Salmagundi

by inatshej

Summary

Stiles' life is not just a mess anymore, it's a fucking salmagundi. Derek flirting with Kate, Stiles' heat, the confusing bite – none of it makes sense jumbled together.

Notes

Vaguely inspired by But We're Still Sleeping Like We're Lovers by CharWright5 and You're A Mess But You're A Catch To Me by jsea.

Please notice that in this fic Derek has a crush on Kate but the endgame is Sterek.
The girl is beautiful. Long dark hair, red lips, perfect skin and blue eyes, like, really, Derek, at least look at her.

Derek turns away, grimacing, and walks off.

"Laura wants me to go to the school dance," he says. "People will hit on me all the time then," he shudders.

"Dude, she wasn't so bad-"

"Don't call me dude."

"You could've at least given her a chance."

"She was making me uncomfortable."

Stiles shrugs. It's not really his problem, anyway, and he's not that close with Derek.

Suddenly, Derek stops walking and faces him.

"I just need someone to pretend to be dating me," he states, looking at Stiles. "Then people will leave me alone."

"You could just date someone, you know, not pretend."

Derek ignores that. "Can you pretend to be dating me?"

"Why me? That's way too random. What, my sweet omega scent driving you mad?" Stiles asks flatly. "Besides, no one will believe we're dating," he adds, glancing at Derek's body and his, well, yeah.

"You're an omega and I'm an alpha. That's enough."

Stiles makes a face, but Derek has a point.

"Anyway, we'd just have to convince them," he bulldozers, staring at Stiles intently. "Just until the dance."

That's how Derek's problem becomes his.

They meet before the school.

"Are we seriously doing this?"

"If you're okay with it."

Stiles nods. "It's not a big deal, and if you think it'll help you," he shrugs. "You want to scent-mark me?"

"We should, to make it believable."
"Come on, then."

Derek steps closer and touches Stiles' neck with his hand.

_OKay, let's keep our cool, here. No need for blushing._

Stiles clears his throat. "So, uh, why exactly Laura wants you to come to the dance?"

"To socialize," mutters Derek darkly, taking his hand back.

"It's always nice to get to know someone," Stiles hums as they start walking to the school together.

"It's the worst."

"Come on, you can flirt with people, that's fun."

"I can't flirt. I hate it."

"Aw, but you've asked me to pretend to be your boyfriend, I feel so special."

"Don't. It's because you were nearby at the time."

"So it was a close proximity thing?" asks Stiles, wiggling his eyebrows.

Derek doesn't answer and frowns, not understanding.

"Man, you really can't flirt," observes Stiles. "Look, it's all about a double meaning. You want to get something to drink before the class?"

"Okay. Coke?"

"No," Stiles gives him a meaningful look, "something _hot_."

"Really? It's kinda warm today."

Stiles can just stare at him. "You're completely oblivious."

Funny thing. Everyone believes they are dating.

They are going to their classes after lunch, Stiles reaching to Derek's head to take some piece of fluff. Derek bats off his hand and reaches to mess Stiles' hair in retaliation. Stiles laughs and uses both of his hands to spike Derek's hair, and Derek tries to fight him off, smiling a little, when Scott comes up to them.

"You guys are seriously dating."

"Yep," Stiles leans on Derek, "we're totally rocking this fake boyfriends thing."

"Yeah," agrees Scott looking at him weirdly. "You're going together to the dance?"

Stiles nods, smirking. "Derek can't wait to dance with me."

"You're horrible at dancing," replies Derek flatly.

"See?" asks Stiles, looking at Scott. "True love right here." He stills and then frowns. "Oh my god,
Derek, you flirted with me!"
"What?"
"You teased me about my dancing skills and teasing is a part of flirting," says Stiles, excited.
"I didn't flirt with you."
"Look, I'm not saying you did it consciously, but."
"Are you seriously playing Freud now?"
"Are you seriously thinking about Freud when thinking about me?"
Derek stares at him, considering. "You flirted with me just now."
"Yes, you're learning! It can be my pet project, actually. Get Derek to flirt. Turn him into a full-fledged playboy."
"That's ridiculous."
"As if it has ever stopped anyone before. Look, it's perfect. You will learn how to flirt and get someone to seriously date you, and I'll get to have fun. I'm a genius."

"Well?" Stiles looks at Derek expectantly.
"What?"

Stiles continues gazing at him, raising his eyebrows.

"She was just talking with me," Derek says defensively.

"Dude."

"She didn't say anything odd," he continues, stubborn.

"Fine, but what about her body language?"

Derek gets a thoughtful look on his face. "Okay, she was staring at me rather intensely," he starts, hesitating.

"Good, go on."

"And she was smiling all the time..."

"Yeah, great," Stiles nods.

"But that's it. Okay, I did get this weird feeling, but she honestly just wanted to ask me about Deaton's class."

Stiles looks at him flatly. "If she had just wanted to know about Deaton's class, she could've asked Scott, he knows him better than you."

"Fine, but-"
"Did you notice her gestures?" interrupts Stiles.

"No."

"She was playing with her necklace, trying to get you to look at her cleavage. Or actually, she's an omega, she could've been trying to focus your attention on her neck."

Derek grimaced. "You can't be sure-"

"Plus, she kept touching her hair and that's considered rather erotic. Did she use your name a lot?"

Derek furrowed his eyebrows. "I guess."

"That's building intimacy."

Derek keeps silent for a while. "You make it sound like she was manipulating me."

"No, dude, that's not it. When people flirt they try to show themselves in the best possible light. They smile, joke, draw attention to their strong points, it's normal."

Derek nods once. "So I know how omegas flirt, but what about the alphas?"

Stiles is taken aback at first by the sudden interest, but then he turns to Derek, half excited, half still incredulous. "You want to flirt with someone? Who is it? I promise I won't tell anyone, who is it?"

"It's not about me, I'm asking for my friend. I know this one alpha-"

"Come on, that's the oldest excuse ever."

"It's not- can you just answer me?"

Stiles sighs, put upon. "It depends on the person, really. See, I'm good with talking, that girl was depending on her body language, and you can go with the teasing," Stiles smirks.

Derek is silent for a while. "I don't think I could tease her," he admits, quieter.

"Whoa, that's serious. Honestly, who is it?"

"She's an alpha," admits Derek after a beat.

Stiles glances at him, surprised.

"I'd rather date an alpha than omega, at least I don't have to worry about hurting them."

"Dude, we're not that weaker," Stiles argues, shoving him. "You want to see for yourself?" he narrows his eyes.

"What do you mean?"

"Arm wrestling. You and me. Here. Now."

Derek glances at him. "I don't think that's a good idea-"

"Are you wussing out?"

"I'm not, it's just that you're-"
"Just that I'm what, an omega? Are you afraid of losing to an omega?"

