Stiles and Derek have been happily mated. The pack is doing well, but in hopes of creating alliances for it to do better, Derek accepts a neighboring pack's request to allow two wolves to join the Hale-McCall pack for a full moon cycle. They hope to form a blood-tie, or at least a long term friendship between the two packs. The issue is Kohona, the tribal leader's daughter, has her eyes set on an unavailable alpha wolf. This could have drastic consequences for their young emissary, however...

Beta read by the amazing Splash_of__bi! Cannot thank you enough!!

Jokingly I'm adding this WARNING after having two separate comments talk about heart palpitations and others stating they are physically shaking or experiencing high blood pressure after reading the first few chapters....

WARNING: read with caution if you have a pre existing heart condition, Derek and the Pack may cause you to be upset!!
Thank you so much for reading!

Beta read by Splash_of_bi! She is awesome!!
Chapter 1

Life in Beacon Hills certainly isn't as exciting as it once was. The pack is established. Derek and Scott are co-alphas. An unusual setup, but it works for them. After high school, the pack went their separate ways to college, but everyone came back. Scott and Kira are engaged and mated. Lydia and Jackson got married and divorced and married again, and they are only twenty-six and twenty-seven, respectively. The two chose not to give each other mating bites, as it's a rather permanent binding. Isaac and Allison are also married and mated, they have a small son called Lucas. He is a miniature Isaac, with adorable golden curls, but holds the huntress’s bright personality and keen eyes. While Lucas is a human, and only five, you can't get anything past the smart boy. Erica and Boyd have been together the longest, but neither has yet to propose. They enjoy their relationship the way it is, and are simply not ready for change. They quietly returned from vacation one day with matching bites on their necks, however, and have yet to share the intimate story with anyone. Cora is recently single, she claims her brand of sass is an acquired taste.

Derek returned to Beacon Hills, after his pilgrimage to find himself, as an alpha again. He earned his red eyes while in his full shift form, connecting with his true self. Deaton said it is likely he never fully lost his alpha ability, but simply dimmed the spark for a while. Stiles developed his own spark. He is a mage now, able to wield magic with sheer force of will alone. His magic flows through the lands. By binding himself to the Nemeton, he was able to bring peace to the unstable town. Beacon Hills is no longer a beacon for the evil. In some ways they are a beacon of hope. The Hale-McCall pack has made a reputation for itself of helping other supernaturals in times of need. After college, Stiles officially accepted the offer to serve as emissary and performed the tricky little spell with the help from the Supreme Council to tie himself to the land, and by doing so, subjected himself to the council’s authority, but it also gives the Beacon Hills pack quite the advantage. Mages are rare and usually solitary supernatural beings. For one to choose to serve a pack is even more rare, amplifying Stiles's connection to the earth, and in turn the pack’s. It's a tricky thing, however, while stronger when united together, Stiles ultimately becomes vulnerable, as anything that damages that connection affects the mage in the physical sense as well as his magical abilities. Because of this, Stiles keeps his identity as secret as possible when assisting others in their time of need.

Stiles and Derek have finally stopped dancing around each other and started officially dating a little over three years ago. They had fallen into each other's beds quite a few times over the years prior, so when they became serious, they became serious. Derek suggested the mating bite on their six month anniversary, Stiles said yes on their one year. He promptly found out that he would need the council’s permission to be tied to another in such a way. With the amount of magic flowing through him, binding spirits would lead to a wonderful and powerful connection, but with that came a risk. Should anything come between the two of them, the consequences could be dire for Stiles, threatening not only his life, but the stability of Beacon Hills itself. Stiles spent the entire next year proving the strength of their relationship to the council, while diligently studying under their tutelage and was granted permission by the time the couple hit their two year anniversary. It was a beautiful little ceremony in the Hale house back yard. They chose to bite each other in private that night. Stiles’s bite is on his chest above his heart. Derek’s is on his inner thigh. As soon as the
mating bites were placed, they both felt an instant deeper connection.

While the supernatural world is familiar with the Hale-McCall pack by name, they are rarely recognized by sight. Often, it is shocking how young and small they truly are when others come across them. Especially their emissary, who has been rumored to be a cranky, eighty-year-old man. This rumor is fueled by Stiles's ability to age himself at will. It makes for a wonderful disguise. The Beacon Hills pack thrives in the rumors surrounding them. Some say they are all alphas. Others say they only have one. Others, still, claim they all have magical capabilities and that is why the Supreme Council monitors them so closely. It gives them the element of surprise when it's necessary.

While Scott does a fantastic job delegating on the home-front, it's surprisingly Derek who goes out and interacts with the neighboring packs, forming treaties and maintaining peace. The system works for them.

It was on a trip to visit the Tillamook pack in Oregon, that Derek was faced with an interesting proposition. This pack is quite large and has been around for centuries, they even prefer to go by the name of tribe instead of pack, and many are full Native American. They asked Derek about allowing several members of their tribe to come stay with Derek in hopes of establishing a permanent relationship between the two packs in the future. Cora was the only single immediate member of his pack, but they did have several pack-adjacent members that could perhaps suffice. It would be an honor for the Hale-McCalls to blood-tie with such an established pack. Joining packs by marriage is a very old way of doing things, but the ties are well respected and could lead to a permanent ally. The tribal leader, or alpha, decided that he would send his second born son Chayton and third born daughter Kohona home with Derek. The two would stay for a month and if they didn't form a personal relationship between the packs, they would hopefully form a permanent friendship. Chay was quiet and reserved, well built, and would probably get along well with Boyd. He wore his dark hair long and often had it tied up in a bun on the top of his head. His eyes were also dark and almond shaped, matching his younger sister’s perfectly. Her hair was long, curly, and unruly. She had a bubbly personality, funny and fast witted. She would probably get along well with Cora, Derek wondered if she was interested in women in such a way.

The two spent the remainder of the week getting to know Derek as he would soon be one of their alphas for a full moon cycle. Derek explained the co-alpha authority and talked about his pack to them, so they would have a general idea of who was who and who was dating whom. They both expressed interest in getting to know the Hale-McCall emissary as his reputation preceded him. Derek knew Stiles valued his privacy, and so the alpha chose to speak very little about him, keeping him anonymous.

Derek had stayed with the tribe for their full moon run, and had quite enjoyed it, but he deeply missed his pack and mate. He was excited to leave early the next day and start the journey home. It was apparent on the trip that Kohona definitely preferred the company of men. She made several small comments towards the alpha indicating her particular thoughts on his appearance and how much she appreciated it. Fortunately, both Tillamook wolves were able to full shift as well, and
they spent the majority of their trip in their wolf form. Derek quite enjoyed traveling like this, less
talking required on his part, and as no one else in his pack had managed the full shift, it was a
welcome change to have company while blazing through the countryside.

They arrived as wolves in the Hale house backyard a day later, signifying the beginning of their
one month bonding period. The entire pack was there to greet them. What could go wrong?

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It was late Spring and while the day was warm, it was far cooler now the sun had set. Despite the
early hour of the night, crickets could be heard and the moon, only a night after being full, brightly
lit up the backyard. As soon as the three wolves stepped foot in the Hale-McCall territory, Stiles
was aware of their presence. He poured himself a glass of red wine and went outside to wait. It
didn't take long for Kira to track him down and join him, followed by Erica and Isaac. The four
awaited their new and returning pack mates (no matter how temporary) eagerly. The wolves could
smell the want rolling off Stiles in waves. Usually when Derek returned from longer trips such as
these the house was off limits for a day or two. Add into account that it was Friday, which was
their date night… but, as they have guests to host, they are actually planning a large formal dinner
on the rarely used dining room.

“They here yet?” Cora asked as she stepped outside, a glass of wine with her own mix of wolfsbane
in one hand. She gets tipsy quickly off the mixture and the rosy tinge to her cheeks clearly showed
she was on her second glass.

“Not yet,” Stiles was unable to sit still and jumped at the chance to answer her question.

“Stiles, hon, you need to calm it, let some magic out.” Lydia said as she joined them. She was
without her usual Friday night glass. She worked at Beacon Hills High school as a math and
science teacher, and despite teaching all the AP courses and having the top students in the school,
Friday night was a welcome reprieve for the redhead.

