn’t want to come here and mess things up for you but I’ve been around enough to know that you were doing really well here. So yes I sniffed you out as you not-so-
delicately stated. I remember your scent from Beacon Hills, just needed a refresher. Do you touch trees and buildings as you walk?"

Stiles stared at him in shock because he did do that; he has for a long time, “Umm, yes. It helps to ground me, the textures and everything.”

“That’s why your scent is clinging to things despite that fact that we’re outside. You said you didn’t want to be alone in this and maybe I am tired of being alone too.”

The human stared at him for a couple of seconds, “Well where is Cora? I thought you lef to meet up with her.”

Derek shrugged, “She’s with some extended family in Alaska. The Hale pack is a lot bigger than who we lost in Beacon Hills but they scattered after the massacre, Alaska is one of our safe havens, a lot of space to hide out in and mostly people don’t want to get into each other’s business. It’s easier to blend in there because a lot of people are isolated and they prefer it that way. I was with her for a while but I needed to wander, so I did. Now I’m here.”

Stiles crossed his arms as he leaned on the table and looked down at the invitation and tried to ignore it as he watched the werewolf pace just inside the door. “But why here? Peter and Malia are back in Beacon Hills trying to make something of their relationship though don’t ask me what they are going for. Scott and the others are scattered, wouldn’t it have made more sense to reclaim the Hale land in Beacon Hills? Maybe adopt the baby betas and help them get to know their wolfiness because you know how awesome Scott is not in that capacity.”

“Maybe it would make more sense to do that, but I don’t want the territory. Scott is going to do just fine; his betas are going to do just fine. I thought about all the times you told me about what was happening, you told me about the Wild Hunt and I wondered if I had even had a chance to forget you and I didn’t, Stiles. I know it. I know you and always did. I never forgot you and I needed to know why.”

Stiles shrugged because he’d wondered about this as well because no one had noticed anything changing outside Beacon Hills, “Proximity to the Riders probably, you were far enough away to not be affected by it.”

“Maybe but maybe it was because you were pack a long time ago. As I said; I didn’t want to be alone anymore. You told me back in May that you were coming here, early so you could make some money and settle in for early enrollment but I couldn’t help but think over and over again that suddenly I had a destination in mind, for the first time in years. I had pack that still cared about me, I never heard anything from anyone else. Not even Isaac or Scott. You cared and I can’t help but want to be close to that.”

“Then why not tell me when you came to town?” Stiles demanded, angry that the people who he cared about continued to make all these decisions about him without saying a word to him and it was getting on his nerves.

“You’re human and you were always a part of Scott’s pack. I didn’t want to encroach on your new place and this new path you were on. You moved across the country from Beacon Hills, it seemed like you were trying to get away from the crazy too.”

Stiles snorted though he didn’t know for a few seconds what part of that he should focus on. He decided to go for the easiest part of it, “You could have asked, maybe I could have been in both. As you say, I’m human. I don’t have to align myself the same way that werewolves do. Do you think I didn’t look into this stuff every chance I got back then?”
Derek sighed, “Maybe I was scared that if I got to close, I would inevitably bring the danger and death to you again and I thought, ‘thank god one of them got out’ and I didn’t want to screw that up. I didn’t want this to get messed up for you.”

Stiles chuckled because it was so like Derek to make a decision like that. He was such a martyr sometimes, “I think you’re an idiot but I get it.”

There was a little smile around Derek’s lips at that, “No lies detected.”

Stiles sighed and pressed on to why he texted Derek in the first place since he was here. “Lydia’s getting married to Parrish this summer and its in like two months. I got an invitation after she thoroughly text-dumped me a couple of months ago. I don’t know what happened but once again she played me. Lydia couldn’t wait; she went back to Parrish instead of actually trying to have a relationship with me. It was never the right time and she was always willing when we were out of time but never when we had all the time in the world.” Stiles blurted it all out in one breath and watched Derek in the aftermath of his explanation of the call.

“You’re going then?” Derek asked as he moved across the room and settled on one end of the couch, the same end that Stiles usually frequented when he and Jesse were playing games. They had a pretty good sized dorm room, more like an apartment which was given to him for the scores he’d delivered to the school as well as the letters from various people in the sheriff’s station as well as Scott’s father, surprisingly helpful in the final years of their high school career. Stiles stayed where he was and thought about what to say.

“They are both friends from the supernatural trenches, if I don’t go its just going to be petty of me. Plus I am going home for the summer in about four weeks so even if I don’t go to the wedding, I am going to see her around. Scott and everyone are going to be there and I just don’t want to be Lydia’s cast off at her wedding. I am going to end up the loser Stilinski like all those years before, don’t even know what I expected.”

“So you called me? To do what exactly?”

Stiles shrugged because the answer he had was stupid and unrealistic, hopeful and all just illusion. A more socially acceptable answer was that he wanted some company but he could ask Scott for that. Why call Derek? Plus he wasn’t expecting a willing Derek to begin with; the werewolf hadn’t come running any other time. “I didn’t really think that far ahead actually.”

Derek sat there just shaking his head for a second then considered, “You could have called Scott if you wanted a friend to go with you. Why didn’t you call him?”

Stiles shrugged, “I’ll see him there and he’s not going to get it. He never dated her, or loved her like I do. Did.”

“Don’t you have a plus one to take with you?” Derek asked.

“That’s a plus one to take with you!” he snapped, crossing his arms over his chest defensively.

Derek nodded decisively, “I guess you need a plus one then. Is that why I’m here?”

Stiles frowned in confusion because Derek wasn’t angry just contemplative and openly curious, “Maybe?”

“A date?”
“Yeah but as I said I don’t know anyone well enough to ask. I am closer to calling a service and having to pay for some sort of date than actually having one,” Stiles said with a shrug.

“You don’t need to pay me,” Derek returned and at first Stiles didn’t know what to say because he was sure Derek hadn’t said what he heard.

“What?”

Derek smirked, “I said, you don’t need to pay me.”

Stiles’s mouth dropped open in shock again staring at the werewolf before he was able to shake things off and ask for clarification.

“Are you saying you want to go as my date?”

“Sure, why not?” Derek asked with a shrug.

“Maybe because no one in their right mind would believe that we were dating. We’re dudes and you’re not gay or bisexual!”

“And you are?” Derek asked, raising a brow in question.

“Well actually…” Stiles started.

“Then we make it look like we reconnected and something happened. We have a couple months to make it believable.”

“Why are you doing this Derek?” Stiles demanded, there had to be a reason the werewolf would go so far for one measly human that he hadn’t seen in a couple of years now.

“Because she hurt you and I don’t like it. I don’t like the scent of it on you, it reminds me of other times when you let everyone ignore your hurts and I am not willing to do that anymore. If you go with me, she won’t be able to damage you while you’re at home and you can think about how to move on. You can see your dad and you won’t be alone, that’s what you wanted right?”

Stiles thought about that, and then considered that when he was learning he was bisexual most of that guy on guy thoughts had started after meeting this particular brand of the male species. Derek Hale had always been physically beautiful and worthy of worship but it hadn’t been only that. The werewolf was dark and mysterious, kind and courageous who stupidly cared about a bunch of teenagers not smart enough to take the help he was giving. It was one of the many reasons he had a hard time not texting Derek every once in a while with an update.

“It’s not that simple for me,” Stiles responded quietly, scared to give away the secret he’d been holding onto for such a long time.

“Whatever it is Stiles, you’ll figure it out and whether or not we do this you don’t have to be alone. I can be here with you. I won’t go far if that’s what you want or need.”

Stiles smiled because he had been lonely here and having Derek close by sounded like a good idea with or without the offer on the table. “I had a crush on you when we were younger, I probably still have a crush on you. No, I definitely still have a crush on you and this is a horrible idea.”

Derek stared at him for a second, saying nothing but his nose flared for a second then he shrugged a little. “My offer still stands, you promise to not do anything we don’t agree to beforehand and I don’t have a problem with it.”
Stiles stared, slack-jawed at the man, “Yeah okay then.”

“I have a small apartment about a block off of campus,” he came forward and handed a slip of paper and a key to Stiles before continuing, “You’re welcome anytime no matter what your answer is.”

The human nodded and took the proffered gift then watched as Derek moved back across the room and exited out the door, leaving Stiles to stare for a minute before he shook it off and settled down to do his homework and studying. He didn’t have time to think about the fact that one of his high school crushes had just offered to masquerade back home as his boyfriend who was serious enough to go to a wedding with him. It was hard to say no to that but it was equally ridiculous to say yes.

He looked down at his phone and flicked it open to the text messaging and added Derek’s address to his contact information then opened a new message and typed out a quick message as he wondered if the werewolf would go back to radio silence now in the wake of him appearing here, ‘You do know that a fake relationship with a guy who for real likes you would cause all sorts of mayhem right?’

He dropped the phone and went back to studying because he figured whether or not he took Derek up on his insane offer; he still needed to get through the course load for the next three weeks. The wedding was three months away and for now he didn’t have any answer anyway.

On Saturday he got done with all of his work during his shift at the library and decided to go out with Jesse and a couple of his roommate’s friends to a nearby bar that didn’t care that they were all underage as long as they had a solid fake ID and didn’t cause a scene. He gripped his cellphone as he downed the first shot and lifted it to look at the message that Derek had sent back to him and smiled. He sent another message; ‘Would you come and meet me?’ he told Derek the address and put his phone back in his pocket as he reached for another shot.

Stiles was drowning his anger and sorrows in a fourth shot when someone sidled up next to him and sighed. He turned and grinned when he saw Derek’s scruffy profile, “Sourwolf!” he shouted jovially.

“Quiet,” Derek snapped but he was turning towards Stiles and looking almost fondly at him.

“You came out here, thank you,” Stiles slurred a little when the booze started to hit him, making his head spin wondrously. “I wanted to forget about what she did to me. You’d think after a couple of months it wouldn’t hit me like this but apparently a ten year plus obsession isn’t the easiest thing to drink away. When I called it was because I didn’t want to be alone anymore. This is stupid but I didn’t know who else to call.”

Derek dragged him away from the bar and Stiles bounced along beside him though it was more of a stagger. “You don’t have to be alone anymore. You don’t have to drink yourself into oblivion.”

Stiles stumbled and bounced over to the dance floor and dragged Derek with him as he jumped and leapt around to some idea of a rhythm and just danced and forced everything away for as long as he could stand before Derek gripped his arm gently and pulled him out of the bar.

“Come on, let’s go back!” Stiles demanded excitedly.

Derek shook his head, “You have a lot of work to do still and I don’t think you are in a good place to make decisions right now. I promise you, we will go out again when you are done with school.”

Stiles grinned and pressed into Derek’s side in drunken affection and grinned when the werewolf leaned into the contact, “You promise? Celebratory drunken night?”

Derek nodded and they continued walking together, Stiles’s arm over Derek’s shoulder to keep him...
upright. Stiles doesn’t remember much of anything after that but when he woke up in his own bed to find a cup of water and some Tylenol on the bedside table he smiled at the consideration. He took the pills and got ready for his day only to find a grouping of pictures of him and Derek not just on his phone but on Instagram too. Stiles laughed at the thought of Derek posting the pictures, he focused on the text below the pictures: ‘Reconnecting with an old friend’.

So either way, they were going to be friends, Stiles thought with a smile. He could do with a friend.
Laying the Groundwork

Chapter Summary

Stiles goes to Derek to see if he was really serious and they get started with a plan and Stiles finishes the school year.

It didn’t take long before curiosity and Derek’s kindness from the previous night made his choice for him. Stiles got through his shift on Sunday then headed over to the address Derek left for him and it was only about a fifteen minute walk to the apartment building, it was a three story building with two apartments per story and if Stiles knew anything, it undoubtedly houses more students than anything. He’d actually looked into off-campus housing but it was too expensive for a guy who was getting paid a small stipend for his work-study jobs on campus especially since he’d given up the term paper writing business in the hopes that he wouldn’t have it count against him when they did background checks and whatnot after he was able to apply for the FBI program. He’d never been caught so it shouldn’t but being in college now made it a lot harder to write them for others when he had to write so many for himself.

Derek on the other hand always seemed more than able to handle life financially though Stiles didn’t know anything about why that was. He’d never asked because frankly it was none of his business and also he knew about life insurance and how much it sucked to have money because people were dead. It was interesting that of all the places Derek could pick from, he ended up a couple blocks from Stiles’s college campus but then again the werewolf had admitted to being here because he wanted to be close to Stiles, to pack he forced himself to remember. He walked up to the correct door and slipped the key inside and turned. The tumblers inside snapped and clicked into place and the knob twisted and he pushed the door open to find Derek sitting at a desk with a laptop in front of him and he was looking over at the door because he could undoubtedly hear Stiles coming from the staircase like when he walked in through the front door.

“Hey Derek,” he said with a wave as he closed the door behind him.

“Stiles,” the werewolf responded and kept working on whatever he was doing on the laptop. “Did you take the Tylenol I left for you? And the pictures, did you see them? I am not good at the pictures thing especially because of the eye flashing thing but I think they turned out well.”

Stiles gripped his phone, sitting inside his jacket pocket and thought about the message he’d received before he’d gone out drinking that said: ‘Maybe the mayhem is worth it because the person is worth protecting.’ He’d been to embarrassed to talk to Derek about it last night and he wasn’t going to talk about it now but Stiles appreciated the thought that he was worth it to someone.

“Yeah, I guess I needed to see this for real. I gotta say man, this is a little stalkery.”

Derek shrugged, like he knew but didn’t see the problem.

“This is the wolf thing right? To be close to pack? Does it matter what pack member?” Stiles asked because he has to, he has to know everything there is to know. Even after all these years, he’d never been the one to demand answers but know he needed them to understand the dynamic that was happening here.
Derek looked up at him, “Of course it matters Stiles, I made this choice to be close to someone who I trust, no matter how much growling we did to each other, you proved yourself trustworthy so many times. This is about the wolf but it’s also about the human part of me that just doesn’t always want to be alone but needs someone that I can trust. I never trusted Lydia, not really. No matter how much you guys did, she brought back Peter and she was never really a part of my pack and Scott never wanted to be a part of my pack and that kind of fracture—I couldn’t get close to that so he became a necessity in town rather than a desired presence in my pack. You though, there was always something more flexible about your loyalties, not because you stopped being loyal to Scott and the others, only that you were equally capable of being loyal to the Hale Pack and you did. I didn’t matter who needed your help; you stuck up for Boyd and Erica, you worked to save my sister and me more than a few times. You saved countless people because you didn’t care about things like Pack dynamics. That’s not something that werewolves do very well. Now if you’re standing here can I assume we going to make a plan or not?”

Stiles stared in shock because clearly Derek had thought about this a lot before he played stalkerwolf and set up shop near the teen’s college and if the werewolf wanted to help then Stiles wasn’t going to say no. He did ask for help after all.

“Okay, well then I guess we have a couple of weeks to continue this ruse. I think the only way that’s going to work is spending time together, maybe more pictures on social media that people back home are going to see?”

Derek motioned him over and Stiles moved to sit down next to him. “It shouldn’t be anything over the top, start with movies or something like that, we can hang out here when you aren’t working your ass off for the end of term. You could even come here for some quiet, I have Internet and everything like a ‘normal’ person.”

“And we are going to get closer too, like physically speaking? Cuddle even? All that?” Stiles asked, crossing his arms in some self-protective gesture though he didn’t know who or what he was protecting himself from.

“And if we are going to actually convince some of your friends, we are going to have to smell like we are together, scent marking and everything. I wouldn’t be able to stand being with you without the desire to mark you as pack and mine. It was one of the hardest aspects of having made werewolves as a pack, they couldn’t ever understand the desire to scent mark each other. I stopped for their sake but I’m asking you if we can do that, please?”

Stiles nodded, figuring that was going to be part of it. He just needed the werewolf to know that when he started smelling like an aroused idiot that he would do nothing to hurt Derek. He knew more than most about Derek’s past, not only because of Kate but also Jennifer/Julia using magic to take advantage of him. He’d been a douchebag about it when his dad was witch-napped but had done everything to make sure the werewolf knew that Stiles understood. “I know you said you were willing to do this but I can’t help but think that it’s not worth it. I’m not worth it. I know I called and you came but I won’t take advantage of this and I don’t know if I’m capable of just pretending I don’t have this stupid years-long crush on you.”

“You told me already Stiles,” Derek said with a grin and snapped his laptop closed. He flinched at the sound and leaned back from the werewolf trying to gain a little perspective instead of his normal dive-right-in approach which he so desperately wanted to do right now.

“I won’t be like them,” Stiles snapped and crossed his arms over his chest.

Derek frowned in one of those honest to god held tilt dog-like motions that made Stiles squirm with a desire to laugh as he asked, “Like who?”
“Kate. Jennifer. I won’t take advantage of you, not like that. I don’t think this would really work not because you aren’t willing but because I don’t think you understand how hard this would be, for me to pretend not to care. Especially after what happened with Lydia.”

Derek leaned forward and Stiles sucked in a sharp breath but didn’t move away. The werewolf hushed him gently then leaned in the rest of the way and pressed a kiss to the edge of the his mouth and Stiles was left with nothing but the surprise at the caress as well as the scruff scraped along his skin deliciously. It was simple and short, over before he could have more than a jumble of emotions then it was over.

The werewolf leaned back again, “I understand what I am offering, what you are asking. I understand what you are telling me and I am willing to stand by you. Is that understood?”

Stiles nodded, shuddering a breath and leaned in for a moment, “Don’t expect me to stop freaking about this. Don’t ask me to stop asking you to repeat yourself. I won’t do what they did,” he’d always been disgusted by what Kate did to him and later Deaton had shared with them that he wondered if Jennifer had used magic.

Derek nodded with a smiled and with that they launched into a plan. One that included spending time together which was exactly what Derek needed, they would take pictures and post them all over Stiles’s social media sites to prepare for going home and Derek being Stiles’s date for the wedding. They weren’t going to tell anyone about the ruse because it would be too much for multiple people to maintain the story if necessary. Stiles and Derek planned to let most of the work be done by the pictures and the fact that they were going to the wedding together, even traveling together. When they returned to Washington then it would just slip away into the distant past, in the meantime Derek would get some pack closeness that he was needing and Stiles would have a friend close by to help with the aching loneliness he hadn’t even known was there until Lydia dropped her bomb on his head.

What came after that first meeting was several awkward interactions, whether it was in Derek’s apartment or at Stiles’s dorm room, even at coffee shops or during Stiles’s shifts at the library but soon they found that a shared past wasn’t all they had, Derek was a bit of a closet nerd in a few areas but the damage of the fire had just made those pursuits not interesting anymore. He was actually writing on his laptop and because Stiles was taking a couple of English courses they frequently launched into philosophical debates about such things as literature, superheroes and so on. Things didn’t stay awkward, starting to smooth into something they both thoroughly enjoyed.

Stiles continued to work on his finals workload and Derek helped to keep him fed and hydrated, had taken to bringing him food during his shifts at school or bringing water and telling him to stop mainlining coffee. There were no ‘dates’ during finals because Stiles was too busy. He talked out his papers with Derek and the werewolf just listened to him, helping when he could. It helped Stiles for the most part because he wasn’t trying to be some perfect version of himself, Derek knew every annoying habit he had and with anyone else he would have at least attempted to be on his ‘best’ behavior but because of their past and the fact that they weren’t really dating Stiles didn’t have to pretend and he loved it. Stiles couldn’t help but feel grateful that he wasn’t alone anymore in this far off world that didn’t understand what it was like to have come from Beacon Hills.

They were sitting together on the couch in Derek’s apartment, close enough to be called cuddling as Derek put on a movie. They were watching all of the superhero movies together since the sourwolf had never seen them. Today’s adventure was Captain America: The First Avenger in celebration of the last final being completed that afternoon. Stiles had a couple more shifts before they would be heading back to Beacon Hills but for now the human was pleased that he’d kicked ass and took names this week. He’d already pestered most of his professors into letting him know what they
estimated his final marks to be and Stiles knew that he would have the grades to get those grants and scholarships. He would have to start on the process of applying for them soon but for now he was just going to enjoy doing nothing with Derek.

“Do you sometimes think to yourself, how could I possibly make friends with people that don’t know what it was like to live with the supernatural? I mean how am I supposed to connect with people whose toughest life choice are which loan to pay back twenty years from now?”

Derek slid an arm around Stiles’s shoulder and the human clicked a quick picture of them for the sake of their groundwork (mostly) and posted it with an update of what they were watching, while completely ignoring their closeness in the post. Derek leaned in close enough to scent mark the top of Stiles’s head while he thought about what to say. Stiles kind of wished they weren’t playing this game, he wanted to have one of these moments and have it not be about laying the groundwork but he just told his hormones to shut up.

Derek finally answered, “I think sometimes those relationships can be nice because they are free from all that supernatural drama but for the most part I get it. I need someone I don’t have to explain it to them. Not really the tragic back story but the werewolf and so on.”

“You get it,” Stiles whispered and pressed in close when he thought about all the times he’d almost died or when he saw someone he cared about dying. He didn’t want to die and yet here he was picking a career that was going to undoubtedly put him into the crossfire of the world’s least friendly humans and he wondered if maybe running headlong into danger was just in his blood. His dad had been in law enforcement his whole life and he’d wanted it too. That is what sent him careening into the forest with his best friend, kept him running into battles he couldn’t fight for the most part.

“It’s not about that though Stiles,” Derek whispered and the human was left wondering how much he’d been muttering out loud instead of in his mind.

“What?” he asked, hoping he’d kept his unhelpful thoughts to himself.

“I do get it about the dangers that we left behind in Beacon Hills but things have been better there too and I didn’t come to you because you would get it about crappy things happening.”

“You came because you wanted pack again, but doesn’t it help a little to know that you can talk to me about anything? That you have no need to hide a part of who you are.”

Derek smiled against the top of Stiles’s head and he smiled in return, enjoying the comfort of their closeness. “Yeah it’s good to have someone I don’t have to hide from but honestly I just spent a good chunk of time with just a bunch of werewolves, I could use a little less supernatural talk. What about you?”

Stiles tightened his hold around Derek’s arm and answered honestly rather than shut it all down like he’d been doing since he got here, “Sometimes I still sleep walk, I still scream out in the middle of the night and I see all those people’s worst nightmares and then I think to myself: I lived it. I’m surprised that Jesse hasn’t asked for a different roommate by now but it could be because he sleeps around a lot so he’s rarely at home.”

“You can tell me about it, Stiles you don’t have to do this by yourself anymore okay?” Derek asked, scrubbing a hand over Stiles’s shoulder gently, leaving behind the warmth in Stiles’s skin and bones.

“I watched one of the chimera die, I was happy about it and I let him die. I watched the life fade from his eyes, he was my age actually younger and I watched him die. I didn’t want it but I also didn’t want to die because I didn’t fight him. I refused to let him kill me and because of that some part of
me felt powerful even though I was weak and human. Theo used it to turn Scott and I against each other and it didn’t take much. Malia and I broke up because of that asshole then just when we were supposed to get over everything and have this simple and easy senior year they forgot me. I watched everyone I ever cared about forget me, I put my heart on the line again for her again and she forgot too. I hated seeing it happen and knowing it had happened to me. We’d forgotten about so many after they died or left; Danny and Jackson, Ethan and Aiden just to count a few. God, we never talked about Boyd or Erica, not even Allison. It was suddenly like they were out of sight and we didn’t want them in mind but I couldn’t forget any of them and I thought maybe that made me short sighted and stupid because I didn’t want them to go and I didn’t want that to happen to anyone else.”

“But it happened to you,” it wasn’t a question because it wasn’t one.

“My dad didn’t know who I was, he said ‘hey son calm down and tell me your name’ and I thought I’m going to have a panic attack. I think I did have one, I just don’t know. I didn’t know that I could lose a significant part of who I was because other people didn’t know me. I thought hey Stiles is always Stiles, and I know myself but when they all forgot me, it didn’t matter anymore because I wasn’t known. How is that a thing?”

“We all want to be known Stiles, for who we are. And they remembered you, they got you back and you were able to thwart yet another nefarious plot.”

Stiles nodded rubbing his cheek against Derek’s shirt and took a deep breath of the werewolf’s scent and inhaling it deeply as he answered trying to ignore the fact that the man’s scent was comforting and it really shouldn’t be since he wasn’t a werewolf, “Didn’t make it hurt it any less.”

Derek shook his head, rubbing his cheek into Stiles’s scalp and tightened his arms around him, “No I don’t imagine it would.”

“And I haven’t been able to talk about it with anyone, I didn’t even really get a chance with Scott because they got me back and time didn’t stop. It just kept on going and I missed it all because of that stupid fucking train station in some other dimension! I survived to senior year and I missed it because of the next big bad in town and because I refused to leave well enough alone.”

Derek just nodded and waited.

“Are we really going to go back to Beacon Hills and be a couple in front of all our friends for the sake of Lydia freaking Martin?” Stiles finally asked, thinking to himself that in his mind, Lydia’s name came with a curse attached to it now every time he thought it or said it out loud.

“Second thoughts?” the werewolf asked.

“And thirds and fourths,” Stiles told him honestly.

“Do you want to call it off? There hasn’t really been anything too explicit in the pictures that we couldn’t back out now. And we haven’t actually declared anything because this plan is hinging on everyone just making an assumption anyway.”

Stiles shook his head and pushed up off of the werewolf and started looking around thinking about all the things he was worried about with this particular plan and how stupid it was to play in his own feelings like this. He knew his feelings; Stiles had crushed on Derek for more than a few years, just as much as he had with Lydia for various reasons.

Suddenly there was a clutching in his chest, a cold drop in his stomach and he needed out. He had to get out of here before he said something stupid that he couldn’t take back, he’d already done that
with Derek a couple of times. He’d told the werewolf more of his experiences then even Scott or his
dad knew about. Derek knew why Stiles had chosen the college, beyond the fact that it would get
him into the FBI program, but because it would get him as far away from Beacon Hills as possible
while staying in the country. Stiles missed his dad but he was angry with the man for forgetting him
even though he knew it was stupid; he even resented the man because his father got to see his wife
again and Stiles hadn’t gotten to see his mother. He didn’t want to be next to Scott anymore, even
even though he loved the alpha werewolf like a brother, he couldn’t stand to be left behind in the wake of
the newest beta that Scott turned or the next best thing like Theo. Being forgotten and the fractures
that Theo caused in the pack left Stiles without a foundation of trust in the people he loved. From that
moment on, he’d wondered if he and Scott could ever really be the same.

Only Derek knew that fear, one of the worst ones that the human carried in his heart.

Only Derek knew that the Wild Hunt had done so much more than make people forget Stiles, they
had made Stiles forget himself.

Only Derek knew that Stiles still carried the weight, the darkness of the Nogitsune and what the fox
spirit had left behind despite the fact that he’d done whatever it took to hide it from the people closest
to him.

Derek knew how much Stiles didn’t think he was worth forgiving for Allison.

“Stiles!” Derek’s shout sounded far away, like his head was under water and he didn’t know why.
He reared back when something grabbed his arm and he gripped his head between his palms and
wondered how he’d gotten here. He remembered standing then everything was wobbly around the
edges. His fingers dug into the sides of his head trying to contain all that he’d already given up,
pulling back because in the last three weeks he’d had more of a relationship with Derek, a fake one,
than he’d ever had with Lydia or even Malia who’d been desperate for someone to fix her and to
make her feel human again. She’d wanted a reason to stay human and there was a part of Stiles that
was desperate to make the fact that they forced her back into her human form okay, even with the
best of intentions he can’t hide what he did to her. What they both had done to Malia. Stiles had been
desperate for her, to not be alone and to be loved and she needed him and it had been enough but
she’d been unable emotionally to give him anything besides needing him.

It was probably why they were so easily dismantled under Theo’s masterful manipulations.

“Stiles, you have to breathe!” Derek said, only the last word coming in clearly and startling the
human in its nearness then there were lips on his and he sucked in a deep breath in surprise before
everything stopped. He registered the beard prickling into his skin and raising his awareness. Those
lips, softer than he’d ever imagined them being shifted and Stiles felt the shift in the werewolf’s jaw
and it was everything he’d ever wanted it to be.

Then it was over and he was slumped into Derek’s chest as he gulped down air into his straining
lungs, left wondering what happened.

“Okay, breathing with me. Good,” Derek crooned gently as he pressed a gentle hand to the back of
Stiles’s head in comfort. One of Stiles’s hands gravitated to the werewolf’s chest and he copied the
breathe in-out he could feel there until he was calm again. Then pressed the heel of his other hand
into the space between his eyes, feeling the fwump-fwump of his heart beat, leaving the start of a
migraine in its wake then there was a subtle shifting and Derek’s hand was on the back of his neck
and there was a bubbling weirdness and the ache was gone. Derek doing the Pain Drain, Stiles
realized after a couple of seconds.

Stiles chuckled, more air than noise, “Well that was embarrassing. You kissed me?”
Derek just let the question sit there saying nothing for another minute before he spoke, “Think about it Stiles, if you don’t want to do this then just let me know but I got you this just in case.” Derek handed Stiles a piece of paper, helped him into his shoes and jacket and sent him on his way much to the human’s further embarrassment because he was still woozy after the adrenaline crash and pain drain which he’d only experienced a few times and still as good as any high performance pain medication when it comes to the after effect of loopiness. He gripped the paper tightly as he wandered back towards the school and went back to his dorm—finally looking when he closed the door behind him. There was a receipt for tickets back to Beacon Hills for five days from now. It would give him enough time to lock up the dorm room for the summer, since it would belong to him and Jesse unless he decided to change rooms, which he didn’t need to worry about until just before registration. Jesse had left before the ink was dry on his last final two days ago; leaving a good chunk of his stuff on his side of the room while Stiles was still pulling shifts at the library and coffee place.

He knew there was a ticket with Derek’s name on it since it was on the same receipt so he needed to get his shit figured out before then so the werewolf could plan for the trip as well but he didn’t know if he could do this to either of them, even though he asked for help and Derek had offered but he took the time Derek was giving him with this. He took the next two days to make a decision, leaving a text saying simply, ‘If you are game, meet me at the airport.’

And for whatever reason even after another two days of silence, Derek was there waiting for him when he got to the airport with his backpack and duffle bag in tow. Stiles couldn’t help but breathe a sigh of relief that he wasn’t going to be alone after all. He didn’t stop himself from throwing his arms around Derek’s shoulders and whispering into the man’s ear, “Thank you.”

Derek chuckled and stood like that for a few minutes, not even caring that they looked like the main characters of a Rom-Com reconnecting after a debilitating third act break up. They got to their gate and on the flight, Stiles took pictures of them together and Derek took one where he was mock glaring at Stiles who was asleep on his shoulder then showed it to the human when he woke up at their connecting flight who just laughed and tucked his phone away, not even posting it because Derek’s ‘lens flare’ was evident. He didn’t delete it though; it was proof that Derek was funnier than he had always seemed when he was dark and mysterious back in the day.

One more flight and they would be getting picked up at the airport by none other than Sheriff Noah Stilinski and their ruse would begin for real.
Stiles and Derek see the Sheriff for the first time and they have words.

Sorry about the formatting, AO3 for some reasons won't take my format.. Ugh...

Stiles was a drooling exhausted anxiety ridden mess by the time they landed and gathered their bags. They found their way through the airport towards where his dad was going to meet them. “Okay, here we go. Are we going for subtle but not hiding it?” the human asked even though they had talked about this for hours a week ago.

“You didn’t want to lie to your dad if you didn’t have to, so we are going for traveling together for a summer visit and Lydia’s wedding, we got close because I moved close to the campus and that’s the truth Stiles. Nothing more with him.”

Stiles nodded and reached out with his free hand and squeezed Derek’s hand in thanks because he hadn’t wanted to lie to his father, they had had enough lies to last a lifetime and he didn’t want this one added on the pile especially for something so silly as Lydia’s wedding.

The only problem was that apparently he was gripping Derek’s hand when they came into the Sheriff’s line of sight and the older man looked down at their joined hands surreptitiously before he locked eyes on his son. Stiles moved away from Derek and took off towards his dad and threw himself at the man because no matter what—he’d missed his dad. They shared a back slapping hug, grinning from ear to ear because the past is the past and right now Stiles was happy to see his father.

“Hey Daddio, gonna be so sick of me by the time I head back to school.”

“I somehow doubt it,” Noah snorted as he released his son and watched as Derek came over to them after he grabbed Stiles’s forgotten bag and walking towards them at a more sedate pace, “Derek Hale. Stiles told me you were traveling together but I have got to tell you I am surprised to hear you moved to Washington. Weren’t you in Alaska with Cora?”

Stiles looked between the two of them because he hadn’t even known that, what the hell was his dad doing with that information? The werewolf nodded then held out his hand to shake, “Good to see you sir.”

Noah shook his hand and Stiles fought the desire to jump in between them before it got even more awkward but he had to let this play out otherwise his dad was going to send Derek away and Stiles surprisingly didn’t want that. They had a guest room that the werewolf could use but first he would have to make sure his dad was on board.

“Hey Dad, since the loft has been closed up for a while now I was hoping that Derek could stay in
the guest room while we’re here?” he asked then watched as Derek’s brow rose in judgment. Stiles winced because yeah he was hoping to go for more subtly there, maybe butter up his dad before asking but there it was and he couldn’t undo it.

“As long as there isn’t any closed doors and shenanigans that are sans clothing, I know you are an adult Stiles but there is still a sizable age gap here and you are barely eighteen.”

Stiles stared at his father in shock, first because he’d said yes and second because now he didn’t have to figure out how to tell his father he is bisexual not to mention he’d apparently made the correct assumptions about the two of them. Well the assumptions they’d wanted people to pick up.

“Close your mouth son otherwise you’re going to catch flies,” the Sheriff said and grabbed his son’s duffle bag and started walking towards the exit while Derek chuckled quietly behind him and nudged Stiles between the shoulder blades to get him moving. He turned and glared at the smirking werewolf, pointing an offended finger at him to which Derek just shrugged and followed the sheriff.

They got outside and he watched as his dad got into something other than the sheriff cruiser and almost dropped his backpack complete with his laptop but Derek grabbed it before destruction could occur, “Dad where’s the cruiser?”

The older man shook his head, rolling his eyes at his son’s drama, “I borrowed one of Chris’s SUVs to come get you, I figured it would be better than putting Derek in the back—again.”

Stiles stared at his father, chuckling a little because apparently his dad had jokes about putting Derek back into cuffs in the back of his cruiser and it was giving him emotional whiplash especially hearing Derek’s huff of laughter behind him. What the hell was going on right now?

Instead of getting any answers about the apparent close relationship between the Argents and Stilinski if they were trading things like cars and the like, even as a favor. He was sure that Chris treated his hunting SUV’s with the same sort of honor that Stiles had with his jeep. Stiles jumped into the front seat after Derek got into the back and they drove home.