Derek eyes him and breathes in, visibly trying to keep calm. "I'm not going to lose."

"Well, but you have to try first, right?"

Derek turns and slams Stiles against the wall, pinning him to it.

Stiles smirks, his confidence after the abrupt movement back. "I guess it's really close proximity for you, huh?"

Derek's mouth tightens and he points to the table nearby.

They sit down on the other sides and put their elbows on the surface.

_Okay, Stiles, you can do that. Somewhat. For a beat. Maybe more than a beat, like, two beats._

So what if alphas are stronger than omegas? He's been training with his dad, he can hold off on his own, that's what he does, and even Derek seems somewhat surprised, man, he has nice eyes, all different colors, is there more green or-

He's not staring, he's not looking at Derek's face, they are fighting, that's ridiculous. His eyes slide down and here is Derek's arm, Stiles may swallow at the sight of all those muscles - all tight – god, he must be seriously strong, he could take Stiles like it's nothing and hold him against the wall - same as earlier, pinning him to it - then lean in, closer-

He is going to just look at the table now.

Just the table.

_Fuck. This is getting difficult. Ugh, okay, Stiles, hold on for three more seconds._

He eases his arm and groans with relief.

Derek doesn't seem smug as he should. "Did I hurt you?" he asks, looking somewhere else.

"I can't tell whether you're really concerned, overconfident in your abilities or just plain deprecating me," Stiles replies finally.

"I'm-" Derek grimaces, "I didn't mean to hurt you. Earlier."

"Ah, you mean slamming me against the wall? I'm fine. It was my fault too, though, I was goading you."

"I've lost control."

"Yeah," Stiles agrees with him, his eyebrows drawing. "Do you have, like, anger issues?"

"No," answers Derek, making a face at him.

"Just asking," replies Stiles, defensive. It's stereotypical, sure, but alphas do have trouble with self-control sometimes, they can be arrogant and domineering.

"I don't know why I did it," Derek frowns.

"Huh. Well, nevermind. I do like bickering with you and making you either adorably confused or
sexily angry."

"What?"

"I'm gay, what can you do?"

"No – but – are you-

"Dude, calm down. I don't want to be with you. I don't want to be with any alpha."

Derek touches his neck, scent-marking him, but then leans in to nuzzle at Stiles' skin there, and shit, shit, there is so many things to think about, the whole universe, really, so no Derek, no Derek, and his warm breath-

yep.

They walk down the corridor, holding hands, when Derek suddenly steps away from Stiles and lets go of him, staring at the group of people further on.

"What's wrong?" asks Stiles, frowning.

"It's her," explains Derek, his ears turning pink. He flexes his hands, anxious. "What do I do?"

Stiles smirks. "You want to flirt with her?"

Derek glances at him, then back at the group. "Yeah."

Surprised by the honesty, Stiles watches him. He suddenly sees Derek in a completely different light, as a love-struck teenager, worried about his crush.

"Who is it?"

"Kate Argent. The blonde one."

"Dude, I know Kate," Stiles nods. This may be difficult. "What can you tell me about her?"

Derek gazes at him and keeps silent.

Anything more?" Stiles drawls.

"She's an alpha," starts Derek.

"Yeah, I know that much."

Derek shuts up again.

Okay, it will be difficult.

"She's good with chemistry," Derek adds tentatively.

For the sake of Derek's crush, Stiles lets go of the perfect pun, chemistry, hah, Derek doesn't know how much Stiles does for him, really.

"Is she in Deaton's class?"
Derek nods.

"That's impressive," Stiles comments. "Wait, is that how you got interested in her?"

Derek refuses meeting his eyes.

"You're such a dork," Stiles grins at him, almost melting inside. He has this dumb urge to hug Derek. "Anything else?"

Derek shakes his head.

Stiles sighs then start chewing on his lower lip, lost in thoughts. "We have to go with your body," he decides finally.

Derek blinks at him, startled, blushing even more. "What?"

"You'll have to flirt drawing her attention to your body. You know, muscles, especially arms, your eyes, and your smile. Any common topics?"

Derek looks at him blankly.

"Okay, ask her about the dance. Go over there, say your name, ask about the dance, smile at her, keep looking in her eyes, smile at her again, roll your shoulders once, use her name, you can joke."

Derek gives him a flat look.

"...or not. See, most important thing is that you feel at ease, that you're confident. Compliment her. Keep looking at her, smiling. You can do this."

"Stop coaching me."

"Flirt the shit out of her!"

"No, god, stop-"

"Turn her into a puddle of goo!"

"What does that even-"

"Remember," Stiles leans closer, grips Derek's shoulders and grins, "you're a playboy."

Derek gazes at him, surprised, his cheeks coloring – and groans. He turns to glance at Kate, then back at Stiles.

"Wait, what do I tell her about us?"

"Right," Stiles pauses. "We started dating but realized we're better off as friends?"

"Okay," nods Derek and steals another look at Kate.

"Come on. Alpha is your second name, yeah?"

"Actually, my second name's-"

"No, nuh-uh, you're ruining the moment, just go."

Stiles watches him approaching Kate. He is hesitant. It could work in his favor, Derek's adorable
with his tentativeness, but Kate could also expect someone, well, more traditionally alpha and man.

Derek asks her about something, but she shakes her head. Watching him say something more, she grows amused, finally bursting out laughing.

Stiles’ almost proud of Derek, except – ouch. Derek didn’t expect that reaction. He looks at her, unsure, but continues speaking as she calms down and waits for him.

Okay, it may be getting better, Derek even rolls his shoulders and Kate gets distracted by the movement. She says something, which earns a nod from Derek and he turns around, coming back to Stiles, confused.

"How did it go? Did she agree?"

"I – I’m not sure," answers Derek, frowning.

"What do you mean?"

"She said I’m cute and that she’ll think about it."

"Not bad," decides Stiles. He claps Derek on his back. "You’ll turn into a womanizer."

"It’ll be your fault."

"Well, you’re learning from the best. My charm is on a whole different level."

"Sure it is."

Stiles glances at him. "I don’t like it when you’re agreeing with me," he states, just to be surprised how true it actually is. He likes arguing with Derek.

"Good, cause I’m not exactly agreeing," Derek smirks.

"Any more of this and you’re calling me master when I’m helping you with Kate."

"So sensitive," Derek admonishes, shaking his head.

"Wouldn’t you like to find that out, huh."

"So your favorite subject is history. Good choice," nods Stiles. "You’ll make a perfect sexy librarian. Or a sexy professor."

"I wasn’t thinking about-"

"Of course not."

Derek glances at him and frowns. "That’s really not why I-"

"Yeah, obviously."

"Stop that."