Stiles did as she suggested. He walked up to the small herb garden at the left side of the porch and
let some magic flow. The herbs quickly doubled in size and all sported heaps of fresh green leaves,
ready for picking. That's when he felt it, the connection he shared with the alpha. Derek led the
rustic brown wolves on either side of him as he emerged from the tree line. Ruby red eyes on the
giant black shaggy wolf stared deeply at the pale young man, whose own round orbs refused to
blink or look away. The two blocked out the world around them, it was like a scene from a movie.
The large wolf trampled up quickly and shifted, catching a pair of shorts tossed his way from
Boyd, and smoothly putting them on without a stumble in his stride. He had almost reached his
target when he was interrupted by a sharp cry of ‘excuse me’ to his right. The alpha faltered in his
step once he looked over.
Kohona had also shifted, but, as her brother was holding both of their bags in his muzzle, she was
completely naked in all her caramel, flawless glory. Her long wavy hair covered her top while she
held a hand over her other modest parts, clearly unashamed. Derek was for a loss of words and
without thinking he grabbed his bag off the floor and handed her a large shirt that skimpily covered
just enough. That shirt would carry her scent for weeks…

Derek wasn't the only one speechless, no one had much to say, until Stiles’s face lit up in a huge
grin. “Welcome home alpha!”

Chayton shifted and changed in the shadows and then Derek introduced the two newcomers to his
pack, leaving off Stiles's official title.

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Scott had merrily welcomed them and showed off the kitchen and living quarters, as well as their
bedrooms. The only three pack members to live at the Hale house full time were Derek, Cora, and
Stiles, but everyone had their own space, and there were plenty of extra guest bedrooms. Much to
the group's satisfaction, Kohona returned from her new room fully dressed, although she left the
alpha's shirt on. The combined scent was probably enough for the wolves of the pack to welcome
her as one of their own.

Isaac and Allison had done the majority of the cooking, although Kira made dessert, but that didn't
stop Scott from showing off the full dining room with an air of pride, as if it was all his doing. In
some ways, as alpha, it was. The Tillamook wolves were interested to see the seating arrangements
for a pack with two alphas. But, as this was Derek's house, he had always had the head of the table.
Scott would sit on his left and Kira next to him. Stiles had pulled back the chair on Derek's right
with the intention to sit there himself, but Kohona had thanked him as she sat down, assuming that
would be her spot. Chayton quickly took the location next to her. If anyone found this exchange
odd, they didn't say anything. Derek sent apologetic eyes towards his mate who sat on the other
side of the table next to Jackson and across from Lucas.

Dinner was nice. A bit quiet at first, but Kohona was really outgoing and easily carried a
conversation with Lydia, Cora, Erica, and Allison about clothes and trends. She wanted to go to the
local mall as soon as possible and the girls had several official plans set for shopping trips. As
expected, Chayton was much more reserved, but carried on a small conversation with Boyd about
pack life and structure in a tribe. Jackson was late arriving that evening and Lydia and him were
having heated glares with each other rather than actually talking about it. But that left Jackson
somber and out of it throughout dinner. Isaac talked happily with Scott across the table about future
book ideas. He was an amateur writer, hoping to make it big one day. This left Stiles the only one
on his end of the table without a conversation besides Lucas, so he asked the little guy about
kindergarten and was informed of how Leslie Greenburg would one day be his wife, but she was also going to marry their friend Juan, who would also be his husband. The life of a five year old had gotten much more intense in the last twenty years. This conversation didn't stop Stiles from noticing Kohona place a hand on his mate’s forearm with a rather familiar motion. This sparked Erica to kick him from under the table and mouth ‘Stop smelling so jealous!’ it was hard not to, but Stiles knew a little trick that could mask his scent. For the rest of the night, no one could smell him, not that anyone noticed the change.

After dinner, Stiles made his way up to their master bedroom to wait for his mate so they could have a much needed conversation and make out session. The bedrooms all carried wards that make them sound proof. Derek took a remarkably long time to find him. Stiles immediately dropped his scent guard, wanting his alpha to smell his lust and desire. His mate recoiled, wrinkling his nose.

“Why do you smell so…so jealous?” Derek asked. The scent of jealousy must be rotten eggs from the way his lover held himself at a distance face still scrunched up.

Stiles immediately put up his guard again. “It's hard not to, I see her all over you and you’ve been practically ignoring me from the moment you've come home.” Stiles responded defensively.

“Ignored you? You're the one who carried an hour long conversation with a toddler during dinner, our first dinner together in a month.” Derek accused.

“I'm sorry Der, my seat was taken by your new house guest, and no one thought it wise to point out that the right is reserved for your mate.” The emissary’s temper rose a little with that jibe.

“She's our guest and it's really important that this goes well, the Tillamook are an extraordinary large and well respected pack. They wouldn't even give us the time of day, being as small as we are in comparison, if it wasn't for all the rumors that fly around about our magical emissary.” The alpha fired back.

“You can't possibly be implying that it's my fault that she seems to think you are single. You've spent a month with them! And shifted together, didn't she see my mark?” Stiles asked, a bit hurt at the realization that Kohona did indeed assume Derek was available for her to act the way she has.

“I sure hope not, that's a rather private location!” Derek barked. He sighed, “Look, it's really important this goes well. She and her brother could form a blood-tie with one of us, someone who is single!” The alpha added quickly as he saw the twisted look of hurt cross Stiles's face at those words. “Even if they don't, this bonding experience could lead to years worth of friendship and a strong ally. This is important.”
Stiles took a deep breath. “Okay, I guess. I think you should tell her you're taken, it's rude to
assume.”

“Stiles! You don't need to make an issue out of this, it's only a month, a moon cycle, we have
forever, you and me…” Derek tried to reason.

“A month of me what, pretending we're not together?” Stiles came closer, “I missed you,
Sourwolf.” He added affectionately.

Stiles leaned in for a kiss, but was interrupted by a knock on the door. To The mage’s
dissatisfaction, Derek opened it.

Scott was stood there looking a bit relieved to see they were both still dressed. “I think it's
important that you stay downstairs for a while longer,” he addressed Derek. “The packs are
mingling well, but the guests seemed happier when you were around, more comfortable.”

“Yeah I'll be right down.”

Stiles dropped his guard in rage at the words that dismissed his earlier concerns. Both Scott and
Derek gave him a look of disgust. Maybe the smell compounds poorly when he has his scent guard
up? Either way, he fumbled as he quickly put on his shield again.

“Dude, why do you smell so, so wrong?” Scott asked, concerned.

“Jealousy Scott. He is jealous of Kohona.” Derek informed him.

Stiles quickly shut the door hoping none of the others overheard that. “She is all over you!” Stiles
whined a bit, stressing the word ‘you’.

“Come on dude, she's just friendly, she shifted in front of all of us, not just your mate. How do you
think The ladies felt at that? But she is so nice! She wants Kira to show her how she made tonight’s
cheesecake! I like her.” Scott piped in happily.
“What? No, she had her hands all over him and sat in my seat and she's wearing his shirt!” Stiles protested.

“Oh. You are a bit envious, aren’t you? That's not a good scent on you, man.” Scott added unhelpfully.

“Yeah, Stiles. They will be here for a month, maybe its best you stay at your dad's for a bit. At least until you get that smell under control. I don't want them to sense the jealousy. And you're the best at hiding your emotions when you want to but you've already let it slip twice now.” Derek looked hopeful.

“Leave? You want me to leave my home for a month while she stays here with you?” The emissary was shocked. How would this help lessen his green eyed tendencies? His dad’s house? His father remarried six months ago to a wonderful lady who had a young daughter of her own. Stiles was expected to go crash at their place for a whole month? His dad knew and understood the supernatural world but chose to stay out of it. Would he understand why his son was suddenly temporarily homeless? Did any of this matter to either one of the alphas in front of him?

It was obvious that the werewolves were frustrated with being unable to scent him. They both looked concerned and contemplative by Derek's request and Stiles's lack of a proper answer.

Stiles huffed. “Fine.” He disappeared into the walk-in closet to pack a duffel bag, half expecting at least one of them to follow and question him further, to make sure he was truly okay.

When he reappeared in his room, it was empty. He made his way out to his still trudging along with the help of magic, blue Jeep.

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While the pack all have jobs and lives of their own, there are two weekly events that are almost time-honored traditions. Saturday morning pack breakfast at the Hale house made by Stiles, himself, and Sunday afternoon training session. The latter usually is accompanied by a pack movie night.

Stiles crept out of his dad’s house quietly the next morning trying to avoid waking any of them. He folded up the blankets and pillow a very tired Lorraine had given him last night, and arranged the couch cushions so it wouldn't appear as if a full grown man had indented them the night before. He
made a quick stop to pick up everyone's favorites at the store and let himself into his home and started making breakfast.