When they got there his room was the same though without a lot of the belongings that he’d taken with him for the fall semester while Derek found his way easily into the guest room and they agreed to meet in Stiles’s room after they were settled. Stiles moved to put some of his clothes into the dresser and heard when his dad stopped at his door.

“Derek Hale? Really?” the man asked and though there wasn’t an inflection of anger or disgust, just neutral which might just be worse.

“So what if it was? What’s wrong with Derek, Dad?”

“Other than the age difference and the wanted fugitive status?”

“First of all, you said it yourself that I am an adult and I can date whoever I want, thank you. Secondly, I told you that he was innocent, stupid but innocent. He’s a good man and he’s been there for me in Washington.”

“When you left here you were dating Lydia?”

“And look where that got me?” Stiles snapped as he grabbed the cardstock invitation out of the front pocket of his bag and slapped the invitation to his dad’s chest, “I’m sure you have a matching one since Parrish is still one of your deputies.”

The sheriff looked down and then back to his son, “I’m sorry Stiles, you’re right. I have no right to
say anything about your choices. I guess I was just hoping for someone a little less supernaturally inclined, maybe someone that hasn’t had the kind of trouble flock to him that Derek has experienced.”

“It flocked to him because of Scott and me after he came back to Beacon Hills and he’s been living a quiet life for a while. I want a quiet life, can’t we just try to have one together?”

His dad nodded and he patted Stiles on the shoulder, “I’m sorry again Stiles, it was short sighted of me. I just worry about you.”

Stiles took a deep breath, trying not to stomp around in anger and realized that he really wanted a quiet life with Derek and damn he forgot this was fake, Stiles groaned and scrubbed his face. He heard the murmur of his father’s voice and Derek’s deeper one just before the werewolf appeared at his door.

“No lies detected,” Derek whispered.

“Don’t listen to my heartbeat unless you want to know more about my desires than you’re prepared to deal with,” Stiles barked rudely.

Derek held his hands up in surrender then started to back out and Stiles groaned again, “Sorry about that, I hate what he was saying, like I had picked the worst possible person for all sorts of reasons and then to bring up Lydia, ugh.”

The werewolf just crossed his arms and nodded, “He apologized and he meant it. Give him time, we weren’t even supposed to be outed the first day here.”

“I don’t know why I grabbed your hand,” Stiles grumbled even though he did. He didn’t want to be here, Stiles wanted to go back to Washington where no one knew his past, where nothing knew about him and his connections to the supernatural. He shoved his fingers through his hair again, leaving it in wild disarray as Derek walked into the room and grabbed Stiles’s hand and squeezed, again Stiles couldn’t pull away from the easy affection being offered.

“You grabbed my hand because we were both looking for something when I showed up on your doorstep, don’t forget that we’re in this together.”

Stiles nodded and pressed his other hand to Derek’s shoulder in comfort before the werewolf headed back out to his room to settle in as well. They had dinner with his dad later then they were going to be meeting up with most of the pack the next day for lunch at one of Stiles’s favorite diners and they were going to have to formulate a plan but for now he crawled into his childhood bed and let sleep take him.

Group Message: Me, Coyote, Foxfire, Red Banshee, Angry Beta
Me: Stiles and Derek are here, the sheriff just told me. They were pretty cozy.
Red Banshee: They came together!?
Me: Apparently, have you guys seen all the pictures? They’ve been hanging out in Washington.
Red Banshee: Did he go there because of Stiles?
Me: No clue, I thought he was still in AK with Cora.
Angry Beta: Why is this a thing? Aren’t we happy that Stiles is back for the summer? It sucked when everyone left.
Coyote: It will be good to see them both; having family close will be good. It helps.
Foxfire: I am coming to town in about ten days, you gotta tell me everything.
Coyote: Will do Kira.
Coyote: What did you want to know again?
Foxfire: Haha, anything about what’s going on with Stiles and Derek.
Coyote: There’s something going on with Stiles and Derek?
Me: Malia, keep up here.
Coyote: Keep up with what?
Me: Since when do I not know these things about my best friend? 😊
Red Banshee: Since we forgot him and all went off to college literally days later.
Me: But the forgetting thing wasn’t our fault. BTW you broke up with him over text!
Red Banshee: Don’t start with me Mr. True Alpha who turned away from his BFF because of Theo!
Angry Beta: Speaking of…
Me: No Liam, we are not speaking of Theo! Just because he did one nice thing doesn’t undo all the other crap. He’s not welcome in the Pack!
Angry Beta: You’re mean and controlling for a guy who’s barely here anymore.
Coyote: Knock it off you guys, I don’t want to have to turn off my phone and toss it into someone’s water.
Me: Again?
Red Banshee: Not again, Malia. We can’t keep buying you new phones.
Me: Okay we’ll stop but does anyone believe this whole ‘they might be dating’ thing?
Red Banshee: Not really.
Coyote: Leave them alone but just take a sniff; you’ll be able to tell if they’ve been scent marking.
Me: Gross, I am not sniffing my best friend. For the smell of Derek Hale!
Coyote: Then leave them alone.
Red Banshee: This is about me and Parrish I think.
Me: Yup, you’re fault and don’t forget it.
Red Banshee: You’re an ass!
Me: Undoubtedly.

Stiles woke up feeling fuzzy and stupid, wondering for a second how he got here then remembered that he was back in his childhood bedroom. His heart rate snapped into high gear for a second as he wondered if anything knew he was there yet before he tried to calm down again. Then he remembered why he was back in Beacon Hills and who was in the guest room down the hall. Heaving himself up off the bed, Stiles stretched and walked down to the bathroom, used the toilet, washed his hands and rinsed the disgusting taste from his mouth then continued down and knocked on Derek’s bedroom door.

He didn’t wait before he cracked open the door to see the werewolf lying on the small bed and his eyes were closed but he wasn’t asleep. After this long of knowing the guy, Stiles knew when he was asleep because he’d seen the look of utter peace when the man was asleep and this wasn’t it. And the close proximity of the past three weeks just solidified the knowledge he’d once had and when Derek lifted up the blanket on the open part of the bed Stiles smiled and walked over. He flopped down and curled up next to him easily slotting into the open space and letting the heat from Derek’s body soothe him a little at a time, leaving him to wonder if he was going to get used to sleeping alone after this if he let himself get used to it. Stiles pressed a hand down over Derek’s thudding heartbeat, the other tucked between their bodies while Derek’s arm snuck under Stiles’s neck and pressed into his shoulder while the other hand held a book and he started reading.

“Would you read it to me?” Stiles whispered, he didn’t know why but he needed to hear Derek’s voice, to know he wasn’t forgotten and he wasn’t alone. Maybe it had been inviting the familiarity of Derek into his life or coming home to Beacon Hills but everything felt like it was going to shatter inside of him at any second and maybe the werewolf wasn’t the only one in need of something stable to lean on just a little.

“You know your dad is going to be calling us down for dinner soon right?” Derek asked as his nose
snuffled at the edge of Stiles’s hairline, spreading his scent just a little all the while taking in Stiles’s scent as well.

“I know, I just feel so – ugh,” he finally finished with a lazy plop of his hand. Derek snorted in response before he put a bookmark in the page he was leaving and started over. Stiles listened to the ebb and flow of Derek’s voice and realized about three pages in that he had no idea what Derek was saying. Though he did enjoy the slightly different inflections and intonation that the werewolf was using for each of the character’s dialogue. To bad it was lost on him.

The werewolf must have realized it because he dropped the book down next to him and pushed his nose back into Stiles’s scalp. “What’s going on in that head of yours?”

“Not much,” Stiles muttered and Derek snorted again. Stiles sighed, “I woke up in my bed and I felt all sorts of wrong. I don’t know what it is about this place, I used to love this town but now all it does is remind me of what I am, what I’m not. Even being close to my Dad doesn’t seem to give me the same kind of security it once did.”

“What do you think you are then?” Derek asked and Stiles heaved a weary sigh into the side of Derek’s chest, tucking his nose into the space under his pectoral muscle.

“Unclean, unworthy of forgiveness. My dad said he would burn the entire Sheriff’s station to the ground to protect me and I wanted to tell him that I wasn’t worth it. Then it was like I got my wish and they all forgot me.”

“Did you ever talk to anyone about any of this? I’m surprised that you and Scott, or you and your dad didn’t say anything.” Derek asked as he rubbed his thumb back and forth across the bare skin of Stiles’s upper arm.

“Like so many other times, they just wanted to pretend it hadn’t happened and I’ve done that so many times that I think I am out of headspace for trauma. And yeah Mr Hypocrite, did you ever talk to anyone about what Kate did to you, not to mention everything else?” Stiles snapped in return, just waiting for Derek to kick him out, something to remind Stiles that this is fake and he didn’t want to depend on the werewolf to stick around and help him through any of the mental hijinks he had to deal with on a daily basis.

Then the werewolf just surprised him again, “Actually I did, when Cora and I first joined up with our distinct family members we were getting a lot worse. We just didn’t know how to be siblings and everything that happened just came crashing down around me. We were actually getting into fights, hurting each other and it didn’t make a difference that it was going to heal because we were out for blood. The alpha told us that we would get help otherwise we wouldn’t be allowed to stay because it was putting everyone on edge. He put us in contact with a counselor who works primarily in the supernaturally inclined edges of society. The counselor let us duke it out for a little while then made us talk about it. Cora talked about running and never knowing until much later that she had surviving family and what happened in Beacon Hills. I talked about Paige and Kate and the fire. We had sessions together, we had sessions apart. Whatever we needed to get better for ourselves and each other.”

Stiles sat up and stared at Derek in shock, “You. Talked about. Your feelings? With someone else?”

Derek rolled his eyes and frowned at Stiles, “Yes for the sake of my remaining family, I dealt with some of my shit and got myself straightened out. After that when I started to feel the compulsion to move on we talked about it in a much healthier way and she decided to stay. I know she’s safe and I’m better than I was. It wasn’t some magical pill but it did help a bit.”
“Wow Sourwolf, I’m impressed.”

“Don’t be,” Derek said, “I was just doing what I needed to do. Long overdue.”

Stiles stared into his dark green gaze and just saw someone desperate for a chance to do something different in his life. Derek came to Washington because he wanted to be close to pack. He’d been there when Stiles needed him and the human had just taken advantage of the opportunity.

“I don’t deserve you as my friend,” Stiles whispered as he laid back down next to Derek because he may not deserve the support he’d been given so freely but until Derek told him to get out, he was going to give as well as take.

“I like to think of it that we deserve each other in our supposed undeserving ways.”

Stiles chuckled and after a few minutes of silence, Derek started reading again and that was how the Sheriff found them when he came upstairs to let them know it was time for dinner. He knocked on the doorframe and they both looked up and nodded.

“Let’s go get something to eat,” Derek said and Stiles nodded as he clambered out of the bed again. Derek followed close behind, taking a minute to press his hand into the back of Stiles’s neck in comfort before they went down to exchange small talk and have some food. He wished the prospect of spending time with his father wasn’t overshadowed by everything left behind and leftover but it was for the time being. Maybe he’d been better off never coming back here.
Old Friends

Chapter Summary

Stiles and Derek go and see Scott and the others.

Chapter Notes

Keep in mind that Stiles and Derek have no idea about the texting conversation from the previous chapter....

Thank you for the comments and kudos, I love you all!!!!

Again, sorry about the formatting issues, I don’t understand what is happening right now!!!!

Stiles walked into the diner then turned to walk back out but Derek was there to shove him inside with a smirk on his face like watching him squirm was the werewolf’s new favorite game. Derek leaned in close, pressing his mouth into the shell of Stiles’s ear and whispered, “Game on Stilinski, these are your friends and you are going to spend some time with them. I am right here with you.”

“You’re not going to leave at the worst possible moment are you?” Stiles whispered back, shivering when Derek pressed a warm hand to the peeking bare skin of his stomach between his pants and his shirt. The touch was comforting, grounding so he had the guts to take another step into the diner even after he caught sight of Scott, Malia and Lydia. He was glad there was no one else there like Liam and the others. He would see them soon enough but for now it was going to be hard enough talking to his two ex-flames and his best friend. Especially since two of them had the supernatural ability to sense things that he didn’t want them to know. Well, he’d long ago learned the skill of keeping his statements vague enough that they couldn’t figure out if he was lying. A necessary skill when one was running with werewolves.

Scott’s head snapped up as soon as he heard something that identified Stiles to him and he came rushing over with his happy grin and pulled Stiles into a tight hug that bordered on painful, one that Stiles returned because this was Scott. Despite recent circumstances, this was the same guy that had been with him when his mother got sick and Stiles had been desperate to not lose anyone else. Stiles had stood by Scott even though the guy’s father had been one of Stiles’s worst influences and when Scott had wanted to stop being friends because of his dad, Stiles wouldn’t let him. And nothing had changed in that respect even as everything else changed around them. He wanted to be Scott McCall’s best friend, even if they were halfway across the country from each other and everything was confused and twisted up inside.

He squeezed Scott tightly against him then tried to pull away, especially when Scott started sniffing him, “Nice to see you too Scott but you are going to have to ask before you sniff anywhere else.”

Scott took a step back with an embarrassed look on his face, then turned to Derek and traded cool guy nods with him. Derek reached out and ran his finger down Stiles’s arm and over his knuckles
because now that Scott’s welcome was over he couldn’t help but look past him and see Lydia and Malia and he couldn’t seem to move.

They were both beautiful, Lydia as coiffed and made up as usual while Malia was looking a little wild in the least amount of clothing she could get away with like she was planning at any time to take on her coyote form and skedaddle.

Stiles walked the rest of the way to their table and nodded in greeting, Malia stood and pressed her head into the crook of his neck and scent marked him before she turned to greet her cousin that left Stiles and Lydia staring at each other.

“I guess I forgot to say congratulations,” Stiles finally said and despite all the times he’d practiced this, with the intent to sound like he didn’t care the words came out waspish and angry. He couldn’t help but roll his eyes at his own behavior. **Way to go, Stilinski! If you really wanted to be the scorned woman in this story: success!**

“Stiles,” she started sounding like she was about to do something completely awful like apologize when Derek stepped up next to him and pressed a hand to his lower back, just a warm presence there next to him and he spoke.

“Congratulations Lydia, I hope you don’t mind me coming as Stiles’s plus one?”

“Yeah about that,” Scott called then Malia interrupted and asked Stiles about school. The human smiled as they settled down around the table, ordering a vast amount of food and started sharing stories about what they’d been doing since they parted ways. Derek sat next to Stiles and shared stories about Alaska and deciding to go to Washington and reconnect with Stiles. Their touching was subtle and for the most part friendly and comforting, leaving the werewolf, werecoyote and banshee more confused by the time they all parted ways.

They all walked outside and Malia immediately ran off, Lydia stood her ground and waited while Scott was bouncing in frustration.

“Well we have a date with my dad to make sure he’s eating healthy while I’m here.”

“Malia keeps an eye on him, she still cares about him and he about her,” Scott said and crossed his arms petulantly, “Now tell me what the hell is going on here?”

Stiles’s eyebrows rose in question but said nothing, wondering if Scott was going to say anything else. Derek just stood in his customary arms folded over his chest stance and just behind Stiles’s shoulder. The human wanted to lean into Derek, be closer to him and the comfort he so willingly provided but they weren’t the public displays of affection kind of people, if they ever were. Both of their forays into relationships, the human and the werewolf had always been under affectionate. Now though, he needed to be closer to the man.

“Scott, Derek and I wanted to be close to each other. He was in Washington and wanted to be close to pack and I needed someone after the invite came.” He looked pointedly at Lydia who turned away and down.

“You’re dating?” Scott demanded and Stiles looked back to the werewolf and held out his hand. Derek gave that half smirk of his and took the human’s hand, lacing their fingers together.

“Yes,” Derek said and Stiles didn’t know if Scott heard a lie in there or not, all he knew was his best friend closed his mouth and stood there. Stiles nodded to his friend and walked away. They headed back through town towards the sheriff’s station and once he was far enough that werewolf hearing
Derek turned and pulled Stiles to a stop, “Of course he believed me, I didn’t lie.” He leaned in a little bit and Stiles took a half step back but Derek was there, his hand pressed into the small of his back, heat pressing into the skin and making Stiles gasp.

“What’s happening right now Der?” Stiles whispered.

“Making a lie the truth,” he returned gently and pressed in again, slowly so Stiles could back off if he wanted to. He didn’t though. He may have wanted Lydia for a long time but this thing with Derek, he wished for it to be real more than once. Though Stiles didn’t know how to trust it now, because they had started out as lies.

Derek came in close enough to bump his nose against Stiles’s and whispered, “You can say no. I would never take that away from you.”

“I want this a lot Derek, I’m just wondering when you started wanting it,” Stiles said even as he inched closer, feeling the warmth of Derek’s breath on his lips and wanting more.

“We need privacy for that conversation but right now, I want to know if you want to kiss me because you want me and not because you want to fool Lydia Martin.”

And like a dash of cold water Stiles pulled away from Derek and stared at him, “You think I want you to rebound from her? You think that’s why I called you? Why would I do that? You weren’t supposed to like guys, or me specifically!”

Derek shrugged, “You told me you didn’t want to keep getting hurt by her, you didn’t want to be alone. She smelled jealous of us in there, is that what you wanted all along? Because you could have just come here by yourself. I don’t want to be here for that.”

Stiles held his hand up to stop Derek’s questions and there was a sick little part of him that grabbed hold of his brain and he mouthed off at the wrong part of that response, “She was jealous?”

Derek lifted his lips in a snarl, turned and started walking away, “Don’t follow me Stiles, figure out what you want from me then come find me but not before.”

Stiles watched him walk away, mouth agape in surprise that Derek Hale was hurt by his interest in Lydia’s jealous and there was no reason to lie. There was no reason to care, beyond having feelings for Stiles.

“Fuck!” he choked out and slapped a hand over his face. Figuring Derek was going to head back to the Stilinski residence, Stiles continued on his trek towards the sheriff’s station and asked to see his dad who was in his office. Stiles knocked and the older man waved him in without looking up. Stiles shut he door behind him and took a seat, “Hey Dad, did you get some lunch already?”

His dad looked up and frowned at Stiles, “What happened to you? You look like someone shot your favorite pet, or werewolf.”

Stiles sighed because his dad apparently still had some semblance of knowledge about his son’s moods and he apparently made a bad choice coming here instead of just going somewhere to be alone. “I did actually.”

“What happened?”
Stiles figured he would give as much of the truth as he could, “Derek could smell that Lydia was jealous that he and I were here together and I asked him you know with more interest than I should have for a guy who is dating another person. He asked me if I asked him to come here with me to get a reaction out of Lydia and I didn’t deny it.”

The sheriff shook his head sadly and folded his hands together in front of him, “Wow, stuck your foot and both of your hands in your mouth that time, didn’t you?”

“Yup,” he said, making the ‘p’ sound pop at the end.

“Did you bring him here for that reason? Did you use him like that?”

“Maybe a little, I thought that we were coming here with an understanding and I don’t know who broke it, me or him.”

“How do you mean?”

Stiles looked up and considered his options, telling his father was going to make them all look shitty but then he might get a real answer and some solid helpful advice. Or he could lie and things would just be even more confusing for him later. So he went with the truth, about the invitation and the phone call to Derek who then answered. The werewolf agreeing to come here and pretend so Stiles wouldn’t have to be alone and Derek would have someone close by again.

“So there you go, I was using him but we were using each other.”

Noah sat there, leaning back and sighed, “Stiles. I love you kid but you’re an idiot.”

“Hey!” Stiles returned though he didn’t know if he had a leg to stand on in this case.

“I think you might need to consider that Derek likes you and that he was doing this under false pretenses too. You liked him and though maybe you were pleased to know that this new thing was enough to make Lydia jealous, its not because you don’t care about Derek. Sounds like to me that you both are fooling yourselves into thinking there’s nothing here beyond two people using each other in the short term. He was reading to you, touching you gently and holding you close. I thought for the first time that maybe you would actually have someone there to soothe the nightmares away.”

“I don’t have nightmares so much anymore,” Stiles muttered but when his dad gave him an unimpressed look he relented. “Okay Dad I hear you.”

“Don’t go to him unless you really know what you want because it sounds like he’s figuring it out just the same.”

“Yes sir,” Stiles said, gave his dad a side hug before he left the office though he didn’t know what he was going to do next. He headed out and started walking, heading in the general direction of the loft, though he didn’t know why but he didn’t have anything better to do so he continued on the path.

When he got there, he climbed the stairs up to Derek’s door and frowned when he realized it wasn’t closed. Walking over to it he slid it open just to see what happened and found Liam and Theo sitting on the couch. Stiles sneered at the other teenager and tried not to take it out on Scott’s beta.

“What the hell are you doing here? This is Derek’s place!”

“Stiles!” Theo called out, “When did you get back into town?”

“None of your business,” Stiles snapped and turned back to Liam who was shrinking under Stiles’s
anger and demand.

He looked confused and like he was going to answer then his face closed off and turned to Theo and motioned for the door. Stiles reached out and gripped one of Liam’s arms and held his hand out.

“What?” Liam asked feigning innocence or stupidity.

“The key, give it here.”

Liam held his hand out to Theo and the other shape shifter pulled the key out of his pocket and placed it in Stiles’s hand. The human was left simmering with rage as he turned back to Liam, “Do you understand why this is such a blatant abuse of trust?”

Liam crossed his arms and stared mulishly at Stiles.

“This is Derek’s place and I know you don’t know much about him or care at all but he’s a born werewolf and a wolf’s den is incredibly important and he may be coming back here and now its going to reek of someone that hurt people he cares about. Derek has had enough pain and I am not going to stand idly by while someone hurts him now.”

“You’re not my alpha, you can’t tell me what to do.”

“Liam,” Stiles snapped and Liam shrank at whatever he scented and saw. It couldn’t have just been the anger because the beta had frequently just revved him up but right now he was shirking under what was in Stiles’s face and scent.

“Okay,” he snapped and walked out of the loft, leaving Stiles there to look around the open space. He crossed to the couch and ran his hand along the top and sighed, thinking of the black light party when he’d realized that he’d done something. He looked over to the large windows and heaved a sigh at the memory of turning around to find Derek, his dad and Chris Argent standing there. He’d offered his hands to be cuffed only to grin and break out against them. His hands throwing Derek across the room and screaming at Chris to shoot him.

“Maybe you should’ve shot me,” he whispered into the room, wishing he could move through time and put a gun in his mouth before all those people got hurt. He wished he’d just let Scott bite him so the Nogitsune couldn’t keep controlling him because he could see the echo of Allison’s laughing face and know that she was gone because of him, because he hadn’t been strong enough to keep the nogitsune out of him.

“Stiles?” someone called across the space and he turned to see Lydia standing in the doorway, hands folded together and watching him primly.

He sighed, “Did you follow me here Lydia?”

“My powers are shifting again, sometimes if I can think hard enough on one individual I can imagine what they are going to do but clearly it doesn’t always work because I never saw you coming home with Derek Hale as your plus one.”

“But you could see me here?” Stiles asked because it was safer to ask about her continuously changing powers than deal with the questions she was going to ask him.

“I saw you as you were back then, a memory of you here facing off against the others. I was in the area, getting some things for the wedding and found myself here.”

“Well then you can easily just back out the door and leave. You’re pretty good at that huh Martin?”
“I didn’t mean to hurt you Stiles, I needed to do this but you’re never going to get it. You’re angry and you should be but stop pretending with Derek.” Lydia said and she crossed the room quickly and Stiles took several steps backwards and to the left, so she couldn’t contain him and touch him.

“You and Parrish just kind of stopped, why would you go back to him after everything.”

Lydia crossed her arms and she stared imperiously at Stiles, it made the desire to hit a girl very possible to Stiles for the first time in his life. “I love Jordan, he has a great career and his background in the military means that his has a very good public background, even with the Hellhound stuff, he’s a good fit for me.”

“Sounds like true love,” he scoffed.

“This is a political move more than anything, he will give me in the best place to make actual change in important fields, his friendship with your father and the military cements contacts for the Department of Defense and even though you aren’t going to understand this, me marrying him is the best thing for everyone.”

“Well I hope you get everything you want, Lydia, now I want you to get out of here because this is Derek’s space and I don’t want other people’s scents to make him feeling unsafe here.”

“But I was pack, I still am,” she sounded more petulant than hurt.

“Well you aren’t to me and you aren’t to Derek.”

A flash of hurt passed over her face before she nodded, turned and left. Stiles took a deep breath and got to work cleaning the loft using the cleaning products from the kitchen and knew that they were probably the best thing because it was organic and the air would clear quickly, so Derek’s sensitive nose wouldn’t be to badly bothered by the smell.

When he was done, he texted Derek, ‘Now you have some options too. I’m sorry.’

With that, he headed out, locking the front door and pocketing the key since he knew that Derek had one on his keychain but he would give the other one back to someone he could trust, definitely not Scott since his beta was the one who brought Theo here. He didn’t like that the guy had apparently befriended Liam but the werewolf was right, he wasn’t their alpha. Honestly after everything he’d done to keep that little shit alive after he’d become a werewolf, Stiles deserved a little more respect but then again that was par for the course.

Stiles shoved his hands deep into his pockets and thought about what had initially sent him running out for a distraction. Derek didn’t seem to want this thing to be fake either but he’d never said anything.

Why wouldn’t he have just said something?

He got back to the Stilinski residence and walked inside and up the stairs, looking towards the guest room before he sighed and turned towards his bedroom instead and walked towards it only to pause when he found Derek asleep in his bed, laying on his side, with his back to the wall. Stiles smiled, grateful if not confused as to why the werewolf was in here.

He walked over and realized that Derek must have been asleep before Stiles sent him the text, but that just meant that Stiles could tell him in person. He settled on the bed in the natural curve of Derek’s body. The well of space at his waist was warm and inviting but Stiles just reached out and pressed a hand to the werewolf’s shoulder and he woke immediately. Derek jerked awake almost painful and Stiles winced in sympathy as he pressed a soothing hand into the werewolf’s shoulder.
“It’s just me Sourwolf.”

Derek nodded looking down in shame, “I didn’t mean to fall asleep in here. I’ll go.”

“No, Derek,” Stiles whispered and used his hands to continue to comfort Derek and try to convince the poor guy that he was welcome in here no matter what was going on. “I don’t want you to go, but I wanted you to have a choice if you weren’t comfortable here so I went and cleaned out the loft. It seems that the baby betas have been using it and Lydia found me there somehow and explained that she has to marry Parrish, I don’t get this situation at all and I didn’t even realize it made no sense that she was getting married until she was talking to me.”

Derek sat up and Stiles’s hand fell away as Derek leaned against the wall and folded his arms over his chest, “Are you going to go into ‘find the answer’ mode so you can get her back? Because if you do that I am not going to stay here and watch that, I have no desire to see you get hurt by her again. Or worse, not get hurt.”

Stiles thought about it, the conundrum was pinging in the back of his mind demanding understanding but he didn’t want Derek to leave and it was her life, no matter what. He shook his head, “It’s her life and her motives don’t change what she did to me or how she chose to do it. If she wants to get married at eighteen that’s her right as a free human being over the age of consent.”

Derek loosened a little at that information and Stiles moved to hold his hand out next to the werewolf’s leg to give him the chance to agree to touch. Derek took his hand and placed it on his thigh so Stiles left it there, letting the touch soothe them both.

“Is it weird that physical contact and your scent are so comforting to me?” Stiles asked because he didn’t know really. He’d been a part of a werewolf pack that didn’t seem to honor the need for physical connection and ironically he feels like that would have been something he could have gotten on board with, even with Scott. Stiles grew up in a house of physical affection, even touches that were steeped in frustration and fear from his father. The bear hugs and the shoulder slaps, joking around with Scott about making out and the like had been more than a joke; in some ways it had been his desire to be close coming through a little bit. When Scott never accepted the physical connection that Derek seemed to crave, Stiles got over it. Even after everything with Allison and the Nogitsune, the desire to be touched and comforted had only echoed loudly in his body as it was barely answered by Malia because of her inability to compromise for Stiles’s needs as well.

“People crave physical connection,” Derek answered as he left his hand over Stiles’s hand and pressed his thumb gently into the human’s knuckles.

“But scent marking, isn’t that a werewolf thing?”

“Do you want your scent on me, so other people know that we are in the same pack or something?” Derek asked.

Stiles flushed though he didn’t really know what to say, he’d only just allowed himself to enjoy Derek’s smell and it calmed him, if this was fake then it didn’t matter and if it wasn’t fake well then there were a few other conversations that needed to happen before scent marking had to be a thing. “I know that your scent, not some cologne but you, calms me and makes me feel warm.”

Derek flushed and ducked his head a little though he sobered quickly, “Stiles we should talk about what happened earlier.”

Stiles pulled away and lifted his legs to sit cross-legged before he took a deep breath and nodded, “I know. You said not to come to you unless I thought about it.”
“Did you?” the werewolf asked again.

“Yes but I don’t understand what almost happened, you want to kiss me and be with me for real?” Stiles asked. “You like guys too?”

Derek shrugged, “It’s different for us sometimes, werewolves don’t have some mythical magical bonding that happens, mates aren’t what you read about. It’s not like you can hear their heartbeat and you always know them immediately. It’s not lightning. We have mates but it’s a slow burn, something that takes time and trust and sometimes it’s not about a sexual connection but sometimes it is. Due to this we are taught at a very young age, if we have a good alpha, that sexuality is fluid and sometimes our preferences will realign if the bond is there. What I feel for you, with you, is a nascent bond and it can stay platonic or we can have this relationship but it’s not just some one-night stand kind of a feeling for me so I need you to know that. I need you to understand that I don’t decide this lightly, especially after what happened to me but I care about you Stiles. I’m content when we sit together and I feel warm when you touch me and I want to take a chance with you.”

Stiles just sat there for a minute, mouth open in shock, “Uhhhh.”

Derek smiled, “Stiles Stilinski doesn’t have anything to say?”

“Shut up!” he returned, his cheeks flushing as he looked down.

“I need to know that if we do this then its not going to be about Lydia anymore, if her coming back to you becomes a possibility are you going to go to her?”

The human didn’t need to think about it, he just shook his head, “No matter her reasoning, whether its for some stupid reason or love or whatever, her choices consisted of waiting until there was no one else then picking me only to be separated by our life choices and then dump me because it was no longer fitting for her. I care about her but I can’t keep pretending that her choices when it came to me for years wasn’t indicative of a true lack of feelings. I hope that if there is ever a time that she and I can be friends, that you won’t try and stop me from having my friend back at least.”

“I couldn’t stop you if I wanted to,” Derek said with a smirk.

“No lies detected,” Stiles smiled back then sobered, “I don’t think it’s a good idea to leap into anything, this is still new and we both came here under the umbrella of ulterior motives and with the idea of this not going anywhere and you have every reason to wonder about me with Lydia because of my stupid obsession with her over the years. But Derek you know me better than any of them, even Scott and especially Lydia. You didn’t turn away when I told you the worst of it, you held me tighter and I don’t need you in my life to survive but I kind of think I need you in my life to live.”

Derek’s eyes softened, he leaned forward and moved his hand up to take Stiles’s cheek into his palm. Stiles tried not to hold his breath; he really did but this moment like all the others were different because it was Derek. So his breath caught as the werewolf kept moving in and then Stiles couldn’t wait anymore and rushed in the rest of the way. He didn’t know who gasped, but one of them did. He didn’t know who made that little groan in the back of their throat but he did open his lips first and sought out the warmth of Derek. He pressed in closer, though he didn’t do much more beyond pressing his chest into the side of the werewolf’s warm body. He wanted to climb into the werewolf’s lap but even though they had been cuddling and getting closer for weeks, he didn’t want to make this about getting off as quickly as possible. Derek deserved more than that, for once he deserved better than that. This wasn’t some crazy last ditch effort to attain some insurmountable goal or two sad and lonely people groping in the dark. This was Derek and Stiles, something that had never made any sense to a lot of people, just them.
Stiles pulled away when all he wanted to do was delve in deeper, instead he moved to curl into Derek’s side and under his arm. The werewolf just sighed and pressed a kiss to the top of his head and whispered, “Thank you.”

Stiles tilted his head back a little, looking up as Derek looked down, “For what?”

“For not climbing into my lap, for not making this about sex.”

“I would love to have sex with you, I would get all up in there and under there and all over you in a heart beat. I really would and I’ve thought about it and dreamt about it but I’m not in this for a one night stand either, in case that wasn’t obvious. I can be kind of an idiot so I guess needing to clarify is just what consequence for that.”

Derek leaned down and pressed their lips together in another quick closed mouth kiss. When he pulled away he whispered against Stiles’s lips, “You’re a good man Stiles Stilinski.”

“You’re a good man Derek Hale,” Stiles returned softly and tucked his nose into the space between Derek’s armpit and his chest and just settled in. That’s where they stayed for a long time, breathing the same air and their hands holding the other gently. It wasn’t anything more than what they’d been doing for weeks now but it was different because they weren’t pretending to pretend anymore.

“We were both pretty bad at pretending this wasn’t a thing huh?” Stiles asked quietly after a couple more minutes of silence.

“I don’t now, I was pretty good seen as how I told you I wasn’t lying and that you were special and you were bound and determined that this wasn’t going to be a thing.”

“Yeah well—shut up Sourwolf,” Stiles returned intelligently with a pout.

Derek chuckled, “Real mature there, Stilinski.” They fell silent again and Stiles wondered how he’d gotten to be the quiet version of Stiles and wondered if he could ever really be the person he was before all this. The Wild Hunt had shown him real loneliness and loss, to be lost and he wished he could just pretend like everyone else had. Near the end the others hadn’t even been forgotten, he knew because he asked about Scott’s mom and Argent and the others, the barrier had started to fracture and it was losing the power to erase them but because he’d been one of the first to go he’d been left to watch as they forgot him.

“Are you spinning in your head right now?”

Stiles nodded, “Do you miss the old me? It’s like I can’t go back and reclaim who I was after the Hunt, after everything.”

Derek actually didn’t jump in which made Stiles feel better because he knew that some wholesale bullshit about the young and dumb version of himself was always missed would have been just that: a lie. When he answered it was gentle, “I don’t miss who you were in the beginning because that person did awful things to me just as Scott did awful things to him. I wouldn’t mind the enthusiasm for anything and everything and the chatter can be annoying but its also stupidly endearing. It’s who you are, you’ll get it back.”

Stiles nodded though he didn’t know if Derek was right about this, “Did you get back who you were before everything? With counseling?”

Derek’s lips smiled against his forehead, “No, I didn’t get back everything but I did get back the most important pieces. Wanting a pack, wanting to move on with my life and forgiveness. I don’t want to be the teenage self that I was. Before Paige, I was kind of a show off, was using my
werewolf skills to be the best basketball player, I played the field and I didn’t really care until Paige. Then Kate happened and I shut it all down.”