"Or?" asks Stiles, actually curious. Sure, he’s goading Derek again, but that’s pretty much his hobby. How far can he get with alphas before completely pissing them off?
"Or I'll make you stop that."

"Wait wait wait, was that a threat? Cause as far as threats go, this one was really lame. Can you at least do the alpha posturing with that?"

To his surprise, Derek's lip twitches as if fighting a smile. Then, he squares his shoulders and stares Stiles down, crossing his arms.

Stiles laughs at the pose and Derek fully smiles in an answer.

_The muscles, though._

Stiles waves, Derek smiles, and Stiles realizes right, _that's it, we aren't fake-dating anymore_, when Derek puts his hand on Stiles' neck and leans in, smelling him, dragging his nose along the skin there, and really.

Stiles should be a better person and push him off.

As it is, he stops himself from reacting in any obvious manner, can't stop furiously thinking that his heartbeat and his smell and his blush, _there is always his fucking blush_, may be really quite obvious to Derek – an alpha.

"So," he starts desperately as Derek backs off, "how's your chemistry?"

_WHAT_

"Bad," Derek admits. "I can't understand anything from this mole topic we have now."

Stiles has never been more thankful for Derek's obliviousness.

"I could help you with that if you want."

"Really? That'd be great."

"Always happy to have chemistry with you."

So sue him. There was an opening, okay? Someone had to use it, and Derek's not that advanced yet.

Derek pauses, thinking about the words and huffs out a laugh after a second. Stiles smiles as well, shaking his head. It should be dumb that Derek needs more time to get the joke but Stiles finds it just cute at this point.

Before he can analyze what _at this point_ means, he sees Derek leaving to talk with Kate. She gazes at his posture approvingly and Stiles turns away, feeling weird. He waits for Derek to use this new awesome flirt technique – touching. It may sound simple but the damage it inflicts is incredible.

Derek touches Kate's arm as if trying to turn her attention to himself, _dork, she's already looking at you_. Kate smiles at that but not in it's-good-to-see-you way, but rather in I-know-what-you-did-there-and-it's-a-great-self-confidence-boost way.

Okay, so apart from chemistry he'll have to figure out how to get Kate to seriously consider Derek. Honestly, it's weird how invested in their relationship he is.
"Okay, so first, can you tell me what is a mole?"
Derek grimaces. "It's an amount of atoms in something."
Stiles makes a face but nods slowly. "Okay, and how much is 1 mole equal to?"
"Is it this 6.022 thing?"
"Yeah, this one. But it's multiplied."
Derek nods. "6.022×1023."
"Good, you have the first base covered."
Derek squints at him.
Stiles shoves him. "I'm not flirting all the time, okay?"
"Yeah, obviously."
Stiles almost gapes at him. "You're such an asshole!"
Derek smirks.
Stiles narrows his eyes. "Avogadro's name was Amedeo."
"What?"
*What indeed.*
"Just wanted to dumbfound you."
*Don't do this, Stiles.*
Derek raises an eyebrow at him but Stiles ignores it, grinning, hoping to keep the smug facade for once in his life. It's especially hard now when he knows that Derek's awesome both as an asshole and as a cute, puzzled guy. And as a crushing teenager, when he looks at Kate now.
"Time to get to the second base," Stiles jokes without feeling.
Derek glances at him. "Yeah," he says distractedly, then focuses back on Stiles. "What about chemistry?"
"We can get back to it," he shrugs.
Derek suddenly turns to him, all his attention on Stiles. "Yes, master."
Stiles laughs, surprised and punches him in the arm playfully. "Dork."
Derek grins and goes to Kate.

And this? This is the kind of alpha Stiles could get along with. One that won't expect Stiles to completely surrender to his omega side, because *surprise*, it's just one side of him.

Even this far out Stiles can notice that Derek still isn't relaxed talking with Kate.
It's in the moment when Kate starts laughing and Derek freezes, not sure if it's a good laugh or a bad making-fun-of-you laugh, and again when Kate finally stops, says something, grinning and Derek responds with a smile, but glancing away, as if not completely convinced, that Stiles decides he doesn't like Kate. It's because of the way she makes Derek stiff, watching what he says, uncomfortable at times as she stares at his body. She's still completely unconcerned even when he shifts his weight, looking away. She just doesn't fucking realize what it is she has. How much it means that Derek smiles at her brilliantly, that he has this hopeful look at his face, that he touches her delicately, so careful, that she has all those things just like that and Stiles does not. He really shouldn't think about it because he has those daily scent-marking hugs from Derek – but it's because they are friends. Close, by now, they spend time together every day, but just this. Friends.

And Kate can't even appreciate it, everything she has when Stiles-

for fuck's sake.
Confusion

Anyway, Stiles has a plan.
"Kate's over there," he points out helpfully.
"Yeah," replies Derek, unsure.

Stiles waits for him to walk away, but he stays rooted to the spot.
"What is it?"

Derek shrugs. "I'm not sure what I can talk to her about."

Jesus, what kind of problem is that? Derek has never seemed bothered about it with him-right, cause with Stiles he doesn't care that much.

"Dude, you're going to the same school. Isn't that topic broad enough?"

"...I guess."

He isn't convinced but comes up to Kate. She smirks at him. Fucking smirks, like she's better than all this, when Derek's so genuine about the whole thing, god, it's so unfair-

Stiles is getting really worked up about it. It's just pathetic.

"See, thanks to the moles we can measure atoms, molecules, you know, small stuff. It would make no sense to measure it in grams."

"Well, thanks to history we know that Avogadro didn't calculate himself this 6.022x1023 number."

"Dork," shoots Stiles.

Derek gives him a flat look. "You knew that Avogadro's name was Amedeo."

"Yeah, well, I've never said that I wasn't adorkable like you."

Derek groans and Stiles laughs, turning away. He notices a woman on the other side of the road, gazing at them with a soft smile. He knows what this expression means – she must think they are this sweet young couple in love. He tenses and looks on the ground, feeling guilty. They do look like a couple, standing under one small umbrella (the rain caught them off guard), Derek keeping him close, his hand on Stiles' hip (so that neither will get wet), just a moment ago they were completely immersed in a conversation (they are friends). He can't tell if they have even mentioned Kate today.

He knows what people in the school think about them. He can hear aw, they are hugging, so cute in the morning. He knows about this guy inquiring whether they are dating, Derek replying no, the guy asking why, Derek ignoring him (the social skills, seriously, Derek). Someone asked Stiles if he's not jealous of Derek talking with Kate like that.

Hah.
"I could totally pull out sashaying."

"Oh, god, *please* don't try."

"Come on, it's just sexy walking. Aren't I sexy enough?"

"I'm not going to answer that."

"Fine, I'll ask Scott. Or Danny, he's gay so he'll know if it's sexy."