Two hours later his large breakfast was very cold and sitting mostly untouched on the Kitchen counter. Cora had woken up and came down stairs, her hair a mess, mumbling about it being a late night and grabbed a bagel, claiming her stomach didn't feel right yet before returning to bed… Wolfsbane wine. Fed up with waiting, Stiles sent the breakfast pic to the pack's group text. He received a series of emoji from Erica he took to mean it looks good. And a text saying ‘makeup sex morning!!’ From Lydia. Which he took to mean she and Jackson wouldn't be able to make it. Everyone else must be sleeping in.

Thinking he might as well join his mate in morning snuggles, Stiles headed upstairs to find his bedroom door locked. They never locked their door. Ever. The pack knew to knock and they knew an unanswered knock meant the couple were indecent. Stiles was unwilling to let this slide so he knocked rather loudly, it was possible his knock was more of a bang.

It had the desired effect as the surly alpha answered the door, beady eyed, and barely awake. He didn't look pleased with the disturbance.

“Stiles! What are you doing making so much noise at this hour?” Derek grumbled.

It was half past ten in the morning, more than an appropriate time for adults to be awake on a Saturday. “I've never had to knock on my own bedroom door before.” Stiles snarked back.

Derek stood back to let Stiles in, but it was clear from the annoyed look on his face that there would be no snuggling happening here, despite how adorable the man looked all sleep rumpled in only his boxer briefs. Derek simply laid back down, closing his eyes.

Much to Stiles's relieve the room was Kohona free, which scared the young mage that that was even a concern to begin with. When had that became a worry? Surely not when he thought about joining his mate in bed.

“I made pack breakfast, no one showed.” Stiles’s voice wavered a bit. “Did you guys forget to go to bed last night?” He tried to sound even.

It took a long time for Derek to respond. “Up late. Tired.”
“Oh, well thanks for the detailed explanation.” Stiles replied sarcastically.

“Stiles! We’re all tired. You would be too if you stayed with your pack, it was a formal dinner, all of the pack should have been there!” Derek mumbled into his pillow.

He was there for the dinner and then kicked out by said complainer promptly afterwards. But it was pointless to argue with the alpha in this state. He went to get up and leave, but Kohona was standing in the open doorway holding a plate of food. Did Stiles leave the door open?

“Don’t worry Derek,” she said airily. “All the wolves were there, and it’s in our nature to bond, it’s hard for mere humans to understand. Breakfast?” She held out a plate to the alpha wolf, who to Stiles's surprise, rolled over and accepted it sitting up.

“Thanks.” Derek addressed the she-wolf.

“You're welcome. I hope you don't mind, I had to use the microwave to warm it up.” She added.

“It's good.” He told her. Stiles's mouth fell open at this.

“Please excuse us.” Stiles said as he firmly escorted the she-wolf out of their bedroom.

The fight that ensued was the worst they had ever had. Stiles had yelled about the inappropriateness of the entire situation. The alpha was almost naked! And, he screamed about how he had cooked breakfast at their usual time which is why it was cold so late in the morning. Derek had insisted he locked the door to prevent her from coming in and pointed out that it was only unlocked because of the mage. He also said it was nice of her to warm up and hand deliver his breakfast and it would have been rude to refuse. He continued to yell about the way Stiles had kicked her out just so they could fight.

“If you weren't here, this wouldn't be an issue!” Derek had finally admitted. “This is why I asked you to leave for a while yesterday when it became apparent that you have a real problem with jealousy!”

That was the last straw. Stiles's chest hurt from the remark. He backed up shaking his head. The younger man tried to form words but none would come. He gaped at his mate, searching and hoping for an apology. When Derek stoically remained silent, Stiles decided to leave the house again, even though he didn't really have a place to go to.
He tried his best to compose himself and walked out the front door holding a hand over his mating mark. It burned just a little.
Stiles called Erica to vent. She picked up groggily and listened. She understood somewhat, but repeatedly pointed out how mates can't cheat on one another.

“I'm not sure what the bond feels like for you, but as wolves, our sense of protection and family towards our mate…it's strong. He would never do anything to hurt you. And, it is important that we form this bond with the big pack, right? I mean as emissary, it's, like, your job to make sure this goes as smoothly as possible.” Erica pointed out.

“Yeah, I guess. I just, even if he isn't meaning to, he is hurting me… my chest hurts, Erica!” Stiles protested.

“You mean like a broken heart?” She questioned. “He hasn't even done anything to break it!”

That wasn't exactly what Stiles had meant, but he agreed and let the werewolf take an afternoon nap. Stiles placed a few more calls to pack members but all went unanswered. He didn't really have a place to go. His father would be working and Stiles just didn't feel comfortable dropping in on Lorraine and his step-sister unannounced, so the young adult decided a trip out to the Nemeton for some meditation would do him well.

The forest flared with life. Trees had the brightest green leaves. At least the world around him didn't reflect the turmoil within.

***

Stiles stayed away all evening and well into the next day, opting to arrive late to the training on purpose so he would be subjected to less time with his current issue. This may have been a mistake, however when he walked through the empty house and found everyone in the back yard essentially wrestling, or to be more precise, watching two of them wrestle. Derek, of course, had his shirt off. He usually did during training exercises. Something his mate had never found a reason to complain
about. But, that was prior to walking into the back yard to see half the pack watching as Kohona and Chay use his mate to demonstrate different pinning maneuvers. Kohona currently laid chest to chest with Derek as her arms held his hands pinned above his head. Their faces were mere inches away.

Reflexively, Stiles placed a protective hand over his mating bite. Erica saw the gesture and shook her head at him. Scott must have read Stiles's hurt on his face, who naturally kept the scent guard up at all times now, because he sent Allison and Lydia over to talk to him.

In hushed half sentences that would have made no sense to anyone else, Stiles explained his worries and feelings, all while watching that woman lay her hands all over his man. Allison completely understood why Stiles feels that way, even if she doesn't think it's intentional, as she watched the wrestling match continue. It seemed that Chayton was more than capable of using words to describe his technique, while Kohona remained very hands-on, even going so far as to volunteer to demonstrate a few of her brother's moves as he described them. Derek remained pliable and bent to her every whim.

Lydia seemed to agree with Erica, that the mating bite ceremony is supposedly so powerful and the connection so strong that one would never dream of hurting their mate. Yes, well she isn't even mated. And, as Stiles told Erica, Derek is hurting him regardless.

Derek heard that bit, if not the whole conversation, because he sent a questionable look his way. One that Stiles had to see off his mate’s face as he peered through the long Tillamook wolf’s legs. It was difficult for Stiles to hold back tears at the look of disbelief and questioning being sent his way, from the man that loves him, is supposed to love him above all else. Stiles excused himself to the kitchen to work on lunch.

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Several hours later the pack are preparing popcorn and snacks with the intent to have a nice, homely, movie night in. Usually if someone had missed the previous movie night because of other obligations, they would be expected to choose the next cinematic experience. As Derek had missed several, the pack didn't even question who would get to choose. Chayton commented on how it appeared as if Derek was the head alpha of the pack, as he was constantly trying to decipher the pack dynamics, he also asked as casually as he could if their emissary ever attended pack gatherings like these.

“Yes. Sometimes.” Stiles answered before anyone else could stumble through a lie or point out the obvious. And the answer was the truth, after all.
Derek, probably in an attempt to win some much needed brownie points with his boyfriend, declared movie night would be a Star Wars marathon. This immediately received some groans and cries of ‘not again!’ But none louder than Kohona who wasted no time in getting into the alpha’s face to argue. It took her less than a minute to have him agree that the guest should pick. She picked a romantic comedy. It took Stiles all of his willpower not to curse the she-wolf right then and there.

It was of no surprise when several moments later Derek was joined on the comfy two-seater by the tribal newcomer. Stiles had half a mind to just up and leave, but he kept his cool as he reminded himself that he had to appear as if the ache in his chest didn't exist. Even while it's cause was the female currently snuggling close with his lover. Plus, his options on where to go were limited, as most of the people he knew were in the room with him. He knew his eyes brimmed with tears as he sat on the floor towards the back of the room, but what could he do?

Isaac sent him a sympathetic look. Maybe someone else had noticed the new seating arrangements after all? Several minutes later Stiles was joined by Lucas who brought a game of go fish with him. The two quietly played throughout the entire movie.