“Braeden?” Stiles asked, wondering. “I kind of figured that Jennifer/Julia used you so I’m not asking about that.”

“Braeden was a lot like lust in the foxhole, finding attraction because you think you should. We didn’t stay together for long at all. She went on her way and so did I. And yes, most of the times with Jennifer was overly passionate with this cotton overlay, felt wrong after the fact but I didn’t know any better while it was happening.”

He didn’t need anything more than that, these conversation didn’t need to happen all at once but Stiles was pleased that they could have them so he let everything be still knowing that right now Derek wasn’t going to leave if he suddenly came back to himself. Though he imagined that particular journey was going to take more than a good relationship and a couple months but he could get it back.

“Will you read to me?” Stiles whispered into the silence. Derek scent marked against the top of his head before he nodded. The werewolf moved away from the wall so they could slide down into the bed length-wise. Derek grabbed his book and Stiles settled in to listen for a while because he loved listening to Derek’s voice, he liked feeling the gentle rise and fall of the werewolf’s chest as he took in and sent it out, bringing it to life with words. And Stiles realized that in some ways this was so much easier than anything he’d ever done before. Derek fit in close next to him and read to him so Stiles could quiet his racing mind, he was so smart and no one seemed to know that about the werewolf. They didn’t have to be alone, and maybe they could help each other be stronger or saner or something.

“Do you have me read just so you can check out and think yourself to sleep?” Derek asked and Stiles snickered.

“Maybe, whatcha going to do about it,” Stiles whispered since he wasn’t tracking the story Derek was telling, just the rise and fall of his chest and the gentle intonation of his words.

Derek put the book down and pressed a hand to the side of Stiles’s neck and tilted the human’s face to him and pressed a kiss to Stiles’s lips gently then moved back just enough to speak, “I’ll keep reading if you just want to hear me.”

“I like your voice in my ear, is it okay? Even if I can’t listen all that well,” Stiles asked.

In answer, Derek continued reading for a while longer. They stayed like that until the Sheriff came home and called for them to come down and eat something. His dad had picked up burgers and fries, curly of course, so despite the glare Stiles was aiming at his father’s forehead the man just merrily went on eating.

Stiles watched his dad and Derek talk a little about sports and hunting of all things. They talked about Stiles’s first year at George Washington and if they had seen anything supernatural since they got there which led Derek into this long discussion about how most supernatural creatures, especially werewolves were even more careful when they were away from family as college invariably was.

“Did you go to college?” Noah asked Derek after that.

Stiles watched in curiosity because it was one of those things he’d never asked and wondered about. Derek looked down and nodded, “I have a Bachelors degree in communication and marketing with an associates in creative writing, I don’t have to work to live but I actually hate using the life
insurance for anything if I don’t have to so I write for some anonymous sources and get paid for it. I also have been working on some marketing plans for various businesses all over the country, it keeps me busy and most of it is remote work so it didn’t matter where I was.”

Stiles just grinned, reaching out under the table to squeeze Derek’s knee because knowing that Derek Hale had done something, maybe found something he actually enjoys is just about the most amazing thing he’d ever heard. The Sheriff watched them idly but didn’t say anything else, Derek didn’t know that the older man knew the ‘truth’ and Stiles didn’t think it was important at the moment.

After dinner they watched a movie together in the living room and Stiles curled up next to Derek and just enjoyed the closeness. He flailed a little and shouted at the television, much to Derek and his dad’s amusement and he just smiled as they all said goodnight and Stiles dragged Derek to his bedroom, leaving the door open but knowing that he didn’t want to sleep alone so Derek joined him.

“The wedding is next weekend, can we just spend that time doing summer stuff? Couple stuff?” Stiles asked as they settled in together.

“Sounds like a good plan.”

“Oh and don’t think you can get out of showing me some of your writing Sourwolf,” Stiles said as he patted the werewolf’s chest.

“Wouldn’t dream of it.”

“Just me,” Stiles said as he waggled his eyebrows in a knowingly comically expression.

Derek just snorted and said simply, “Shut up Stilinski.”

“Copy that.”
Revisiting The Past

Chapter Summary

Chapter Excerpt:

“Derek have you been on a real date, like since Paige?”

Derek turned slowly and frowned at Stiles, “What?”

“You know, like the picking someone up at their house and going to dinner and a movie, stuff like that?”

Chapter Notes

I revised the tags to include the Anti-Scott, Scott is a bad friend so be aware. Thank you.

Stiles watched as Derek was making coffee at the counter and couldn’t help himself, “Derek have you been on a real date, like since Paige?”

Derek turned slowly and frowned at Stiles, “What?”

“You know, like the picking someone up at their house and going to dinner and a movie, stuff like that?”

The werewolf stood there, leaning against the counter to think about it, “I don’t know if Paige and I really did that either. We hated each other and then we just started making out in any available corner. Her friends didn’t like me, my friends couldn’t stand how brassy she was so our lives never really moved beyond that. I loved her, in a Scott/Allison kind of way. It was loud and amazing and everything to me and when I lost her, it broke my heart. I didn’t date in New York, I could barely handle when someone was interested in me; the smell of lust would make me want to vomit because I just kept remembering Kate. Then when it got better, I wasn’t really interested in relationships because that required a level of trust that I wasn’t capable of. You were different, it was so slow and you kept showing me that no matter how surly or obnoxious we were to each other, you did what you needed to do to keep everyone alive. You showed me you didn’t have to believe what I was saying for you to support my pack when they needed someone. You didn’t wait for Scott to know what you knew to stand up to Argent because of what they did to my family. Stiles, the trust I have with you happened without meaning to but in the end when I wanted to be close to someone again, there wasn’t a contest. It was you.”

Stiles looked down, trying to hide the flush of embarrassment but Derek walked over and sat next to him. He couldn’t help but say, “I wasn’t going to ask about her, or me.”

Derek smiled, “Yes you were. You care too much about me, not asking about you compared to her would have just made you crazy.
“And the lust smell?” Stiles asked.

Derek shrugged and leaned forward to press his nose into Stiles’s throat for a minute before he answered. His words pressed warm air into Stiles’s skin and he shuddered happily at the sensation. “It’s not like women, it’s different enough but because I trust you it doesn’t even matter. I know what you smell like when you are aroused but before it was never about me—it was just a part of who you were. You were a sixteen year old boy, even I remember being horny all the time.”

Stiles pressed his cheek into the side of Derek’s face, “What if it was kind of about you?”

Derek chuckled, “Wouldn’t matter now, you took advantage of my body once and you never did it again.”

Stiles remembered that day in his bedroom with Danny and making Derek strip, “I am an awful person for that,” he whispered.

The werewolf just pressed another kiss into the side of his neck, “You were an awful person, past tense.”

“Oh huh. If I remember correctly you slammed my head into the steering wheel for that,” Stiles returned with a grin, “Speaking of the past.”

“Yes?”

“I don’t like it here anymore,” Stiles returned quickly and scrubbed at his arms over the smattering of goose bumps were rising from anxiety about what he was going to say. “I think maybe it’s because I’ve had time away and I really am realizing how little help I got with what happened to us. To me. We were so alone and I don’t want to be alone anymore but in Washington I felt even more alone.”

“Oh okay.”

“Will you go down nightmare lane with me, walk and talk with me to a couple of places? Maybe if I go there, I will remember that they are just places where awful things happened. I don’t want to run away and never come back and I can feel that desire in me. I want to pack my bags and leave in the middle of the night and Beacon Hills be damned. I can live with the ask forgiveness instead of permission concept of life.”

“You usually did,” Derek said with a smile.

“Shut it Sourwolf,” Stiles returned with a pointed finger in the werewolf’s face. The only response he got was Derek grabbed his hand and pressing a gently nip to the tip of his finger and Stiles would never admit to the little ‘meep’ that came out of his mouth at that. He laughed awkwardly knowing that the pheromones were rising now, “So what’s that smell like?”

Derek tossed his head back and barked out a laugh, “Smells good Stiles.”

“So-o-o-o-o coffee then memory lane?” he asked, drawing out the word.

He got a quick jerking nod in return before Derek walked back to the counter and started the coffee. Stiles sat back and watched, wondering if his ‘boyfriend’ knew how to cook. He knew a lot about werewolves and some of their behaviors around partners and ‘mates’ but didn’t want to butt in and make this more awkward than he’d already done.
“So we start the evil walk down memory lane with the Hale house,” Stiles said as they jumped out of the jeep.

Stiles hadn’t been surprised to find his car parked next to his dad’s cruiser and he started his day by plastering himself to the front of it and barely stopping himself from kissing the hood while Derek looked everywhere but at him while he muttered, “I’m not with him,” over and over.

He sent a quick text to say ‘thanks’ to Scott before they leapt into the vehicle and headed out. The Hale house wasn’t even there now, it had been demolished before Derek had been kidnapped and Kate regressed him. As they stared at the hole where the house used to be Stiles took himself back to the night when he’d thrown a Molotov cocktail at the werewolf and watched him burn. Then watched as Derek tore his throat out.

“Maybe its selfish to consider this such a troubling memory but I think maybe it was one of those key moments, I had always made jokes about killing people—everyone does because humans are idiotic but that moment, I wanted him dead and I was content to not only watch it happen but actually help. We set a man on fire that had already healed from massive burns and there was a sick glee inside me that scared me more than anything.”

Derek walked over and placed a hand on his lower back and started rubbing in slow circles. “That sounds pretty normal, actually you sound like a werewolf. Its almost impossible for me to separate the desire to hunt and kill from the rest of my thoughts, though I have done everything I ever needed to do to make sure I wouldn’t act on it unless I had to. I might be a predator but I am not a killer. I avenged the death of my sister when I took out Peter’s throat, I took care of a threat that had affected so many lives. He bit Scott, he attacked Lydia and threatened and hurt you for fighting back.”

“But I’m not a werewolf and I didn’t fight back,” Stiles whispered and scooted a little closer to his friend’s side. They really needed to talk about titles and shit, this was confusing but he ignored it for now.

“Stiles you did everything you could with what you had, that is all someone can ask from you. Do you think you should have let Peter beat you or even kill you for the answers?”

“Maybe,” Stiles muttered, “I think sometimes about turning down the Bite that night. Peter wasn’t wrong, I wanted it but not from him. By the time there was someone else to ask, I could live without but what if being a werewolf had made it harder for the nogitsune to take me? What if that would have changed something?”

“It would have changed a lot of things, I’m sure,” Derek said and tugged Stiles closer, “But you can’t change the past and you didn’t want to be a werewolf. That’s your right.”

“Is that why you never asked me?” Stiles turned to inquire even as they turned to walk back to the jeep. They both knew where they were going next. It was the most important thing for him to face.

“I never asked you because I knew that if you wanted it, you would come to me. Then Scott became an Alpha and if you were going to ask anyone it would have been him.”

Stiles turned in Derek’s embrace, “Maybe that’s why I never asked. I hated to see what happened to all of my friends because of the Bite but I knew they were stronger. Maybe I didn’t ask because I knew it would force me to pick a pack, a side and I didn’t want to do that. You needed me, the others needed me. I wanted to be there for all of you and not feel like I was being ripped apart.”

“And did you?” Derek whispered and his hands pressed gently into Stiles’s skin at the edge of his shirt.
“I just wanted everyone to be alive and I wanted to be needed.”

“We did need you Stiles, you were always figuring things out that no one else could. I think that Scott is a good alpha but he’s not the sharpest tool in the box.”

Stiles chuckled and leaned forward to hug Derek tightly, “Ain’t that the truth.”

“Stiles?”

“Yeah Sourwolf?”

“Will you kiss me?”

He smiled at the gentle request, “Hell yes I will.” Then putting words into action he leaned in and pressed his mouth to Derek’s and just let it sit there for a minute to see who would falter first. It didn’t take long before someone was groaning and delving in. They stood like that for a little while and soon enough Stiles was trying to climb Derek’s body to get closer. The werewolf just chuckled and turned them both around so Stiles was leaning against the hood of the car. With that done he could use the leverage to lift Stiles up a little than lean in between the human’s spread legs and they both groaned at the contact.

“Too much?” Stiles whispered between groans.

“I just want to press my scent all over you,” Derek rumbled in response as he pressed a smattering of kisses to the side of Stiles’s throat and jawline. Stiles grunted at the rasping sensation that sent a zing of pleasure down his body and he pressed out against Derek’s front. Then before anything else exciting could happen, Derek jerked away and the human faltered and landed roughly on the ground. He flailed just enough to not land his ass on the ground as he looked at the werewolf in question only to find that he’d shifted as he turned away from Stiles, “What the hell Derek?”

“Someone’s out here,” Stiles gasped thinking about all the things that could be in the Preserve. What would make Derek so nervous? Then Derek sighed and spoke again, “Its Scott.”

Stiles cursed though he really wanted to soothe Derek first, “Are you kidding me Scott, get your ass out here now and explain why you’re cock-blocking me!” Derek slapped a hand over his face at that, barely containing a snort of amusement which must’ve helped with the adrenaline rush that forced his beta shift.

The alpha slunk out of his hiding place behind a small copse of trees and shuffled over to where Stiles and Derek were standing. Any erection Stiles may have had was gone now, not to be recovered for a while. Then refocused on Derek who was still shifted and growling a little.

Stiles frowned as he reached out and ran the tips of his fingers down Derek’s arm. He knew better than to press his hand, even his fingers to the man’s back or neck in comfort, no matter how close they were. Derek was spooked and this thing was still too new to depend on like that.

Derek just turned and took his hand, “Sorry about that. I was distracted and because of that I reacted badly.”

“What are you apologizing for?”

“Shifting?” Derek asked rather than said, not really knowing either.

Stiles smiled, “You have nothing to apologize for, I wasn’t worried about me. I just wanted to make
“Okay seriously,” Scott shouted, causing Stiles and Derek to flinch having forgotten for a second why they’d been interrupted, “This is why I was following you. I don’t think either one of you are thinking clearly and I didn’t want something to happen that you both are going to regret.”

“I am pretty sure I didn’t ask for a chaperone to stand between me and my boyfriend,” Stiles returned and he crossed his arms over his chest. Derek just transferred his hand to the back of Stiles’s jeans and tuck a thumb into the back loop. Stiles smiled at the desire to stay in contact though he figured it was partially to keep him from going after Scott.

“But your boyfriend Stiles!?! That’s the biggest problem with all of this. What the hell man? And if you were going to bring home a fake significant other, why not someone a little more realistic? Someone we might actually believe?”

“And why isn’t Derek at all believable?” Stiles snapped and started towards his friend before he even knew what he was doing. Derek tightened his grip over the back of his pants and held him back gently.

“Because he’s a guy!” Scott started with.

“I’m bisexual,” Stiles answered and shook off Derek’s hand but stood his ground instead of going after his supposed friend.

“And Derek?” Scott gestured wildly and Stiles just stared at him.

“That’s actually none of your business,” Derek said smoothly.

“Except that you’re fucking with my best friend.”

“No he’s not,” Stiles returned quickly.

“He left us! Stiles he left us on our own!”

“Because that’s what he needed,” Stiles said calmly, feeling all the tension drain out of him at that knowledge. He turned and smiled at the other werewolf, “I know he would have come back if we called but I wanted him out just as badly as he needed out.”

Derek smiled that little smile that he seemed to have for Stiles that was fond and exasperated at the same time, “I would have come back if you called.”

Stiles nodded, “I know.”

“Oh my god you guys are unbelievable!”

“Give me one good reason I shouldn’t be with him,” Stiles asked as he turned away from Derek to demand from his friend.

“Everything is his fault!!!” Scott shouted and it echoed into the trees.

Stiles stared, jaw dropped and eyebrows scrunched in confusion, “What does that even mean?”

Scott started to talk but Stiles just cut him off.

“You know, I don’t want to know actually. The only thing that should really matter to you is that he’s there for me and he cares about me. As my friend, I am telling you that unless you have the
Scott pursed his lips but didn’t say anything.

“Then we’re going and I will text you later if you want to hang out and not judge my relationship,” Stiles said and they got back into the Jeep and Derek drove them away from Scott who was still standing there. Derek drove them out of the Preserve and looked to Stiles who was staring out the window, watching the trees and everything pass by as they moved quickly. Stiles watched and wondered if he should tell Derek where to go next but the werewolf seemed to know without any help from him.

Derek was taking him to the high school. A place that had seen so much of the destruction of their lives, Stiles and the others had faced the nogitsune here, Aiden had died here, Stiles watched the Chimera die here. Lydia was bitten here and she had found so many of the dead bodies because of it. The sacrifices and being held hostage by Peter, thinking that he’d killed Derek. Then there was the Deadpool and so on, how they had ever survived this place was beyond Stiles’s understanding.

They were standing in the parking lot, leaning on the hood of the jeep with arms around each other when Stiles smiled, “The pool.”

Derek turned and frowned at him, “The pool?”

“You lied to me then, I don’t think you knew it at the time though.”

“Stiles,” Derek rolled his eyes so hard Stiles could feel it, “What are you talking about?”

“When I held you up in the pool because the kanima attacked us, you told me that we didn’t trust each other but I don’t think that was true—even then.”

Derek leaned in close and pressed his forehead to Stiles’s ear and the side of his head, “Yeah you are probably right. How many people would you hold up for that long?”

“Definitely not Jackson,” Stiles responded, chuckling.

Derek snorted, “Yay, I am more important than Jackson, that’s not a heck of endorsement.”

Stiles turned and hugged Derek, “You were always important. No matter how stupid we were, no matter if I followed Scott around like a puppy, desperate to get his scraps.”

Derek pulled Stiles down by the neck just enough to kiss him on the forehead then hugged him tightly, “You shouldn’t have to wait for some scrap of affection from your best friend, especially when he’s a werewolf, he shouldn’t have said those things to you when you watched the chimera die and Theo can’t be blamed for Scott’s inability to be a good friend even after all the years of you being together.”

“Maybe I deserved it?” Stiles whispered.

“Deserved what?” Derek asked as they shifted to look at the school again.

“Punishment for dragging Scott out into the woods to find a body, for telling Peter how to find you and him, for throwing that Cocktail, for Allison and Lydia, even Jackson. Should I go on?”

“You really think those things are your fault?”

Stiles nodded.
“Well all I can say is you need to talk to someone, maybe someone like I talked to. She helped a lot to teach me what was my fault and what wasn’t. You aren’t going to believe me or even Scott or your dad but maybe when you tell someone else, who you can trust to not have a skewed view of the situation. I can make a call.”

Stiles thought about it for a few minutes, heaved a sigh and whispered, “Let’s get going.”

“Just think about it Stiles.”

The human nodded and they got back into the car and continued on the trek through town.

The drive continued to a couple of over places, including Eichen House and even the Argent house, Stiles would talk and Derek would talk and they would leave. Stiles didn’t know if any of this was really helping but knowing that Derek was willing to listen to him, even when he shook apart at the seams in the werewolf’s arms or when he railed and yelled about the injustice of everything they had gone through.

Hours later, they walked into the loft and Derek looked around before he nudged Stiles over to the couch and they both sat down. Derek leaned against the arm of the couch and pulled Stiles into his side, tucking close to each other.

“Are you hungry?” Stiles asked, placing one of his hands on Derek’s chest.

The werewolf just held Stiles and nodded though neither of them moved.

“I thought about it Der,” the human spoke after the silence had stretched to thin for him to stand, Derek had always been laconic but now it seemed like the quiet was more peaceful whereas Stiles needed to fill it because he didn’t like anything that come from the silence in his mind.

“Yeah?” the werewolf leaned over and rubbed his cheek and chin over the Stiles’s head.

“I don’t want this place to rule the rest of my life, I don’t want the war I have somehow survived to be everything to me. I want to live, not just survive this way.”

“I’ll make a call, see if there is someone you could see that is close to your campus.”

“Why not here and now?”

“Because you need someone who is going to be with you through this, not just someone to start the process and then you leave California again. When I saw my counselor, she mentioned that the infrastructure of support for the supernatural world is far reaching, much like werewolf families and Emissaries for packs.”

“You know a thing that I don’t know,” Stiles said with a grin.

Derek chuckled, “I only wish I had known it long ago and had been willing to seek help for the losses and destructive nature of hunters versus the supernatural. It’s a shit world we live in sometimes but there is some good things too.”

Stiles moved and pressed his lips to Derek’s in a quick kiss before he hugged the werewolf again, “Yeah, there is some good here too. I don’t want to lose the good because the darkness seems so vast.”

“Then you won’t, I’ll help you remember the light in you.”
“So freaking poetic,” Stiles flushed in embarrassment and tried to hide his face in Derek’s chest. He needed what Derek was offering; even the idea of going back to school without some Lydia focused fantasy had been hard to swallow before. Knowing now that he would have Derek to listen while he jabbered on and on, or shook through a panic attack was the comfort he needed. He didn’t have to depend on people who didn’t know he was worth standing next to anymore.

“I am a writer you know,” Derek said haughtily after a minute and Stiles laughed.

“Of poetry?” he asked.

“Not really, I stick mostly to fantast and mythology but I have written about some of my experiences for self-help blogs. If I think I have something I can use, I write for it in the off times when I am not working on my marketing campaigns.”

“So no sappy Stiles poems to be found?” Stiles asked, heaving a sad sigh.

“Maybe, but you’ll have to find them first.”

“Oh, challenge accepted Sourwolf!” Stiles exclaimed as he sat up and pressed a heavy kiss to the werewolf’s lips. Derek’s hand slid up the side of his neck, holding him gently. The human couldn’t help the smile as he was trying to kiss and their teeth clacked together for a second before kissing again.

He pulled back, “It’s so hard to think of you doing marketing campaigns, the man who never owned a thing helping other companies to sell their products.”

Derek shrugged, “I try to stick to products that I believe in, or companies that do serious good but there is plenty of other companies that I work with because of the money. Most campaigns are three to six month runs, the planning happens for about one to three months before a launch and since I do everything so far, I can spend all the time I need to on each project. I Skype with my clients frequently which is another thing about this business that pushed me so far out of my comfort zone but it’s gotten easier with time.”

“Talking to people, yeah,” Stiles grinned as he tightened his hold around the werewolf and just marveled at the differences in Derek. If the sourwolf could become something well adjusted and different than the laconic and violently disturbed young adult to this man sitting next to him then Stiles could do it too. “I still want to be in the FBI, is that stupid?”

Derek shrugged, “I am honestly surprised you didn’t want to be a cop but then again FBI agents are kind of like cops right?”

Stiles nodded, “Yeah, they are more like who you call when the cops don’t have the power they need. FBI takes care of most terrorism cases and there is so much more to what they do and I wouldn’t be like douchebag McCall who only comes to town to drag my father’s good name through the mud. There is such a thing as interdepartmental compromise and mutual benefits to the FBI coming into an investigation. Actually I am pretty sure that McCall shouldn’t have been the one to try to get my dad fired, he just had a bug up his ass about when we were all younger.”

“Well you are going to be great in any kind of law enforcement.”

“Thanks.”

They fell silent for a couple of minutes and Stiles looked around the loft, “How much real estate do you actually own? This was still your place even though you weren’t here.”
“The loft was something I acquired when I realized I was going to stay in Beacon Hills. I wasn’t one for the big house in the woods but I needed something. I bought out the building because it was easier. The land on the Preserve still belongs to the Hale family, there is a cabin on the outskirt of New York, there is also a place I just bought in Alaska, Cora and some of the others live there now. Why?”

Stiles shrugged, “You said you don’t like to use the money. The life insurance money?”

“Most of the Hale assets transferred to Laura and me, there were several places that belonged to other family members, my mothers siblings and her parents that Laura and I sold when we first hit the road but there was life insurance policies on everyone, not to mention on the house itself. It’s enough, especially since I let someone invest a part of the money, to live on and make those kinds of purchases but I bought the loft and the place in Alaska for Pack or family. I got the place in Washington to be close to you, if it wasn’t for the other people in my life, I might never touch that money.”

“What if you had a family?” Stiles asked, not knowing why.

Derek shifted and looked down at him in surprise.

“Do you think about that kind of thing, since losing Erica and Boyd?”

“Of course I think about it, I’m a werewolf and I want to be close and have a pack and I did in Alaska. It just wasn’t what I wanted anymore.”

“What not?”

“Maybe I wanted to be needed too,” Derek said with a shrug.

“Well you are,” Stiles said and they both fell silent. Soon it would be time to head back to the Stilinski house but for now, the silence was actually okay to Stiles because he wasn’t alone and Derek wasn’t going anywhere. And neither was he.
Bachelor Party

Chapter Summary

Snippets of time, Stiles and Derek taking food to the Sheriff, Date Bucket list and the Bachelor Party.

Chapter Notes

Reminder - any texting conversation is just giving a little bit of insight into the other Beacon Hills gang and obviously its been kept away from Stiles and Derek.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Chapter Six: Bachelor Party

After another night spent curled around each other in Stiles’s bed, they decided to make some turkey sandwiches and deliver them to the Sheriff at the station. Derek added some barbeque chips and sodas to the bag, despite the glare he was getting from Stiles and shrugged, “I’m doing this for you Stiles, we want him to like me and forget all about the times that I was spending hours with his underage son a couple of years ago especially now since we can’t seem to stop sleeping in the same bed under his roof.”

“Uh huh,” Stiles didn’t believe the excuse at all, “Suck up.”

Derek just shrugged as they loaded everything into the jeep and Stiles got in to drive, Derek settled in the passenger seat. They arrived at the station about ten minutes later, after a pretty extensive argument about the pros and cons of superhero movies and their comics. Stiles had never really thought of Derek as a comic kind of guy but the werewolf was turning out to be a lot of things he’d never really considered.

“So we are in agreement that the comics are obviously better for continuity as well as in-depth portrayal of the stories and characters,” Stiles summed up as they were grabbing bags and started walking in.

“Then again,” Derek bartered, “Tony Stark played by Robert Downey Jr.”

“There is that,” Stiles chuckled. Derek reached out and opened the door, letting Stiles lead him into the building and grinned as he walked in and waved at the front desk person before he just continued on through to the back. He knocked on the door and opened it before he really looked inside as he’d been doing most of his life, “Hey Dad, we brought lunch.”

“Stiles, Derek, you guys remember Chris Argent obviously,” the Sheriff said as he pointed out that he wasn’t alone in his office.

Stiles waved and looked back to Derek who gave his little dude-nod towards the hunter. Stiles wondered after all this time if it was just easier to be acquaintances than really think about what the
Argent and Hale families had done to each other in the past. He wasn’t going to mention anything.

“Mr. Argent, I sadly didn’t bring enough for everyone,” Stiles said with a polite smile.

“I won’t intrude on your lunch, I was just here to touch base with your father about the supernatural happenings around town. Thankfully we haven’t seen much going on and since the adults have been working together in the alpha’s absence we work to stay in contact with each other.”

“You guys are pals then?” Stiles asked, looking at his father for some kind of response.

“We are work associates,” Argent answered sharply as he stood and walked past them and out the door.

“And friends,” the sheriff finished after Chris was gone. “Stiles I know what the man is responsible for in the past, I know he’s made mistakes but I needed someone who knew more than I did to deal with everything. The Wild Hunt left everything in a steady flow of quiet chaos and you guys were gone, as you should be but we needed to keep on living here. Chris and some of his men helped out a lot getting things back in order.”

“I’m glad you have a friend Dad, I’m glad that he has a friend. Especially one who follows a much better Code than he ever did, before Allison set his head on straight anyway.”

“Stiles,” the Sheriff said in that tired way that he had sometimes when he understood that he’d raised an opinionated little shit who was going to say what he meant but also he was almost begging him to stop. “Argent doesn’t know how to have friends that aren’t on his crew and he doesn’t have family anymore so for him this is a partnership for the betterment of Beacon Hills and that’s just about it.”

“I meant what I said Dad, I’m glad you have a friend. You’ve been alone for far too long but seriously, you should consider dating once in a while. The last time you had a date that I knew about was Lydia’s mom.”

Stiles slumped down in one of the chairs, not waiting for an answer that wasn’t coming, while Derek handed out food and sodas. The Sheriff smiled in thanks of the sandwich and chips and they were silent as the three men dug into the food. Stiles wanted to reach over and take away the chips but Derek just shook his head, “Hey if you’re not going to help then get out of the way.”

Derek just smiled, “Let the man have some chips Stiles, they aren’t going to kill him.”

“He’s right here and can hear you treating him like a child, ya know?”

“Stiles just cares about you, doesn’t want to lose you,” Derek explained and Stiles glared at his boyfriend because the whole point of this was that he didn’t tell his father that sort of thing not to mention the cholesterol fight was half actual concern and half to see how long his dad would actually put up with it. Stiles is convinced at this point that his dad enjoys the game just as much these days.

“Traitor,” he griped.

“I am pretty sure I am going to die from a lot of other things before I die from having chips but the thought is appreciated boys, if not old.”

“Have you heard about his thing with Melissa?” Stiles asked after a minute of silence, thinking back to Argent with his scruffy face and his hidden guns and bulky SUV’s.

The sheriff just shook his head, “He doesn’t talk to me about it and I think Melissa thinks it hits too close to home for us to talk about it. They seem to be doing okay though. Argent actually looks like
he’s going to smile more often, I think after the deaths of his family he deserves it and so does Melissa.”

“Why do you say that sir? The part about Mrs. McCall not talking to you about it?” Derek asked quietly, like he expected to be shut down cold by the man, which might be the only reason Stiles’s dad answered.

“We basically raised Scott and Stiles in a tag team effort, being there to the best of our ability and maybe someday if certain things hadn’t happened we would have ended up romantically involved but like for example when Stiles was in the hospital and we all thought he had what his mom did, Melissa was there for me in a way only family ever could be. She’s with someone else but it doesn’t undo our history. So I think it’s uncomfortable for her and I to talk about that sort of thing.”

“I always wondered why you and Melissa never tried it out?” Stiles asked and informed.

“We both needed friends more than we needed a fling when it had been possible.”

Stiles was about to dig even further into where his nose doesn’t belong when the door opened and Parrish was there, staring at the three of them. Stiles jerked, jolted by totally unnecessary shock since the man worked in the station.

“Stiles, Derek, good to see you both. I was just stopping in to make sure that you were both invited to the bachelor party tonight. Its just going to be dinner with some friends while the ladies go out and do whatever they are going to do.”

“Are you kidding me?” Stiles snapped before anyone could stop him, starting to get up to do who knows what to someone who wasn’t actually at fault for Lydia’s behavior.

Derek immediately reached out and took his new boyfriend’s hand, to comfort him and probably to contain him. Stiles looked over long enough to see the wavering uncertainty that Derek was letting him see instead of shutting it all down. He resettled at that because though the man’s offer was in poor taste, this wasn’t about Lydia Martin anymore. It didn’t stop the sting of rejection and confusion he felt rushing through him with jagged stops and starts.

“Just go, Parrish, we’ll see you later,” the sheriff said and the other man hurried out of the room.

“Dad!” Stiles exclaimed.

“Be the bigger man Stiles,” his father returned quickly.

“Fuck the bigger man!” Stiles said and Derek choked and he replayed what he’d said before turning to his boyfriend with a groaned out, “Not a word.”

“You’re doing just fine without my words,” Derek responded and Stiles glared because seriously there were things about this Derek Hale that were equally annoying and enticing, and having jokes was definitely one of those things.

“Ugh!” Stiles responded inelegantly and slumped back towards his chair, missing by several inches and Derek had to drag him over into his lap otherwise he would have landed on the ground. Stiles pressed his hand into Derek’s neck and hugged him because he could before he turned and looked at his dad.

“Stiles, I know the falling out you had with Lydia was painful and honestly not something you or anyone else ever deserves to go through but Parrish doesn’t really know that you two were together, he doesn’t have a lot of friends and you are one of them. Just come with me and make nice for a little
while then you can bow out gracefully, don’t make someone else miserable because she hurt you.”

Stiles groaned because of course his dad was going to appeal to his ‘better nature’ not that he thought he had one. He just had a reputation to uphold and this sounds a lot like one of those ‘I’m so disappointed’ talks if he doesn’t do it, “I’ll think about it.”

Noah nodded, Stiles shoved off of Derek’s lap and sighed. “I was promised some dates by this here man so we’re going to head out. See you tonight Dad.”

The sheriff waved them off out of the room without saying another word. Derek would be help Stiles decide to go tonight. He would also need to make sure that little display in the office didn’t hurt Derek. He barely made it out to the jeep before he turned and shoved his hands in his pockets and asked, “Was that little thing a leaving Beacon Hills offence? I didn’t mean it was about her.”

“I get it Stiles,” Derek returned, pressing a hand to the human’s shoulder.

“You get what exactly and just so you know—that wasn’t an answer.”

“I get that it was in poor taste and your reaction was justified but was it necessary? Are you just going to react in magnificently stupid hysterics every time the wedding comes up because if so then maybe we should just go away until its over. Also I know that we have both been shit at this but I am not going to leave just because you’re an idiot.”

Stiles snorted, “Yeah you’d be leaving pretty quickly.”

Derek nodded and Stiles grinned despite the agreement. Derek noticed and his eyebrow rose in question, “What is that?”

“What?”

“Your face.”

“Fuck you, it’s my face.”

“Why are you grinning like that?” Derek slid both of his hands around Stiles’s waist, causing shudders in their wake.

“You think I am magnificent.”

Derek chuckled and pulled him closer, “Magnificently stupid.”

“You’re the idiot for coming and having anything to do with me, you know who I was before you came here.”

“Technically I didn’t since I met you here in Beacon Hills after I returned.”

Stiles rolled his eyes and leaned in, letting his fingers dig into the hair at the base of the werewolf’s scalp, “Hey Derek?”

“What?” he asked, breathing each other in.

“Shut up and kiss me,” Stiles whispered and Derek complied quickly.

Several minutes of sloppy and deep kisses later, Stiles ended it with a little peck and whispered, “Good boy.”
“Really, a dog joke,” Derek said, his eyebrows doing that thing where they judged Stiles where he stood and found him wanting.

“Yup.”

Derek just rocked into Stiles and kissed him again, the human moaned and shut up.

After almost being arrested for public indecency, Derek and Stiles left the station and they decided to go to a matinee at the theater, figuring they would have plenty of time to get home and get dressed for the Bachelor Party which Stiles didn’t even need Derek’s help to make a decision about.

He just said as they were looking up times, “I don’t want to be the better man but I don’t want my dad to be disappointed in me.”

“Which can you stand living with?” Derek asked, like he knew what kind of decision this was. Sometimes when the choices are laid out to pick from, the one you can live with isn’t fun but its still the better alternative.

“I can live with being the resentful better man, I can’t deal with another one of my father’s looks because he is damn good at them and I want to throw myself off a bus when I think of all the times he’s used it with me.”

“A bus? Not a train?”