"You know, I'm actually curious now. And bisexual. You can ask me."

"No, you'll be biased."

"Not in your favor, don't worry."

Stiles huffs out a laugh to mask that the words hurt him somewhat. He doesn't need a reminder how much out of Derek's league he is. Before he can remark, though, he notices Kate.

He sighs and doesn't even try to smile. "Kate."

"What?"

He motions with his head to the girl.

Derek nods but doesn't move. "You can show me, you know. I'll stay neutral. Monroes Doctrine and all that."

Stiles narrows his eyes. "The Americans are no longer splendidly isolated. Besides, I'd rather not have you grade me when you know already how Kate sashays."

Derek frowns. "I don't know how she-"

"Dude, she's doing that right now."

Derek turns and stares at Kate's hips.

"Just go to her already," snaps Stiles.

Derek nods and leaves.

It's not beneficial for Stiles' mental health to see Derek walking away from him that many times.

He doesn't bother watching them talking today. He's done it so many times already it's weird, even if earlier it was for scientific reasons.

He'll just glance to see if Derek's alright-

and why exactly does Kate curl her fingers around Derek's arm?

Stiles stares at her hand, frozen with a sudden wave of jealousy.

He is so fucked.
"I am so fucked," he states to Scott.

Scott nods solemnly. "I know."

"What? How?"

"You fell for Derek but can't tell him because you're just pretending to be dating."

Stiles stares at him. "Dude," he starts, amazed, "you got it almost right. We're not pretending to be dating anymore but yeah, I fell for him. The story gets worse, though."

"What do you mean?" Scott turns to him, readying himself for a long talk.

"Derek likes Kate Argent."

Scott winces.

"Yep. And I volunteered to help him get him to date her."

"Dude," says Scott, emphatic.

"I know. Still, well, we're friends, so I had a plan to at least try to help him. But we're friends, and we keep spending time together, and he even hugs me every freaking day. It's a mess."

"It is a mess," nods Scott, gazing at him.

"And I've just come up with this plan yesterday and it turns out I can't stick to it. I'm going into heat."


Stiles nods, miserable.

"But my last heat with Allison lasted."

"Dude, TMI," interrupts Stiles.

"I haven't even said anything," Scott frowns.

"You didn't have to. You had that face," informs him Stiles and stands up. "I'm going to see Derek's that face."

Scott tries to smile at him, a look of pure sympathy on his face.

Stiles feels somewhat bad that he's got such a great friend and didn't really hear anything from him, but then he remembers all the things he had to go through during before-dating-Allison stage of Scott's life, and it's okay. He's earned it.

He sees Derek and walks up to him. Why are they talking so little about Kate? Shouldn't she be a big part of Derek's life by now?

And what's wrong with Stiles if he actually wants that? Wants to see clearly that he's rejected, that there can only be Derek and Kate, no other way, that he is the only one suffering here and he's got a reason for it-

"Where were you?"

"What's it to you?" Shoots Stiles before he can stop himself. He grimaces and replies, "I was talking
with Scott."

"Scott's going to the dance with this Allison girl, right?"

"Yeah. Apparently, everyone's dating or close to dating nowadays."

"Besides us, huh," observes Derek.

Stiles turns to look at him, incredulous. "No, Derek, not beside us. Did you forget about Kate already?"

Derek's face hardens. "I didn't, that's why I-"

"Please, it's really not a hardship for you to get someone to date you. Didn't we pretend to start dating cause there were too many willing people?"

"No, dating's not the same as flirting-"

"Don't go fucking pretending you care what's inside," sneers Stiles. "You barely know Kate."

"I know her enough-"

"You two started talking when? Four days ago?"

Derek' mouth thins and he narrows his eyes. "What the fuck do you want, Stiles?"

"Nothing. Nothing from you, at least."

That's what tips Derek over. He slams Stiles against the lockers this time, how nice to see the change, his hand gripping Stiles' hoodie, cause some things never change.

Derek only watches him for a moment, before stating, "You know I care about you."

Just like that.

Just in the middle of their fight.

Stiles stares at him as the whole situation is catching up to him – Derek's words, Derek getting him where he wants him, gazing at him, his eyes intense, breathing harder because of the adrenaline of their argument, his hand fisting Stiles' clothes, so close to him-

Derek's eyebrows crease as he regards Stiles.

Stiles' heartbeat skyrockets, he keeps looking at Derek, there are barely inches between them, he can see Derek's lips part and Stiles is blushing, he doesn't even want to think about his scent-

_Fuck._ There is no denying the attraction now.

"You're going into heat?" asks Derek, looking at him intensely.

Stiles snaps his eyes to his.

"I- yeah. Yes."

_And it's all? Is Derek seriously that oblivious-

"I'll help you."
That punches disbelieving laugh out of Stiles. "Dude, no."

"It'll be easier for you."

"No, come on, I can get through my heat alone. I've done it-"

"It'll be safer if I'm with you."

Stiles grimaces. Of course it'll be safer, but there are important things and important things-

"It's normal to have someone to help," Derek adds, leaning back.

It actually is, but Stiles couldn't bear the idea of someone seeing him so weak and desperate.

"Are you always this snappish before your heat?" asks Derek. It's not mean, he is genuinely curious, but Stiles still glares at him for the question.

"For your information, yes, I am."

Derek nods. "It's similar to me. I get angry easily, though I also almost don't talk before my heat," he offers.

And fuck, why is he being nice now, it just messes everything even more.

Stiles trusts Derek. He wants Derek to help him. Of course he does, but what comes later on?

Once again, Stiles does what he wants to do instead of what he should do because later comes later.

Stiles wakes up feeling hot all over. He shifts and it causes his dick to drag on the sheet. It's enough to make him shiver. Not completely awake yet, he moves again, almost rutting into the mattress before he realizes what's going on-

his heat-

Derek-

oh fuck his heat with Derek.

He wills himself to get up even though he feels feverish. He takes a new shirt and boxers, hissing as it touches his cock. Still, he needs to focus on finding something to eat for now, it's just going to get worse.

His dad left him food before his doors.

He grimaces as he remembers springing the news on him yesterday. He feels bad about it now, faced with his kindness. The sheriff even respected that Stiles doesn't want to be seen during his heat.

It does get worse and Stiles goes back to his bed, feeling his hole getting wet. He isn't sure how much time has passed when he hears Derek coming in.

"Hey, are you okay?"

Stiles nods, his eyes closed, focused on just getting through the day.

Derek says something again and Stiles tries to nod even as he's not sure what Derek's talking about,
the words flying over his head, he can only try to bear his flaming skin, biting back on a whine.

He probably isn't successful cause Derek's suddenly next to him, petting his head, saying something about the heat plan they've made yesterday in a shushing, gentle tone.