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The following days were a lot of the same. Stiles spent a night at Isaac’s and Allison’s (he babysat, while the pack went out for dinner) as well as three more at his dad's and even spent one in his Jeep on the edge of the preserve. He couldn't help but find his way to his home, the Hale house, throughout the days, however. His office was there. He did love that office with his growing library and very, very sturdy desk. He and his mate had made several wonderful memories in there. He did also have the occasional case to work on, although work was light at the moment. The needs of the supernatural community were not on a schedule, sometimes he found himself overwhelmed and other times he was gunning for a good one, something new and different to break the monotony. By Friday afternoon his schedule was completely freed and he found himself held up in his office simply reading a book for something to do.

Chayton appeared in the doorway. “So this is what you do in here?” He questioned, eyes darting around, trying to take in as much detail as possible. “I'll be honest, I thought you were like the pack cook or something after that large breakfast on Saturday, but you've barely stepped foot into the kitchen since.”

Stiles really didn't care for their month-long guests, at all.

“Nope, just pack’s human.” He bit out forcefully.
“Hemmm, I would guess an office like this belongs to the emissary, all of these books…” the werewolf trailed off, eyes still scanning the impressive collection.

“The emissary and I are on good terms, he is an old man and I'm very curious, he lets me learn.” Stiles replied, thankful his guard would prevent any skips in his heartbeat from being noticed.

“That's unusual. Rumor has it he is a mage, and mages are very private. Which would make the fact that you are here in his office and possibly being trained to take over for him kind of unheard of, to say the least.” Chay continued.

Chayton did have a lot of questions regarding the pack and its emissary. Perhaps it was time for Stiles to properly introduce himself to the Tillamook wolves. He would have to plan and do it right. In the meantime, “is there anything I can help you with? I thought you and Cora had an afternoon hike planned?” Stiles knew Derek's sister was trying her best to bond with him, but she is very tenacious and her personality can become overpowering.

“Ah yes, we are leaving shortly. Between you and me, my sister would rather I bond with the others as well. She doesn't want me developing feelings for Derek's younger sister, if her thing with your alpha pans out.” Chay looked curiously at Stiles.

“Well, I'm taken (was that so hard?), but if you're looking for another to bond with, if you float both ways, we have a tech guy with adorable dimples, he's a real sweetheart.” Stiles was doing everything in his power to control his face. The hurt reflected on it must be readable.

Thankfully, or not, Derek chose that moment to knock and join them.

“Chay, Cora is ready and waiting in the backyard.” Derek eyed Stiles longingly and with a bit of concern.
Stiles simply went back to his book. He was long past having words to say to his neglectful mate.

“Stiles.” Derek took a deep breath.

“Don't worry Der, I'm going to go use my shower and quietly keep to myself. I'd hate to interrupt your private time with your potential girlfriend…” Stiles's number one defense was still sarcasm, it would seem.
“Don't be like that. She is out shopping with Lydia. I think the two are really clicking.” He added as an afterthought.

So, they were home alone for the first time in over a month! “I'm serious about needing a shower… if you want to join me.” What? Stiles has needs too, despite his anger.

Derek smiled. “I think we should talk first.” Of course he did.

“Well, I'm going to shower. Join me or don't. It's not like I'm not accustomed to my right hand by now.” Stiles pushed his way across the larger man in the doorway.

“Stop being liked this. We're already a week down. Just three more and their friendships will secure us for years to come and we never have to see them again.” Derek tried to reason.

“Yeah, we won't see each other until we do and are you just going to decline invites to their tribe whenever they come? She thinks you're single and interested, do you think that pursuit will just stop?” Stiles was using every bit of his power to prevent the hurt and emotion from his voice.

“Don't you trust me?” Derek was getting frustrated again.

“Trust you? Yes. Don't question my side of this relationship! I trust you and I'm telling you this is a bad decision, it's affecting your mate in a negative way, and you don't care. Derek, you don't care at all. You've been home a week and we've barely been in a room together, doesn't this bother you too?” Stiles questioned, but he didn't wait for the reply.

He ran up the stairs and utilized the lock on his bedroom door again.

***

That evening was Friday night. Date night for the two squabbling mates. So Stiles took a long time to calm down in the shower. He took a long time putting together an outfit. He used the mirror and a little gel to get his hair just the way he wanted it. He swallowed the lump in his throat and put on his best face when he finally descended the stairs.
Lydia, Cora, and Kohona were chatting merrily in the kitchen. Stiles made himself a late lunch. From the sounds of it, they were going out dancing tonight. Great! Derek hates dancing. Perhaps he could still have his date.

“Want to come? I think Danny is, so we were going to hit up the Jungle and help him break his dry spell.” Lydia asked.

“Can’t, date night.” Stiles replied.

All three seemed interested in his statement, although for different reasons.

“Oh that’s fantastic!” Kohona exclaimed. Everyone stared at her. “I'm sorry. It's just, I thought… I thought maybe you had a crush on my Derek.”

You can’t hit a lady. You can't hit women. You can't. Can not hit her no matter how much you want to! Stiles repeated this mantra in his head.

“You should reconsider. Derek is over at Scott’s getting ready for the club scene, we’re all going!” Lydia said, hinting that his date would be there as well.

“Oh, news to me I guess.” Stiles mumbled. “I'll think about it.”

He disappeared into his study. Chayton asked to join him, saying he would like to look at some of the emissary's books further. But Stiles refused, claiming the emissary wouldn't appreciate it, which was true. Stiles did not want a foreigner going through his collection.

***

By eleven that night Stiles couldn't take the self wallowing anymore. He jumped into his Jeep and made his way to the industrial side of town, where the Jungle stood with a line of hopeful patrons at the door. Fortunately Stiles knew the doorman. He was a fae who needed a good cure for a bad night out with a leprechaun. He let the young mage through immediately, telling him his lot could be found by the bar.
By the bar they were. Jackson and Danny looked like they were enjoying themselves dancing and generally catching a lot of the single men's attention. Lydia, Allison, and Kira were nearby, but out on the dance floor. The three moved in unison swaying and grinding to the beat. Erica sat at the bar next to Kohona who, of course, was next to Derek. Scott and Isaac were standing, all in conversation together. Boyd was there too, but you could tell the loud music wasn't his thing and he was chatting away with Chayton in hushed whispers, probably complaining about the noise.

“Who's watching the little guy?” Stiles casually asked Isaac as he joined the group by the bar.

“He's at Argent’s!” Isaac yelled over the music, clearly not sure what volume would be necessary for the mage to hear and bringing attention to the newest customer at the bar.

“Stiles you made it! How was your date?” Kohona must have had some wolfsbane added into her drink. Her copper skin was almost glowing, and she had a tinge of pink in her cheeks. It was really beautiful, Stiles thought bitterly.

“Oh! That asshole, stood me up, can you believe it?” Stiles replied with a snarky smile.

The bartender noticed his arrival from the commotion and quickly came to add another drink to the probably large tab. He ordered a round of shots for the whole group, strong ones, and a Jack and Coke for himself.

“You know we can’t get drunk on these!” Kohona continued her conversation with Stiles. She seemed to be much friendlier with him now.

“I know,” Stiles said as he downed two shots back to back. “They are for me and my few human friends!” He signaled the girls to come back over, catching Danny’s attention too.

Allison, Danny and himself did another round of shots. Lydia declined, politely. The girls seemed ready to disappear on the dance floor immediately after, all a little sweaty but Danny wanted to catch up.

“So, you joined us! Why are you so late?” He asked.

“No show on my date night.” Stiles replied. “I'm getting tired of the disrespect, actually.” He added with a pointed glare to the silent alpha. The tech wizard followed his line of sight and saw the way
Kohona was casually trying to pull the man to the dance floor with her.

Danny being the smart guy he was, must have picked up on the situation. He eyed Derek with suspicion but simply smiled and invited Stiles to join him on the floor as a wingman. Just then Cora returned from the bathroom, huge smile on her face. She was drinking the wolfsbane concoction too! She saw the shots and Stiles and yelled ‘Shot Time!’ After sprinkling a little powder into her own shot, she did one with Stiles and Danny and the three made their way to the busier side of the dance floor.

Stiles hadn't been out dancing in ages. He was having a great time on the floor, after downing his four shots and a mixed drink. He had people pressing up on him from every side. There was a cute guy with blond hair in front of him, he swayed his hips to the rhythm and occasionally hit the mage in just the right spot to send a shockwave of inappropriate pleasure through him. He was a bit small for Stiles’s taste, however, and he quickly introduced him to Danny who was dancing on his back side. Cora replaced Tim, the blond claimed that was his name, and the pair made their way to one edge for a bit of a breather.