“Same difference especially since no one said it was moving,” Stiles returned with a wink and a ‘badump-bump’. Derek just chuckled and they continued to drive to the theater. They found a quiet corner in the back and focused on the screen at the pre-movies commercials began. Stiles glanced over to Derek a few times in the darkness and tried to commit to memory what his profile in this light was like. He’d never been to a movie theater with him, he’d never really considered going on movie dates with Malia because keeping her human had been hard enough without adding the astronomical task of keeping her entertained while she was sitting still. She could never really understand things like movies and television because it would impede on her survival skills. From what he’d experienced with Lydia when she was with other guys is that she says what happens at all hours of the day and sitting here, he can’t imagine her caring about this.

“Why are you staring?” Derek leaned over and whispered.

“You ever do that thing where you make out in the theater and almost get kicked out?” Stiles whispered, putting himself close enough to Derek’s ear that he barely needed to speak to be heard.

“What? Are you fourteen?” Derek returned. Then without saying anything else, Derek shifted in his seat, lifted a hand to cup the back of Stiles’s neck and sank in. It was uncomfortably with the arm rest in between them and though Stiles was more than a little okay with sitting in the same seat, Derek didn’t seem to be that adventurous but it was totally worth the painful indents in his side and stomach to check one of those ‘having a boyfriend’ bucket list items off.

**Text Message Transcript: Me and Red Banshee**

*Red Banshee: Apparently my fiancé invited Stiles and Derek to the Bachelor Party tonight.*

*Me: Okay, that makes sense. Parrish isn’t really friends with a lot of people, us mostly.*

*Red Banshee: Scott, I didn’t tell Parrish I was sort of dating Stiles when we got back together.*
Me: Ouch.

Red Banshee: Yeah and in my designs to not have Stiles mad at me and lying to us about Derek. I may have told him that this thing with Jordan is more political than romantic.

Me: So what are you telling me for? I can’t make him forget that stuff and I can’t go back and tell you to shut the hell up.

Red Banshee: You’re going to be there, keep them away from each other.

Me: Why should I?

Red Banshee: Well, I could always let Stiles see some of those pictures of who you’ve been hooking up with.

Me: Fuck you Lyds! I’ll watch them.

Red Banshee: Good Alpha.

They didn’t get kicked out but between the tongue in his mouth and hands under his shirt, Stiles couldn’t say anything about the movie they’d just watched. They walked out at the end, Derek’s arm wrapped around Stiles’s waist and holding him possessively close and Stiles was just grinning like a loon.

“Best date yet,” Stiles crowed as they got home and went their separate ways to locate clothes and get ready.

“Out of what? One date?” Derek chuckled as he walked back to the guest room where his suitcase was still sitting on the footlocker at the end of the bed though they hadn’t spent a night apart since their arrival in Beacon Hills it wasn’t necessarily in one room or the other.

“Hey that’s a 100% success rating, don’t jinx it Sourwolf.”

All he heard after that was a lot of muttering then the shower down the hall turning on “Don’t use all the hot water jerk!”

Derek just barked out one laugh and Stiles grinned because this Derek, someone who has had a little help from all the right places is enough to help Stiles remember what the Wild Hunt had made him forget. This Derek was still so much the other part of what Stiles craved to balance himself out. Stiles had always been sarcasm and intelligence, ballsy stupidity and lucky encounters whereas Derek had been determination and caution, the power of the alpha whether his eyes were red or not. Now it didn’t seem to matter that they were both different again, they still fit in these terrifying ways.

Not to mention the kissing.

And his body was amazing, Stiles thought with a shudder, which was impossible to forget. There were these moments when the human just stared at the guy over the years because his jaw was sharp and like it belonged on a marble station. Not to mention the stubble and the muscles and just all the things.

Then again, it wasn’t his body that Stiles thought of when he made the phone call a couple weeks
earlier, it had been the feeling of pack that he wanted. If he wanted to look at someone’s body, he could have called so many other people—on campus and a couple of them even flirted and or offered themselves to Stiles. Strangely enough it wouldn’t have been enough to get through finding about the wedding and coming home to this mess.

“What are you thinking about?” Derek asked and Stiles shrieked much to the werewolf’s apparent amusement.

“Thinking you need to wear a freaking bell,” Stiles responded to the humor of Derek’s snort. He shoved Stiles towards the bathroom and the human showered quickly before he got dressed and they headed to the restaurant. Standing in front of the door, Stiles took a deep breath and reached out for Derek’s hand. After tangling their fingers together in a warm comforting grip, Stiles led the way in and saw some of the deputies, as well as Scott and Liam. The rest of the baby betas didn’t seem to be there and Stiles was surprised that Liam was there at all; there was enough of an age gap that in any other town it would have raised eyebrows. Stiles nodded to his younger pack mate and best friend as they were both just staring at the couple.

“This is going to be a long evening,” Stiles muttered.

“Let’s go say hello and offer congratulations to Parrish, we’ll have some quality free food and leave with conscious clear.”

Stiles nodded; glad to have a plan in mind. They walked over and greeted Scott and Liam, chatted with some of the deputies that were left over from Stiles’s childhood and had survived the horrible deaths of various monsters in town. Most people didn’t seem to know about Lydia and Stiles every being an item so there wasn’t a lot of pitying looks. It was actually more curiosity about Derek, when they had gotten together and so on. Stiles realized that though this was uncomfortable, there were a lot of people here that he’d loved throughout his life, important people in his life and before he knew it they were sitting down for the meal.

“Surprisingly not as bad as I thought it would be,” Stiles whispered into Derek’s ear. The werewolf smiled and the conversation flowed again and though Stiles wanted to talk to Scott, he’d missed his friend despite the douche-like actions of his friend but there was no chance. Then there was a clinking and the toasts started.

Stiles cursed under his breath.

The flowering words of praise about Parrish, what he had done and accomplished in his young life. There were words of congratulation after congratulations about asking Lydia and them getting married. Stiles focused on his hands, the forks he didn’t use or Derek for as much of it as he could then his father stood up and the son sucked in a breath and started coughing. It brought several gazes towards him, like Stiles was doing it on purpose.

The Sheriff shifted his gaze and frowned before he started, “I remember when Parrish joined the team here in Beacon Hills, so young and yet so accomplished. He’d done amazing things and now there is Lydia who is beautiful and going to make a wonderful wife for you. Congratulations.”

“Lydia. Married. To Parrish,” Stiles whispered painfully. His throat was raw and Derek was staring at him in concern. The werewolf leaned sideways and pressed a gentle kiss to the shell of Stiles’s ear.

“Remember who you are, remember that you have decided that this doesn’t matter anymore. You are the bigger man Stiles.” He nodded but he thought about his conversation with Lydia, that she was talking about Parrish like an investment at a bank. She made it sound more like a business transaction and Parrish looked legitimately happy with the turn of events and since he didn’t know about Stiles;
there was a good chance that he didn’t know about some of Lydia’s motives. He didn’t have to be the bigger man.

They were both getting fucked by Lydia Martin.

After that, it was just sad to sit there and listen to every one talk to Parrish but Stiles wasn’t on the verge of a panic attack anymore. Derek never stopped touching him, undoubtedly confused by the seemingly sudden shift in the human’s mood and scent. Stiles would talk to him about it later when they weren’t in the room with the groom.

Before leaving the dinner, he did offer a sincere handshake with the deputy before he hugged his father and they walked out of the restaurant. There was still a bunch of people milling around so their absence wasn’t going to be noticed and Parrish seemed pleased that they had been there.

Derek walked Stiles over to the passenger side of the Jeep and he shrugged because strangely he didn’t have a problem with the werewolf driving his baby. The werewolf walked around and climbed easily into the driver’s seat and turned to look at Stiles.

“Are you okay?”

He nodded, “Yeah, I realized in there that if she lied about me to Parrish then maybe we both are getting the short end of the stick.”

Derek frowned, “Are you going to try anything? Save everyone from each other?”

“Where would you get that idea?” Stiles asked though he knew exactly where the werewolf got that idea. His incredulous eyebrow raise just confirmed the knowledge. “Yeah okay, I dig it but no, they made their choices. We all have to live with what we do and its not my job to save Lydia from herself, maybe from monsters but not from herself.”

Derek nodded and turned back to start the jeep, “I don’t know what to do with this suddenly mature guy that you’re being.”

Stiles snorted suddenly and choked as it tried to come out as a laugh, “You’re one to talk Sourwolf!”

Derek just grinned and they drove back to the Stilinski house and watched a movie on the couch while they waited for the Sheriff to get home. All in all, it hadn’t been the disaster Stiles had been expecting.

Chapter End Notes

"Fuck the bigger man." has got to be one of my favorite Stiles lines I have written so far and just in time for the Sterek baiting episode of season 6b.
Derek woke up to Stiles curled up close to his side, the human’s body fitted to the space like he was made for it. It was stupid and romantic and he was a sap but that didn’t seem to bother Stiles very much. Getting that call a month and a half ago had been a welcome sight on his phone. There were days when he was in Alaska when he would look down at his phone and give a little smile and Cora would groan and tell him to grow up and go get Stiles if he wanted him so badly.

He would consistently follow that up with, “I can’t. He’s with Lydia.”

Derek didn’t even know about the text break-up until he got to Stiles’s dorm room that night. He’d been agreeing to things the entire time, trying to show Stiles that he’d wanted him for long enough to have gotten over whatever gay crisis he could have been having. He agreed to fake date the human, for crying out loud, and Stiles just kept on talking like they weren’t real.

He’d never considered that Stiles would be the oblivious one between the two of them.

“Hey,” Stiles muttered as he started shifting, nuzzling his nose into Derek’s neck and hugging the werewolf even tighter.

Derek gave into the seemingly never-ending desire he had to touch and kissed the top of Stiles’s head before speaking, “Good morning.”

Stiles, ever the epitome of movement shifted enough to look at Derek. He leaned down and pressed his lips to Derek’s and the werewolf sighed as he pressed a palm into the side of his boyfriend’s face and sank into his lips. He opened to Stiles’s caress and groaned, their tongues pressing and trading spit back and forth. Stiles gasped in the back of his throat as he moved up even higher and slid one of his legs over Derek’s waist. He just settled there, not over Derek’s hips and his dick but just above and the werewolf couldn’t help but smile. Their teeth clicked together and Stiles pulled back.

“Is this okay?” Stiles husked gently.

Derek nodded, letting his hands find Stiles’s waist and slid up his back. He moved his hands under the human’s shirt and his hands covered the smooth skin of Stiles’s lower back. Derek started to pull him down when his fingers grazed over raised skin and he pulled back and frowned at him.
Stiles shifted his shoulder, forcing Derek’s hands back down and away, “What is it?” he whispered.

The human, this amazing and tenacious human that Derek just loved more than he could handle, turned away “I don’t want you seeing that. Feel that. It’s not fair because I’m scarred from everything that happened and you… you’re not, not your skin anyway.”

“Stiles,” Derek responded because he didn’t know what to say. He wasn’t physically scarred by everything but he’d been traumatized by it, in some ways he wished he had marks to show the hurt inside. He didn’t want Stiles to think that those marks made him ugly or something less than. He sat up and without waiting; Derek pulled his boyfriend’s shirt off and dropped him down on the bed. Stiles grumbled in annoyance but didn’t try to hide after all maybe sensing that Derek wasn’t going to let this go. He scrambled off to the side of the mattress and sat down to put his back on display and Derek sat up to look his fill. There were white lines like a lightning bolt across his left shoulder blade, it was subtle but Derek knew that he’d been feeling it. He could see other marks here and there. Several looked like claw marks others were from more mundane weaponry but nothing that he remembered Stiles getting but the human was so good at pretending that he hadn’t been hurt in fights and after he’d left there hadn’t been a lot of people to watch out for the humans. He felt sad that he’d never considered that this kind of damage was something Stiles had to live with, it was something Derek didn’t ever have to worry about. Derek gripped Stiles by the shoulders and turned him around.

“You don’t need to hide this from me.”

Stiles nodded but his scent turned sour with shame. Derek reached out and pressed Stiles’s hand to the center of his stomach, just below his ribcage, pressing those long fingers that he’d had dreams about more than once into his skin.

“What?” Stiles asked gently even as his fingers shifted and caressed the skin beneath his digits.

Derek reached down to pull his shirt off and placed Stiles’s hand back to his stomach then let them run up and over his pecs and shoulder blades. “Kali stabbed me through the back and slammed it into the floor of the loft, if I wasn’t a werewolf I would have died but I can still feel that phantom pain sometimes, not because it didn’t heal, but because Cora was disappointed in me and what I was back then. I don’t know if I agree with her now, I did the best I could.

“What most people didn’t know what that I ran into the house when it was still on fire, I was burned pretty badly for being in there only a short time, then Laura dragged me back out and I hid out until I healed. I know what it feels like for my skin to burn and then I think about the fight with Kate, the torture and everything else. Just because it heals, doesn’t mean I didn’t feel it and it doesn’t mean that I forgot it. These marks don’t make you weak or ugly, they make you strong and courageous.”

Stiles shook his head but his scent didn’t remind Derek of shame and worthlessness anymore, but the flush of happy embarrassment.

“You are the only one who carries so much of the marks on your body, and yet you never stopped going into battle. It’s like Batman and Superman.”

Stiles looked up and smiled, “Oh do tell,” he said and moved to climb into Derek’s lap. Derek gladly accepted his boyfriend’s weight and pulled Stiles in to kiss him before he started.

“Once upon a time,” Derek started and Stiles snorted out a laugh.

“Come on, be serious.”

“ Weird, saying something like that to me huh?” Derek whispered and pressed another kiss to the side
of Stiles’s jaw who just hummed happily. “But really, sometimes it’s easy for werewolves or anyone who has the power to survive great pain and injury to go running into battle because there is a better chance of survival not to mention the protective nature of our aggression. If its about pack or territory, it wouldn’t matter if we healed; we would always go to war. Doesn’t mean it’s enjoyable but it’s easier. Superman doesn’t get hurt very often because of his abilities, Batman goes into battle with a mask and his intellect and tools, and he’s the braver of the two because he doesn’t have something that makes it easy to run towards danger. You, Stiles, were always the bravest of any of us. You were always Batman.”

Derek scented the tears before he looked up and saw them, he even understood them so when he leaned forward and rubbed his nose up and over the tear tracks, it was a simple acknowledgement then Stiles tightened his arms around Derek’s shoulder and they just sat there hugging.

“Does that make you Superman in this story?” Stiles whispered into his neck and Derek chuckled and shook his head.

“I don’t think that’s likely, I’m more likely to be one of the anti-heroes like Arrow,” the werewolf said, breathing deeply at Stiles’s neck where his scent was the strongest.

“Don’t sell yourself short Sourwolf,” Stiles moved back just enough to hold the werewolf’s cheeks in between his hands, “You have the backstory that any super villain would love and yet you care and you do whatever it takes to save who you can, even though you were always a grump about it. Your right, I think Superman had it too easy for it to make any sense for the metaphor but it doesn’t change my point. You, Derek Hale are a hero.”

Derek chuckled; flushing in embarrassment then reached out and pressed his fingers into the scars that he could see. Leaning down and pressing his lips to one of them, it looked like a knife wound he listened to the choked off moan that rumbled through Stiles and echoed into Derek. He’d never experienced this, someone liking him for being just who he was.

And Derek reveled in it.

He took Stiles’s mouth in another deep kiss and just decided to stay there until either one of them got to hungry or had to get up for some reason. He shifted and slumped back onto the bed, dragging Stiles with him so they wouldn’t have to stop kissing. Stiles smiled again and their teeth clacked before Derek dragged him back for another open mouthed, messy kiss. Stiles was starting to move in his lap, shifting slightly to rub over Derek’s very interested dick while his own was rubbing between their bodies. Derek’s hands were slipping away from Stiles’s face and down his chest when he heard the very obvious slamming of a cabinet then a clearing of a throat and he laughed into Stiles’s neck.

“What?” the human whispered, panting. Derek was surprised he hadn’t heard the not-so-subtle banging.

“Your father’s gentle reminder that we aren’t supposed to be getting up to anything under his roof.”

Stiles groaned and chuckled, “Everyone is making me far more virginal than I actually am.”

“No one said you were a virgin,” Derek frowned.

“They sure are going for a cockblocking record then.”

Derek grinned and pressed a kiss to Stiles’s temple, “We did promise your dad that we wouldn’t get up to anything that required a closed door. I would rather respect his wishes and not rush into the physical aspect of this.”
“We have been dancing around each other for years now. How is any of this a rush?”

“Because we came here pretending to be something we weren’t for the sake of someone else. I told you this wasn’t a one-night stand for me and I want you too, I just want you for a long time. I don’t want to screw that up today.”

Stiles leaned back and pressed a palm into Derek’s cheek, staying away from his neck like he knew. Because he did and Derek couldn’t help the warmth that spread because Stiles knew werewolves and him well enough to know that the neck is a vulnerable place. Derek reached up and slipped Stiles’s hand down to cup the side of his neck and smiled at his partner. “I don’t want to screw things up either, so I will allow all the cockblocking as long as we have a chance to follow through later.”

Derek rolled his eyes, “I promise there is time for sex later. We can find someplace when we’re ready.”

Stiles bounced a little, pressing a kiss into Derek’s jaw before jumping up out of the bed, “I have a list and don’t you forget it.”

“Does this list include the loft?” he asked as he leaned back and watched Stiles grab some fresh clothes.

“Of course, in that ridiculous bed since its still there. Maybe making out in front of those windows,” Stiles’s scent started peaking into that heavy lust again and Derek took a deep breath as Stiles continued to ramble. “I’m not actually into like the voyeurism thing but maybe just a little, if I knew for a fact that I wasn’t naked in front of a crowd. I don’t know what I’m saying, I’ll shut up.”

“You haven’t yet,” Derek said with a grin and Stiles threw a shirt at the werewolf who laughed. By the time he dragged the shirt off his face, Stiles was waving as he rushed out the door and towards the bathroom while Derek got dressed and walked downstairs. He nodded his thanks when Noah handed him a cup of coffee and gestured to the island. He settled there and took a sip of the coffee.

“I was surprised Stiles handled the dinner as well as he did. I thought he was going to cause a scene.”

Derek shrugged, “I know that Parrish is one of your deputies but the toast was hard on him. You have to know it was like picking Parrish over Stiles, maybe not to anyone else but to Stiles. The only reason he didn’t do anything was because he figured that Lydia might not be on the level with Parrish either. Apparently he didn’t know about Lydia and Stiles?”

“As far as I know, that would be a complete shock to him, Parrish isn’t the kind of man that wouldn’t come to me and Stiles and apologize if he had known there was something going on. He would have been ashamed for his part in it, he’s a good man.”

Derek shrugged because he’d heard about the first time Parrish and Lydia had been involved when she was still in high school but there were age of consent laws that undoubtedly say that they weren’t completely in the wrong. He’d been glad when Stiles didn’t do anything but coming back to Beacon Hills had just turned into ripping open old and new wounds for his new significant other. “He’s hurting you know?” Derek finally whispered because the man deserved to know and Stiles needed his dad more than he needed to be strong. If anyone knew that it was Derek.

Noah sat down at the table across from him and heaved a long sigh. He scrubbed his hand across his face and Derek listened and made sure that Stiles was still in the shower. He was undoubtedly going to get a couple licks for this; a pissed off Stiles but it didn’t stop him from listening when the other man spoke. “This isn’t just about Lydia, is it?”
Derek shook his head, “He doesn’t think he knows himself anymore, he doesn’t feel like his friends are going to have his back and their behavior since we got here isn’t helping. They are more interested in proving that I shouldn’t be with him or he shouldn’t be with me than actually listening to him. After the Wild Hunt, even everything with Theo, he feels a lot lost and he needs you more than anything. He needs you more than Parrish needs you.”

Noah flinched and nodded, “I understand Derek.”

The werewolf tilted his head and knew Stiles was going to be coming down the stairs in a few minutes, “He needs to be reminded why he is amazing right now.”

Then he stepped away from the table quickly, grabbing a second cup of coffee and walking over to the stairs and handing Stiles the black brew as he walked up the stairs, kissing the human gently on the head as he passed. Stiles stared after him for a moment then walked the rest of the way downstairs. He showered quickly and wondered if the Sheriff was going to go for the straightforward approach and hopefully Stiles would understand that his dad needed to know and that Derek wasn’t trying to break his confidence. Hopefully he wouldn’t think of it like that but know that he wasn’t alone in his corner.

Then again, Derek thought as he walked into the bathroom and stripped out of his clothes, this was Stiles who was more than a little desperate to always be okay standing on his own two feet, to never let his dad know he wasn’t going to be okay or let all his werewolf friends know that he couldn’t fight side by side with them.

So then, Derek was screwed if the Sheriff didn’t go for subtle approach and both of the Stiliski’s were about as subtle as a heart attack. “Shit,” he whispered under the spray of the hot shower as he stepped in.

**Group Message: Me, Foxfire, Red Banshee, and Coyote**

*Foxfire: I am coming in this afternoon, how is everything? Any updates on Stiles and Derek? I didn’t hear back about what you guys found out.*

*Coyote: Thank god, maybe you can zap some of our friends into making sense again.*

*Foxfire: Huh?*

*Coyote: Let’s see, Scott is apparently decided to be a jerk to Stiles instead of talking to him; Lydia is keeping secrets from everyone which is stupid. Now I’m not supposed to talk about the fact that Scott and I are having sex.*

*Me: MALIA!!!*

*Foxfire: You and Scott?*

*Coyote: What’s the problem anyway?*

*Me: Kira? I’m sorry; I didn’t want anyone to find out like this.*

*Foxfire: If that were true Scott, you would have told me when it started, you would have told Stiles too. You wouldn’t even touch me in public until Isaac and Allison started making out but you*
couldn’t tell me what was happening. And now you’re telling me that two of his best friends betrayed him in romantic relationships in less than a year?

Red Banshee: You don’t get to sit in the desert and pass judgment on us Kira, you left us and here we were!

Foxfire: Good thing I can come to town and pass judgment straight to your face then huh?

Me: What has happened to all of us this past year?

…

…

…

Me: Guys?

Derek was surprised when he got out of the shower and got dressed to find a note on the pillow, saying to meet Stiles at the Sheriff station in an hour. He found that both the Stilinski’s were gone from the house so he ate a couple of pieces of toast with peanut butter then headed out. The jeep was gone so he figured that walking through town was his best option, though he wasn’t too worried about it. He’d spent months at a time walking around towns and cities; it was good for him and the wolf.

He was left walking and wondering if Stiles was going to be angry with him. Since the Sheriff was also gone, he couldn’t ask. Derek looked around as he walked through town but he didn’t see anyone or anything he wanted to stick around for. It had been too long and Stiles was the reason he came back and he didn’t think there was any reason to stay.

Derek pulled out his cell phone and dialed a number from memory, waiting a couple rings before the call was picked up by a surly sounding, “What. Do you know what time it is?”

“Not much earlier in Alaska so don’t start with me Sis.”

“Hey Der,” Cora’s voice turned soft, another blessing of being in Alaska together after some counseling was that the hard protective shell of his little sister had softened with him. “How’s Washington treating you? Been on Instagram lately?”

Derek chuckled; he should’ve known that Derek showing up on someone’s social media was going to get attention from his only surviving family. “What have you seen?”

“I’ve seen you getting really close to the one pack member that you wanted to find, good for you Derek.”

He smiled, “Do you mean that? I didn’t want to leave you but there was so much unfinished and now I have a chance to have something real for the first time in years.”

“You going to bring him here sometimes soon? Meet some of your distant relations, let me pick on the both of you.”

“You know the wedding is this weekend, you could come and crash the party? See him now instead
of a year from now which would be the next time he would have the time. His school schedule is pretty tight, trying to get into the FBI program.”

“See everyone again, all those misfits you were obsessed with helping? What are they like now?”

Derek sighed, “I don’t know Cora, I think they’re all lost, the pack is fractured and Stiles is alone. He shouldn’t have been left alone, that’s not what pack is about.”

“Then I guess you have to show them,” Cora returned easily, like she was shrugging and thinking that she really shouldn’t have to tell him that.

“Like it’s so easy, have you met these people?” Derek asked with a smile. He knew she was right, they needed someone who at least had grown up in the werewolf life, the last couple of years seemed to have done damage to everyone who had stayed in Beacon Hills and it left him with the overwhelming guilt because he left them on their own.

“Oh my God Derek, I can actually hear you berating yourself. Are you regressing! Do you need to have a phone session with the doc?”

Derek shook off the thoughts, “Maybe. It’s been a weird couple of weeks. I don’t regret going to Washington and I know that Stiles and I needed to come here, but it hurts him to be here. I don’t like that they’re hurting him. Coming home shouldn’t have to be like that.”

“Going home was always like that for us, for years now. You get it so you can help him. So don’t be an idiot and be there for him.”

Derek smiled, “Got it sis. Say hi to everyone for me.”

“Will do, talk to you soon. Loser.”

She hung up, Derek rolled his eyes and walked the last block and pulled open the door to the Sheriff’s station. He walked over to the front desk and smiled a little shyly, it was still hard to come in here like he wasn’t a criminal or a person of interest in several crimes in town. The deputy behind the desk just smiled and pointed to the back, “Stilinski is waiting for you in the Sheriff’s office.”

He nodded and walked back to Noah’s office and found Stiles sitting on his father’s desk, the Sheriff nowhere to be found. Stiles was standing still, arms crossed over his chest and more serious than he’d seen the human look in days. He thought about his conversation with the Sheriff that morning and tucked his hands into his jean pockets and waited.

“You talked to my dad about me,” Stiles said and looked up.

“Yeah, I did,” Derek responded there was no point in lying.

Stiles pushed away from the desk and walked towards him and despite the fact that Derek still had the strength to knock the human on his ass, he took a half step back because he didn’t want to screw this up but Stiles needed his dad. Then Stiles wrapped his arms around Derek’s shoulder, “I’m pissed that you didn’t let me get there on my own with him but after the last four years or so of lies I kind of get why you didn’t. Thank you. I didn’t know how much I needed to know that my dad didn’t regret picking me over my mom, even the evil doppelganger that she was. I didn’t know I needed to know that he wouldn’t pick someone over me. Stupid fucking Wild Hunt!”

Derek pressed into the side of Stiles’s neck and accepted the hug, tightening his arms around the human’s waist. When Stiles pushed back, he released his hold and looked at Stiles who was grinning. “Derek Hale, do you trust me?”
“Yes,” he said without hesitation.

Stiles’s smile somehow got even brighter while his cheeks flushed slightly in happiness, “Good because I have a plan for today and I want you to know that my only bullet point is you being happy. I need you to tell me if anything is a problem for you okay?”

Derek nodded, though he didn’t know what he would have a problem with. Stiles bounced forward and pressed a kiss to his cheek then dragged him out through the station and out to the jeep. Derek got in and Stiles bounced into the driver seat, narrowly missing the steering wheel with his head in the haste and Derek groaned, “I don’t understand how you made it to adulthood sometimes.”

“You and me both bucko,” Stiles responded with a wink.

Derek smiled and reached out to press his hand into Stiles’s shoulder for a minute before he went back to quietly watching the town pass away then they were heading towards the Preserve, he turned to Stiles with a frown, “Are we going out to the property?”

“No, close by but not there.”

Derek nodded and went back to watching as they drove into the forest along the made road up to the Hale house then Stiles stopped before they got there and looked over at Derek and smiled. “Derek Hale?”

“Stiles ‘I don’t know your first name’ Stilinski,” Derek returned and Stiles chuckled.

“Someday I’ll tell you.”

“What are we doing Stiles?”

“We are going running,” Stiles returned with a goofy smile and Derek flashed on watching Stiles run ahead of him, flat out booking it through the forest with Derek in pursuit. The wolf inside growled happily at the thought, Derek tried to pull back from the happy feeling because Stiles hadn’t said he was going to let Derek catch him. Stiles jumped out of the jeep and bounced around the hood and opened the door and dragged the werewolf out of the vehicle. He waggled his eyebrows and leaned forward. Derek accepted his weight and pressed back into the side of the jeep for a minute, letting Stiles kiss him.

“Running?” Derek whispered when Stiles moved back a little.

“I am going to run into the woods and you are going to chase me. I know you can catch me, but how often do you let loose and just run.”

“Rarely, and never what you’re talking about,” Derek whispered hoarsely. “You know that I had control problems when I was younger then the world went to shit and I never asked someone to run with me.”

“What about a full shift? Like your mom and like when you were hurt?”

Derek frowned, “You remember that?”

“Of course, I remember everything about you.”

Stiles slid his hands up and down Derek’s arms, while his hands tucked in close to the human’s waist. He thought about being the wolf, how free it felt and sighed, “I don’t know how I did it. I can’t do it now but I can do a beta shift and chase you. I can’t tell you how much I want to chase
you. I want to catch you.”

Stiles grinned, pressing a kiss to Derek’s mouth then whispered, “Close you eyes, cover your ears and count to 180.”

Derek did and he felt the lingering kiss on his lips then Stiles was gone. Derek focused on his sense of smell as it faded into the distance. This was going to be fun. He counted to 180 seconds and uncovered his eyes and looked around. He shifted into his beta form easily, taking a deep breath and realized how much more vibrant Stiles’s scent was in this form. He found the trail and took off after the human. Running Stiles down wasn’t going to be tough, especially since Stiles apparently was crunching and crashing through the brush, laughing every once in a while but then this wasn’t about the hunt. This was about the run, which was the best part. He ran, weaving through the trees, catching flashes of Stiles in the distance. He didn’t think this was going to take very long but as Stiles laughed again, Derek knew it didn’t matter. Stiles was letting him be exactly who he was born to be, so when he grabbed Stiles from behind and tumbled them both to the ground, he forced his body down into the dirt so the fragile bones and skin were not damaged in the fall.

“You caught me!” Stiles laughed, pressing his hand to Derek’s cheek where the hair had grown out. Stiles watched his face, letting his fingers slide across the pronounced ridge of his forehead. “I’m glad you can be yourself like this with me, I only ever wanted someone to be themselves with me, for them to want me for all of me.”

Derek let his face melt back into human so he could press Stiles down and share a kiss. Stiles settled down against his chest and the weight over his chest was warm and comforting. The kiss went on for a wet and sloppy minute before Stiles moved back to put his chin on Derek’s chest and he couldn’t help but say, “Thank you Stiles, for letting me be myself with you. I always knew that I could be with you, even in the beginning when I was telling you to chop my arm off. I knew that even though you seemed determined to hate me, maybe in solidarity of Scott or whatever, you actually gave me the benefit of the doubt. You were one of the first to wonder if my family didn’t deserve what happened to them so this isn’t a surprise but it is welcome.”

Stiles leaned in and kissed Derek’s scruffy chin, “It was because I loved Scott and I couldn’t handle the sudden I’m Gay crisis in my head when I saw you. I was such a jerk,” he said with an amazed chuckle.

“You also hit Scott with lacrosse balls and got him beat up for keying someone’s car.”

Stiles stared down at him, “How do you know that, creeper?”

“You were both idiotic about just everything, so I was always watching, scared that you and Scott were going to out me even more. The Argent’s knew about me but if they thought that I had bit Scott then they were going to be well within their ‘rights’ to kill me.”

Stiles nodded, “Okay well as much as I love our miserable past together, I am more interested in our hot and amazing future,” Stiles waggled his eyebrows and Derek smiled back.

“How about the rest of the day?” Derek asked instead.

Stiles moved just enough to rub his hands together with glee, “Well I have a little surprise for you this afternoon but I am thinking it might be nice to just stay here for a little while longer?”

Derek nodded, rubbing a hand up and down Stiles’s back in a comforting gesture. His boyfriend closed his eyes and resettled on Derek’s chest, his cheek pressed down on his hand and settled. The silence was nice and thankfully the ground was actually warm from the day’s sunshine. He didn’t
think he’d ever see the day where he was the first to speak when he was with Stiles Stilinski but he wanted to talk.

“Stiles, do you want to just be quiet?”

He smiled against Derek’s chest and lifted just enough to talk, “I am not married to the idea of silence though I have to make a note in my calendar because Derek is asking to talk instead of me.”

“Har har,” Derek flushed and fell silent because now he just felt self conscious about it.

Stiles sighed, his stomach pushing into Derek’s stomach. “I didn’t mean to make you nervous.”

Derek shrugged, “This is more normal anyway for me, the not talking.”

“Tell me something please?” Stiles whispered.

“I talked to Cora and she wants to meet you now that we are dating,” Derek blurted out.

“I’ve met Cora, why would I have to meet her again?”

“She wants to see you again, I have pack in Alaska. I could show you what it’s like there.”

Stiles smiled, “I wouldn’t mind going there, in the summer I hope you mean.”

He nodded, “Yeah we can go in the summer.”

“Derek, I don’t know if I want to stay here if the only thing I am going to do is find out how much I don’t have in common with my friends anymore. Lydia and Parrish are getting married in a couple days, Scott is more distant and combative than I have ever seen him before and the others are, I don’t even know.”

“They’re lost, it’s like they all forgot how to be a pack.”

Stiles laughed but it was a sad afterthought of sarcasm, not real humor, “I don’t know if they ever knew how to be a pack. I read all the books you know, I listened when you and Cora and Peter talked about what it was like to grow up in a pack. Scott never moved beyond ‘I am alpha, hear me roar’. I love the guy but we all needed more otherwise I wouldn’t have been getting the calls.”

Derek frowned, “What calls?”

Stiles shifted in embarrassment, “Jackson, Danny, Ethan, Isaac and Kira. They all tend to call me. Jackson just rambles on about how shitty Lydia’s current taste in men is, Isaac tells me about his adventures, Kira just talks to me. Danny knows about werewolves, him and Ethan don’t realize that they both talk to me about the other. They all scattered over the years and for some reason they call me.”

Derek leaned up on his elbows and pressed his lips into Stiles’s forehead until the human shifted and they shared a quick kiss. “What was that for?” Stiles whispered.

“Because for the sake of your pack, you let them call you and complain, even Jackson.”

“Pack? No, if they were in anyone’s pack it would be Scott’s. I’m not a werewolf why would that matter? They just don’t want to call Scott especially now that he has the baby betas.”

“They are searching for something too Stiles, and you’re giving it to them. Don’t sell yourself short.”
“Yeah yeah,” Stiles grinned then pushed down and away from Derek’s body and stood up. He reached down and Derek put his hand in Stiles’s palm and they rose and started walking and Derek wondered about why the others would be calling Stiles. It seemed like they were all searching for something and Stiles had been the one to pick up the phone. They walked back to the jeep and Stiles got into the driver seat again.

“Where to now?” Derek asked as he put the seatbelt on.

Stiles waggled his eyebrows in answer and Derek rolled his eyes and watched as the world sped up around them and he just keep taking deep breaths of Stiles’s scent until they were pulling up in front of the loft, “Are we doing the whole nightmare down memory lane again?” Derek asked.