Stiles doesn't need words, or plans, he needs to do-

something, just to move-

he moans, feeling sick and imbalanced.

There is a wave of cold and he shivers, realizing Derek's taking off his shirt, then his boxers. He is naked as well now, and Stiles regrets not being in the right state of mind to truly appreciate it as he should, he can only notice Derek's red alpha eyes, but then Derek is touching him and finally the burning eases down, even if just a bit.

Derek lays behind him, Stiles' back flushed against his chest, and Derek keeps his hands moving, smelling Stiles and continues to talk to him. It's okay, almost nice until it's really not enough. Stiles starts shifting, moving a little, letting out an openly erotic moan as he suddenly feels erection pressing against his back. He shifts, trying to get it inside, his hole getting so wet he can sense it leaking down his thigh.

Derek finally moves as well, but instead of doing what Stiles clearly wants him to do, he pulls Stiles to lay down on his back and Stiles can feel Derek's tongue on his nipples. He probably reacts to it, but can't be sure since Derek moves further down, to his stomach and then to his length-

and takes it inside his mouth.

Stiles can hear filthy, wet noises, then realizes with a start that it's him and Derek making them. He arches his back in pleasure as Derek finally, finally starts fingering him. His hands are thicker than Stiles', the ache of being empty subsiding with each thrust. Stiles moves with him, deepening the motions, moaning and whimpering when even that's not enough. He's probably saying something, trying to get Derek to fuck him like he needs it-

Derek groans and turns Stiles so that he is laying on his stomach again. Stiles can't bring himself to be ashamed of the way he presents himself, his ass upwards, legs wide open, his hole retracting.

He waits for few seconds, fistin the sheets, biting them to muffle the sounds he's making, just – tries to endure. As soon as he can feel the blunt pressure of Derek's length, Derek's hands gripping his hips hard, Derek's sack when he bottoms out, the muffling doesn't matter anymore. Stiles cries out, almost begging for more, pressing around Derek's cock.

It's as if Derek stays indifferent to whatever Stiles says, though, going slow, careful not to cause any harm. Stiles' mind is hazy, the words, pleads and curses, spilling from his mouth as he tries to hurry up the pace, yet Derek's almost tender with the way his hands are petting Stiles' hair, his arms and back.

Stiles is far too gone to care about his pride which is the only explanation he can offer, apart from his feelings, as-obvious-as-they-are-but-wait-not-for-Derek, for calling Derek his alpha.

At least it seems to affect Derek, he finally moves faster. Stiles keeps making sounds, half-formed words, and Derek knots him.

Stiles whimpers, feeling the pressure, and reaches for his cock, trying to get the edge off. Derek stops him, though, takings both of Stiles' hand and pinning them over Stiles' head. Stiles may call him his
alpha again, he really can't be sure of anything at this point, but he knows he feels Derek's fingers wrapping around his length, he knows he feels Derek biting his neck, he knows he finally comes, the image of white lines on Derek's hand clear in his mind.

He feels marginally better now, kept close to Derek. The alpha hugs him from behind, continues to touch him. It's grounding, warm, and safe, and Stiles should hate it for having it with Derek, of all fucking people Derek, so he doesn't think at all.

When the knot is down, Derek checks if he's alright, cleans them, gives Stiles water and some fruits.

It's not long before Stiles gets restless, Derek holding his neck to give him some semblance of stabilization, and then the things start getting fuzzy again, the want even stronger-

Still, Stiles' heat lasts one day.

He is too exhausted to say anything as Derek leaves in the evening. He may pretend being too exhausted.

It's not that bad.

As long as he doesn't let himself think that Derek – this Derek – *this standing right before him Derek* – had a knot inside him just yesterday, he is fine.

And let's be honest, Stiles doesn't remember much anyway. The whole day feels more like a feverish dream. As conscious as he felt yesterday at times, as clear as the images and sounds seem to be in his mind – they all feel unreal.

It can't be the same for Derek, though, if he scent-mark-hugs Stiles longer, inhaling his smell, if he keeps glancing at him and sticks close the whole day.

Stiles kind of gets it, it must be weird for Derek, but when Kate passes them and Derek looks at her, turns away, and then glances at Stiles, he starts freaking out, because he could have said something-

he could have *spilled* something.

But it was his heat, Derek must know he wasn't in his right mind-

"So, uh, yesterday was weird, I guess, I don't remember," starts Stiles, smooth as ever, "but we're still friends, right?"

Derek just gazes at him for a minute. "Yeah. We're friends."

He sounds distant. Stiles grimaces and quickly changes the topic. "Your hair looks different today."

"Laura did something with a gel."

"You look good."

"It was supposed to make me popular," says Derek, his voice flat. "It just makes me look like a twink."

"Oh, please, if anyone here looks like a twink it would be me."

"Your hair's normal."
"In what universe is my hair normal? I keep combing it with my fingers. I have a permanent bed-hair."

"Are you seriously arguing with me about being a twink?"

"I choose my battles, thank you. I'm way more twink-y than you. It's an argument for my sexiness," explains Stiles. He glances at Danny, passing them by. "Hey, Danny, out of me and Derek, I look more like a twink, right? And can you see me sashaying and tell me if it's sexy? Con-crit's welcome."

Derek gives him an incredulous look. "No."

Derek laughs. It's his full, open, bright laugh and it's amazing how much it changes him. Stiles smiles but his expression quickly dims as he sees Kate.

"Kate's going to pass us for the third time already on this corridor," he says. "Come on, Derek, just two more days to the dance. No time to waste," he cheers, unconvinced.

Derek nods, turning serious. He shifts his weight, hesitating but leaves without saying anything.

They actually look good together. Kate is beautiful, with her self-confident grin she seems almost dangerous and it goes well with Derek's closed-off posture, which appeals predatory. There is so much more to Derek, though, Stiles kept discovering his new sides – how shy he is, gentle at times just to turn almost aggressive when angry, playful, yet serious and honest.

Derek's saying something now, Kate keeps nodding, looking at him. Finally she answers with a smile, Derek nods, turns away and walks back to Stiles.

It's been less than 2 minutes. What is he doing?

Stiles frowns and eyes him. He takes in Derek's relaxed stance, the way he stands taller and his stomach drops with a sudden realization.

Kate agreed.

That's it.

There is no way he and Derek will spend this much time together again. God, he'll miss him.

It's been nice. It was good. None of his hopes matter now.

He glances at Derek, feeling heavy. "She agreed?"

Derek hesitates for a second with an answer. "I didn't ask her to come with me to the dance."

"What?" asks Stiles, dumb. "Why?"

"I don't want her to come to the dance with me." He turns to Stiles, his expression serious, genuine. "You were right. I didn't know her."

Stiles stares at him, weakened with a sudden wave of guilt. "I'm sorry-"

"Don't be. It's not your fault."