“You keep letting people grind you like that, and my brother is going to pounce you to scent mark you right here in the middle of the crowd!” She jokingly warned.

“I wish! He hasn't so much as touched me over a month now!” Stiles did a little bit of magic to give the two a private conversation bubble. “That asshole-”

“Is my brother, so watch your mouth Stilinski!” Cora cut him off.

“That asshole,” Stiles continued, “is ruining our relationship over keeping the wench happy? It just doesn't make sense to me.”

“It's only temporary, and you're mated! Nothing can come between your bond! No one!” Cora added.

“Everyone keeps saying that but it's not happening to any of you, I've been kicked out of my house for Christ’s sake, and it just doesn't seem to matter to anyone, least of all my supposed boyfriend!” Stiles was being blunt with his feelings due to the loss of inhibition from the alcohol.

“Stiles it's not like you're homeless, you have your dad's. This is a pack thing, it's for the good of the pack, you need to suck it up!” She shrugged.
“Easier said than done, mini-Hale, easier said than done.” Stiles dropped their privacy shield and escorted her back to the bar for more drinks.

Derek and Kohona were absent. It took Stiles no time at all to spot the pair dancing as far away from the bar as possible. He could still count on his bond to always find his mate, at least. Derek must of sensed his eyes lingering because he looked up and quickly dropped the small smile he had on his face.

The damage was done however, Stiles downed two more shots and made his way to the middle of the dance floor. He danced and grind as seductively as he liked with anyone and everyone in a two foot range of himself. He spent at least an hour dancing away. An older gentleman brought a pink cocktail out to him and Stiles did something he has never done before, ever. He accepted a drink from a stranger. It was strong. That particular fellow stayed close by and often would wiggle his way in between Stiles and any of his other dance partners.

“Hey, it's getting late. You coming back to my place or we going to yours?” The man leaned into Stiles's space to ask some time later.

“What! Neither, although I do need…”

“He's coming with us!” Scott intercepted. He yanked Stiles off the floor and Isaac and Boyd glared the older man down, daring him to try anything.

Scott pulled Stiles over to Jackson. The two immediately started to berate Stiles for his behavior.

“How could you?”

“We can all smell his Jealousy!”

“Which means she can smell it too!”

“Why'd you show up tonight?”
“You need to be a team player Stiles, it's not fair making him watch you dance with others?”

“Do you know what you smell like? That's driving him insane, it's driving us all insane, those weird scents all over you!”

“Stiles, man. Are you okay?” Scott finally looked somewhat concerned for his drunk friend.

Stiles knew they couldn't smell his emotions, and he wouldn't hold that against them. But he was visibly shaking he was so angry at his friends. And, for werewolves, it took way too long for his best friend to notice something was wrong with him.

“You know what Scott! Fuck you! If this was Kira you would be devastated. And I would be there for you! You all keep treating me like my failing relationship doesn't matter, so you know what? Fuck you, Scott! Fuck all of you!” And with those powerful drunken words, Stiles turned around and left. His mating mark was on fire it was burning so badly. Stiles couldn't help but rub it in a failed attempt to soothe the ache there.

***

Stiles didn't have to wait long for another pack member to find him as he sat on the back bumper of his Jeep in the club’s parking lot. Derek quickly made his way over.

“You are way to drunk to drive.” He said as he approached.

“I know, notice how I'm not driving.” Stiles replied with venom.

Derek took a moment to choose his words carefully. “You don't even smell like yourself at all with all those other scents on you.” His eyes were red when Stiles looked up at that. “I know this is hard for both of us…”

“No. Don't come out here and try to reason with me. I mean it, fuck all of you! This is bull, this whole situation and it so easily could have been avoided had you just stepped up and told her you were already mated to a wonderful fucking man who makes you happy!” Stiles screamed. “But, you know what Derek, the fact that you didn't, and refuse to even now, shows me that there is a lot more wrong with our relationship than I ever thought. So maybe this is a good thing!”
“Stiles. You're drunk, you don't mean it.” Derek looked livid but he kept his tone even.

“I do Derek, truth comes out when you wasted, you know.” Stiles replied in a sing-song voice, mockingly.

“Okay. Maybe you do. Can I at least drive you to your dad's.” Derek asked his temper obviously rising.

“Won't that ruin your date?” Stiles lost his heat at the words.

“It's already ruined, don'tcha think?” Derek said with sass you would expect from his sister or mate but not himself.

“Yeah, it was ruined the moment you decided to take her dancing over our standing date night.” Stiles agreed solemnly.

“Stiles…”

“Dancing, Derek. Dancing! I love dancing and when was the last time you took me?” Stiles couldn't fight the tears anymore. His amber eyes were watering as he looked away from his boyfriend. “Is this really worth it, worth losing me?” He mumbled under his breath.

“I'm not losing you! You're just drunk, we will get through this, now let me take you home, to your dad's” the alpha quickly corrected.

Just then a squad car pulled into the lot. Deputy Jordan Parrish exited the vehicle.

“Oh hi, Derek.” He greeted. “Still want that ride?” The officer asked Stiles.

“Yeah, thanks for coming.” Stiles wiped his tear streaked face on his shirt as he reached into the Jeep to grab his duffel of clothes.
“Anytime!” The hellhound responded with too much cheer for the late hour. “Your father would have my badge had I refused. Not that I mind.”

“Thanks again.” Stiles mumbled. “We'll talk later. When I'm less ‘just drunk’,” Stiles said to his mate, complete with air quotes.

Stiles hopped into the front of the squad car and the two went back to the Deputy’s house where the younger man crashed on the couch for the remainder of the night.

***

“Was that your emissary?” Chayton was waiting at the club door for Derek to return. He wasn't sure how much the Tillamook werewolf overheard, and frankly, he didn't care at the moment.

“No, that's our hellhound, he stays out of the pack stuff unless a threat arises.” Derek said in a monotone.

“Hellhound? Is he dating the human?” The other wolf questioned.

It went unanswered as Derek swept past to re-enter the club with a permanent frown in place.
Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

If You're feeling upset and need to vent, meet me in the comment section, were having a hate fest and heart attack watch party down there! It's quite fun! Poor Stiles...

Thanks for the love!!!

Given that last Saturday no one had showed up for the pack breakfast, Stiles chose to skip it this week. He thanked his father's deputy for picking him up so late and allowing him to crash by making a McDonald’s breakfast run. The mage returned with two piping hot coffees and a bag full of sausage burritos with a smile, despite the slight hangover.

He enjoyed his morning spent catching up with the hellhound, who thankfully didn't question Stiles's relationship status. He didn't mention the pack at all, actually, which was really refreshing. Parrish told the young man how he was planning on having dinner at the Sheriff’s house on Tuesday night, and he hoped Stiles would be there. He planned to introduce his girlfriend to the Sheriff. Apparently the two had been exclusive for a while now, and the Sheriff's opinion meant a lot to the officer. Stiles thanked him for having something to look forward to before the deputy had to drop him off at his Jeep prior to his shift at the station.

Stiles decided to do what the Supreme Council suggested when feeling conflicted, and seek peace from the land. He shut his phone off, grabbed a sleeping bag, and made his way to the Nemeton. He planned on attempting to break his meditation record which was eighteen hours, and was thankful for the large breakfast.

***

He lost focus some twenty or so hours later. It was early Sunday morning. Stiles, despite not moving for such a long time, was exhausted and starving. He quickly devoured all three granola bars he had in his backpack and wished he brought more than the one bottle of water. He turned his phone on and scowled at all the complaints of him missing pack’s Saturday morning breakfast. Jackson had even said making breakfast was the least he could do after ruining their alpha’s night! He ignored them all and laid out his sleeping bag and fell asleep right on the Nemeton’s stump. The young mage didn't even notice the new healthy foliage surrounding him.

*** Meanwhile***
Derek looked at his pack as they gathered earlier than usual for Sunday’s pack training. Everyone seemed a little off. His mate was missing again. It pained him to know Stiles was suffering. He wanted so desperately for the two of them to just make up and move past this argument. His broody thoughts were interrupted by a shrill giggling. Kohona was there, as always, to his right. It felt stifling, he could barely have a moment’s peace without her. He had stooped so low as to pay Erica to take her out shopping last night just so he could have some much needed time alone. Chayton looked eager and expectant, patiently waiting for the pack portion of the day to commence. Derek wished his sister was more like him. But, only three more weeks, he could do this. He had to do this!