The human just winked and walked towards the building. Derek followed behind, taking Stiles’s hand when he reached back for Derek and when they were in front of Derek’s door he turned and pressed his fingers into Derek’s forehead gently. “Close your eyes, I know its silly but I wanted you to have this. I may not be able to surprise you with a lot of things but I thought maybe this would be good.”

Derek closed his eyes and felt as Stiles took his hands and slid the door back on its track. Stiles pulled him through the open door and he trusted the younger man to keep him safe, something he hadn’t done in a long time. The last time he’d trusted anyone like this and it didn’t get screwed sideways for the trouble he was talking to his mother. He couldn’t count Paige because his lack of trust in her had gotten her killed.

“Open your eyes,” Stiles said excitedly and Derek did, looking around to see the bed was made and there was a blanket on the floor with a picnic basket full of food laid out in the center of the space and everything was lit in flameless candles, the small ones that people use to decorate their homes. It wasn’t wavering and golden like candlelight but it was a close second and it wasn’t triggering to him. He squeezed Stiles’s hand, “You are amazing, did you know?”

Stiles shrugged bashfully, “You like?”

Derek smiled, “I didn’t know you were such a sap.”

“Sap?” Stiles asked with a chuckle then rubbed the back of his head with a hand, “Yeah I guess I am capable of sappiness after all. I haven’t had a lot of opportunities for sappiness in the past couple years.”

Derek dragged him closer, pressing one hand into the back of his neck and kissed Stiles for a long moment, swapping open-mouthed kisses for an unending breath of air then Stiles pulled away with a groan, “Come on Sourwolf, there’s food and cuddling in our future.”

Stiles fed Derek strawberries; they drank wine that he wasn’t going to tell the Sheriff about. He still didn’t think the man was really going to be okay with the age difference, especially if it came with booze for his underage son.

“It’s just wine Derek, you can’t get drunk and I am not drinking to get drunk. I am drinking this to be romantic and you are just going to relax okay?”

“Okay,” Derek smiled and nodded.

They ate and then Stiles, attempting to be sexy moved across the blanket on his hands and knees, Derek grinned when he climbed into the werewolf’s lap and pressed a kiss into Derek’s cheek. He wrapped his arms around Stiles’s back and thought about what else they could be doing besides
cuddling, undoubtedly that had been the plan when Stiles came here with him. Derek didn’t have a problem with the idea but just as Stiles started kissing down his neck, he groaned because maybe Stiles’s cockblocking theory wasn’t that far off.

“Oh yeah baby, you like that?” Stiles whispered misinterpreting the sound and pressed his teeth into the joint of his jaw. When Derek stood up and Stiles moaned as he let himself drop to the floor before the werewolf walked over to the door and opened it.

Derek watched as Stiles covered his mouth in shock but he could see the smile behind the human’s hand. “Don’t even think that I am not keeping track of another cockblock from this town. Seriously there has got to be a conspiracy going on. Kira Yukimura get your fantastic ass over here and hug me!”

Derek rolled his eyes and watched as the kitsune grinned at them. The werewolf couldn’t help but notice that she was here and not with the others. She must’ve tracked them here. She was still wearing a short plaid skirt and leggings with combat boots and a tank top with a jean jacket over the top and when she went bouncing across the room to throw herself at Stiles and they both laughed together.

When they were done hugging it out, Derek walked over and pressed in close to press a little bit of his smell into her skin, over her head and she leaned into him for a half awkward hug. Stiles chuckled and pushed into their embrace and they just made it into a group hug, which was easier at least.

“You’re here in town!” Stiles exclaimed.

“Yeah, I was coming into town for the wedding but I have been hearing about you guys from the others and I tracked you here. I just wanted to see you, Stiles you have been such an amazing friend this last year and I wanted to know if you were happy.”

Derek looked over to Stiles just as he looked back, “Yeah, I’m happy here with Derek.”

“It’s good to see you Derek, how is your sister?”

He smiled, “She’s good, been asking about everyone here since she knew I was going to end up coming here with Stiles. She is settled in Alaska with some of our distant relatives and their pack. Good place for her.”

“Not for you?” Kira asked with a wink.

Derek looked at Stiles, “It was good; just didn’t have exactly what I was looking for.” Stiles flushed, shoving his hands into his pants pocket before he nudged Kira.

“You came here instead of to the pack?”

Kira frowned, “Not my pack, hasn’t been for a while. Kitsune normally just stick close to their own kind, I was with the pack because of Scott and ever since we broke up all those other friendships didn’t seem to be reciprocal except for you. Whenever I call, you picked up. You were always there for the bitching and the groaning through weapons training and everything, I came here because you’re my friend and my pack. And I think you deserve to know what else they are hiding instead of finding out the hard way.”

Stiles moved to sit on the couch, dragging Kira to sit next to him, “What are you talking about?”

She looked over at Derek who was still standing near the door, arms crossed because he was pretty
sure he knew what she was going to say. There was something to Scott’s scent, beyond the anger and distance. Something like sex and he’d been glad after all these years that Stiles wasn’t a werewolf because he hadn’t known the other day.

“Do you know about Scott’s dating life?” Kira asked.

“I know that he’s been telling me all about his one night stands since you guys broke it off,” Stiles winced when he said it.

“That might be true but I just found out that he’s sleeping with Malia.”

There it is and Stiles blinked a couple times and looked up at the ceiling before he shifted his gaze over to Derek and he sighed. Stiles spoke, “I don’t have a right to be upset about this, we broke up because of all that shit with Theo and nothing could make it better.” It was difficult to listen as Stiles’s voice turned neutral and his scent grew thick with hurt and shame. He may not think he should feel something about this but he did.

“Are you okay?” Kira asked gently, placing a hand on his knee. Derek was surprised when the motion didn’t cause the territorial part of himself to growl especially considering they were in another territory and this thing with Stiles was so new.

“Yeah I’ll be okay, are you okay?” he asked, turning his hand to lace their fingers together.

Kira forced a smile, her cheeks wobbling a little as she tried hard not to cry but the tears were in the air. “It hurt to find out that he’d moved on to her, after what we had been through. That he didn’t tell me, when I left things so confused but a part of me wanted to finish my training and come back to him. I just couldn’t believe about Scott and Malia, then Lydia and Parrish. Like isn’t there a bro code about that sort of thing?”

Stiles chuckled wetly, “Undoubtedly his excuse is the same as it was with Lydia back in the day.” His voice pitched a little higher and definitely whiny as he said, “It’s a werewolf thing, you wouldn’t understand.”

Derek could see Scott using that excuse anytime he did something mean though he didn’t know about the Lydia. He crossed his arms and grumbled, “That’s a load of shit really.”

Both of them turned and looked at him, “What?” Stiles asked.

“Blaming being a ‘wolf when you do something. I had trouble with control, it didn’t make me kiss people I didn’t already want to kiss.”

Stiles nodded, “I figured, he was a jerk sometimes back then and always had an excuse. Is it okay to say that I wish I didn’t realize these things about my best friend?”

Derek walked over and squeezed his shoulder in comfort; “No one wants to know that someone they care about is willing to hurt them in selfishness. Maybe knowing is just so you aren’t side swiped when it happens.”

Stiles gave him a hard side-eye, “Seriously, go back to being emotionally constipated for a minute. Cannot deal.”

Derek glared at him for a minute for that as Kira snickered.

“Derek it’s good to see you, really,” the kitsune said with a grin.
He nodded to her and went back to watching Stiles who was smiling but the expression wasn’t reaching his eyes and there was a pinched look around his mouth. He couldn’t do this alone anymore, Derek realized. Stiles wasn’t going to leave because it was too important to be here even if it killed him a little at a time to stay but maybe if he wasn’t alone, it wouldn’t break his heart so badly to go to the wedding.

Stiles needed his pack and apparently that wasn’t Scott and Lydia.

“Hey Stiles, can I see your phone, I think I left mine at the house?”

The human nodded distractedly and unlocked the screen before he handed it over and Derek went to work. Posting some pictures from their adventures the last couple of days and then looking over as Stiles started demanding that Kira show him some of the moves she’d been learning and looking thrilled at the prospect of knowing something his classmates might not know. Since Stiles was busy, Derek settled on the couch and started sending messages, not really knowing what he was going to get back, making sure to give people his number to respond to before deleting the messages and putting the phone back down on the arm of the couch. He went back to watching Stiles as Kira repeatedly handed his ass to him in hand-to-hand but the human never got angry, always laughing at himself in a way that left Derek smiling at him.

He felt his phone vibrate in his pocket and Kira turned at the sound before she winked at him and went back to working on Stiles’s stance or something. Kira was going to make a wonderful ally in this, and Stiles didn’t look so much like the weight of the world rested between his shoulders.

It was a start anyway.

Chapter End Notes

I really couldn't help myself with the Batman/Superman conversation. It was just too much that he's actually played Superman and Stiles was always talking about Batman in the show.

Until next time.

Also the no sex thing is kind of a running gag but also I don't like the idea of explicit sexual stuff right now and possibly at all.

Thank you for every comment, kudos and hit count, totally make my day when I get those stats.
Chapter Summary

You guessed it! They are coming and Derek will make sure that Stiles is not alone, no matter who he must stand up too in the coming days.

Chapter Notes

Super raw content, I will go back and do editing later but I hope that you will all forgive since you haven't had a new chapter and we are getting so close to the wedding. What's coming!!!!

After they sparred for a while, Kira said she had to go and see the others so Derek and Stiles went back to the Stilinski house and watched movies until his dad got home and they had some dinner.

Noah Stilinski is not subtle when he blurted out before they were halfway through serving out the Chinese food, “Son, I could never imagine what it was like to hear your father forget who you are. And then to come back here and see your mother like that. I want you to know that…” Then he just petered out pathetically and Stiles looked over at Derek who was suddenly very interested in the wall behind the sheriff’s head.

“Real subtle guys,” Stiles snarked.

Derek snorted, “I don’t know if that’s the best example of the pot calling the kettle black that I’ve ever heard but it’s pretty close to the top.”

Stiles chuckled, “No lies detected.”

“Should I leave? Like the house? To give you guys some privacy?” Derek asked, quietly reaching over to press his palm over Stiles’s hand.

“I’m going to tell you everything later,” Stiles said with a shrug.

Derek turned to look at Stiles’s dad much to the younger Stilinski’s amusement. The Sheriff shrugged, “What he said. Plus you’re eating.”

Derek tucked his chin, his cheeks flushing a little and Stiles frowned at that before he turned back to his father, “Dad, when you asked me what my name was. I think it was worse than anyone else forgetting me. It was like I was suddenly an orphan and you weren’t dead.”

His dad nodded, flinching a little at the words. Stiles reached out and his hand hovered for a couple of seconds before he pressed his palm into his dad’s wrist and squeezed in comfort. He looked over at Stiles, “I’m so sorry son.”

“You didn’t know,” Stiles returned with a shrug.
“No,” the sheriff waved off, “I’m sorry that I didn’t know how to open up about my son about the loss of his mother, the deaths he’d seen in front of him. I’m a cop, I was good at making sure I would live through that stuff but I didn’t think I would have to tell my seventeen year old son how to deal with his friends dying, seeing someone die in front of him, then he went missing and we didn’t even know. Thank God Lydia was so desperate to make us believe.”

Stiles shook off her name, the anger and confusion that it brought out in him and focused on his dad.

“You never gave up,” he said to Stiles after a few minutes of silence.

Stiles shrugged, “I don’t know how Dad.”

“No, kiddo you sure don’t. Thank god.”

Stiles flushed and took another bite of food, not knowing what to say.

“I wouldn’t trade her death for yours, you know?” his Dad whispered and Stiles sucked in a deep breath and coughed explosively when the food when down the wrong pipe. He covered his mouth and coughed for a couple more seconds while Derek rubbed a hand across his back, patting it gently enough to be helpful without extra pain. Stiles had never understood the desire to pound someone else on the back when they were choking, it didn’t help.

Derek handed him a glass of water which he chugged to soothe the pain then stared at his father, “Dad?”

“You heard me kid and if that had really be your mother instead of a shadow brought by the ride and my pain, she would have kicked my ass for daring to imagine her in place of you. There is no such thing as a parent wishing their child away in place of a dying or dead parent. I am so damn proud of you Stiles, and I know that your mother is too. I don’t know if she would be so proud of me after all this time but I am going to keep trying. If you’re willing to keep trying?”

Stiles stared at him slack jawed then he turned to Derek for a second who just shrugged so he turned back to his dad, shoved away from the table and moved around to hug the man. “Of course Dad, and I don’t think you are as awful as your making yourself out to be.”

His dad laughed though it sounded forced so Stiles just kept hugging him.

After Stiles returned to his seat, they talked about the train station; they talked a little bit about Scott and Theo and how everything went down before the Wild Hunt came to town. His dad listened and ate, then he talked about how tough it was to bring people home after the Hunt, how people were vaguely aware that something happened but they couldn’t hold onto anything. Like the Wild Hunt had ‘never’ happened but everyone was tarnished in the reaping. Stiles listened and thought about all those people that had suffered and struggled. He wasn’t alone though because the supernatural is an open secret, other people didn’t understand their confusion and posttraumatic stress.

Too bad he had no intention of speaking to Peter about this because he probably remembered everything. So he would stick to Derek and his dad, talk about things when it became necessary and he would stay here and face all the demons he’d run from when he left the state.

His dad went to bed a little later then Stiles held out his hand and pulled Derek up from the couch and led him upstairs and into his bedroom. He closed the door behind them and turned to the werewolf. “I don’t know when you turned from a broody werewolf that can’t get away from people quick enough to someone who is so nosy it puts me to shame,” Derek looked down and away from him then. Stiles tutted and pressed his finger under Derek’s chin to make him look back up. His
green eyes shimmered as they caught and held Stiles’s gaze. “Thank you.”

Derek smiled shyly, “I couldn’t let you lose him too, not when you both care so damn much about each other. I would give anything—”

“I know,” Stiles whispered when Derek stopped. He pressed his hands down the front of the older man’s chest, slipping his hands under the edge of his t-shirt and pulled it up and off. Derek pressed his palms into Stiles’s hips and the human tangled his fingers into the edge of his own shirt and pulled it off as well before pressing his hands into Derek’s shoulders. He closed his eyes and the heat coming from Derek’s body sink into his through his hands and his chest. Sometimes it was like he was never going to be warm again, after the nogitsune.

When he was sleeping with Malia, she had always been warm and he could pretend that they were good for each other but now, as his hands slipped over Derek’s shoulders so he could pull them close in a skin on skin hug. Stiles pressed his cheek into the side of Derek’s head, his chin digging gently into the werewolf’s neck and breathed him in. Derek whined, a sound more canine than man as the werewolf’s larger hands gripped at Stiles’s waist and lower back.

Stiles felt safe there.

“Derek, I need you.”

He pressed a damp kiss to the side of the human’s face, “What do you need?”

“I need you to stay because you want to be with me. I need you to want me as much as I want you, not just for fun times but for all the tough times, all the holidays and fights in between family and life stuff. I know its silly and clichéd and I am sure I’m not supposed to want this now but I’ve lived and lost enough and now I just want to stay with you.”

“I’ll be with you Stiles. I promise. You’re not alone.”

“Good,” Stiles croaked, emotions of the last couple of days converging to make it difficult to speak. He pressed his fingers into the back of Derek’s neck and let them slip through the thick strands of Derek’s soft black hair. He gasped when Derek lifted him easily off the floor and carried him to the bed and placed him on top of the covers gently. Stiles let go and watched as Derek grabbed some clothes from their bags and quickly changed his jeans for sweats. Derek walked over and helped Stiles out of his jeans as well then he settled down next to the human and Stiles gathered him close. This time, he didn’t mind being the person holding the other; Derek needed him sometimes just as much as Stiles needed him. Derek pressed his head into Stiles’s chest and took a deep breath as Stiles held him close.

“You’re not alone either, Derek. Not as long as I’m here.”

The next day Derek watched as Stiles ran around the track, sweats and tank top sweaty with exertion and he wondered what the human was running from. He seemed to be a lot calmer this morning when they woke up together but then again, the wedding the next day and they were still planning on attending so maybe that was it. He knew from his many conversations that Stiles had taken up running on campus for various reasons, running from the voices in his head and keeping up on his health since he’d spent the majority of his high school experience running from something supernatural or even human. Always running.

Now didn’t appear to be the running of a man intending to escape reality but it was interesting that he
decided to take the little trip down to the school to run this morning.

His ears sharpened and twitched at the sound of clomping boots and buckles long before Kira came around the corner. The young woman smiled brightly at Derek, flashing her eyes and his flashed in response, recognition of fox and wolf. In the supernatural world, they were rarely allies, let alone friends but Kira had always been an amazing contradiction, with a pretty quick introduction to the supernatural and always the first to nod and move on to the next thing. Derek hadn’t spent much time with her back then but he could see why Kira and Stiles had gravitated towards each other in the recent year.

They were both nerds of the highest order, finding pleasure in the simple things even after the passing time. They shared the heritage of carrying a fox spirit and they both had been deeply harmed by someone they thought they could trust.

“Hey Derek!” she waved cheerfully, he realized she was dressed strangely casual in jeans and her biker boots, along with a t-shirt with the Wonder Woman logo on it, and the belt that Derek knew straightened into her katana.

“Kira,” he returned with a nod.

She turned and caught sight of Stiles on the field and nodded to him, “What’s got him going this morning?”

Derek shrugged, “I swear he was doing really well last night, there was a lot less tossing and turning, he talked to his father about things. Then first thing this morning he wanted to go running and he woke up with this sixteen-year-old Stiles kind of frenetic energy.”

“Wedding is getting closer and he’s barely been in the same room as Lydia.”

Derek nodded, since he’d thought the same thing, “Have you seen Scott and the others? How was your visit with them?”

Kira shrugged, crossing her arms loosely over her chest, “Scott being a dork about his betas, and trying to pretend that he wasn’t with Malia even though I found out before Stiles did. Malia doesn’t understand subtlety though so she’s always a delight. Like legit a delight. Lydia was barely there and the betas were showing off.”

Derek smiled, thinking about Isaac and Erica, when they were young betas. They showed off and he wished a little bit every day that he’d been a better alpha to them. He’d lost another family because of his hubris and Isaac defected, something he’d never really planned for but at the time he’d been glad. He knew that Isaac might have a chance to survive if he wasn’t with Derek.

And now, he was just sick of being alone.

When he’d reclaimed his alpha status he’d already been out of Beacon Hills for a while and he woke up and it was there, like he’d needed time to heal and be a better alpha. Deaton had postulated that when he’d died and rose as the wolf something inside him had reset and for a while he’d held it back because he just couldn’t handle the responsibility of alpha. Thankfully he’d been with Cora when it happened, and the others in his Alaska pack. The alpha there was a distant cousin to his mother so she had easily taken them in. Alpha Nova Peyton had taken him away from the rest of her pack and told him he didn’t need to answer the call to make a pack, to take his time. He wouldn’t be sought out, the Alpha pack was long gone, and as long as Derek was close to a pack-mate then he wouldn’t feel the need to turn betas and gather others to him. Derek remembered taking a deep shuddering breath and thanking Nova for that. Everyone knew he was an alpha in the Alaska pack but it wasn’t
a concern because he wasn’t going to attack Nova for her pack, and he had Cora.

And now he was with Stiles and there was a chance that the spastic human had done all the pack grooming for him, Derek thought with a smile as he watched Stiles trip and come to a halt. Derek could hear him panting from exertion, he watched as the human’s chest expanded and deflated with his fast breathing then he must have caught movement out of the corner of his eye because he turned towards them.

“Kira!” Stiles shouted waving and generally appearing the lovable idiot and Derek couldn’t help but smile as his boyfriend ran over to swoop Kira into a hug before they sat down on the bleachers and started gabbing about what they were going to do for the day.

“Stiles, are we going to go back to the house for clean clothes and showers and maybe food at some point?” Derek asked, making the human and the fox pause and Stiles nodded jerkily before he started talking again. The werewolf just shook his head and smiled. His phone jangled in his pocket so he tugged it out and his brows rose in surprise before he turned back to his friends.

“Stiles I’m going to run a couple errands, will you and Kira meet me at the loft at around four?”

“Yeah but remember the rehearsal dinner is at six and we’re all supposed to be there,” Stiles remarked with a nervous twitch a good intentioned roll of his eyes and Derek nodded before he walked over and pressed a kiss to the human’s forehead then without thinking about it, he pressed a hand into Kira’s shoulder, leaving the scent of pack with them both.

“Was that weird?” Stiles asked Kira as Derek walked around the corner of the school. He knew that the jeep would still be there, since Derek didn’t have the keys and he was used to running around Beacon Hills.

Kira shrugged, “I couldn’t tell you what was weird and not weird when it comes to Derek Hale, or Stiles Stilinski for that matter.”

Stiles laughed, “Fair.”

“What are you going to do when you see Scott?” Kira blurted after a few seconds of silence, picking at her nail beds. Stiles reached out and pressed his hand over hers so she would stop and look up at him.

“Where’s that coming from?” he asked with a slight smile, trying to soothe her anxiety.

Kira shrugged, “I saw them both last night and everyone is being all squirrely and keeping secrets from each other. I don’t understand what’s happened here.”

Stiles rubbed her hand gently, “Me neither and I was here for a lot of it. I think we all fucked up, following Scott when he was given his alpha ability but he’d never really learned to solidify pack bonds. We know from Peter and Cora and Derek that losing someone should feel like a death and yet Scott has lost a lot of his betas, whether they were human or not and its like it doesn’t phase him at all or he’s just ignoring it which seems to further fracture the bonds of those left behind. He had a tight connection with Isaac and he didn’t even fight to keep him close, he just gave up. He hasn’t been reaching out to me since I left for Washington and I just don’t know who he is anymore. What can I do with that?”

Kira stood up, surprising Stiles with the movement as she moved out onto the grass and held up her fists in a defensive sparring position and Stiles nodded with a grin. They could at least do something
useful while they talked about this complete useless thing called Stiles bestie relationship with his supposed brother from another mother.

Mother?

Melissa?

Stiles slapped his forehead and almost got slapped as Kira lunged at him then backed up with a laugh, “I haven’t gone to see Melissa yet. I should go see her.”

“Yes you should,” Kira said as she moved forward again forcibly moved his hands into position so she could start teaching him blocks, “And you should tell her what a piece of shit friend her son turned into. That woman is terrifying, especially when she’s all disappointed in her son.”

Stiles chuckled, “Not my current reason for seeing her but maybe I’ll let something slip. Maybe she knows if there is something I did,” Stiles said as he blocked a couple of quick shots.

“Don’t take the blame for his stuff Stiles, you were always really good at that. I think she’s at home for the afternoon because all the ‘rents are going to the big wedding dinner tonight. Lydia definitely can still throw a stupid and huge meaningless party, can’t she?”

Stiles nodded and they fell silent and got serious about training for another hour before they separated and went to do their own thing. Stiles went home and showered, grabbing a sandwich and texting Derek at the same time about if he needed something to eat, only partially wondering about his ‘errands’ that he left for.

Derek responded a couple minutes later, ‘I took some lunch to the station and ate with your dad. I hope you don’t mind?’

“Daaaawww,” Stiles emitted the sappy sound before he could stop himself at the thought of his brooding Sourwolf taking food to his dad. He looked up and called out, “Hello? Anyone home to hear me acting like a love sick idiot?” he shrugged when there wasn’t an answer, not that he expected one.

Apparently his silence had gone on too long, his phone buzzed again, ‘Stiles?!?!?’

Stiles quickly tapped out a reply, ‘Of course its okay. I was just wondering what kind of contraband you brought to him.’ He hedged, glad that Derek couldn’t hear a lie through the text.

‘It wasn’t curly fries if that makes you feel any better. I would have brought you some if I’d gotten curly fries.’ Derek’s response brought a tight feeling to the center of Stiles’s chest and not in an about-to-have-a-panic attack kind of way. Then it spread into this warm and loved feeling because Derek would bring him curly fries and he’d thought about Stiles’s dad enough to bring him a lunch. He tried to keep his cool when he responded.

‘Love you,’ he tapped out then deleted it quickly and tried for cool again because declaring his everlasting love to the werewolf over text because of curly fries seemed a little anti climatic, ‘Thank you for doing that. I’ll see you at the loft in a while. I am going to see Melissa at her house first.’

Stiles finished his sandwich and finished with a quick wash and changing into some fresh jeans and a t-shirt, with the Ironman symbol on the front. He walked out and climbed into the jeep and headed out towards the McCall house, Derek’s last text had been a simple ‘Say hi for me, if she cares.’

Stiles just rolled his eyes, then sent the ‘rolling eyes’ emoji for good measure. He easily found his way to the McCall house and he pulled up next to the SUV that was parked next to Melissa’s car.
Stiles sighed, thinking he should just turn back around because she wasn’t alone and he didn’t need to bring his crap here to her. He was about to put the car into reverse when the front door slammed open and Melissa was standing on the front step, staring at him with one brow raised in a faintly Hale-like judgment.

Stiles got out of the jeep, turning the key to switch off the ignition and walked up to her. She wasn’t wearing scrubs, wearing soft looking jeans and a t-shirt with a zippered sweater from the high school, possibly something she’d swiped from Scott.

“Mrs. McCall,” Stiles said in greeting.

“Stiles,” she chided gently and pulled him into a quick hug and he tightened his arms around her waist and settled into the mom smell she couldn’t help but emit, it wasn’t as prominent as it once was, but it was just as comforting as it had been that first time he’d stayed over at the McCall house after his mother died. There had been countless sleepovers before then but that night, when Melissa sent her husband to the couch and cuddled Stiles in her bed so he could sleep for the first time in days had been burned into the child’s memories and it echoed now. “I think Melissa is just fine.”

Stiles laughed, “Sure.”

Melissa pulled back; pressing her hand into Stiles’s cheek and smiled then dragged him into the house. He caught sight of Chris sitting on the couch but Melissa dragged Stiles into the kitchen with her without another word and settled him down at the table before he had a chance to argue. Then she assumed that interrogation stance and he started twitching.

“What’s going on Stiles?”

“I don’t know what you mean?” the statement turned into a question at the end and he flinched before he wrapped his arms around his stomach and tried to make himself smaller under her watchful gaze.

Melissa’s eyes narrowed, “How about the fact that you have been in town for almost a week, you have a new boyfriend and this is the first I have seen of you. Scott has been wandering in and out of here, snarling and throwing things then switching over to pouting like a kicked puppy.”

Stiles smiled a little at the kicked puppy statement because apparently he was never going to outgrow that very accurate description. He quickly sobered though when Melissa cleared her throat. “I haven’t really heard much from Scott in the last sixth months, I came back here and tried to convince me to leave Derek. By the way, Derek Hale is who I am dating.” He paused and stared at her but she didn’t say anything. He shrugged and continued, “Lydia dumped me and apparently was fooling around with Parrish and now everyone is thrilled that they are getting married. Scott is hiding things from me, including the fact that he is with Malia and I don’t know what’s happening anymore. I miss my best friend Melissa.”

She stared at Stiles for a minute then reached out and squeezed his hand in comfort, “I didn’t know. How could I not know?”

Stiles purposefully did not look towards the other room where the ‘retired’ hunter was still sitting because it wasn’t Melissa’s job to make her son be a good friend. It wasn’t her job to stop living for the sake of her wayward son and his pack of misfits.

Melissa jiggled his hand a little, “Do you imagine that I have in some recent time decided that you don’t mean as much to me as Scott does? Ever since your mom, your father and I have always been an unwitting team and I love you like my own son. Why didn’t you tell me?”
Stiles shrugged, “Same reason I didn’t tell my father or Scott or anyone. I didn’t think I should. And then it was too late and I didn’t do anything. I just left because silence was the better part of valor.”

“Silence is not valor, it’s running away and I don’t like it. I don’t know what to tell you about the rest of it Stiles but don’t let your friendship with Scott go without a fight, even if the fight you have is with him.”

Stiles nodded and smiled a little, “I should go. Derek wants me to meet up with him at the loft.”

“Think about what I said,” Melissa said, nodding already like she knew that he was going to agree. She was a smart lady, because he couldn’t walk away again without a fight, not from Scott. He’d let everything from the last year dictate how he should leave things and despite the lovey-dovey send off they had together after graduation it didn’t change the silence that came after. It didn’t change the hurt and damage that had never been aired out and maybe it was time to look at some of that stuff.

He waved to Melissa and ignored Chris because he didn’t really want to talk to the man anyway and looked down at his phone to see that he didn’t really have time before he was supposed to meet Derek so he headed to the loft instead of worrying what he should or shouldn’t be saying to Scott right now. Maybe it would be better to wait until after the wedding to stir up any more trouble anyway. Maybe if Lydia weren’t around, it would simplify things between them.

The drive over to the loft was filled with whatever rock station he left the radio on and when he got there, he noticed the cars in the normally barren lot and frowned, wondering what the werewolf was up to. Wondered again about the errands he ‘had to run’ this afternoon. He figured the only way he was going to get an answer was to go up there so he got out of his jeep and traveled quickly to the correct floor and opened the sliding door.

“SURPRISE!” came the shouted word from several places around the open space and Stiles flinched in shock before his gaze caught on Derek, just inside the door waiting for him. He smiled, confused as he walked over to his boyfriend and took the outstretched hand before he looked around and beamed in surprise.

Kira was there, holding a red solo cup, holding who knew what kind of drink and she wasn’t alone. Danny and Ethan were standing close together, over by the windows, Jackson standing on Danny’s side but a little separate from the duo. Then before he had a chance to react to those three being here and together, Isaac came out of the opposite corner of the room and Stiles jerked in surprise, “Isaac, you’re here!”

The beta grinned, that wide smile paired with the curling dark blonde hair and the ever present scarf around his neck made him appear timeless, like he’d time traveled here from several years before. Stiles wanted to talk to them, touch base but he could feel that there was one more surprise and she come out from where the bed was partitioned off.

“Cora Hale!” Stiles grinned and finally walked over to her first, somehow drawn to her more than the others. The younger woman looked alert and calm, like the time in Alaska had been just as good to her as it had been to Derek and he didn’t stop until he was hugging her.

She smiled and wrapped her arms around his back, “Nice to see you again Stiles.”

“You’re here! You’re all here!” Stiles sputtered, pulling away from Derek’s sister and trying to turn away when his eyes started to ache and water. This was stupid, not a good enough reason to cry but it was like the sky opened up and dropped a bucket of knowledge on his head.

Pack.
This was his pack and they came here.

“Why?” he finally asked.

“Well I wanted to see if this whole Stiles is gay was really a thing,” Jackson mouthed off first, breaking the tension brought on by the moment. People chuckled around the room.

“Awww Jackson, sorry man I am already off the market,” Stiles said with a wink.

To which Jackson responded with a snort.

“We came here because you and Derek don’t need to be here alone and feeling like you have been laid out to bare in front of another pack,” Cora stated pragmatically. She leaned into Kira’s side and Stiles couldn’t wait to see what kind of damage those two could do together.

“Many of us were planning on coming into town to at least make an appearance this summer so when Derek called, we all just moved up our travel plans,” Danny said from the back.

“So nice to know it only took Lydia Martin getting married to bring so many of us together,” Stiles said sarcastically then rolled his eyes because he’d been sure that the hurt had at least lost most of the sting but apparently not. Derek moved up next to him and pressed a hand to his shoulder.

“They didn’t come here for her, they came here for you.”

Stiles looked towards each of the faces in the room and saw them nodding in ascent of what Derek was saying. Kira walked over to them and held Stiles’s hand, “You were there for me when I needed a friend, no matter what it was like for me and Scott. Instead of making me come home or answer anything, you just listened though I didn’t know you were capable of such a thing.”

“Hey!” Stiles exclaimed though they were both smiling, “I can be quiet.”

“Rarely,” Isaac spoke up as he walked over and pressed his hand to Stiles’s shoulder, “But then I like when the Pack Mom calls with all the details.”

“Excuse me!” Stiles gasped at the ‘pack mom’ title.

Isaac winked before he continued, “You told me what was happening back home, you listened when I just wanted to talk about Europe and then when I came back you never demanded that I return home to Beacon Hills, you asked me what I wanted. You were the first to ever really mean it, sorry Derek.”

Stiles watched as Derek shrugged, “I understand Isaac and you’re not wrong.”

The others came forward, one by one and described moments when he’d been the person they needed him to be instead of using them or demanding something from them and finally Cora walked over and squeezed herself in next to Stiles and Derek and smiled at the human, “You were the pack that Derek needed. You were also the partner he would need and I would travel the world to see him happy over and over again. So I am here on behalf of the Hale family and the Peyton Pack to say welcome and thank you for bringing these people together because I know that you are going to be stronger for it.”

Then to the utter joyful surprise they all pressed in even tighter in a group hug that dissolved into laughter and if anyone asked, he would deny the tears until his dying day even though the werewolves could all smell it on the air.
And even though he wasn’t a werewolf he could feel the bonds that formed between each of them grow stronger. Only to be interrupted by a cough and sighed realizing that they were going to have that talk now instead of waiting until after the wedding.
Confrontations

Chapter Summary

Scott and Stiles are having it out. The rehearsal dinner might give some answers but it will just leave everyone with more questions.

Chapter Notes

Really raw content, un-beta'ed obviously.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Stiles turned towards the wide-open door to see Scott, Malia and Lydia. Apparently, Scott hadn’t invited the baby betas but that was probably for the best, this wasn’t their business. They weren’t there when the Hale-McCall pack fractured and people disappeared. They weren’t there for most of it.


The Nogitsune and the Argents. Up till now they had no experience with dowdy looking older men beating the shit out of them because they were werewolves of supernatural sympathizers.

Liam and Mason and the others had been around when Theo was charismatically tearing them apart from the inside out but that didn’t compare to the losses of this room of people, not to mention the damage done more recently.

“Hey guys, so we are going to be at the rehearsal dinner in like two hours, what are you doing here now? How did you even know we were here?”

“I felt it!” Scott snapped, his eyes flashing red.

Stiles frowned, “Felt what?”

Scott rushed into the open space of the loft, his nostrils flaring and eyes still that sharp alpha red. Stiles kept eye contact even as Derek shifted to stand slightly between the two friends. Scott stopped up short and snarled at Derek, “I felt your power! Since when are you an alpha! How come I didn’t know?”

The other werewolf shrugged even as he pressed a hand into the center of Scott’s chest and shoved him back a step then crossed his arms over his chest making everything bulge in distracting ways, “I didn’t need you to know, I didn’t come here with my pack and I am trained enough now to mask my alpha sense. I am not here to take the land that rightfully belongs to my family.”