Stiles could've tried harder for them. God, he can't even think about helping Derek with Kate more, it feels wrong, but he could've tried.
He needs to see Scott.

Scott's his long lost twin brother, no one knows about it since evil forces separated them at birth but Stiles is sure of that, because at this moment Scott calls, "Stiles? Come here!"

Relieved, he stands up, not daring to look at Derek.

"Dude," says Scott, "you spent your heat with Derek?"

"Louder, Scott," Stiles hisses, coloring.

Scott rolls his eyes in response like an asshole he can be, before growing strangely determined again. "You should tell him you like him."

"What? No."

"Why not?"

"I told you about Kate."

Scott looks at him, horrified. "He is dating Kate now? Are they going to the dance together?"

"No, but – okay, just tell me what's your deal."

Scott gazes at him for a beat. "You don't know;" he says, lower. "Stiles, he bit you. During your heat, he bit your neck and the mark's still there."
"Dude, this shirt's obscene," comments Stiles. Derek shifts, uneasy under his scrutiny and, no, that's even worse.

"Oh god, don't move," he pleads. "I feel like I'm watching porn."

Derek makes a weird face.

"Actually, I thought you'd hate wearing clothes like that."

"I do, but Laura made me take it. It's her another attempt at making me more popular at school."

"Define made me."

"There was no other shirt available."

"...oh."

"Yeah." Derek flexes his hands, glancing at the people around them. "I feel like everyone's looking at me."

"They are looking at you. Come on, it's hard not to. I mean, your arms' muscles are staring at them. And, god, your nipples, your nipples are staring at them, this is surreal. No, don't blush, why are you blushing, I'm receiving mixed signals here-"

"Mixed signals?"

"I'm under emotional turmoil, don't ask me questions, my brain's failing."

Derek smiles a little. Stiles turns away, his guts stirring low seeing Derek like this. He notices Kate then, Derek doesn't, too busy focusing on the floor, overwhelmed with the attention he's getting. Kate shoots him a death glare.

Startled, Stiles stares at her but she walks away.

The situation explains itself later, when Kate bumps into Derek, not-so-accidentally spilling the water on the front of his shirt.

Now Derek looks like a porn star.

"Oh, sorry," she says, unapologetic.

They both stare at her this time, shocked. So Kate knows focusing on Derek's body is making him uncomfortable. She's observant, of course she's realized it even earlier – she just didn't care.
"You're such a pushover," she adds, gazing at Derek with almost disgust.

Keeping an eye contact with Kate, his mouth a thin line, Derek does the most amazing – or the dumbest shit ever, Stiles can't decide. He takes off his shirt – still standing in the middle of the corridor in high school.

A drop of water slides down his neck and onto his chest, god, this is no time for this, Stiles.

Of course, that's when Deaton sees them.

As Derek leaves with him to search for a new tee, Stiles walks away, deciding to just ignore Kate. He doesn't want to have anything to do with her.

He spends the next class thinking about the bite. It has to mean something, right? It always does. He touches the mark at the back of his neck. The skin feels tender there. He can imagine Derek laying on top of him, completely covering him, deep inside and biting down, as if stating that Stiles is Derek's-

no point going down this road. It ends with hopeless pining.

Because there is another explanation. Heat messed with Stiles' head, so why wouldn't it mess with Derek? It could've been a heat of the moment – hah – thing. Then, Derek came back to school and said he doesn't want to go to the dance with Kate, because what else could he do? The meaning of the claiming mark's obvious. Usually.

And Kate saw them together many times, she knew they've been 'dating' earlier, Derek couldn't exactly lie that it wasn't him who spent the heat with Stiles in such a situation.

Obviously, Stiles just needs to ask Derek about the mark, but he doesn't want to. There is too much risk of ending everything they have.

So they meet when the school is over, Stiles silent, Derek gazing at him, his eyes searching as he asks, "We meet at the dance tomorrow, right?"

"Yeah," Stiles nods, then frowns. "You're going alone, right? Do you want to pretend to be dating?"

"No." Derek half-smiles. "Everyone thinks we're dating anyway."

Right.

Stiles huffs out an awkward laugh in response, unsure if blocking Derek's possibilities to really date is a good thing.

Whoo. You can do this, Stiles.

Whoo, he breathes out.

"This boy I saw earlier, Derek, will he be at the dance as well?" inquires his dad.

"Yeah."

Sheriff nods. "Ask him to come to the dinner on Sunday. We'll have salmagundi," he says in a mild voice.
Stiles' so overwhelmed with the dance he almost falls for the deception. "Dad! I told you we're not dating."

"Mhm." He sounds agreeable. "He's *only* spent the heat with you."

"Dad," groans Stiles.

"Dinner, Stiles."

*Whooooooofuck.*

He has no idea if he looks good in the suit. He has no idea if his hair looks better styled like that, who is he kidding, the hairdo will be ruined by the end of the night. He has no idea why exactly is he this stressed with the stupid dance.

It must be worse than he thought because Danny actually stops when seeing him and waves.

Stiles waves back, grateful. Danny's sweet.

But Danny turns and starts walking towards him. Jesus, Stiles must be shouting CRISIS with all his being, not just inside his head.

"Hi," Danny takes him all in. "You're looking good, Stiles."

Stiles snorts.

Danny glances at him, surprised. "I'm serious."

"Uh, sure," he says, awkward, completely unconvinced. "Thanks for trying to compliment me, though. That's nice of you."

Danny smiles. "You're not usually this honest. That's nice of you as well."

"Returning the favor," Stiles shrugs.

"You're just sweet-talking me now."

Stiles grins, his confidence back. Flirting he can do. Flirting's not serious, flirting's about fun. "Is it working?" he asks, cocking his eyebrow.

Before Danny can answer, however, Derek comes to them, standing close to Stiles. "Hey," he says, his voice cold. Stiles turns to look at him, surprised to find Derek's stormy expression.

He makes a mistake of glancing down and his ability to flirt, sweet-talk or just talk flies out of the window. Derek's stunning. Gorgeous.

He flushes, realizing he's been staring a beat too long. Danny smirks at him.

"Just for this, consider your sweetness gone," Stiles narrows his eyes at him. Danny huffs out a laugh and walks away.

"What's wrong?"

Derek shrugs. "I wanted to introduce you to Laura."

"Oh, I can't wait, the infamous Derek's Disaster In Making," says Stiles excitedly.
"Excuse me?"

Funny how small the world is.

"That's Laura," explains Derek.

"I take it Derek's been complaining to you about me," states the dark-haired girl.

"Yes," Stiles nods, his face straight. "He's been crying on my shoulder."

Laura cackles, clearly evil.

Stiles grins in response but then glances at Derek. "Seriously, though, he isn't good with that popularity stuff."