Scott looked apprehensive as well. It was obvious the fight with Stiles on Friday had left him wondering where he went wrong. Kira held his hand in comfort and the two leaned on one another in support. That was what Derek needed: Stiles's support. But he didn't have it and that was the real issue.

The meeting commenced after confirming that no one had heard from Stiles since he left with Deputy Parrish on Friday night. If the Tillamook wolves found this strange or odd, they didn't show it, as they listened along with the rest while Scott continued to go over territory patrol scheduling for the upcoming week.

After all the important agenda aspects were addressed, Scott opened the floor for questions or concerns from the group, wincing a little as he knew there was a glaring concern everyone was pointedly refusing to bring up.

“We were really hoping to meet your emissary while we're here.” Chayton boldly announced, not knowing how mentioning their emissary was a current sore spot for the group at large.

Everyone turned to Derek. “It might be arranged. He is a rather busy man however.” He stated firmly looking to Scott for backup. Scott had his phone out shooting off a text, presumably to Stiles.

“Indeed, he must be, rumor has it he's a mage, is it true?” Chay continued.

After a moments paused the older alpha answered. “It's true. He is a mage, a powerful one at that.”

“Hemmm, some think it's a rumor you guys spread about yourselves. I'd like to be able to tell our tribe we met with him and he is real.” The werewolf said rather pointedly. “He is a big reason for our tribe to be making this offer to your pack, after all.”
“But it's not the only reason!” Kohona butted in as she grabbed Derek's arm and held on. Only
three more weeks, he could do this.

The group decided to do several seek and find exercises in the forest that day. It was late afternoon
when they started the final one; Scott had spent some time burying or hiding articles of clothing
that belong to Danny. This kept the familiarity rather even across the board, obviously Jackson
would have a bit of an advantage, but he was the worst tracker so it balanced out. The Tillamook
wolves would need some assistance, so they were given the right to choose a partner to go with.
Whoever returned with the most pieces in two hours would win. Scott, Lydia, and Allison would
all remain at the Hale house awaiting their return.

Derek quickly interjected that he would also sit this exercise out as the alphas had alpha business to
discuss. Kohona let out a small whine at this proclamation. She ended up partnering with Cora. Her
brother went with Boyd. ‘Alpha business’ turned out to be Derek needing a break from his clingy
counterpart and involved very little talking and lots of brooding. Scott and the girls told Derek he
was doing the right thing for the pack. And, that Stiles would come around eventually and
probably be really sorry for flirting and dancing with others and they assured the older alpha that
his mate would apologize in time.

***

It was a little over an hour into the exercise when Boyd and Chay came across a refreshed and
hungry Stiles who was literally just walking through the woods.

“Stiles?” Boyd called out tentatively.

“Oh hey, what are you two doing here?” Stiles asked as if it was normal to come across people this
depth into the preserve.

“Oh uh training exercise?” Boyd sheepishly replied, “you?”

“I was visiting the Nemeton.” Stiles said without much thought, and then seeing Chayton’s
clueless face he added, “it's this big ancient magical tree root….”

“Oh, visit it often?” Chay asked.
“Sometimes, its good to keep in touch with nature.” Stiles replied. “So what's the exercise?”

“Were looking for Danny's hidden clothes.” Boyd supplied.

“A classic. Well, I suppose you'll win if you return with an actual missing pack member, I'm starving, care to head back early?” Stiles asked jovially, meditation does wonders for his mood and the forest. Although it didn't stifle the constant burn in his chest.

The three were the first to return and without a single item of clothing. But, as Stiles strode right into the kitchen and started making enough sandwiches to feed the entire pack, both alphas were pleasantly okay with Boyd’s and Chay’s early return.

Stiles however did not apologize for his Friday night behavior, which did not go unnoticed by any of the pack members.

***

“Your forest is huge and very healthy! Those were some of the largest trees I've ever seen!” Kohona exclaimed affectionately towards Derek some time later.

“Our emissary is very in tuned with nature, his presence keeps the forest up.” Scott said positively. He wanted Stiles to hear the appreciation, but his pale friend seemed to be ignoring the conversation. He needed Stiles to play ball with the visiting pack and wanted him to show off some of the emissary's ability.

Everyone complained that the preserve was too full of trees and bushes for the game to be fair. Only half of the clothing items were recovered. Jackson and Erica had tied as the winner with three articles each. Kira had proudly snagged Danny's boxers and declared herself a winner in her own right for that. Scott had grumbled as he told Kira he would have to go retrieve the remaining items after the meeting was over, because their tech guy expected to get everything back. The kitsune volunteered to join him.

Before Scott could head off however, Stiles told him privately that he would arrive in his old man form the next day and ‘put on a magic show’ to please Chayton’s curiosity. Even though Scott had said it was the least he could do, Stiles didn't get upset or mad. He held his tongue, and as soon as he could he promptly asked Allison and Isaac for a ride to his Jeep parked on the other side of the preserve.
The rest of the pack went their separate ways after that final exercise too, choosing to skip the usual movie night as almost everyone had spent the entire weekend together already.

***

As promised, the emissary arrived at the Hale house on Monday to show a little magic to the new wolves.

Stiles generally enjoyed using his ‘old man’ form and aged himself so he was a grey-haired geezer with frail, knobby knees and skinny chicken legs. Despite his appearance he was as young and as fit as ever, so it was great fun to surprise the unsuspecting by skipping or running or jumping with relative ease. He enjoyed bounding into his house, watching the curiosity flicker across everyone’s face at the breakfast counter.

"So, I've been told you are in need of some magic tricks!" Stiles cut right to the chase. His aged voice always shocked the pack a little, Derek jumped. It was hard to spook the alpha. Stiles continued with out waiting for their reactions and placed a top hat on the counter. He then pulled a ridiculous toy wand out of his coat pocket.

He proceeded to wave the wand around. “Alakazam, alakazoom, Alakazunny, I give you a bunny.” The sarcastic old man pulled a stuffed bunny plushy from the hat and passed it over to the outstretched hands of Kohona. The she-wolf shrieked and clapped, clearly willing to play along. Derek and Chayton both looked less than pleased. Stiles held up a finger, as if to say ‘but wait there's more!’ He then proceeded to pull out a real white rabbit and gave it to Cora who was struggling to control her laughter as the bunny nipped playfully at her fingers. Kohona looked a tad envious.

“Are you serious?” Chayton questioned.

“Am I seriously done with performing tricks on command. Yes, I think so. I am a mage, set to serve the Supreme Council itself, I do not need to prove myself to anyone, do you understand that?" With these sharp words thunder boomed outside despite it being a bright and sunny morning.

Derek was frowning.

“Mage! Hem, maybe, but how are we supposed to know?” Chayton dared to ask.
“Perhaps it is not your place to know.” the old man stated with finality.

“Hemmm, it is if you want this pack treaty to go through.” Chay huffed.

“Ah yes, and what makes you so certain I want this deal? I happen to find it pointless and unnecessary.” Stiles knew he went too far.

Derek flared his red eyes and asked him to leave if he wasn’t going to be serious. Stiles was tempted to do just that and even went out the front door, but instead of leaving he stood in the grassy yard in front of the kitchen window in plain view of the werewolves inside. He formed a small house from growing and weaving the grass in an unusual fashion. The house continued to grow. It looked sturdy despite being made from grass and flowers. It had an opening forming the door. It looked remarkably like an old fashion dog house. Stiles placed a hand on the ground and several sticks gathered from seemingly nowhere. They made the word ‘SourWolf’ and placed themselves across the top of the doghouse. Stiles turned to make sure the house was clearly visible, for all in the kitchen to see.

Cora turned to her brother and unnecessarily declared that it looked like he was perpetually in the doghouse, as it were. This earned a laugh from Chayton.

Stiles waved his hand and everything returned to normal. Instead of leaving he rejoined the group in the kitchen.

“I’m serious, no more parlor tricks. Magic is not for show. If your pack should ever be of need, I would be there to assist without question as long as I remain the Hale-McCall emissary.” At these words Stiles reflexively grabbed at his heart earning looks of concern from all four.

“Are you dying?” Kohona asked rather rudely. “Heart attack?”