“You have no right to Beacon Hills. Your family is dead!” Scott sneered and Stiles lunged forward and punched his best friend in the face, burning with a white-hot rage for his boyfriend’s grief. A feeling that Stiles knew never really faded for Derek. He was left staring at Scott’s shocked face and
a throbbing fist because his friend’s face was clearly made of steel instead of flesh and bone but he refused to back down. The room was deathly silent in the aftermath of the punch, Stiles didn’t have anything he could say that wasn’t going end their lifetime friendship.

“Knock it off Scott, what has gotten into you?” Kira snapped.

“What are all of you doing? Here?” Scott asked venomously.

“They came home to visit Beacon Hills, what’s it to you? It’s not like you fought for any of them?” Stiles snapped, trying really hard not to snarl like a cornered wolf even though the pressure building in his chest was causing his claustrophobia to rise.

“I am remembering all of a sudden why I don’t call or write home,” Jackson snorted.

Scott’s gaze shifted over to the once-kanima and glared at him, “You never cared about home and pack before Jackson, what makes today any different.”

“Something you wouldn’t understand,” Jackson husked and Stiles sighed because even though Jackson mostly just griped when he called Stiles, there were times when he called and told Stiles that he hated himself, hated all the things that made him a douche. Stiles would jokingly tell him to just stop and they would go back to bickering but he knew better than most of the people in the room, except Danny, that Jackson was the way he is for the same reasons that Derek was the way he was. Grief and loss, confusion and righteous anger at the unfairness of life. Something that Scott apparently had forgotten about completely.

“You assembled a Pack, you hid your alpha status and you did all of this in my territory?” Scott demanded, clearly talking to Derek again. Who just calmly shrugged.

But Stiles was done, this was his best friend and it was his fight to have. He shifted from behind Derek’s shoulder and the alpha stiffened in response, the others in the room swelled towards him but Stiles just held his hand up to them. He didn’t need to be protected from Scott, no matter how much posturing was going on.

“Scott, I don’t understand why this is too much for you to understand. Why are you angry right now? What’s with the flashing eyes and canines, you are losing control because Derek came home and he happens to be an alpha. He didn’t make a play for your people, he didn’t try to claim his legacy. And these people were your friends once.”

“Maybe some of them,” Scott snarled and Stiles could feel the sadness eking into the back of his mind from somewhere. He could feel it from all around him, there was also the shimmer of anger and the mindless determination to protect each other. It was going to take some time to get used to the sensation.

Stiles crossed his arms and went to work. If Scott wasn’t going to explain himself then Stiles was going to tell his best friend all the things he should have said a year ago, “Do you even care about what it was like for me to be forgotten?”

Scott scoffed waving him off, “We all went through the Hunt together.”

“No Scott,” Stiles snapped, angry tears trying to fall but he shook off the sign of weakness, “By the time any of you three, even Liam and Mason were hit, the train station had already joined with our world and you weren’t forgotten. And I wasn’t talking about the Hunt.”

Scott frowned, “What are you talking about Stiles!”
“I am talking about you turning your back on me because of the chimera, because of Theo.”

Apparently the other people in the room couldn’t stay silent anymore, Isaac growled. So did Cora and Kira took several steps forward though Derek stopped her. Scott ignored them, not that it was different than any other day, Scott had proven more than once that out of sight, out of mind. He looked at Stiles, “You killed someone!”

More gasping.

Stiles sighed, “No I didn’t. I was in a fight for my life against a Chimera, someone who had abilities I couldn’t fight against, again in the line of fire with the odds stacking against me because I love you like a brother and you know what’s sad? Really sad?” he didn’t wait, “I didn’t tell you because you live in this little black and white world of judgement and I knew exactly what you were going to say. I was scared of losing you and you know what. It didn’t matter because I lost you anyway. I remember that day next to the Jeep before senior year started, and you told me. You promised me that we would be together after high school. And here we are!”

Scott shook his head but his eyes were staring straight ahead and he was still. Stiles didn’t know what was about to come from his friend but he didn’t think it was an apology. “We got you back, that has to count for something!” he finally declared with a nod to the girls.

Stiles looked towards the ceiling, asking something for strength, “Thanks. Thank you so much for bringing me back in time to have missed everything for senior year. Thank you for getting me back in time to declare love to a girl that I don’t think exists anymore only to send me on my way across the country and only call me every once in a while to tell me about your latest conquest who apparently was my ex-girlfriend. Thanks for that too.”

Scott sputtered, looking from Malia and back to Kira.

“You should have been a man about it and told me to my face,” Stiles continued.

“I didn’t want it to hurt you,” Scott pleaded.

“And yet,” Stiles stated, splaying his arms out in production. “Maybe I was right all along, sometimes friends aren’t meant to stay close after high school. I think you could be a good alpha to your betas, I think you have a lot in store for you but I don’t think I am going to be there to high five your victories with you.”

“No, Stiles we can work through all this crap. We’ve been friends forever, I was there when your mom passed. I was there for you when everything happened, I didn’t leave you after the nogitsune, everything you did. Why do you think this is so much worse?”

Derek snarled reminding Stiles that he had a very volatile audience, “You are going to compare the time that he was possessed and being killed slowly by a trickster fox spirit to your behavior over the last year. Are you going to blame it on being a werewolf because that’s bullshit and Stiles’ deserves better!”

Scott shifted suddenly and punched Derek before Stiles could even respond, Stiles felt and watched as everyone else tensed and Stiles held his hands up and hoped they didn’t jump in and this turned into teeth tearing, claws wrecking flesh kind of brawl. Thankfully his wayward friends all stayed were they were, probably not feeling inclined to jump between two angry territorial alphas.

“You are a piece of shit alpha!” Derek shouted as he punched Scott across the jaw. They tumbled
sideways and down to the floor, grappling while they shouted at each other.

“It’s your fault he’s like this! You seduced him, you fucked him up and now he’s choosing you over me!” Scott was snarling as he swiped his claws at Derek. The older alpha was on the defensive by choice, he wasn’t here to fight but clearly he’d lost control.

“You didn’t care about him! You weren’t there for him!” Derek huffed as he landed a well placed kick to Scott’s legs and the younger wolf landed on his back and stayed there, huffing in deep labored breaths for a couple of seconds then snarled.

“He always belonged to me until you came back into his life!”

Stiles reared back a little and laughed, not because it was funny. He hadn’t realized the territory Scott was here to defend was Stiles and though to some pretty unhealthy heroines in story books might think it’s flattering he did not.

“I don’t belong to anyone but myself Scott, I stood by you as you became someone I didn’t know and watched you choose other people over me more than once. I didn’t pick Derek as some ultimatum-inducing manipulation. I didn’t even really pick him outside of my dreams, he picked me and it had nothing to do with you.”

With that said, Stiles walked over and pressed a hand into Derek’s arm then leaned down to help Scott to his feet. Scott refused to take his hand, shoving upwards and glared at them both. “You were my pack, you stand with him now? That’s your choice?”

“Why is this an us and them conversation right now?” Stiles asked, throwing his hands up in exasperation. “I have at one time or another stood next to each of the people in this room, we don’t have to be divided. Why do you want to be?”

“You think you’re so special you can be in two packs? Two packs that have the kind of history we have?” Scott sneered.

Stiles rolled his eyes, “Oh god, I am done talking to you.” He turned to Malia and Lydia, “Malia, if you are happy and safe with Scott then I get it but don’t forget to be your own anchor.” The coyote turned away and flushed, nodding a little.

Lydia crossed her arms, “And me Stiles, what is your amazing Stilinski wisdom for me?”

“First of all, get over yourself because maybe this was about you three weeks ago but it isn’t anymore.” He walked over to her. “And secondly, don’t marry some guy under false pretenses. If you are honest with yourself and him and you want to get married now then do it because it doesn’t make a lick of a difference to me but if you are doing this for some stupid fucked reason then just stop before you destroy another relationship in your life.”

Without another word, Lydia turned and stormed away. Stiles turned to catch sight of a couple of gazes watching as she walked out. Isaac was still watching Scott who was glaring at Derek, the beta looking like he was desperate to say something but he couldn’t. Kira was watching Malia and Scott, her gentle gaze shifting between the two of them. Danny, Ethan and Jackson were standing and watching Stiles though he didn’t really know why.

Scott turned to look at Stiles again, “You can’t ask two alphas to share, that’s not how this works.”

“I already said I was done talking to you, if you ever want to know what it could be like. Ask Derek and Cora, they were with another pack in Alaska, Derek didn’t try to take anything from their alpha. We could live together in harmony, Beacon Hills would be safe under the protection of two alphas.”
“I shouldn’t have to fight him for you,” Scott whined.

“I shouldn’t have to ask for you to care about what I went through. I shouldn’t have to demand you care about your pack,” Stiles said and turned his back to Scott. He knew the second Derek moved closer to him, still staring at Scott. Stiles was allowed to trust, to know that Scott wasn’t going to hurt him but Derek wasn’t as trusting apparently.

Scott gave a great huff and walked out of the loft, followed by Malia who didn’t say another word. Stiles rubbed his hands over his face for a second, thinking that this wasn’t over. They had phones and Stiles was going to be in town for another month and a half. If they were going to reconcile, it was up to Scott this time.

“Well that was an interesting experiment in futility,” Cora snarked.

Several people laughed and it broke the tension, Stiles walked over to the couch and slumped down into the cushions suddenly exhausted. Derek walked over behind him and sat down, the rest of the adults in the room moved in sync to surround them. Making a loose circle, Cora settled on the couch next to her brother while Kira settled on the arm of the couch. Isaac flopped down on the side next to Stiles, while the other three grabbed chairs and sat down across from them. Stiles looked around the room at each of them.

“I didn’t mean to make a pack, I didn’t know what to do when someone would call. I thought I was just this weird GateKeeper for Scott. Like whining to mom because you couldn’t talk to dad. How would this even work? No one has made a formal declaration.”

“I called you because I knew you weren’t going to judge me out loud for anything, you weren’t going to make demands because you weren’t the alpha,” Isaac started, he reached down and rubbed his hand through Stiles’s hair. He rubbed into the contact, enjoying the sensation. Derek was wrapped tightly around his other side, offering his warmth and quiet support.

“You guys called me for me? Not because of Scott?” he asked, shocked.

“Yes!” they all chorused incredulously.

“You’re kind of an idiot,” Jackson declared and Stiles laughed.

“It has been said.”

Derek pressed his nose into the space behind his ear and whispered, “Our idiot.”

Stiles stammered and wiggled the way the sensation tickled and shoved Derek with his shoulder, smiling widely as he responded, “Again, we live all over the place. How do we function as a pack?”

“Same way we have up to this point,” Ethan said with a shrug.

Derek took over from there, “What we are trying to get at is that though the pack bonds are uncomfortable with separating the members of a pack, as you said because there have been no formal declarations to an alpha they haven’t tightened to the point of changing our lives like that. We can all stay the way we are, spread out all over the place, talking on the phone, maybe upping the communication we all have with each other or we choose not to make anything official. For the humans in the room, you have come and go privileges much more easily because you aren’t going to feel the bonds the way we can.”

“Then if those decisions are made, I will officially declare alpha and ask for a formal acceptance. We would all decide together where to settle and we could build there or here in Beacon Hills. I have
land in Alaska, here in town, as well as in New York and Washington now. I can always liquidate some assets and we can find someplace else but looking around and knowing where some of you are at the moment in your lives, you each have to make this decision for yourself.”

Stiles listened to Derek’s answer and realized again how smart he was and what an idiot he and Scott had been back in the day for not listening to him. Derek, because he grew up in a werewolf family knew so much more about this. “I am on this path to getting into the FBI and I want to stay in Washington DC.”

“I stay with you,” Derek said immediately and Stiles leaned over to press a kiss to his face.

“I am not ready to declare anything different, I am going back to Alaska for a little while but I am going to be honest about one thing: I believe the last Hale Alpha should fight for this territory in Beacon Hills.”

Stiles figured as much, thankfully that was down the line; maybe Scott wouldn’t want to fight. He turned to the others in the room, “Nothing needs to be said or decided today. It’s been emotionally high strung around here and we don’t need to be making any hasty…”

Isaac cut him off, “I am coming with you to Washington DC. I want to do something different, I want a place to settle down and call home again. I can’t stay somewhere waiting for Chris to come back; I don’t want to keep pretending that I don’t need a pack anymore. Please don’t say no!”

Stiles smiled and grabbed the other man’s hand and squeezed, “I wouldn’t say no to another familiar face in DC.”

Isaac’s smile was incandescent, a little flushed with embarrassment but totally worth it. There were no other immediate declarations, people had lives in other places but no one turned down the offer. With Stiles and Derek together in Washington they would look for others, people who needed family. That’s how Derek found Isaac, Boyd and Erica and though their stories ended pretty horribly Derek was different now. He was stronger and he wasn’t alone, Stiles would make sure they were offering a home and a family, not power.

“Okay, so who wants to place some bets about this wedding tomorrow?” Jackson asked.

Stiles smiled, glad that they were moving on for now. He struggled to his feet, using Derek’s chest for leverage and walked into the bathroom, looking at himself in the mirror as he started the water. He splashed a bit of water on his face and took a deep breath as he tried to make sense of what had happened in the last couple hours. It was hard to wrap his mind around all these changes.

“Hey,” someone spoke from the door and he looked over to see Jackson.

“Hey,” Stiles returned.

“I wanted you to know something, and everyone is talking out there and giving me the opportunity to say this. When I called and bitched at you, all that time I wanted to say something different and I figured I couldn’t. I didn’t have the right to ask you to do what you did today with Scott.”

“What?” Stiles frowned.

“You picked us but not because you were picking us, you were picking yourself. No matter what I was or what I am, I am a werewolf and I want a pack. All those times when I would call you some stupid name, I was hoping you would call my bluff and ask me to join you somehow. I felt the bond start with you and Derek, even though I have a life elsewhere its not where I am planning on staying because I want to be with a pack and you made that possible. You let me in, even if it was for all the
wrong reasons and I might never stop being a douche sometimes but I am going to keep calling you and I am going to keep hoping you’ll pick up the phone.”

Stiles stood dumbstruck because he hadn’t imagined that Jackson was capable of saying anything nice but he had. Then he nodded his head because if there was something he could do, he would do it even if it was picking up the phone in the middle of the night and talking to these people that had been just as affected by the supernatural as him. “I will you know.”

Jackson winked and walked away, Stiles could hear him saying to the others that he was going back to his hotel room to shower for the rehearsal dinner because it was still going to be the best party in town tonight. Stiles dried his face and walked out into the open area again and watched as Jackson walked out, turning back with one of those soft looks that Stiles hadn’t ever imagined he could possess. Danny and Ethan left soon after, saying that they were going to do the same.

Danny walked over to him and pressed a hand to Stiles’s shoulder, “I know I am human but you never treated me any different. You kept what I shared with you to yourself, those things about Ethan and Jackson; you helped me understand about the supernatural. I might not be ready to jump out of my life, but you are a good friend and some day things are going to be different for all of us. I know it, because you showed me that.”

Stiles nodded and waved them off because he seriously was not going to cry like a baby in front of them. Again. Deaton had been right, his actions had meant something to these people and their calls had meant he wasn’t alone something he’d needed long before he called Derek.

Kira walked out with a wink and skipping as she went by, Stiles chuckled as he watched her. Isaac scent marked both Derek and Stiles with a happy smile, and told them that he was going to shower here since this was where he was staying and shoved Stiles over to Cora and Derek. The alpha easily righted his clumsy boyfriend while Isaac closed himself into the bathroom and proceeded to turn on the shower and music from his phone.

Stiles grinned at Cora as she rolled her eyes, judging everyone with her eyebrows. Just like a Hale. “You guys should go get ready, I am imagining fireworks tonight at the dinner and you should be there. You should know I am staying here as well and making Isaac sleep on the couch.”

“Figures,” Stiles said with a snort.

“Thanks for inviting us to the show,” Cora said to her brother.

Derek smiled, nodding to his sister. “Thanks for coming here for us,”

“Let me remind you little brother, that I am still here to judge your new boyfriend and make sure he’s good enough for you.”

Stiles stared at her in surprise, “Excuse me!”

“He’s more than good enough, trust me,” Derek answered smoothly over Stiles’s annoyed squawk. Stiles smiled when Derek gripped his waist, pulling him close to his side. “He’s the reason we’re all here.”

Cora smiled and for all the times Stiles had seen her sullen and bratty, seeing the smile on her face as a rare sight and he couldn’t help but smile back. Apparently he had it bad for happy Hales. He didn’t want to make out with her or anything, not like he did with Derek thankfully because that would have been an awkward conversation but it didn’t make him want to hug her.

“We should go then,” Stiles whispered and Derek nodded. The Hales exchanged a hug then Stiles
leaned in and pressed his forehead into her temple as he dragged her into a tight hug. She paused for a moment then tightened her grip, “I didn’t know humans not born into a pack could be like this. You know what this means,” it wasn’t a question and Stiles just nodded because he did know.

It was just too bad that Scott didn’t.

“Go,” Cora barked suddenly, “You smell sad and I don’t like it.”

Stiles snorted, “So much like your brother.” He smacked a loud kiss to her cheek and hopped out of range of her ineffectual slapping motion and Derek followed him out of the loft, pulling the door closed behind him, leaving Cora and Isaac to get ready. Stiles turned into Derek’s arms easily, pressing a deep kiss into the other man’s lips. Derek opened to the insistent pressure with a happy grumble. Stiles wrapped his arms around Derek’s neck and shivered in happiness when Derek’s hands slid around his back.

Stiles pulled back just enough to smile at his boyfriend, “Thank you for everything.”

“You thank you for calling me, I probably would still be sitting in my apartment hoping for the courage to pick up the next time you texted. You were always the bravest of us.”

Stiles looked away, flushing a little, “That’s what you say, maybe its just that we are brave for each other these days.”

Derek shook his head and smiled, “You’re not getting off that easily.”

“Not getting off at all in this town,” Stiles said with a grin.

Derek snorted, “No Stiles, listen to me. You’re not alone and I wanted you to know that what you do makes a difference.”

“I hear you Derek.”

He pressed another kiss to the werewolf’s lips.

Stiles leaned back again, swallowing convulsively because he didn’t know this was a good idea but he couldn’t keep it to himself anymore. He couldn’t hide what he felt after Derek had done everything he’d asked, except let himself be taken advantage of, Derek had listened and cared for him no matter what and after years of harboring all these feelings actually having them returned was heady, “I know this is probably stupid to say but I love you, just in case you need to know.”

Derek smiled, pressing teeth and tongue into Stiles’s lips, his palms holding the human’s neck gently, like something to be treasured. He pulled back again, “I don’t know what to say, I want to say it back but I’m…”

Stiles pulled back but not because Derek had said anything bad or even unexpected, “Scared?”

Derek nodded a little, “Maybe. I have had hot and heavy romances before and they haven’t worked out well for me.”

Stiles chuckled, “That might be a horrible understatement. I didn’t say it to get a response though. I just want you to know and its because of you not me.”

Derek’s cheeks flushed and Stiles couldn’t help but press a kiss to the man’s jaw because he was amazing inside and out and this moment was nothing like when he said those words to Lydia and got nothing in return. He’d been getting nothing in return from her for years, and he was a sad idiot for
trying to see it as something it wasn’t. Everything he had discovered with Derek had been different and he didn’t think that was going to stop. Derek had shown him care, even loving gestures for weeks now.

So instead of making this moment more awkward then it needed to be, Stiles turned and dragged Derek down the stairs and over to jeep. They climbed in, Derek was all animal grace while Stiles almost brained himself on the door. Derek just shook his head while they drove back to the Stilinski residence.

“So I brought a pretty loud suit for this thing,” Stiles blurted after a couple minutes.

“Did you bring one that wasn’t so loud?”

Stiles grinned, “I don’t have such a thing.”

“I guess you are going to have to wear it then.”

Stiles grinned back as he drove, they barely had time to shower and get dressed before they were supposed to be at the private club that was hosting Lydia and Parrish’s rehearsal dinner and the wedding the next day. Stiles decided to stick with a pair of dark blue jeans and a button up white shirt with a black vest, it wasn’t the loud outfit he was joking about with Derek but he didn’t want to make a scene at his ex’s wedding, no matter the fact that they all made a scene about two hours before. Derek came out of his shower smelling dark and alluring, dressed in a black button up shirt, his sleeves folded up, with black jeans and his leather jacket, looking grown up and delicious.

Stiles frowned at him, “Stop being so distracting. We have a party to go to where I can’t have my way with you.”

Derek rolled his eyes, “I don’t think you have any room to complain. You look amazing.”

Stiles’s stomach warmed in happiness.

The werewolf walked over to him and pressed his nose into the curve of his neck, “And you smell amazing. I can’t wait to make you smell like mine.”

“Wow, you werewolves and territorial things,” Stiles said but he probably smelt as pleased as he was and his heart was lying about the annoyance. He wanted to belong, needed to belong to someone and he wanted that someone to be Derek. “Let’s go get this over with.”

Derek pressed a quick kiss to the side of Stiles’s neck and they headed out. The drive to the club was uneventful and he was able to park close to the door and he looked around the lot frowning. “If this was the biggest party in town with Lydia Martin at the center of it, wouldn’t you think this place would be packed already?”

Derek shrugged as he unbuckled his seatbelt, “We’re on time, I don’t know. Let’s go in and find out.”

Stiles nodded and exited the jeep and they walked in together, hand in hand. Derek opened the door for him, all gentlemanly. Stiles thanked him and they followed the signs and walked into the designated ballroom only to find Lydia and Jordan waiting for them with the rest of the pack. Scott was there, arms crossed and pouting with Malia standing next to him, Liam, Hayden, Mason and Cory were there as well as Theo. Stiles couldn’t help the glare he leveled at the leader of the chimeras who were long gone, thinking he should have stayed gone.

“What?” Stiles questioned just as the others walked in behind them. Jackson, Danny and Ethan came
in, followed by Cora, Isaac and Kira. They were all dressed to party and they were left looking around in confusion as well.

“I’m glad you still came, but things have changed. We are just waiting for a few more guests then I can tell you why we were all going to be here tonight.”

Derek brought Stiles and the others forward to settle down at one of the round tables close to the front of the room. Lydia was still just standing there, Parrish looked sad and detached like nothing about this was up to him. The door opened one more time, Stiles’s dad walked in with Melissa McCall and Chris Argent and Lydia gestured pointedly to another one of the tables.

“What’s all this?” the Sheriff asked.

“This was my stupid desire to make things different,” Lydia stated mysteriously.

“What are you talking about Lydia?” Jackson asked, crossing his arms over his chest.

“I am talking about the future, I know the future of Beacon Hills, the supernaturals anyway and I was trying to change things. I have shared with my friends what I saw but now I share it with you. The supernatural is going to be outed, here in town and maybe all over the world but I can really only see this town. And the way it happens, it’s going to destroy us all. One final fight and we aren’t coming out on top and a lot of people are going to die in the meantime.”

Stiles stared at her incredulously and not for the whole seeing the future thing because that was probable. The part that he didn’t understand was, “But why are we having this conversation on the night of your rehearsal dinner?”

Lydia looked down, “You were right Stiles, I was going to marry Jordan without being honest with him. I have no desire to be married at eighteen but I was trying to put myself in a position of trust in this town, Jordan is well known and liked in town as a deputy and as the right hand to the sheriff. Not many people know about the supernatural aspect of him, they haven’t even had an inkling of it up till now, same with me except for the fact that I hang out with the supernatural crowd. I was going to use my position to bring the supernatural into the light without the fear and death. I was hoping to make it so that the hunters didn’t have our silence to use against us.”

“And you decided to do that by lying to us, hurting people to keep your secrets?” Stiles asked, not believing what he was hearing.

“It was the best I had Stiles,” Lydia sighed and he paused because she sounded exhausted.

“This plan seems a little short sighted,” Danny said from where he was sitting closely with Ethan. “As one of the humans ‘in the know’ Lydia might be a polite introduction to the supernatural but not Parrish, a hellhound who’s past isn’t very rosy. Not many people in this room are going to make a good spokesperson for the humanity of the werewolves and other things that go bump in the night. Look at all the damage this war between the hunters and werewolves have done to this town.”

“So this is why we’re all here now,” Lydia stated. “We need a different plan, something that will help keep people alive because my vision says that they are coming and the plan is to out us one by one with the intent to build an army and destroy everyone who isn’t quite human.”

Stiles looked over at Derek and he shrugged, “She’s not lying.”

He thought about the implications of what she saw. An army of people led by hunters and trained by them to hate werewolves and supernaturals. It was their worst nightmares laid out on a platter for them all and he figured that her methodology and her actions were shit; he could at least understand
how Lydia got desperate enough to do something like this. Also didn’t mean he wanted to go back to holding her purse again or waiting for her to be his strawberry blonde goddess.

“Scott would make the best face of werewolves,” Stiles interjected quickly. “Jackson’s kanima days hurt a lot of people, Ethan killed with the alpha pack, Malia had really bad luck with her family, Liam has anger issues that were only magnified by the change. If they learned anything about the chimera then Theo, Cory and Hayden are out. Scott is the best bet we have for a clean face of the coming out party.”

“You didn’t count out your boyfriend,” Scott snarled.

“He won’t be doing it either because you put a ‘gun in his hand’ with the sheriff’s department in this town but he is also in some ways a secret weapon.”

“Oh?” Lydia asked, sounding intrigued to hear what Stiles came up with in the last twenty minutes.

“Yeah, he was hurt, his family destroyed by humans who decided they were in the right. There are news stories about what Kate did and we could pull out the big guns with her assault on him when he was really young. I wouldn’t want him to be out there in front of hundreds of people because at some point, what happened to Paige could come out and I won’t let that happen to him.”

“Are we going to unwrap our history with the world?” Scott asked Lydia.

She shrugged, “I don’t know but whoever is put out there is going to lose any right to privacy they have at the moment, its why I wanted the target on my back, I have a cleaner reputation than most of you and my abilities are not as terrifying than that of a werewolf.”

“Yeah only because they don’t know jack-shit,” Stiles returned.

“Of course,” Lydia sniffed imperiously like she was talking to stupid people.

“So obviously this means tomorrow is cancelled.”

“No,” Lydia responded and took a deep breath. She reached out and took Jordan’s hand who smiled at her, still saying nothing. Was he going to say nothing their entire marriage? “We are still getting married but its not just about this anymore. Something we didn’t consider happened and Jordan has been gracious enough to stand by me through these harrowing events. Think and thin, through richer or poorer. All that stuff.”

Derek lifted his head and took a long breath in through his nose and nodded, like he knew something none of them did but that seemed to be the end of it. Lydia and Parrish nodded to everyone and turned to leave the room.

“Be here for the wedding, it’s a happy occasion so please do act accordingly,” Scott stated before he turned to follow but his mother stood and shouted his full name which stopped the young alpha in his tracks.

“I need to speak to you, now!” she said evenly then she looked over at Stiles and walked over to the far corner of the room and waited. Everyone watched as Scott slumped and walked over to join her, knowing he was about to get his ass handed to him by his mother in front of the pack. Stiles tried not to listen and for the most part Melissa and Scott were both talking at a level he couldn’t hear across the room though most of the werewolves were looking a little uncomfortable which seemed to be Melissa’s plan all along.

Stiles looked over at Derek for a second but the other alpha just shook his head.
“Mom!” Scott yelped but she just grabbed him by the shoulder.

“No Scott, I don’t care that you think right now. If you think that stabbing the friend that stood by you through everything is the right play, then I don’t know what kind of man you are and I will make sure that this ego thing you got going in is held in check. I may not be able to ground you anymore but I can make sure that these people who look up to you and follow you really know what you’re doing!”

Stiles’s eyebrows rose in surprise and he started to stand, this wasn’t what his plan was. Derek held him back. Scott and Melissa argued for a few more minutes then Scott looked over at Stiles, nodded then left. His betas followed, leaving Lydia and Parrish standing there above them all. Melissa walked back over to Stiles and pressed a hand to his shoulder gently then glanced over to the Sheriff and Argent. The three of them left.

“So no food here?” Isaac asked to break the tension, though it didn’t. Lydia shook her head and the others started to leave.

“See you all tomorrow,” Parrish said, speaking for the first time.

Derek surprisingly stood and walked over to Lydia and whispered something into her ear, the bride-to-be nodded and there was a shimmer of tears in her eyes. He squeezed her shoulder gently and Stiles stared slack jawed at the man.

“Let’s go, it’s going to be a long day tomorrow,” Derek said as he walked over to them and everyone dispersed and Stiles stood and gestured towards Lydia.

“What was that?”

“No here Stiles.”

He nodded and Stiles looked back and stared at Lydia for a second then nodded at Parrish. He didn’t know what to think about what Lydia had told all of them, he didn’t know that banshees could see that much farther into the future but then again, she had always been their wild card.

“Stiles?” Derek asked. The human turned and he joined Derek, taking the werewolf’s hand and they walked out to the jeep and headed home. Derek was quiet as they prepared for bed, the routine of sharing the bathroom down the hall had become simple and comforting. Stiles got done and climbed into his bed, and watched as Derek walked towards him and smiled.

“Are you going to tell me what you said to Lydia?”

Derek pulled back the sheet and stepped in, easily sliding into the warmth waiting for him next to Stiles’s body. “She’s going to tell people soon enough but the reason I am telling you is because you shouldn’t go and get it out of her yourself. Apparently we all have enough to worry about. I could smell the change in her body chemistry. I’ve smelled it before but its been a while. It took me a little longer to figure it out.”

Stiles sighed in annoyance, “Come on!”

“She’s pregnant.”

“Oh,” Stiles whispered and tucked his face into Derek’s neck. “Well I guess that explains why tomorrow is still a-go, maybe. I don’t think it matters. Apparently we have one more big bad that’s going to kill us all if we don’t figure out how to work together. That’s going to matter more than anything else.”
Derek leaned back but Stiles didn’t move this time to meet his boyfriend’s gaze. Derek moved his hand to the side of Stiles’s neck and nudged gently until he did move, “What’s going on in that brain of yours?”

Stiles shrugged, just thinking that this was always how they lost track of the terrible things that happened to them and to each other. They were always too busy moving on to the next thing to think of what they had lost by the end.

“Stiles, don’t start hiding out on me again.”

“I don’t want to just forgive and forget for the sake of the fucking fight. We should just take our people and leave this place.”

“You have every right to have your stuff be recognized but Scott and Lydia and Malia; they are your people too. If you want to leave, go back to Washington with the others then I will go with you but I don’t know if you would be able to live with yourself after that.”

Stiles shrugged, “Maybe I can’t live with myself after ignoring everything for the sake of Scott McCall. I didn’t give up everything for everyone; mostly it was for my best friend. And for what? To be abandoned?”

Derek pressed his lips to Stiles’s forehead in a kiss, “Sleep on it and don’t make any decisions until after the wedding. Okay?”

Stiles closed his eyes and nodded.

What was one more day in Beacon Hills?

Chapter End Notes

Holy shit, I don't know how I feel about this way bigger plot that just happened...... Tell me what you think...
Sleepless in Beacon Hills

Chapter Summary

The wedding is happening, but what's really going on in Beacon Hills? Stiles is determined to know.

Chapter Notes

Such a short chapter, I am getting the next one done. We are coming to an end.

Stiles stared at the ceiling, soaking up the warmth of having Derek pressed close to him. Seriously he was never going to get used to the trust that Derek placed in him for them to sleep together. In sleep the werewolf had shifted and now his head was tucked on Stiles’s shoulder and the human was getting the chance to hold the other man. He wasn’t really the big spoon but he kind of felt like he could protect Derek in his sleep.

He’d been the supported for most of this trip, it was nice even if Derek was asleep, to know that he could be the supportive boyfriend as well. He’d been the supportive guy with Malia, with school and the shift and her crazed lack of boundaries, sometimes he wondered if she should have just been allowed to go back to being a coyote. She was a weird human but then again Stiles didn’t have any stones to throw with that statement. He was weird too.

He sighed, thinking about Scott and Derek fighting and about Lydia’s declaration and wondered when the hell his life was going to make sense again. Probably never since he didn’t seem capable of walking away from the supernatural even if he wanted to. But he didn’t so there was that.

Opening his eyes to the things that go bump in the night the night that Scott was bitten couldn’t be undone and despite everything he didn’t want it to be, one of the reasons being the man he was curled around at the moment. Stiles shifted just enough to press a kiss to Derek’s head.

“You’re not sleeping,” Derek mumbled causing Stiles to jerk back in surprise.

“Asshole,” Stiles chuckled, “I didn’t know you were awake.”

Derek snuffled into Stiles chest, the motion so reminiscent of a dog that Stiles smiled softly as the werewolf spoke, “I can sense your discontent.”

“Mhm,” Stiles muttered and thought back to the loft and the feelings tethered to the back of his mind. They were feelings that hadn’t belonged to him, “What does it feel like? What is it like sensing what other people are feeling?”

Derek shrugged into Stiles’s body and gripped him tighter, “It’s hard to explain since I’ve been using my senses most of my life, like many other born werewolves I presented at a young age. Scent is a part of training as a wolf and using all your senses, but mostly it’s getting to know someone. I can read your heart better than a lot of people due to proximity and my feelings for you. The instinct is
strong to protect and care for you because of our relationship, which I can do better if I know you. Your scent has become something I can read pretty easily but others, it’s more of a feeling or a judgment call based on past experience same way you would with body language and tells from someone you know because even though certain scents are the same across the board, they react to each person’s body chemistry a little different so the idea that one person’s fear and anxiety smells the exact same as the next person is ridiculous.”

“And?” Stiles asked because he was a betting man and he knew there was more.

“Part of knowing someone’s emotions and reactions is completely physical like I said. It’s about sweat and heart rate and all those physiological responses to life but for some, like family or pack there is a magical aspect to it. Did you feel it earlier?”

Stiles nodded, tightening his arms slightly to draw Derek in even closer which the other man allowed easily, as if they both needed the physical proximity that he’d come to rely on in the past month and a half, “It was weird, I could feel them in the back of my mind. I’m human, I don’t understand if it was just a trick of my mind or wanting to not be alone. Though I don’t think having other people in my head is a good idea. I don’t know. It’s been a weird day and we didn’t even get a chance to really talk to them about anything.”

“And you do love to talk,” Derek snarked.

“Shut it Hale,” Stiles said all false affront.

Derek pressed a kiss to Stiles’s chest, “You didn’t imagine it. Just cause you’re human doesn’t make you less then, especially because all of them trust you which made the bonds stronger because you tie them all together. In you, not me despite my Alpha status. It doesn’t mean that we all move into a one bedroom apartment together and snuggle for the rest of our lives in a California King, or even into a big ass house like my family but it did mean something.”

“I wanted it to mean something, I want it all to mean something. The phone calls from the others, you coming back into my life. Is that stupidly sappy or what?” Stiles moved to run his fingers through Derek’s hair, scrubbing gently at his scalp thinking about the California king comment, all that room to play. “Thanks for letting me know I wasn’t crazy. And I know that this thing with Scott, Lydia and Malia shouldn’t be affecting like this but I can’t help it; it’s killing me.”