"I know. It's like he was made to be teased."

"Yeah, he's adorable."

Derek watches them, bewildered.

"That's not exactly the word I'd use-" starts Laura.

"Come on, he's blushing already. Adorable."

"At least I don't blush up to my neck," retorts Derek.

"What-, oh, I know what you're doing here. Deflecting's your new ability, huh?"

Derek scowls, still flushed. "No, I was raising a perfectly valid point."

"Look at you, getting all hot and bothered."

Instead of laughing or joining the snark as he usually does, Derek gazes at him, oddly intense and asks, "Is that how you see me?"

Surprised, Stiles stares right back at him. "I-," he starts, but this feels suddenly serious. He licks his lips nervously.

Derek traces the movement. It makes Stiles' skin flare, he must be blushing all over-

"Okay," interrupts the moment Laura. "I should go. Derek, try to talk with at least one more person besides me and Stiles."

"I already did that."

"Really?" asks Laura, turning to Stiles.

"Does 'hey' count? He said that to Danny."

Laura shoots a glare to Derek. "No, it doesn't count. Stiles, watch over him, okay?"

Even if she asks it rather offhandedly, the question feels loaded. It doesn't really matter though – the answer's same.

"Okay."
They watch Laura go and Stiles turns to Derek. "See, after I asked if deflecting's your new ability, you could've countered it with something like, are you interested in my other new abilities? Insert wiggling your eyebrows here."

"You're ridiculous. Let's go dance."

"Wait, you actually want to dance with me? So you were teasing me back then, with Scott. So you were flirting with me!"

"Stiles. Don't talk, just dance."

"Is that a reference to Lady Gaga's-"

"Stiles, I swear to god."

"That one was your own fault!"

Derek just smiles in an answer and pulls him in to start dancing. It's closer than how they normally stand, closer than when they've trained. Stiles can feel the tension in the air. It's not a bad kind, though – rather, it's like a space for new possibilities, like a chance to redefine what they already have. Stiles glances at Derek, hesitant about the situation but Derek still watches him, his smile had turned to something more private. He is focused solely on Stiles, like they are the only ones in the room.

Derek continues looking at him, slowly drawing his left hand to Stiles' neck. It's a light contact, barely the tips of Derek's fingers touching the mark, yet it feels so intense Stiles' lips part with a silent exhale. He jerks his eyes to Derek's, but the alpha doesn't do anything more, giving him time to decide, letting him decide what happens now.

Stiles could joke. Turn the situation completely, asking Derek if he really listens to Lady Gaga. He wouldn't have to say what's actually on his mind. But it would also mean even more time pretending, faking something, hesitating, withholding some things, avoiding others.

He could also meet Derek's eyes and be honest. Be truthful, real.

He takes a small breath and meets Derek's gaze—just for his courage to leave him all at once.

"I- I have to go to Scott," he blurts out.

He doesn't dare look at Derek, leaving in a hurry. How is he supposed to know if he makes the right decision? Is risking the friendship they have worth it?

He notices Kate, standing nearby.

Oh fuck, Kate.

He has completely forgotten about her. Jesus, his life's not just a mess anymore, it's a fucking salmagundi. Derek flirting with Kate, Stiles' heat, the bite – none of it makes sense jumbled together.

Kate's eyes slide over him, not stopping, and she turns to some girl next to her and they start talking. She appears completely immersed in the conversation.

So she ignores him. That's actually relieving – Stiles wants nothing else but to be left alone, him and Derek.
He starts walking again, focused on finding Scott. If none of it makes sense, he just won't think about it for now.

It doesn't work.

Finally, he can see Scott and Allison.

"Scott, I need-" he stops, because what does he need? He slides his hand down his face and sighs. If he is to forget about Kate for a second and if he is to imagine it's only about him and Derek, the answer's simple. And let's be honest, Kate had her revenge at school already. Anything more and she'll get pathetic – she can't risk that. She has to leave Derek alone.

Still, Kate's beautiful, and Derek's way too good-looking, so-

"Scott, I need a self-confidence boost, tell me I'm sexy."

"Dude," Scott grimaces, startled.

"What, like it's worse than hearing a love confession, love letter and a love poem about Allison," complains Stiles.

"Dude!"

"Ugh, fine," Stiles rolls his eyes.

"You are sexy, Stiles, but only when you're not conscious of it," replies Allison.

Stiles turns to her, surprised."Thanks, Allison. But when am I ever conscious of my sexiness?"

"Dude," interrupts Scott again.

"Oh, suck it, Scott."

"D-"

"Scott, I love you, but if you say dude one more time I can't be held responsible. Stiles," Allison turns to him, "just don't flirt."

"Huh?"

"Be honest."

"Thanks," he repeats after a second, nodding his head. "You two are my favorite people."

"Derek's your favorite," reminds him Scott.

"Derek doesn't count, he is my romantic interest."

Scott huffs out a laugh and Stiles leaves, shooting him a smile, reinforced with the words.

Derek's sitting close to the stage, alone, closed off. Stiles comes up to him and Derek raises his head, his expression guarded.

It breaks Stiles' heart.

He has no idea what to do now. The atmosphere's different, he can't just go with the flow. He remembers Allison's words – he should just tell the truth, right?
"I really want to hug and kiss you," he blurts out.

Derek's eyes widen in surprise.

"No, I mean – I wanted to say – shit. Just what the fuck is going on, Derek?" He looks at the alpha, frowning. "I was sure you wanted to be with Kate – I saw your freaking love-struck face, okay. But you were so unclear with everything, kept spending so much time with me, talking, hugging me every day. And then comes my heat. I think I'm fucked, hah, god, I start to hate those puns. But you bit me and I saw you breaking up whatever-could-be with Kate, but well, you can't really do anything else with this mark on my neck, right?" he asks, exasperated, ignoring Derek's hurt look. "I haven't done anything because I honestly had no fucking idea what I could do. Besides coming clear and losing this – this thing with you I'm actually serious about for once in my fucking life."

Stiles turns away, his breathing labored. He feels horrible. That's why he hates serious – it hurts. It always fucking hurts.

"I'm sorry," says Derek, astonished with the outburst. "I didn't mean- I liked you, you were my friend, we grew closer but I was still attracted to Kate. She's beautiful, intelligent, we started talking – you were still there – and Kate's kind of – ruthless. You don't even know how many times I struggled through a conversation with her, thinking I could've stayed with you. Wanting to go back to you." Derek pauses to take a breath, doesn't meet Stiles' eyes. "I was – confused. I couldn't understand why would I want to get to know Kate better, how I could stare at her, thinking about the way she walks, and then talk with you, spend time with you so easily, and yet when you had heat I couldn't imagine you with anyone else."