“No, just a symptom of a larger issue.” Stiles remained ominous. This statement earned a puzzling look from both Hales who shared a look of concern. The decrepit man paused at the doorway. “I’m going to be in my study, and let me remind you, Chayton, I am more than capable of knowing who has stepped foot in there while I am away. Stay out.” He allowed a glare.

“I have to apologize on behalf of our emissary he is a fickle old man, he acts like a child in someways still!” Derek raised his voice to make sure Stiles heard the jab.
Cora just giggled as she cuddled her bunny.

***

Stiles remained in his old man form for the rest of the day and would creep up on the unsuspecting guest whenever he saw the opportunity arise. He overheard Chayton telling his sister that he thinks the mage while having some magical abilities is wholly a fraud, putting on a show to maintain an image of power. He thought it was likely the man was a standard wizard, which would be impressive enough in his own right, but doubted the fact that he claimed to be a mage. He questioned whether or not the man even considered himself emissary or if it was a front and he was merely teaching ‘that weird Stiles human’ a few tricks or two so he could serve as emissary. It was odd that Stiles was allowed in the emissary's private library and it was odd that Stiles would visit magical trees, alone. The werewolf emphasized it would be a good thing if the wizard wasn't really their emissary, because it means the old geezer could come and train their emissary as well. Kohona disagreed. She didn't seem to care as much as her brother, but she kept insisting that Derek wouldn't lie to her. She said you can hear the steadiness in his heartbeat when speaking about their mage emissary. Well, she was right about the alpha not lying about that particular fact, but how can she be so blind to the glaring misconception being put on from the entire pack when referring to Derek’s relationship status.

Honestly, Stiles himself didn't care what the siblings thought of him in any form. He didn't care if the Tillamook pack thought he was a fraud and he certainly didn't care if that fact caused this treaty to fall through. Erica was right, as emissary, it was his duty to encourage and help maintain friendships between allying packs. He had done so without question from the moment he officially took over the role. This was going too far. This was affecting his personal relationship and allowing that was above the job description. He wasn't going to bend to his alphas’ wills on this one, which became ever more apparent throughout the day.

Derek made several more attempts to include Stiles with the day’s activities and all failed disastrously. The Hales, Tillamooks, and Stiles had spent the late afternoon picking and planting vegetables in the garden, something that was always a fun affair with the mage who would cause vegetables to grow to twice their size prior to picking or quickly make all the blueberries disappear from one’s bucket. But, not today. The five worked tirelessly in the hot sun, without a trace of magic in the air, sweat beading down their brows. Cora was angry to be dragged into this predicament, she watched as her new rabbit chewed on a lettuce leaf. Derek was frustrated. Kohona was pretty lazy, barely helping at all and mostly complaining. Stiles picked tomatoes with a smile on his wrinkly face and Chayton stayed close by, perhaps hoping to glimpse some more magic from the supposed mage.

After about an hour it became obvious that Stiles was going to keep all his usual hijinks away for the day and everyone was dying in the hot sun. The alpha declared them finished for now. Kohona commented loudly on how hot he must be in that shirt. She was persistent.
“Oh come on Derek!” She whined. “Your shirt is sticking to your back!” She had already pulled hers up, showing off her flat stomach. “Come on, take it off, give me a good show!”

Derek ignored her request, until he caught sight of Stiles’s narrowed eyes. He was angry with his emissary for his lack of cooperation and it caused him to do something he instantly regretted. He spun around and rather seductively and slowly stripped off his dark Henley. Kohona giggled and let out an obscene noise. Cora gagged and rolled her eyes. But Stiles just stared ahead, knowing that despite it being put on by his boyfriend, that striptease wasn't for him. Kohona caught the shirt tossed her direction and laughed as she sprinted towards the alpha, jumping up on his back, demanding to be carried the rest of the way to the house. The two looked good together. Their sun kissed skin glistening with sweat, her huge smile of pearly white teeth were a bright contrast from the alpha’s darker hair as she laid her head on his. They looked good and comfortable in each other’s presence.

And, Stiles decided he didn't have to put up with this. As soon as they dropped off their pickings in the kitchen sink he gathered his belongings and left. The burning in his chest was overwhelming anyways and once he was safely far enough down the road, he dropped the aging spell and scent guard, seething rage. The mage checked the bite above his heart. It looked blistered and raw. Perhaps he should take a trip to visit the vet.

***

Dr. Deaton was far more concerned with the mage’s grotesque looking mating mark than Stiles originally thought he would be. It's a bad sign for the bite to take on a physical alteration, reflecting how Stiles feels. It means his relationship with his mate is breaking. While this does happen from time to time among werewolves and their mates, usually leading to one or both of them leaving the pack as simply seeing one another could cause pain. Deaton is unsure of how this would affect the young mage. He recommended that Stiles tells the Supreme Council immediately as they had given special permission for his mating to begin with. The vet gave Stiles some cream that would hopefully help ease the burning in the meantime and dismissed the emissary in lieu of paying customers.

Stiles ignored the vet’s advice. The last thing he needed was an angry council on his back. He wished desperately for the ability to reach out to his pack mates for support. But it was obvious they were all in agreement with the alpha on this one. Stiles was in the wrong for dancing with others on Friday night, and Stiles was in the wrong for not supporting the idea of his mate flirting and carrying on with the Tillamook she-wolf to gain a long term ally from her tribe. So what could he do? He had no one in his corner and no one he could vent with, so instead of heading to a friend's, he went back to his dad's, and asked to crash on his couch again.
His father wasn't dumb. He passed his son a beer and invited him out back to talk while they grilled some chicken for dinner.

“Son, are you and Hale having relationship issues? You know running from your problems never helps to find a solution, and staying on my couch for the rest of your life isn’t really a solution either…” the Sheriff cut straight to the chase.

“It’s a temporary thing, Dad. Pack stuff, pack is mad at me.” Stiles mumbled.

His dad looked concerned by this. “You know you can tell me, right? I will always have your back, always!” His dad offered a hug.

Stiles accepted but chose not to elaborate. How could he explain that the love of his life was basically cheating on him but not really and everyone was just okay with this fact. Just dwelling on it hurt his head. And, he’d hate to tell his dad about the actual burn on his chest as a result of said not really cheating going on. It was all just one big mess. A beer with his dad on the warm spring evening was a welcomed distraction.

Stiles stayed away from all pack business for the next few days and enjoyed several peaceful dinners with his father's new family and even got to meet Parrish's girlfriend. She was wonderful and complemented the hellhound perfectly. It was nice, spending time at his dad's house pretending he didn't have a home of his own full of discord.

This peace ended on Wednesday when his father took him aside and said he would go to Derek's and find out what was wrong from the source itself, if his son spent one more night refusing to talk about it while sleeping on his couch.

Stiles folded his laundry and repacked his Jeep as he was basically living out of it, thanked his Dad for his hospitality and swallowed his pride as he headed back to the Hale house.
Wednesday afternoon at the Hale house turned out to be much more crowded than usual. Almost the entire pack was there, the only exception was Jackson and Lydia’s vehicle. Stiles double checked his phone to see if one of the texts he had ignored had told him why they were gathering in the middle of the week. None did.

He parked his Jeep in its usual spot, bitterly thinking that had Kohona brought her car that probably would have been taken from him too. Stiles doubled up his efforts to keep his scent and emotions a secret as he made his way inside. The sight that treated him was one to behold.

Everyone was shirtless and pantless, some had on bathing suits while others were in their briefs. But the strangest part was how they were all half covered in paint. They all stopped to look at Stiles as he entered the living room. “Carry on, I guess.” The mage mumbled, not really knowing what was going on.

“It's a pack bonding exercise Kohona was sharing with us.” Kira supplied helpfully from her position on the floor. Scott was painting what looked like a child's attempt at an animal on her stomach.

Stiles took a closer look and realized everyone was partnered off. Scott and Kira, Erica and Boyd, Chayton and Cora, Allison and Isaac, and of course, Derek and Kohona. They were painting anything and everything on each other. Boyd was covered in words. Allison sported dots and lines. It looked like Chayton had a large tree covering his back, and while Kohona was mostly bare, Derek was covered in some of the best artwork Stiles had ever seen. Kohona was clearly very talented in the art of painting bodies. The alpha had a scene of wolves chasing along a river under the full moon. The scene continued on all around his torso. Despite his pang of jealousy from knowing how close she was to his man’s abs to achieve such detail, he couldn’t help but admire how beautiful the scene was and he told her so. Kohona beamed at the compliment. Stiles was partnerless and declined Cora’s offer to join her group, opting to take the stairs to his room instead. It had been eleven days since he last laid on a bed. He might as well try and get a good nap in.