“It’s not nothing, they were your pack and you feel abandoned. You felt alone.”

“Yeah don’t think I didn’t notice the past tense. Very accurate past tense thanks to you,” Stiles whispered and released Derek so the alpha could sit up enough and scoot upwards enough to share a kiss. Derek leaned into the caress as Stiles’s hands gripped at the back of his neck to keep them close.

When Derek pulled back Stiles smiled. The werewolf pressed another awkward and sweet kiss into Stiles’s chin and sighed, “Are we going to sleep or you wanna go for a walk or something?”

He sighed, wishing he could sleep. Lydia and Parrish were getting married in about ten hours and he needed to at least try to look like this didn’t really matter to him but he couldn’t help but think of the other bomb she dropped.

“What do you think about what she told us?” Stiles finally asked and Derek rested his cheek on the human’s chest and just stayed still for a moment. Stiles moved his fingers up and down Derek’s back gently, finding the marks of his tattoo and rubbing his fingertips into the black symbol thinking about the pain it would have caused him to get that mark.
Then the werewolf spoke, “I think that the supernatural have been hidden for a long time, they aren’t supposed to be out and proud. I don’t know what she saw, if anything but I don’t agree with how she went about things. She could have eloped if she was worried about the pregnancy not that I think she really does. Nothing she did or said really made any sense.”

Stiles shrugged, “I wondered why Beacon Hills just pretended it was normal all those years, but if hunters have such a tendency towards kill first and ask questions later and most humans are so scared by something unexplainable I can see why you guys would want to stay in the dark.”

Derek shrugged, “Its makes more sense to keep us in the dark from the hunter perspective because if we were known then there would be regulations about how and when to kill my kind, they would lose their ‘right’ to kill us all whenever they wanted to.”

Stiles nodded, that made more sense than anything Lydia had planned. “Do you think she saw something specific and because we don’t know what she saw then we can’t understand the scheme she’s brewing?”

“I don’t think she told anyone, this was supposed to be some magical day for her and everyone but bringing everyone here and calling her story into question seems to have forced her hand but even then she acts as though this is a foregone conclusion and that I don’t understand either.”

Stiles fell silent and Derek resettled but didn’t go back to sleep, instead his hand wandered in soothing patterns along Stiles’s neck and shoulder. He sighed into the caress and let it settle him. A little at a time his body relaxed under the onslaught enough for his mind to wander to the puzzle laid out before him.

Lydia was sure the supernatural was going to be outed.

Lydia was getting married in what was going to be one of the biggest Beacon Hills events. This was bringing people from all over town as well as some people from Parrish’s family, which Stiles only knew because he’d heard some random conversation someone was having about the invitations or the place cards or something, while he was on one of his many treks back and forth to the station. Parrish and one of the other deputies laughing about the metrics and seriousness of seating charts and so on as Stiles walked by. There was going to be a lot of Beacon Hills residents of the supernatural variety in the crowd, all of which had plenty of control.

So it couldn’t be any of them.

Stiles really wanted to ask her, or even Scott about what they knew because it was clear that this wasn’t new information to Lydia. Scott and the others may have only known for a couple hours but they were ahead of Stiles in that way and he couldn’t handle it. He was desperate for information and sleep was not going to happen but even with his ADD knocking at the back of his skull he didn’t want to get up. He wanted to sleep.

“Come on,” Derek said with a heavy sigh as he got up and off the bed.

Stiles pouted, “No, Derek that’s not what I want. We should sleep.”

“You’re not going to sleep until you have an answer. So let’s go find one.”

He nodded after a minute then they both dressed quietly and walked downstairs, Derek stopped at the base of the stairs and pointed towards the kitchen to show Stiles’s dad sitting there with Chris Argent and Melissa McCall and they were all staring at each other like kids caught with their hands in the cookie jar.
“Hey Dad, whatcha doin?” Stiles finally blurted out, leaving any sort of casualness in the dust.

“Son, Derek. We were trying to figure out what the hell is going on in this town.”

Stiles touched Derek’s shoulder, “Did you know they were here?”

“Of course,” Derek said with a raise of his imperious eyebrow, “I wanted you to sleep. There was no way I was going to tell you they were down here unless there was absolutely no way you were going to sleep. You’re going to hate looking like death warmed over but I know you well enough to know that this is going to keep you awake and feeling useless if we just lay there.”

Stiles smiled and nodded, “You get me Sourwolf,” he said with a fake sniffle and pressing a dramatic hand to his chest.

Derek’s only response was a role of his eyes and walked over to the counter and turned to the adults, “Do you guys know anything?”

Stiles followed him quickly and threw himself into the remaining available chair while Derek leaned against the counter, looking much more the gruff wolf he’d known in the beginning. It was hot.

“Stiles, focus,” Derek whispered with a chuckle before Stiles even realized that he’d started imagining all the things he could do with a focused, intense Derek.

“Okay, so? Anything?”

Argent cleared his throat, “There are reasons that the supernatural is kept under wraps, as we all know panic is a likely response and fear is going to happen. Most of us were introduced to the supernatural in some horrific ways, whether in youth or adulthood.”

Stiles shrugged, “Not all of us.”

Argent nodded, “You were always a conundrum Stiles, I actually think in most ways your introduction to the supernatural is exactly what would have to be replicated on a grand scale but never could be. You were introduced because your best friend was attacked and you knew enough to go looking for answers. You found the supernatural and had proof in Scott. Most people don’t want them. Then you experienced some pretty shitty circumstances with hunters, so you had a lot of evidential reasoning to keep an open mind about werewolves for the sake of your friend—you know for a hormonal stupid genius of a teenager.”

“Hey!” Stiles retorted, hoping the hunter was coming to a point in the near future.

“What I mean is that you saw humans and werewolves the same, there are good and there are bad ones which means that wholesale killing isn’t the right response. But most people just choose ignorance and fear. They all see humans and monsters. Like me before Allison showed me a new way and at the cost of my sister and wife.”

“I did,” the Sheriff responded and Stiles looked over at him, remembering that moment when he said ‘Mom would have believed me’ and watching his dad flinch but at the same time needing the man so desperately to get it and to be there for him. But he couldn’t, at the time.

At least he was there now.

“So we can’t force the supernatural to come out on a large scale in a positive light or even a neutral light, shouldn’t we try to keep it from happening all together?” Stiles asked.
“That’s the thing,” the Sherriff gestured wildly, “Lydia says that this is a definite future event but we don’t know anything about what she saw.”

Stiles considered that for a moment and thought again about the wedding and the guest list. He didn’t want to consider what he was thinking, imagine that she was capable of this but its possible that if she saw something Lydia would do anything to keep it from coming true.

“What if she’s going to shove the supernatural into the open somehow? At the wedding.”

“Why would she do that?” Derek practically growled.

Stiles shrugged, “Maybe because of what she saw but she hasn’t shared any information with us and who knows what she told Scott and Malia and the others. All we know is that she is having a big ass wedding, one that she is determined to have even though an elopement would have worked just as well if it were about some baby. This isn’t about some illegitimate Martin/Parrish offspring; it’s about what she saw.”

“So she’s going to have Scott shift, or what?” his dad asked.

Stiles shrugged, “No clue, this is just my theory.”

“You’re theories are damn good most of the time,” Derek said, and Stiles turned with a smile on his face but it fell when he noticed that Derek was leaning there, his head in his hands.

“Derek? You okay?” Stiles asked, rubbing a hand over his shoulders and bringing the other adults’ attention to both of them. Stiles winced, thinking belatedly that Derek didn’t really like to be seen as weak or vulnerable and he had brought attention to it in his concern. “Let’s go into the living room.”

Derek shook his head and looked around, “Nothing good comes from the supernatural emergence into the light, as Argent undoubtedly knows. What he doesn’t know is that there are people out there, like Deaton and other Druids and Emissaries that are in charge of keeping the supernatural under wraps. They don’t necessarily take the nice and kind way of doing things.”

Stiles stared at him, “Where the hell have these people been for the last couple years then? Where were they when Peter was out and proud? Or when the Beast was running around, any of it!”

Derek shrugged, “Maybe Beacon Hills isn’t on their radar so much anymore because of my mother’s death. I just know that if Lydia actually does something really radical they might not be so forgiving, maybe it will bring them here. As far as I remember from my training is that the only way to keep that sort of thing from being initiated is a worldwide event and Lydia’s impending nuptials might be exciting by Beacon Hills standards but she can’t have thought about that. And you never knew any of this because Scott and his pack has never really been a bigger picture kind of guy.”

“Yeah, that’s mostly true,” Stiles responded, not proud of his own reticence about learning about the supernatural from someone who grew up in the world. He’d been too busy blaming Derek and siding with Scott in the beginning.

“So much of the information that I had was about ten years old, and after our family was killed the only thing that was on Laura’s mind was getting me out of here alive. We ran and we didn’t ever stop somewhere long enough for certain things to happen, a new alpha is supposed to be tested. The secret remains a secret. These were a few of the things that a support system were out there to help nascent packs, new alphas and everyone but now it seems like it doesn’t matter but maybe we should consider that it does. Do we really want to take the chance the someone comes here to make it stop, while we are dealing with whatever reaction people are going to have in the face of our unveiling?”
Stiles nodded and wondered again what the hell Lydia saw and what her plan was. “I’m going to ask someone to give me some answers,” he said as he stood up and looked at his dad then to Derek.

“I’m going with you, I don’t like any of this at all,” the werewolf stated and Stiles didn’t argue though he didn’t know if anyone would answer his questions if Derek was with him. Stiles also knew there was no point in attempting to change his mind.

“Keep us informed?” his dad asked and Stiles nodded while he ran back up to his room to get his phone which he hadn’t grabbed from the bedside table and opened a new text. He put in the names of those people he wanted to talk to easily and started typing.

**Group Message: Scott, Malia, Lydia, Liam, and Mason**

*Me: I need to meet and talk about what the hell is happening or going to happen in this town. Meet me at the loft in fifteen minutes.*

...  
...
...  

*Scott: I will see you there, the others don’t need to be there.*

*Me: Do you know what she saw, what she is planning?*

...  
...
...  

*Me: That’s what I thought. I will see you guys there.*

Stiles rushed back downstairs and shove his feet into his shoes and gave a sloppy salute to his dad and the others as they sat there, saying nothing. He didn’t think they were telling him everything but that’s not new or a problem for now.

Only one problem for the moment.

“Come on Sourwolf, we have a meet and greet with my wayward pack.”

They got back in the Jeep and drove over to the loft, the trip took about ten minutes and he turned to Derek, who just raised a brow in question. “How many are up there now?”

Derek gave him an incredulous look; “I can’t hear them from here Stiles. I’m not that good.”

“I meant do you know which ones were planning on staying at your place,” Stiles said with a roll of his eyes.

Derek snorted, “Oh. I think that Isaac and Cora are both here. As far as I know, Jackson and the others were going to stay with friends or something.”

“Then we aren’t going to be alone up there and I need to do something,” Stiles said as he leaned over
and pressed his lips to Derek’s mouth. The werewolf’s mouth under his gentle pressure and it went on for a while then other cars started arriving so they separated with one final kiss then got out of the car.

“What’s this about?” Scott asked, crossing his arms angrily.

Stiles saw Scott, Liam, Mason and Theo but no Lydia. He rolled his eyes, “Where is she?”

“Lydia is sleeping, she needs to be ready for the wedding tomorrow. What do you want Stiles?”

“I need to know what she saw, I need to know that she isn’t going to use the wedding to make everyone see the supernatural as some weird desire to change a vision we know nothing about.”

Scott walked over to him and sighed, “She saw bodies, she saw every single one of us dead all because the hunters found a way to bring the supernatural into the light in the most destructive way possible. She’s trying to prevent that, beyond that I know very little. She said that it would all become clear after the wedding. She’s better at this now, she’s seen things that have come true, things that hadn’t happened yet. She did everything she could from the first vision to do what she had to so she could change things. Everyone knows that Parrish has been tapped for the next Sheriff, she is going to be a respected member of the supernatural to head the charge and we are going to trust her. We are going to follow.”

“You’re supposed to lead them Scott, not let her do it for you.”

“She’s seen the future, that trumps alpha any day.”

“No it doesn’t.” Derek responded gently and Stiles looked over at his boyfriend even as Scott snorted in reply.

“What do you know?”

“More than you on my slowest day, but I am not here to start a fight.” Derek held up his hand and Scott shut his mouth surprisingly, “I am here to tell you that Lydia is not the only banshee to see the future, she is not the only thing that can. Most big packs end up with someone with some sort of precognition but that does not remove the alpha from power, it doesn’t remove the demand that his or her decisions are made on the backs of others. You are playing with a lot of lives here, trusting someone’s vision when you have only her word about what she saw. I believe that Lydia saw something but you have no idea right now if her plan brings it about or doesn’t.”

“I trust her.”

“I don’t!” Stiles stated, angrily running his fingers through his hair and gripping painfully at the strands. “This isn’t just about you or your pack here in Beacon Hills, you have no idea what she is planning and all of us could end up dead either way. It’s better if we could just plan something down the line if necessary but this—whatever she has planned, isn’t going to work the way she wants it to.”

“How would you know that?” Liam asked, his voice breaking a little making him sound as young as he really was.

“Because you didn’t reach out to anyone else, she didn’t even tell you guys until her secret got splatted all over the side of the wall. This isn’t who we are! We were a team who trusted each other and she has never kept her visions to herself before, why would she start now?”

“Because she didn’t know what we would do, she figured this out so we wouldn’t have to.”
“That’s quitter talk,” Stiles snapped, “You have to think about this. You can’t just let her take the lead, in some ways she can be hidden in the normals but you guys… she is making a decision all on her own for your ‘benefit’ and I don’t think anyone has thought enough about this for a wedding coming out party isn’t really a good plan.”

Scott shrugged and Stiles waited, staying silent which was a skill he’d learned since he went off to college. Someone can get a lot of answers from the guilty, unsure people if they can just stay silent. He just watched Scott as the werewolf started to fidget and he knew that Derek was standing still at his shoulder, adding to the overall feel of determined stillness.

“Okay fine!” Scott burst out, “So what do you suggest genius?”

Stiles grinned, “We figure out her plan and stop it.”

**Group Message: Me, Red Banshee, Coyote**

*Me:* Stiles doesn’t think the plan is a good one. He’s determined to stop you.

*Coyote:* Maybe we should consider that Stiles doesn’t really have bad plans, maybe he has a point.

*Me:* He hasn’t been here, he doesn’t understand that we’re all going to die. Lyds didn’t see him in the vision. His life isn’t on the line.

*Coyote:* You don’t know that, Lydia, I always said we needed to know more. I swear I am going to go back to being a coyote.

*Me:* Lydia, he knows that you’re going to do something at the wedding. What are we going to do?

*Red Banshee:* It’s too late to stop anything, it’s happening whether he wants it to or not.
Introducing, For the First Time

Chapter Summary

The plan to out the supernatural comes to a head but Stiles and Derek are going to do whatever is necessary to keep it from happening, to keep their friends out of danger.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The wedding was elegant and over the top, Lydia and Parrish sharing vows to each other. Stiles watched from his seat in the third row, Derek on one side of him and his dad on the other. Parrish was handsome in a tuxedo and Lydia looked like a goddess in her strapless empress style dress, sleek and understated but overwhelming on her visage. She was made up and her hair in a graceful up do with loose strands around her face to soften the look. With her pale skin and red-blonde hair she looked more like an ethereal being then the Harbinger of Death they knew her to be.

Nothing happened during the fifteen-minute ceremony, but then Stiles wasn’t really expecting it to happen then. They slept after they met with Scott and he was under no illusions about his ‘best friends’ allegiance being to Lydia. He wasn’t surprised with Derek informed him that he was texting before he’d even left the loft parking lot. He was just hoping that when the time came, Scott wouldn’t have to pick between Stiles and Lydia.

Derek had been on high alert all morning and they were about to finish and head into the hall for the reception to start. Apparently pictures were done before the ceremony, since Lydia’s afternoon was going to be about the unveiling and not about her ‘blessed union’.

Then they were standing and clapping while Lydia and Parrish kissed then headed back up the aisle. Stiles clapped as the rest of the wedding party followed, which including several deputies and some family member, Lydia’s bridesmaids were Malia and Kira, along with her mother standing in for Allison (complete with a small memoriam for the fallen Argent daughter). It was a sweet touch, too bad Allison would have been ashamed of them all for what they were about to do. There were Argent hunters all around the room, coming in as guests but as under the radar as they could with lumps under their suit jackets. Argent and Melissa was sitting next to Scott, holding hands and wearing matching pinched smiles. Stiles looked at each of his friends; Jackson, Danny and Ethan were as far from the front as they could be while still being in the room. Cora was sitting on Derek’s other side and Isaac was sitting on her other side. Scott was sitting with his baby betas and trying to get them to sit still—like toddlers in church. It would be laughable if they weren’t here to stop some idiotic plan from the bride to out the werewolves and supernatural.

When the whole wedding party was inside, everyone else started walking out of the rows of chairs and towards the doors that would lead into the banquet hall where they would spend the next couple hours eating and toasting the couple. Stiles couldn’t help but notice the people arriving for the reception that weren’t there for the wedding, including some more photographers; because the three already there weren’t enough?

No, the real show was about to begin.

“Everyone take your seats and the new couple will rejoin us in a few minutes, there are refreshments
The Master of Ceremonies was some hipster, with a computer and a microphone and he wasn’t someone in the know as far as Stiles could tell. Stiles and Derek found their seats next to each other, with a bunch of names that he didn’t know. He looked around the large room and realized that Lydia had somehow separated him from the rest of his friends, Scott and the others were close to the front where Lydia and Parrish were going to be sitting up on a stage. Even the chairs they were sitting in were made to look like thrones, “Gimme a break,” Stiles muttered.

“What?” Derek asked him.

Stiles shook his head, this wasn’t the time so he slumped into the chair and grabbed up the drink in front of him and slugged back whatever it was. Sadly it wasn’t alcoholic but that wasn’t surprising with the barely graduated bride. Though it looked like the deputies had access to a beer in the corner of the room. He really didn’t have any stones he could throw after looking at his very adult boyfriend but at least they hadn’t done anything while Stiles was still in high school, nothing was ever going to happen back then and honestly not much had happened now. Still, he wasn’t asking and getting wholesale acceptance from an entire town about an eighteen year old, pregnant and marrying someone in their late twenties. Probably getting all the congrats because it was Lydia and Parrish.

Derek was sitting next to him, one hand reaching out to rub soothing circles into Stiles’s shoulder while holding his drink and sipping it. It was fruity, maybe with a hint of something forbidden but Stiles didn’t care. He slammed back the rest of his and held it out to the nearest waiter who just handed him another with a smarmy smile. Stiles glared him off and started drinking again.

“I’m pretty sure you can’t get drunk off of this,” Derek smirked.

“Something to do. I can’t figure out what’s happening here. We’re running out of time.”

Derek tightened his hand on Stiles’s shoulder then rubbed his ear and the human nodded. He was listening to something so Stiles just went back to drinking, suddenly feeling more thirsty than when he started drinking it. He snapped back the rest again and eagerly took another glass from a waiter. Derek was still on his first drink and he was staring at the cup and looking around the room. Stiles looked up as well, wondering what Derek was seeing.

“What’s up?” he asked and smacked his lips together wondering why everything suddenly felt numb. His head listed to the side a little and he reached out to grab Derek but missed. “Maybe there was more alcohol in there than we thought,” he muttered.

“No Stiles, I don’t think so,” Derek said as he rose slowly from his seat and Stiles noticed that the waiters were quickly moving through the tables, taking away empty glasses and giving over more. Stiles tried to focus on the scene around him; everyone was drinking the fruity concoction like they were dying of thirst. He looked down at the cup that he was holding, it was empty and he didn’t even remember drinking the rest.

“Wa’s ‘appening Der?” he mumbled, then opened his mouth to see if there was cotton shoved inside only to find his tongue, then start chuckling because he was holding his tongue.

He looked over at Derek who was holding tightly to the chair he vacated, wavering in Stiles’s vision. The human reached out to see if he could help keep his boyfriend standing but just ended up petting his abs, giggling in a way he’d never even known he could do.

“Stiles I think the drinks were drugged, whatever the plan is—this is how it starts.”
“Ya think,” Stiles responded waspishly then giggled again.

Derek slapped Stiles’s hands away from his stomach and held his wrist tightly making him flinch a little at the ache it caused, “Stiles I need you to focus. We have to figure out what the plan is here.”

Stiles leaned forward and used his other hand to feel the side of Derek’s face, mumbling about his stubble. Derek pulled his hands away again and kept looking around. Stiles leaned into Derek’s chest then heard the scream. His head snapped up and he looked around, just in time to see Parrish turn into a flaming man and grab Lydia by the arms. She screamed, not a banshee scream, but a pained blood-curdling life ending kind of scream and Stiles jerked away from Derek.

“Lydia! Parrish, stop it!”

“Stiles, they aren’t there!” Derek snapped and he turned back to see Derek was shifted to his beta form. He jumped back to his boyfriend and covered his mouth and eyes.

“Turn back! What are you doing? Turn back!”

“Stiles,” Derek mumbled and jerked his hands away. “It’s not really happening, whatever you’re seeing. There was something in the drinks and I think everyone is hallucinating now.”

He felt his legs wobble a little and stiffened them against landing on his ass on the floor and Derek held him up. Derek said something about hallucinating, “Wolfsbane. She used wolfsbane?” Stiles slurred.

“Yeah,” Derek said but he sounded faraway.

“Oh God, Derek, they won’t have any control,” Stiles whispered. Or at least he thought he was whispering until Derek shushed him. He thought back on what he said and thankfully he hadn’t said anything to telling. “Where are Lydia and the others?”

Derek pressed his mouth to Stiles’s ear and the human moaned from his closeness, “Focus Stiles. Scott and the others are struggling with visions; Kira is with them trying to keep them behaved. I don’t see Jackson, Ethan and Danny. Or Cora. Isaac is sitting in a corner meditating. Good one Isaac.” Stiles mumbled happily because Derek was a good alpha, he was letting his pack mate know that he was doing what he needed to do. “Everyone drank at least one glass of the refreshments, the photographers are confused but still taking pictures of the revelry and Lydia is hiding in one of the other rooms with Parrish. I don’t understand what she’s doing here.”

“Catch someone’s shift,” Stiles slurred.

“But how does that show anyone that the supernatural can be a good thing. I have to get them out of here before the hallucinations get to far and they do something that we can’t undo. I have to put you down Stiles, you need to sit still and try not to respond to whatever you see.”

Stiles shook his head, “Derek you’re keeping me grounded. If you leave, I don’t know what I am going to see. Please don’t leave me here.”

“I have to make sure they get out of here Stiles, I will be back as soon as I can.”

Stiles nodded and Derek moved them somewhere but with his eyes closed he wasn’t able to steer or wonder what they were doing. Then his back was against a wall and Derek was pressing a gentle kiss into the edge of his lips before leading him down into a sitting position. There was a warm presence next to him and Stiles flopped his head back enough to see that it was Isaac. Stiles smiled and let his head flop down on the beta’s shoulder, “Good boyfriend.”
Derek huffed, pressed a hand to the top of his head then he was gone. Isaac growl-grumbled and wrapped an arm around Stiles’s shoulder and pulled him flesh against his side and Stiles let his head drift.

“It would have been better if you died and I survived,” she said as she came closer. “We could have just had another kid and maybe he wouldn’t have been this ridiculous spaz that was always getting in trouble.”

“No, that’s not true,” Stiles mumbled into someone’s shoulder.

“You are never going to be enough for any of them,” another voice joined the words of his mother. This one was Lydia. She was in her wedding dress but it was tattered and burned, like she’d gone to war and she was the only survivor. “You are just one more weak human being and there is nothing I could have ever wanted from you.”

“Nothing you could bring to any pack except sarcasm and another person to save in the midst of battle that you shouldn’t have been caught up in.”

“No, Scott, don’t say that. Please!” he muttered.

“Stiles, let them go, it’s all in your head. Breathe in and out with me.” Isaac’s voice was a soothing rhythm cutting through the fear and the visions. “Breathe in, two three. Breath out, two three. Again.”

He listened to the voice outside of himself, hoping against hope that the one that could cause the most damage didn’t come back.

“What about me kid, you come back to town, make demands on all of us like you’re the shit. Instead you are still that spazzing kid that I just don’t know what to do with anymore.”

It was easier to remember that it wasn’t really with his father, maybe because he’d seen this before. There was nothing new about this fear and honestly it was dead and buried, maybe twitching in the grave but all the same. This was just the wolfsbane trying to heave it out of the ground.

Then he heard it, the laughter he remembered from his dreams and from his memories, his head snapping up and catching on himself. No, it was the other him.

It was Void.

“Yes Stiles, I didn’t think that you could forget me because I never left.” VoidStiles was moving towards him with single-minded intent and Stiles pushed up and away from the firm arm holding him close.

“Stiles, ignore it!” he heard shouted from somewhere.

“You can’t be here, we destroyed you.”

“Oh I can, and do you know why?”

Stiles shook his head, trying to clear his vision then opened them again only to find Void right in front of him reaching out and snapping his fingers tightly around Stiles’s neck in a bone-snapping grip.

His eyes flashed, that cold blue that Peter, Derek and Jackson all had.
The Bite didn’t destroy the Void; it just made him more powerful.

He heard the screaming but didn’t realize it was him until his throat was raw.

Derek slammed through the doors; shoving several security guys out of the way and shouldered open another door. Lydia turned towards him and put her hands up like she was going to scream but he moved quickly enough to grip her around the throat, “WOLFSBANE!”

“I did what had to be done, so they would see what they are all capable of. It’s the only way for me to come in and show them something different.”

“What?” Derek sneered. Parrish rushed over, his eyes changing into those flaming irises but Derek just shook his head and tightened his fingers as he allowed the change to roll over him for a second. Parrish stopped, holding his hands up in surrender.

“What was the point of all this Lydia?” Derek snapped.

“So I could show the world that they are animals but they can be tamed. I knew there was no way to keep this clean so I figured I would have to clean it up. I planned for this.”

“You planned to out them as animals, you poisoned them so they would lose control so you could save the day?”

She nodded. Derek pushed her back into Parrish’s arms and pointed at both of them, “Stay in here, call off the press. I am getting my people out of here and this is the end, right here Lydia. You lost so much today that you don’t even know about yet. They won’t trust you anymore, not like they did. That’s gone!” The last was snarled as he spun away from her before he gave into the internal debate demanding why he couldn’t slice open her throat for the stupid arrogance she portrayed here.

Derek turned back to the main room and looked around. Everyone was screaming, at each other or no one. He touched on all the wolves and hunters in the room. The hunters were staring at the wolves, looking trigger-happy while Argent and Stilinski attempted to get people to calm down even while they seemed to be shaking off the effects. His eyes caught on Isaac, sitting with his arm slung over Stiles who was muttering but at least he was safe. He turned back to Liam and the others, figuring that they were going to be the most trouble.

Surprisingly it was Cora’s roar he heard, turning to find her near the doors screaming with golden eyes. He rushed over to her quickly and grabbed her, turning her body into his chest hissing when her claws caught in his suit shirt and skin. “Cora, come on girl. I know whatever you’re seeing is freaking you but you have got to control yourself.”

“No, let me go!” she screeched, sounding more guttural than human.

He pulled her in tighter and started walking towards the doors and shoved her through. She snapped around quickly and glared at him, her teeth elongating and the hair growing on her face. Derek cursed and rushed her, taking her down and hoping no humans were coming in for the reception late, they tumbled together and he dragged her farther away from the doors of the building and closer to the jeep. Hopefully it would be enough to calm her, to contain her for a few minutes so he could get back in there before anyone else shifted or Lydia decided to play bitch goddess to the rescue.

“Derek,” he heard from behind him and saw Jackson, Ethan and Danny. They seemed to be unaffected, staring at them in surprise. Derek heaved a sigh and shoved her towards them. Jackson easily grabbed her and used some sort of grip on her neck to knock her out.
“We need to get the rest of them out of here,” Derek said as he picked up his sister and moved her quickly to sleep off the effects in the back of the Jeep. He turned quickly, “How are you guys unaffected?”

Jackson shrugged, “I think its my kanima thing, I am not deeply affected by wolfsbane.”

“I don’t drink anything I didn’t make myself,” Ethan responded cryptically like someone who’s been poisoned a time or two.

Danny didn’t say anything at all but it didn’t matter. They were unaffected which meant that they could get people out that much faster. “Okay guys, then we do this as quickly as possible. We need to keep the hunters that are on the fence about killing away from the most affected, get them out so Lydia can’t exact her endgame which I will tell everyone about later when our people are out of danger.”

They all nodded and walked back inside to the cacophony of screaming and shouting. Derek’s heart stopped when he realized one of those people were Stiles, he rushed in forgetting about patience only to find Stiles standing away from Isaac, who’s eyes were glowing though he was trying to be inconspicuous about it while he watched Stiles but nothing could have prepared him for Scott with his hands around his best friend’s throat with the Sheriff and Melissa trying to drag him off. His eyes were glowing; his claws were out and ready to rip Stiles apart though thankfully Lydia did something right and called off her videographers and photographers. They weren’t holding their equipment anymore and it seemed that a couple of them got into the Kool-Aid to boot. Derek turned to Jackson and the others “Get them out. We do what we have to so we can protect each other.”

They nodded and took off, Derek headed straight for Scott and Stiles. He pushed right into the center of the scuffle, looking at the Sheriff and Melissa and flashed his eyes. The Sheriff just sneered at him a little, and Derek couldn’t blame him. Melissa looked like she couldn’t figure out if she was going to scream or cry, maybe both. He decided to focus on the problem at hand. He shoved his face into Scott’s and roared. He flashed his eyes and something in Scott flickered for a second then his fingers tightened and blood welled under the pressure and part of Derek whimpered at his love being harmed and he couldn’t just rip out Scott’s still beating heart. Stiles would never forgive him for that.

Then to make everything worse, Stiles spoke past the pain and the fingers choking off his ability to breath, “Just do it, I can’t stop you. Maybe they are all better off without me anyway. What you made me do was unforgivable.”

“Oh God, Stiles,” Derek whispered because he knew better than anyone who Stiles may be seeing then flicked his claws out and jammed them into Scott’s side. He felt the slick of skin giving way to muscle underneath and Scott screamed, a completely human scream of pain and he released Stiles. The Sheriff and Melissa moved to grab him before he hit anything around him on the way down while Derek left his fingers inside Scott and dragged him away feeling as the wound attempted to heal but couldn’t.

“Get a hold of yourself now! Or lose everything that ever meant anything to you.”

Scott shook his head but said nothing, he still had that glassy look of the drugged in his eyes so Derek just held him close, tucked the other alpha’s face into his chest and away from his neck and propelled him outside and away from the other people. He didn’t let Scott go until the bloody mess of him was on the other side of the parking lot then he dumped him on the ground.

That seemed to finally crack through a bit more of the wolfsbane crazy and he curled around the wound in his stomach before looking up at Derek in surprise, “What’s happening? Are you trying to kill me after all?”
Derek rolled his eyes, “I don’t have time for this, I still have to make sure Stiles isn’t hurt to badly and that the others are safe. This is because you and Lydia obviously didn’t listen to anything we had to say last night, not that it mattered because she drugged you just the same as she drugged everyone else. All to appear the hero, the master of the monsters.”

Scott just covered his wound with his suit jacket and stayed there, looking sullen and confused. An interesting facial expression even for Scott McCall but he ignored it as he turned and rushed back inside. Looking around the mayhem of the hall, he figured Lydia and Parrish were going to be paying a pretty hefty fine for the damages and he wasn’t going to help at all this time. He looked around the room and didn’t see anymore werewolves, the hunters were keeping the human masses calm enough, while Isaac was still on the other side of the room looking completely human but he was crouching over Stiles who was on the floor, facing down Sheriff Stilinski and Mama McCall. Derek rushed over, “What happened?”

The Sheriff shrugged, “Isaac got a little territorial about Stiles. He’s not trying to hurt anyone and he hasn’t shifted but he won’t listen and Stiles—I need to get him out of here. Now.”

Derek walked over and pressed a hand into Isaac’s shoulder and the beta immediately settled. The alpha leaned in close, “Thank you for protecting him. You did good Isaac.”

Isaac nodded and he stumbled down to his knees like the guarding of Stiles or something had just taken everything out of him. Melissa immediately moved to grab Isaac while the sheriff moved closer to Stiles who was still sitting against the wall. Derek moved to his other side and whispered, “Stiles, can you hear me?”

The human looked towards his voice but nothing else registered, he was still in the wolfsbane haze, he probably got a lot more than everyone else the way he was guzzling it earlier though he didn’t know for sure. People around the room were calming down, most of them were vomiting up the remains of the wolfsbane-laced drink but Stiles still just sat there.

“I don’t wanna die,” Stiles whispered, like he was continuing some conversation.

“You’re not going to die, I wouldn’t let that happen,” Derek responded and pressed a hand into the side of Stiles’s neck. “I need you to come back to me here. Whatever you’re seeing, it isn’t real. He’s dead because we wouldn’t let him end you.”

“He could never love me, no one ever could after what you did to me. Why didn’t you just kill me.”

“Stiles!” Derek shouted because the nogitsune in Stiles’s head was really hammering on all of his biggest fears.

“Derek, we should go.” The Sheriff insisted again and he nodded. Leaning down he lifted Stiles from the floor and they all walked outside, just as Lydia and Parrish came out of the room they were hiding in. She locked eyes on him for a second before she looked away and whispered, “I fucked up. I just did what she told me.”

Derek didn’t have time to care what that was about. He made sure that the rest of the pack were heading away from the location before he tucked Stiles into the passenger seat and got behind the wheel. Stilinski and Mrs. McCall got into one of Argent’s darkened SUV’s so he drove out of the lot.

At the first stoplight Derek grabbed Stiles’s phone and sent a message demanding that everyone come to the Stilinski’s house for a debrief. So they could figure out what the next step was. He tossed the phone back down, not waiting for an answer as he accelerated forward on green. Stiles
was still muttering to someone who wasn’t there though the change in venue seemed to knock it down in intensity a little bit. All Derek wanted to do was keep driving, get Stiles back to the campus apartment in Washington and away from this insanity. Beacon Hills was a hellish place and everything that mattered to him shouldn’t have ever come back here or stayed here.