Stiles stares at him, shocked.

"You were in heat – Stiles, you're so beautiful. You just kept talking – and I bit you. I'm so sorry."

Stiles starts shaking his head. "No, I wasn't exactly opposed-"

"You were in heat, that's not-"

"I mean later. I wasn't opposed." Yeah, okay, his blush's down to his neck and his hairdo's gone, of course. "It was – grounding."

Derek gazes at him, his expression turning from serious to a hopeful one.

"But, dude, I don't think I could do polyamory thing." Stiles chuckles nervously. "I mean, the jealousy was killing me with Kate, I don't want to multiply that."

Stiles looks at the ground, biting his lip. It was supposed to be funny. He can't even pretend to smile at the words.

Derek doesn't answer, so finally Stiles looks up, just to gape at Derek's red alpha eyes.

"I don't want polyamory," he states coldly. He seems furious with the assumption.

"But – there was me and Kate-"

"Stiles, you're my mate. Don't talk about the others-" he stops himself, his mouth thin.

"What?"

Stiles' confusion must do a thing because Derek closes his eyes and when he opens them, they're
"I'm sorry," he repeats. "I know it must've looked differently from your perspective but-" he sighs, frustrated. "You're my mate. I was confused. I love you."

Stiles stares at him, trying to keep the hope inside, for now, until he has all the needed information. He'll come at this, you know, rationally. "Are you serious?" he asks, hesitating.

Derek nods, looking at him.

"How can you know this is – mate stuff?"

Derek's eyes flash red again. "It's your scent. And I have trouble with my control around you."

Stiles laughs after a beat, disbelieving, but well, "that actually explains all the hugging and the close proximity thing."

Derek smiles as well, suddenly appearing softer.

"Didn't you say you'd rather be with an alpha than omega?"

Derek shrugs, awkward. "It's just – you," he says. Then his eyes drop to Stiles' arms. "Besides, you're unexpectedly strong."

Stiles flushes at the attention, his heartbeat quickening. "My dad-" he starts but Derek nods.

"I know, he's told me." He freezes at the words and glances at Stiles, who narrows his eyes.

"What do you mean, he has told you?"

"I met him when I came to help you with your heat, he was just leaving."

"Oh my god," groans Stiles. "What did he do?"

"Well," Derek pauses, "he's really good with interrogations."

Stiles groans again.

"Seeing a gun this close is really different, you know?"

"I'm sorry," says Stiles. He combs his hair with his hand, somewhat nervous.

"So what was it about kissing me?" asks Derek slyly.

Stiles snorts, embarrassed. Everything about this feels so intense, so much fuller than when he's just joking, keeping others at an arm's length.

"You could still be better at flirting," he replies finally.

"Nothing's lost. I have the best teacher, right?"

"Yeah," Stiles nods, trying to hide his smile, but Derek doesn't let him, taking his face in his hands and stroking his cheek, his face turning serious, caring, and then he is kissing Stiles slowly, sweetly.

Then they just breathe, standing close to each other.

"Wait," Stiles looks up at Derek, "is it a kind of thing with a label or not really?"
Derek smiles and leans in to kiss Stiles on the corner of his mouth. "Boyfriends?"

Stiles nods, feeling dazed. Then he makes a face, remembering what the question was actually about. "My dad wants you to come to dinner on Sunday."

"Okay."

Stiles squints at him, immediately suspicious. "Okay?"

Derek shrugs. "You met Laura."

"Dude, that's different. I bonded with her over teasing you."

"First, don't call me dude. If you can't stay with Derek, I liked my alpha," he smirks.

Stiles groans, his cheeks coloring even more, impossibly, and punches Derek's arm.

"And second," Derek raises an eyebrow at him and starts smiling slowly, predatory, keeping an eye contact with him.

"No way," gasps Stiles, laughing. "You won't bond with my dad over teasing me!"

"He's an alpha."

Stiles laughs again and shoves him. "You're such an asshole."

"And a dork, apparently," he adds with a straight face.

Stiles shakes his head. It strikes him again how not-alpha and not-omega he can behave with Derek. "Come on, I'll get you to Scott, you can bond with him over being alphas, occasional assholes, and dorks, and I will keep my promise to Laura."

"Laura's overdoing it. I talked with Danny already."

"You said hey and looked like you wanted to kill him."

"You can't really blame me."

"What? What do you mean?"

Derek glances at him, surprised. "He was flirting with you."

"Yeah," Stiles shrugs. "It was a joke."

"He seemed too interested in you for that."

Stiles laughs. "You can't be serious."

"I am. You look amazing tonight."

Stiles flushes at how honest Derek sounds.

"Do you want to dance?"

"Are you trying to delay meeting with Scott? Or can't you get enough of me?"

"Both," replies Derek without missing a beat.
Okay, this strategy's not working. Derek only gazes at him, smiling at his blush before leaning in for another kiss.

They may be getting somewhat lost in it, that's why they stumble on another two guys, dancing.

"Sorry," manages Stiles, glancing at-
huh, so Danny's suffering from a blush reaching his neck as well.

"We are terrible at this dancing thing," he says to Derek.

"Can't say I care."

Stiles laughs. God, it's like he is laughing all the time, he feels giddy with the happiness. He's never let himself be this genuine, real with anyone besides Scott – sometimes – and his dad.

"Come on, I want you to meet Scott."

Derek nods, tentative.

As they can see Scott and Allison, Derek flexes his hands, nervous but determined. Stiles can't help a smile, looking at him and kisses him again, trying to calm him down. Knowing Derek's this stressed and yet choosing to still be here – for Stiles, just as he came for Stiles during his heat – makes him overwhelmingly happy. He hides his face in Derek's neck for a second.

"I think I love you," he says quietly against Derek's skin. He doesn't even look at Derek, yet the confession leaves him feeling vulnerable, so immediately he tries to lighten the mood. "Even if you don't like chemistry and are a history nerd."

Derek smiled at him. "I like you even if you flirt all the time and make bad puns."

"Even with my everywhere-reaching blush?"

"Especially with your everywhere-reaching blush."

Stiles groans. "You're making me blush again. You know what will be the cause of my death? Overblushing."

Derek smirks. "So I'm making you hot as burning?"

Stiles gapes at him. "Oh my god. You just flirted and made a bad pun. You've come so far, Derek, I'm so proud of you."

Derek huffs out a laugh. "Come on, they are waiting for us."

Looking at all the events leading to this moment here, it seems unbelievable. It was such a mess. They were both so unclear, confused – yeah, it was a fucking salmagundi. Apparently, life's like that. Throw in some vegetables, meat, nuts and fruits and flowers cause why not, this recipe's fucked up, and hope it will work out.

Derek smiles at him softly, Stiles beams back and yeah. Somehow, they did make it work.
Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!