And all because Lydia thought she could be the hero that would control the supernatural. He didn’t understand how someone as intelligent as she seemed to be could be so stupid. He didn’t think on it too long because he was parking in the lot in front of the Stilinski house. He got out and spared a glance for Cora who was still sleeping in the backseat but she was going to be fine. He focused instead on getting Stiles inside and settled on the couch where he curled up against the arm. Derek sat down next to him and reached around the back of Stiles’s neck and felt up and down, counting the edge of his vertebrae until he found the right spot and flicked his claws straight into his neck and there was a snick and he couldn’t help but think he’d done it wrong for two seconds then the connection slotted into place and there was nothing but Stiles.

If Derek thought that being around him, connected to him through a nascent bond was anything, it wasn’t compared to the overwhelming presence of Stiles. The human wasn’t just human, that was the only explanation for how big he was in Derek’s mind. It was like he spiraled out and multiplied. His heartbeat was in Derek’s chest, he could feel the slight irregularity that he’d never noticed before because Stiles was always talking, always moving. His mind was a moving target, no it was more like hundreds of moving targets and each of them filled with a curiosity for life, the thing that made Stiles ‘Stiles’. It was ineffable.

And his soul, not that Derek would ever share these musings with anyone, maybe if his mother was still alive—but his soul was the brightest sun at the center of a universe. Derek’s universe immediately tilted on its axis because this wasn’t just some smart ass human who got caught up in his best friend’s crazy werewolf life, this was something a lot more like a Beacon, like the Nemeton. It suddenly made sense; everything made sense because Stiles was at the center of it all and he drew people in, not because he was an alpha or a powerful druid. He drew them in because there was no other choice. It was the gravitational pull that echoed in the back of the minds of pack times a thousand.

It only took a few seconds for all that intensity to start to fade under the onslaught of the voices here. He could hear Scott, Melissa, the Sheriff, even Derek saying horrifying things to Stiles but the one Stiles was listening to was his.

Void.

“You think anyone could ever pick you?” Void was saying.

“I do,” Derek said and both of the Stiles’ turned to him and he knew suddenly which was which even if he hadn’t heard VoidStiles speaking. Stiles was light and full of color and life even though he looked like he’d been emotionally battered for the better part of the day instead of the last half hour. Void was pale and gaunt but there was something in his eyes, a wild desire to destroy what stood before him. It was the same as VoidStiles a couple years ago.

Void laughed, “You’re just as pathetic as he is. Of course you would pick each other.”

Derek ignored the creature because what it said didn’t have the power to touch Derek anymore. That’s what therapy was for and Stiles needed him more. He walked over to Stiles, stepping up close to him and pressed a gentle kiss to the human’s lips before the human even had time to figure out that he was really there. He listened to the gentle whimper that emitted between Stiles’s lips and fed straight into Derek’s mouth. He didn’t let the voices in, he didn’t let any of it touch this moment with Stiles, the real one underneath all the pain and agony of past trauma. It was amazing that all the
things done to him had not tainted the soul of this person; Derek thanked his mother for that because she was the only being of power that he trusted out there in the universe.

He pulled back, pressed one last kiss to Stiles’s mouth and whispered, “Don’t listen to these voices Stiles, I chose you because you are what I want.”

“Me?”

“You. Stiles Stilinski. I want you as my friend, my partner, and my lover. All of it. As long as you want me. But you have to let all this go and come out, okay? It’s the only way we can have all there is to have in life.”

Stiles closed his eyes and took a deep breath, then leaned in and sniffed at the werewolf’s neck. He nodded and Derek pulled away from the dream world he was in, reaching around Stiles to grab some tissues for his neck just as the human opened his eyes and smiled a little before leaning over the side and vomiting all over the floor. Derek groaned at the pungent scent and chuckled when Stiles moaned out, “Sorry. I’ll clean that up later.”

“You really won’t” Derek chuckled as he rubbed his back gently and waited for Stiles to say anything else. He heard the moment the Sheriff came into the house and he rushed into the living room and watched the scene for a few seconds before he grabbed a handful of towels and started cleaning up the mess with one hand while the other rubbed at the side of Stiles’s neck. The human smiled shyly and looked over at Derek after a few minutes, “What happened?”

“I got everyone out, I have no idea if the photographers got anything, I guess we won’t know until its too late. Apparently the point was to show the world about werewolves and then Lydia was going to come in to save the day though I don’t understand how, she maybe be amune to most supernatural devices but she can’t control werewolves. She might be able to momentarily cripple them but that would just out her powers as dangerous too. None of it makes any sense.”

“Everyone’s okay though? They all got out?”

Derek nodded, pausing as he thought about Lydia’s final words to him, “She said something weird, ‘I just did what she told me.’ Or something like that.”

“Are you saying there is something else out there pulling strings of a Banshee? Something that no one knew about?”

Derek shrugged, “I think there is a lot of string pulling going on around her and honestly the idea of someone pulling her strings is the first to make any sense. She was listening to something else, someone that she trusted? That person told her all about this weird plan to get through the unveiling. She’s too smart for this, maybe she argued, maybe she was punished. We don’t know anything about the last eight months.”

“Yeah, because she didn’t tell anyone anything,” Stiles grumbled then started coughing again, the sound far more moist than Derek was comfortable with. He kept rubbing Stiles’s shoulder and tilted his head when he heard the vehicles parking down by the road, doors opening and closing. Then the not-subtle click clack of shoes and he was glad that they decided to listen to his order to come here when they left the reception hall. Hopefully that meant that it was time to get all the answers from the only person who seemed to know anything.

Derek left Stiles sitting there while his dad finishing cleaning up the floor and putting a garbage can next to him just in case. He opened the door and found a pack of unhappy and pale pack. Scott, Malia, Lydia and Parrish were there still in their wedding finery. Jackson, Ethan and Danny were
there with Cora and Isaac. Derek let them in.

“There better be a damn good explanation for what just happened out there!”

Lydia crossed her arms over her chest and sighed, “I saw my grandmother. She came to me and told me what I needed to do. She knew everything my grandmother knew, about me and the code for the dead pool and everything. I trusted her, I’ve seen the dead before, ghosts and real people. I didn’t know what else to see, there was death all around and she said this was the only way. I didn’t tell anyone anything because she told me not to, that no one would understand.”

“We don’t understand,” Stiles said weakly.

“I know,” Lydia responded. “I know none of this makes sense and you would think I would be smart enough to know that this wasn’t what it seemed and I still don’t really know what’s happening here but I did what I could with the information I had.”

“Which was a lot without much,” Derek said, crossing his arms and flexing in a show of power. He couldn’t help it with his pack-mate close and sick. He wanted the other alpha in the room to know that he was protective and they weren’t going to get through him, not while Stiles was still looking like death warmed over.

Lydia held her hands out, “I know that now. I haven’t seen any more visions since about a week ago. Maybe its over because they think we did what it wanted. I don’t know. All I can say is that I believed that it was her and that she wanted what was best for me.”

“You’re an idiot,” Stiles said, shaking his head.

“Oh, like you’ve never done anything wrong in your life?” Lydia snapped but Parrish touched her shoulder and she immediately calmed a bit. “But I cede to your point. I was an idiot in this and I couldn’t see until it was too late. And if I am being completely honest, I wanted to be the savior for us all, I have been the weird sidekick with the death visions for too long and this was too much of what I wished for. I don’t know how she knew about something that I had never even spoken aloud. I was jealous and looking for some wish fulfillment, seeing my grandmother was too much. She led me to this.”

“It wasn’t her though,” Stiles snapped, though Derek could hear the strain. He was exhausted but they had to get through this and Stiles wasn’t going anywhere even if it took straight up stubbornness to keep him awake. This had quickly turned from a wedding to a vision quest to a conspiracy theory and trust Beacon Hills to make something as simple as a wedding so easily fucked.

There was something bigger at play and it’s endgame seemed to be the unveiling of the supernatural. It was one of the only things that kept the supernaturals from becoming the victims of war or genocide.

“Anymore secrets we need to know about?” Derek demanded and everyone looked at Lydia.

She shook her head, “I won’t believe her the next time I see her. I will talk to the others if I see her. Or anyone I know to be dead. I swear. Fool me once and all that.”

They all nodded at her answer, then stumbled out of the room. Scott and his girls and Parrish all left and the others moved to slump around the kitchen and the living room. Derek turned and looked at Stiles, “Visions of her dead grandmother?” Stiles asked incredulously.

Derek shrugged, “Of all the visages that she would have trusted, her grandmother is the most likely. She was a confidante of Lydia’s as well as a Banshee. She had a point about seeing ghost and the
dead after the fact before. Whatever did this to her, to all of us, did their homework well enough to
know all the things that her grandmother would have known. It wasn’t smart, it wasn’t good for any
of us but at least it wasn’t only about being the savior of humankind from the big bad wolf. At least it
wasn’t something that we couldn’t stop.”

“I feel sick still,” Cora whined from the floor next to the coffee table.

“Yeah, you will for a while yet, anyone who drank the wolfsbane concoction. It takes a little bit of
time to burn out of our system. Stiles is probably in for a rough night.”

“Take me to bed then Sourwolf, I don’t want to think about conspiracy theories, ghosts, tricksters or
the supernatural coming out to the world.”

Derek nodded and heaved Stiles off the couch and swung him into a bridal carry while the others
hooted and hollering excitedly. Stiles leaned his head on Derek’s neck and though the smell from the
wolfsbane and the vomit was not pleasant, it was still good to scent his partner. He settled Stiles onto
the bed and helped him out of his clothes then walked down to the bathroom and grabbed a cup of
water and the mouthwash. Stiles wrinkled his nose when he saw what Derek was holding, gargled
the mouthwash and spit it into the second cup that Derek had the forethought to grab. Stiles guzzled
the glass of water so Derek went back to dump the contents of one down the sink and refilled the
other. After putting the fresh cup down on the side table, Derek climbed into the bed with Stiles.

They were silent for a little while, “I want to go home Der.”

“You are home.”

“No,” Stiles whispered, “I want to go back to Washington. This was a mistake.”

“We foiled a plan to unveil the supernatural, wouldn’t that be considered a win?”

Stiles nodded then shrugged, “Maybe it was a win but it still wasn’t enough to make all the other
crap feel any better. The grandma plot had nothing to do with Scott and Lydia choose not to listen to
me, or the fights or the miscommunications. We can come back for another visit later but I want out
of here and I want to get the baby betas out too.”

“Liam, Theo and the others?” Derek asked with confusion.

Stiles scoffed, “No, Isaac and the others.”

“Not really baby betas but if they want to come they can, for the short term anyway.”

“Deal,” Stiles said and fell silent while the werewolf heaved a sigh of relief. He was going home and
taking Stiles away from all this madness. He listened as the others settled into the Stilinski house, a
couple of them on the guest bed and the rest down in the living room. He heard when someone
haphazardly found where Stiles puked up nothing but drink and said loudly, “Ewwww! What the
hell was that?”

The sheriff told her and Derek heard as Kira ran to the bathroom and turned on the faucet to clean
her hand off. He smiled as his pack settled into where they were all sitting or laying down to sleep
off the poison in their system. Some were playing games, others were napping and he knew that they
would do what they must to not only keep Derek alive but also Stiles, and for the first time having a
house full of werewolves meant everything to him because they were his pack.

Chapter End Notes
Have some more of my Stiles head canon for the win. We are winding down for some resolution, thank you all for sticking with me even when my personal life is taking a beating and the chapters don't come out on a regular schedule.

Thank you to everyone for the comments and kudos. They are amazing when I am needing a pick me up. <3
Stiles woke up after a thoroughly uncomfortable afternoon and evening. He woke up more than once for the sole purpose of dry heaving into a bucket, shaking out of his skin despite the werewolf beside him and screaming himself awake which was far to reminiscent of the weeks after the spell that saved his father and before the nogitsune then he would care to admit. He woke several times convinced that the Nogitsune was returning.

Every time he woke up, Derek had been there to metaphorically hold his hair back with the puking or just holding him until he wasn’t trying to scratch out of his skin. Derek had been there when he screamed himself awake from gnashing teeth and Oni stabbing his friends. Derek was there every time.

Until now, Derek wasn’t in the bed anymore.

There was a lot of shouting going on, he didn’t hear Derek either but he wasn’t really a shouting person. Stiles stumbled out of bed and down the hall into the bathroom to take a leak and wash out the taste of something dying on his tongue, as if he’d gotten wasted. Fucking wolfsbane poisoning, the gift that just keeps giving. As he walked down the stairs, he could actually hear what they were saying.

“Are you telling me that you are going to just leave? After everything that happened today?” someone shouted.

Stiles made it down to the entry and the living room where the pack squared off against Derek who was standing with his arms crossed and looking like his normal sour self, nonchalant and surprised at the contention he was getting. “What’s going on here guys?”

“You?” Cora growled, turning and coming at him a few steps. “This your idea?”

“Is what my idea?” Stiles asked, holding his hands up in surrender. He might be a sarcastic asshole most of the time but he was smart enough to know not to mess with a Hale, especially an angry one. Especially the one he wasn’t dating who wasn’t fond of him in one piece.

“You’re just going to head back to Washington and pretend this didn’t happen?”

Stiles frowned, “Well I think that’s a bit of a short sighted view on the situation but yes, I don’t want to be here anymore. There’s no reason for me to be here, all of this was a fucking mess and I am 1000% done with it.”

“We need to know if anything got out!” Cora snapped.

Stiles shrugged, “I am not going to disagree with you.”
“Because you think I’m right and you’re going to stay?” she asked, with just an edge of youthful enthusiasm that Stiles didn’t think any Hale was capable of. As sad as that was to think.

“No,” he said slowly, “Mostly cause I am too scared to argue with you. I am not going to stay here to see what else Master Lydia and her Puppet Master have in mind for us. This isn’t about leaving anyone behind, it’s about having a chance at something outside of this Hellmouth of a town. You should understand that better than most.”

Everyone frowned at him for that one. Stiles just rolled his eyes and went over to Derek and pressed a kiss to his shoulder. The werewolf softened and pressed his nose and lips into the crown of his head for a second. He turned back to the others, letting himself lean into Derek’s body heat as he answered, “We won’t cut off ties. I have never done that. Scott and Lydia and the others may have done it to me but I never decided to do it to them. She fucked up, we did the best we could and undoubtedly wanting to leave will not make it so today. My dad wouldn’t be pleased if I just up and left but I am not going to stay here the whole summer. I can’t do that.”

Cora huffed as she turned away and Isaac rubbed her shoulder as she walked past. She leaned into the touch but didn’t stop for it. Stiles looked around and saw the others lounging now that the intensity in the room had dropped a couple hundred decibels. He was surprised to see Jackson, Ethan and Danny still sitting on the couch, smashed up next to each other while Kira was leaning against the arm of the couch. He remembered very distinctly telling Derek that he wanted to go home, back to Washington but he knew better than anyone in the living room that he couldn’t just leave. He had to know that his friends were safe. He knew that Lydia screwed the pooch on this one, she’d been manipulated and she had done her part to manipulate everyone else in the process, which didn’t really bode well for the idea of pack trust in the future.

“So what’s the plan?” Isaac asked.

“We find out what really happened yesterday. Did any videos or photographs make it out of here? We do what we can without the others, at this point we know that Lydia has been compromised and honestly Scott and Parrish both made decisions based on her being compromised. I am not saying whatever this is got to the others because we don’t know that to be true but they were all making decisions based on bad intel or no intel.”

“We can contact the photographers,” Danny said and pointed at his best friend and the former alpha between the two of them and Stiles nodded after looking at Derek who seemed content to let Stiles take the lead. He knew the dynamics of a pack better than most, he knew what being Derek’s boyfriend or mate would make him equal to these people but he knew it wasn’t just that. It was the fact that for years, he’d been coming up with the plans. For years he’d been keeping werewolf asses out of the fire, now he was going to do the best to keep them all out but he didn’t have to do it alone.

“I’ll go speak to Scott, we might not be close now but we never had the falling out that others have had,” Isaac said and Derek nodded.

“That’s good, that’s really good,” Stiles stated and despite the separation from Beacon Hills and the insanity of an abusive father, Isaac still grinned at the praise like he’d been hoping for it and a little desperate for it. Stiles smiled at him, nodding a little to reaffirm what he’d already said.

“Someone needs to talk to Lydia and Parrish, see if they know anything else? If she saw anything or they heard anything,” Stiles said.

“You can’t go, neither can Derek. You guys are too close to the crap hitting the fan,” Jackson said.

Stiles glared at the former-lacrosse captain.
“I’ll go, she’s always had a soft spot for me,” Jackson responded.

“She just got married,” Stiles scoffed.

“You don’t forget your first love, huh Stiles?” he asked and the human rolled his eyes. Derek shifted his gaze and stared at Stiles.

He just shook his head, “You might always remember them but sometimes reality isn’t the truth, be carefully with her.”

Jackson nodded, giving a little snappy salute before he went back to chatting with Danny and Ethan. Stiles turned back to Derek and held his hand out, Derek pressed his palm into Stiles’s hand and he led the werewolf away from the others and outside into the darkening evening and kept walking for a few minutes.

“I do want to go home Derek, I want to go back to Washington with you and maybe Isaac and someday the others. I wasn’t lying, and they didn’t change my mind. I just wanted you to know that.”

Derek huffed, “You think I don’t know you? Is that was this is?”

Stiles shrugged, “I know that I have not sounded like a firm guy in the last month or so, since you met me in Washington. I have been bouncing around like—well like me but I don’t want to do that to your feelings. I want to go somewhere with you, with whatever pack we can salvage from this hellhole and live a life that’s going to mean something more than death and destruction someday.”

“And you want that with me?” Derek said, looking confused.

Stiles punched the werewolf lightly in the shoulder mostly because he didn’t want to hurt himself on the wall of muscle that was his boyfriend, “Yeah of course with you. Why wouldn’t it be with you?”

“Stiles, I was death and destruction for such a long time. It might not have been all my fault but from the age of fifteen, people have died around me and I don’t want you to miss out on something else if staying with me continues to bring that to you.”

Stiles frowned at him, “You’re an idiot.”

Derek growled.

The human held up a finger to forestall any further growling or gnashing of the teeth, “First of all: you’re my idiot and don’t you forget it.” Derek huffed a little chuckle and Stiles lifted another finger as he answered, “I am a beautiful bringer of chaos and destruction myself. There have been times that my actions caused death or hurt. I did the best I could but I was a kid and you are helping me to have some clarity around that stuff but Derek, I love you and nothing you say is going to change that. It never has and it never will.”

Derek stared at him but Stiles just kept on talking.

“When all I knew was that I was being left again, you appeared. You saved me, you trusted me more than you should have and I remember you in my head. When I was trapped in the wolfsbane haze, you brought me out of it. You chose me and I am choosing you. So you are just going to have to deal with it.”

Stiles took a deep breath, to start listing all the things he loved about Derek, from all the things he’d learned over the years but also the amazing nerd that he was. He was going to tell Derek that past
Derek, present Derek, it was all the same.

He had a speech dammit, but Derek’s was better. He leaned forward and took Stiles’s mouth in a wet and open kiss. Stiles mumbled into his lips, and it turned into a happy groan as he opened his mouth and gripped the back of Derek’s neck to hold him close. He had no intention of letting this end anytime soon. Derek moved them somewhere for a few minutes, Stiles shifting backwards until his back pressed up against something, maybe the side of the house, maybe a tree. Who knew.

Then it got better, Derek hoisted him up and Stiles ambitiously wrapped his legs against Derek’s waist and kept kissing, tongues twisting together for moments then they traded gentle closed mouth kisses all the while Derek’s hardened erection rubbed deliciously against Stiles. He hissed when Derek thrust a little, his head thunking against the tree and making a flash of pain zing through his brain and distracted him from the frottage currently happening. He pulled away and groaned into the side of Derek’s neck as the other man mouthed at his throat.

“We should…maybe you know,” Stiles pressed another kiss to Derek’s jaw, “kick the betas out and go up to my room and do more of this. You know,” he pressed another kiss into Derek’s cheek. “We could talk or not talk. We could make the bedroom smell like us.”

“It already does,” Derek growled, his voice guttural and Stiles’s hips thrust forward without his say-so at the sound.

“Does it smell like us when we’re doing sexy things?” Stiles muttered, latching his teeth into the side of Derek’s neck and sensed when the werewolf’s knees tried to buckle before he shored them up and Stiles grinned.

“No but I need to tell you something. Show you something,” Derek whispered as he pulled back a half step and Stiles slid his feet back to the ground, groaning at the loss of heat.

“You can show me whatever you want Sourwolf,” Stiles said, waggling his eyebrows in a suggestive manner.

Derek snorts, “Idiot.”

“Yup, your idiot,” Stiles sing-songed as the werewolf started back towards the house, dragging him along. He barked at all the betas, for them to leave to which they grumbled that they were here doing favors and now they were getting the boot for sex.

“Wait, what about sex?” Kira asked.

“Human nose,” Isaac said as they all started out, “You can’t smell it on them. Consider yourself lucky. Been smelling the arousal and sadness for years, don’t know if this is better or worse.”

“What the hell Isaac?” Stiles shouted about the arousal and sadness thing but he was already out the door and the suddenly growly and serious werewolf was going up the stairs and dragging Stiles along with him. They got to the bedroom and Derek closed the door behind them. He pressed a hand into Stiles’s sternum until he was flush against the door and panting a little.

“What are you going to show me?” Stiles panted, coughed and tried to stern up his voice but nothing was working. He still sounded like a squeaky teenager about to lose his cool in front of his first date. Not cool at all.

“I don’t know another way to show you besides going back into your mind. Are you okay with that?”
“The claws in the neck thing? Weird foreplay if you ask me.”

Derek rolled his eyes, “It’s not foreplay but I want you to know something about you. Something I saw when I was trying to bring you out of the wolfsbane fog.”

“It’s bad, isn’t it?” Stiles whispered. Derek had been inside him, there was enough going on in there to scare off even the most of devoted people, it was the reason he had never wanted to share memories and thoughts with the werewolves even though Scott, Isaac and the others all knew vaguely how to pull this thing off.

Derek shook his head and smiled, “Please just trust me Stiles.”

He nodded, “Okay as long as you promise me that you aren’t going to leave me because of whatever’s in there.”

“Didn’t before,” Derek said with a shrug.

Stiles reached out and grabbed Derek’s hand, anxiety flaring up all around them, “All you could hear was what they were saying to me. You don’t know. You have no idea what’s in there.”

Derek reached out again and pressed his very blunt and human fingers into the back of Stiles’s neck, “I promise, nothing in your mind will make me leave you.”

The human nodded and Derek leaned forward and pressed another long and luscious kiss to his lips, going on long enough that Stiles figured he forgotten what they were doing here then Derek pulled away and whispered, “Ready?”

He nodded.

Without any warning, Derek flicked out his claws and stabbed them into his neck, there was a half-second of pain then he could feel the subtle pain drain start and Derek was there in his mind with him. He leaned forward a little, breathing shallow puffs into Derek’s chest. He was only aware enough to know that Derek was there, holding him close on the outside, all the while he was searching inside.

“You hear them now?” Stiles shouted over the voices that were muttering all sorts of things around them.

“I figured this was the wolfsbane,” Derek responded inside his mind. There wasn’t an answering rumble in Derek’s throat and out of his mouth so they weren’t speaking normally anymore.

“Its who I am, voices pulling at me all the time. They demand attention; I can barely grab hold of one before noticing the next. The attention problem is because too many things need my attention.”

“Quiet them down Stiles, I know you can do this.”

He shook his head, figuring this was the moment when Derek would step out of his mind, stuck in a vacuum of thoughts whirring around at high speeds just waiting to be caught. But Derek just grabbed one and started talking to it quietly and Stiles looked a little closer and the thought took form into a fox, a kit to be more specific and Derek gentled the kit and settled it down on the floor where it yawned and laid down.

“They all want your attention Stiles, this is who you are. You sit at the eye of a storm of intelligence and only you can calm it. Calm them inside of you, otherwise I can’t show you what I want you to see. This thing is at the core of you and it’s not something easily noticeable because it’s the stillest
part of you.”

“I don’t have anything still about me,” Stiles shouted, growing frustrated with Derek for not listening.

“Try,” Derek pressed gently, “Please.”

Stiles closed his eyes and looked around, “I know you. All of you. Each and every one of you requires attention to grow from an idea to a plan into something actionable but please just lay down. I don’t know if I can be still but if I were capable, I would do it for him,” he finished and watched as Derek smiled at him. It was such a strange facial expression on the man but Stiles was getting used it and he loved it. Like a lot.

“I knew you could do it Stiles,” Derek said and he looked around, the thoughts were slowing and sinking to the ground. They took shape; foxes, wolves, cats and so on all curled up around each other and slept. Stiles took a deep breath and looked back to Derek where he was walking through a path in the furry piles. It was a trail left there by his subconscious, hoping that they would find what Derek so desperately wanted to show him and even though he knew they were in his mind it was still hard to imagine.

They arrived at something, the awning mouth of a cave and Stiles looked over at Derek, “What is this?”

“This is your representation, it’s just an easier way to feel your way around but when each of us seek out the center of our being it can take shape. This is your place.”

“How do you know this?” Stiles demanded, crossing his arms and grinned, “It’s very hocus pocus, not really your schtick.”

“I learned it when I accepted my alpha-hood back, the alpha and the pack that took us in were very much into the meditation and passive mentality, even though they understood the violence in themselves better than most. They taught me to use my alpha power to seek out this in others, it could help a beta someday, she showed me how to find myself and now you are going to find yourself.”

“I know myself.”

“Not this part. I think you need it, more than anything. Even me.”

“I love you Derek, of course I need you,” Stiles scoffed.

“And I love you too, but this piece of who you are; I have known it for a long time and now its time to introduce it to yourself.”

Stiles nodded and turned back to the mouth of the cave and stepped into the shadows, not knowing what to expect. He didn’t even know what to look for until it appeared. There was a light in the center of the space, growing before his eyes. He stepped towards it and felt the undercurrent of choice. He felt the will to move then augmented into something bigger and the orb grew a little and he was suddenly running towards it. He threw his arms out and ran into the sun.

Only to be caught by very human arms. Arms that he knew, even after all these years, “Mom?”

“Mischief,” She smiled and pressed a kiss into the top of his head. “I am so proud of you for coming here.”
“But you’re dead,” Stiles whispered even as he pulled away, realizing all of a sudden he was eight years old, fitting into the arms of his healthy mother.

“I am here in your heart and mind, there is nothing you can’t do here. I am here and you are here in the body that you knew me last in. Don’t think about it too hard, you’re just going to get a headache.”

Stiles laughed, it was a long ago joke; he was always imagining things, thinking too much about anything that came into his mind. His mother had always been there to help make sense of the world again. Maybe that’s why his mind made her here, she could make anything sensible again.

“I know it made more sense to always hide that Spark inside of you, too scared to see it for what it was. It’s the most unique and perfect thing about you.”

“Spark? Deaton said something about that a long time ago.”

“I know, I use it now to let you know that if you had said yes to Peter, let him make you into a werewolf, your abilities would have brought people to you. You would have been nothing less than a powerful alpha. Not because of Scott but because of you Stiles. You are the center to those around you, it is not your job to make them okay, it is not your job to make them happy or stay. It is your job to bring balance.”

Stiles shook his head harshly, “No, I won’t be like him. Hiding the truth, telling half lies to maintain someone’s balance while people die!”

“Mischief, when have you ever suffered such a foolish notion that you could ever be like someone else?”

Stiles stood up and realized he was his nineteen-year-old self again and they were looking at the orb again. He looked at his mother and she nodded. Stiles reached out and pressed his hand into the light and sucked in a deep breath. This is what Derek saw, at the core of who he was, it was bright. It was never-ending. It was endlessly good. It was potential, wild and chaotic and waiting. It was waiting for him to do something with it.

It was the Spark Deaton spoke about so long ago, but it wasn’t just about belief. It was just harnessed in belief.

It was too much.

“Stop,” he whispered, pushing against Derek outside of the dream.

He didn’t look back, just shoved away from Derek’s hand, barely feeling when the claws came out of his neck and he was standing, wavering next to the bed before flopping back down again. He pressed into Derek’s waiting arms, thinking about his mother’s arms, a safe little place in his heart that protected her image and the core of who she was until he decided he was ready to see her again. A guide for her wayward, anxious son just as Claudia Stilinski always has been.

“I didn’t mean to freak you, I just couldn’t stand you not knowing,” Derek murmured as he seeped away Stiles’s pain even as he covered the wounds with a hand towel that he found who-knew-where. Hopefully it was clean.

He curled closer to Derek, listening to the strong thud-thud of the werewolf’s heart comforting against his face and thought about what he’d seen.

“I saw my mom, exactly like she was before she got sick, just waiting for me there.”
Derek nodded but said nothing, rubbing Stiles’s back in soothing circles. He couldn’t help but feel comforted by the care it showed.

“She said she was there to guide me to this discover but I don’t want it. It’s too much.”

“We have time, Stiles. We have forever for you to come to terms with that part of you. I’ll be here either way but I just wanted you to know what was there.”

They had so much other shit to deal with; he didn’t think that he had the time of the give a damn to go on some soul-searching adventure in his head. It was an intriguing idea but for now, he was going to go back to one of his solid methods: ignore until it goes away. Undoubtedly Derek wouldn’t be letting it go anytime soon but Stiles was pleased to see that he was at least willing to leave it alone for now.

As his mother reminded him, Stiles didn’t suffer from being foolish and he refused to let others suffer the same fate when he had the chance to do something about it. He thought about all the ideas in his head, swirling around—silent for now but there was something there that would help them figure out what happened here and he had a frustrating realization that they weren’t going home until they were sure that the werewolves weren’t going to be on any hit lists because of Lydia’s idiotic messiah/monster-tamer plan.

“God, I don’t know how anyone sticks around for too long. I almost understand Scott because we’d been together for so long but I just don’t understand how Malia was patient enough to stay and Lydia had it easy as my ‘girlfriend’ if she ever was one because we were separated for the bulk of our time together,” Stiles muttered thinking again about the wavering he’d done with Derek ever since they started this thing. Was this just the sad conclusion to having a brain that was never on target but on multiple targets?

“Stiles,” Derek chided.

“No, seriously, I have fucked with you so much recently and not because I wanted to but I just realized we can’t leave and I want to leave and I can’t! I just wonder if I am always like this with other people.”

“I don’t think you’ve ‘fucked’ with me at all, especially with all the interruptions,” Derek said and wagged his eyebrows.

Stiles snorted a laugh, “Was that an innuendo Mr. Hale? I love it! Couldn’t be prouder!”

“Yeah sure,” Derek grinned, “You can’t leave because you love them. You love them all too much to just walk away, same way you love the others. Its why you pick up the phone, its why you speak to Lydia and Scott even though they hurt you. This isn’t waffling, this is you figuring out that sometimes love means doing something you don’t want to do.”

“Like stay in this Hellmouth town instead of going back to Washington DC and letting you have your way with me for the next month and a half?”

Derek chuckled, “Yeah like that. Though I don’t know what a Hellmouth is.”

“You will,” Stiles said with a smirk.

“I also think that you are letting Void Stiles into your head about this. He wasn’t right about you, I will pick you for as long as you want to be picked by me. Probably longer, if I am being completely honest.”
Stiles nodded, tilting his head to kiss Derek quickly, ignoring the ache in his neck for a few minutes before he had to pull back and search out some bandages and antiseptic. Derek followed, helping to clean the wounds before wrapping them. Stiles took a moment, when Derek tried to leave and kissed his boyfriend. Derek tightened his hands around Stiles’s back to hold him close for a few minutes, clinging a little desperately.

When they stepped away, both of them nodded and walked downstairs. Stiles looked around thinking about all the werewolves that had been here not that long ago and knew there was no choice. “Well let’s get to work.”

He caught sight of the elderly woman as she walked towards him and glared at her. “What the hell was that? They escaped and we have barely more than we did before you started scheming with the Martin girl!”

The older woman sneered at him, “Let us be clear human, I did this as a favor to the release you gifted me but I will not be treated as fodder for your enemies. Enemies that I would normally call friend and ally in the ways of chaos. Werewolves and Banshees are delightfully difficult to control and they spread fear and death.”

“And what do you know about chaos?” he demanded.

The woman shifted into other forms, a young smiling man in a green outfit that looked a lot like something out of a comic book with the horns on his helmet and long dark hair. Then it changed into a small boy with a wicked smile, another woman with vibrant red hair and more. As she shifted from thing to thing she spoke, “I have been known as many things. Loki. Eris, God of Discord. Kitsune. Kuma Lisa. I am all and I am none. I am simply Trickster.” She resettled back into the visage of Lydia Martin’s grandmother as she stopped talking.

“You didn’t succeed despite your resume of misdeeds.”

“They don’t trust each other, she lied and the rest joined in instead of allowing the others in and letting them help. They are primed for beautiful chaos. I might just stay to see what kind of destruction you have planned just for the pleasure of watching them rip each other apart.”

“But they won’t because we didn’t get any footage.”

The old woman flashed her eyes, a bright violet and the man narrowed his eyes and tightened his grip on a shock wand in his beltloop. He didn’t know how well it would work on whatever she was, but he was willing to try anything. She raised a brow in question, “You did not warn me of the other pack, I could not have prepared for those who did not drink merrily and you have clearly underestimated their ability to come together despite contention.”

“Clearly,” he responded and rubbed a hand over his mostly bald head at thought about his son the Traitor. He thought about his beautiful daughter, fallen into the hordes of demon wolves that he would do anything to destroy. “I didn’t bank on Stilinski and Hale, a mistake I will not make again.”

“And what, pray tell, Mr. Argent was the point of all this?”

Gerard looked at the creature in front of him, “They thrive in the dark, I am going to bring them into the light and make people see them for who they are and then I am going to have the army I need to bring every single supernatural creature to heel.”
She smiled, her teeth elongating, “Sounds delicious,” her face returned to normal as she turned to walk out and waved back, “We stand square, I owe you nothing. I shall be going now.”

Gerard motioned to a couple of his hunters and they dropped down, attempting to take the creature to the ground but she just spun and shifted out of the way and they hit the ground and rolled. She looked at him, tutting in clear disappointment.

“Do not attempt to stop me otherwise I will end you and everything you plan to do here.”

He shrugged and waved off his men, it wasn’t the first or last time he would choose to stay his hand for the sake of killing werewolves. For now she was leaving, and he had a new plan that he had to come up with. The trickster had been an easy solution, she had been able to not only appear to the Banshee as her deceased grandmother but she also implanted the visions that started all this. He should have realized it would have been too easy to do it like this. He would much rather get his hands dirty.

“Come on boys, let’s get to work.”

Chapter End Notes

Okay everyone this gosh darn story is out of control and I am bringing this one to a close exactly where I wanted to end it in the first place. After the wedding.

I know there is going to be at least one sequel to this but I would like to take a breather and come back strong because this story is not just a fake relationship story, it has morphed into a reworking of season six (all the things I hated, getting worked out).

Thank you so much for all the comments and kudos, you guys have made my year!!!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!