Stiles was woken up a little while later when Derek entered. He was still beautifully painted. The
scene now carried on to his arms as well.

“I'm sorry.” The alpha greeted him. “I didn't mean for you to have to see that. I know it's difficult for you to keep your emotions in check with her being so close to me.”

“Wow Derek, I honestly didn't think you cared.” Stiles admitted as he sat up. “I mean that, I know it sounded sarcastic, but I didn't think you cared how any of this was affecting me or us…” he trailed off.

“Of course I care!” Derek searched his mate’s eyes. “This is difficult for me too, being so far away from you.” Derek joined him on the bed.

“Then why are you? Why do this at all, just tell her you're not interested!” Stiles tried to keep his temper down.

“You know why. I'm not going to argue with you on this again.” The older man leaned away. “Why are you here anyways? It can't be just to use the bed.”

“My dad is suspicious of all the time I've been spending there. He thinks we're fighting, which I mean, we kind of are, but he wants us to talk it out and fix it.” Stiles huffed. “I keep getting kicked out.”

“I didn't kick you out! You agreed that it would be easier on you if you left!” Derek argued.

“Look. I'm not doing this right now. I haven't had a decent night sleep in forever, just leave me alone.” Stiles shot back.

“You think I have! I come home from my trip away and after three nights this bed barely carries your scent anymore. It's weird, and I don't like it.” Derek complained.

“Well I'm sleeping in it now, so there you go, you should be happy.” Stiles had had it. “If you woke me up to argue, just leave. I'm going back to bed, I don't feel well.”

“I made lasagne, your favorite, with the fresh tomatoes you picked on Monday. Do you want to
come down and have dinner with the pack?” The alpha asked, hoping to end the argument there.

Stiles thought about it, “…No.” He just didn't have it in him to put on a fake smile.

Derek looked disappointed by this. But moved to leave. Stiles acted without thought, his almost naked mate was on the bed next to him, after all. He lunged across and planted his lips on the older man’s desperately. The kiss was chaste but quickly became hot and heavy. Stiles grew more bold and climbed his way on to his lovers lap, moving his lips down and across the familiar stubbly jaw. Derek let out a sound of approval as he migrated to the alphas ear lobe. Stiles continue to move further south, sucking a hickey onto the alpha's neck and watching as it disappeared, a favorite pastime of theirs when the older man stopped him from continuing.

“Wait! Wait! Stop!” Derek exclaimed.

Stiles immediately did, not meaning to push himself on someone when it was unwanted. He looked confused.

“It's just, I don't want to mess up my painting and we can't really go around smelling like each other.” Derek tried to explain.

Stiles saw red. “You've got to be kidding me!”He didn't even wait for a response. “Just go back down stairs in nothing other than your boxers! That makes so much more sense than making out with your actual boyfriend, I don't know what I was thinking!” He strode across the room and slammed the bathroom door shut behind him.

Stiles needed a cold shower before he could do anything else. It was after the shower when he was staring at his reflection in the mirror that he noticed it. His nose was bleeding. Nothing heavy or serious, but as he wadded up some toilet paper to clean it, he noticed that it was continuing despite his attempts to negate the flow. He sat in the bathroom for over an hour waiting for his mysterious nosebleed to stop. Flushing the evidence as he went.

By the time he had finished up in the restroom it was dark out, and to avoid having to be awkwardly asked to leave again by his boyfriend he chose to pack a few more items of clothing and let himself out, but not before changing the bedsheets. If Stiles was spending the night sleeping in the backseat of his Jeep, than Derek would at least not get any comfort from his fresh scent on the pillows. Laughing could be heard from the dining room as he made his way through the front door.
Derek was unsure of what to do. He watched his mate walk away from him again. He wanted to join him in the shower, to continue their little makeout session. But it would be way too obvious to those downstairs what had happened if that went any further. He checked his painted chest and then decided Stiles was right about one thing and threw on some clothes before heading back to the kitchen.

There were several grumbles from the others when they noticed he had covered up the majority of the beautiful painting. Scott complained that it was unfair that he got to wear clothes while the rest remained exposed, and Kohona pointed out that a part of the bonding is sharing your whole self with the entire pack. But Derek didn't care as he served them all dinner. No one asked why he didn't return with Stiles after excusing himself to retrieve him.

The pack ate and laughed and had a nice night. Allison and Isaac had to leave after dinner to pick up their son but everyone else stayed and they played board games while reminiscing on the good old high school days spent doing similar activities at Derek’s loft. Sometimes with similar states of undressed because truth or dare with a werewolf pack usually meant someone was losing some articles of clothing for the night.

Derek was lost in a memory of Stiles who was dared to strip for them and how he had made sure the alpha had known the show was all for him. His mate had always made sure everything was all for him and Derek had made the boy wait, wait until he was older, and then wait until after he had the ‘college experience’ but Stiles and Derek had faithfully waited with years of pining for one another, and for what? So they could break up now? Over something so minuscule in comparison, it just didn't seem right…

He was brought to by Erica telling him it was his turn in monopoly. He shook his head and announced he would be going to bed, adding his money and properties to the bank pile. This made several people excited because that meant there would no longer be hotels on Boardwalk and Park Place.

Derek was disappointed to find that not only was Stiles absent but that he had spitefully changed the sheets as well. He locked his door and fell into an uneasy sleep.

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Stiles tried to stay away, he really did. But Friday was his date night. He had no illusions after last week that his mate would still honor his commitment, but he had hoped that he could get to use his
room and space for well, showering again, it had been a few days.

Stiles wasn't too surprised to see his friends at the house again. It seemed they were just spending a lot of extra time together with the new wolves in town to keep entertain and impressed. It was probably a good thing, all the extra pack bonding, but the constant lack of invite was growing tiresome. He stalled his pride again and ran into Jackson who he hadn't really talked to since being berated by him at the club.

“You smell like you've been wearing the same clothes for days!” Jackson wrinkled his nose. “Even if you hide your emotions from us, you still need to wash your clothes! Have you been rolling in grease?”

Eating lots of takeout, as his Jeep doesn't have a kitchen, would be the correct answer. But Stiles simply shrugged and says shower pointing to the stairs.

Jackson rolled his eyes and said they have a big announcement so don't take too long.

***

Stiles must have taken too much time, because when he returned cleaned and wearing a tight white long sleeve fresh from his closet, it was to the sound of cheers and clapping from the living room. The shirt was one that Derek loved on him because it showed off the younger man's muscles just a bit. Stiles hope the alpha would be a little forlorn at what he was missing out on. He helped himself to a plate of leftover pizza and join the others asking what is everyone celebrating?

“Were having a baby!” Lydia cried out as she saw him. She was glowing with excitement in a short navy blue dress that was a bit too baggy on her, because she certainly wasn't showing yet and just wanted the excuse to maternity shop.

“Man, wow! Congratulations! Aww Lyds, it's like our dream is coming true! You're having a baby, I just need to get on that adoption part!” Stiles was genuine. He had the largest smile on his face as he crossed the room to hug his friend. He was also very thankful no one could smell the whole new jealous feeling flowing through him.

“So your future little girl and my future little guy can grow up and fall in love, because at least one Stilinski is going to get a Martin!” Lydia continued, sharing their ‘dream.'

“He or she will be a Whittemore!” Jackson quickly corrected his wife.
“A Martin-Whittemore, don’t forget I hyphenate. And so will he!” She jokingly smirked. “He or she.” Jackson said.

“He is a he, I just know it.” Lydia declared.

“This is why you skipped the wine a couple of weeks ago, you sly girl you!” Stiles merrily hugged Lydia again. “May I?” He asked, hand hovering above her stomach.

“It’s just a little bean, but yeah.” Lydia said.

Stiles without thought for their company blessed the baby with good fortune and his eyes shone brightly as he chanted several protection spells.

It didn’t go unnoticed by Chayton who piped up. “I knew it! I knew it! The mage is teaching you magic and you're the real pack emissary!”

Everyone froze at this.

“Is it true?” Kohona was dressed in a thin floor length strapless that complemented her body well as she spun around to face Derek with the question. The mage felt the familiar burn in his chest as he watched the two interact.

Derek hesitated. His hand on her lower back.

“If I say yes, will you guys go home?” Stiles bluntly asked. “Does it ruin this whole pack integration bullshit?”

Scott flashed his eyes at Stiles and ordered him to be quiet. Stiles obeyed even though the alpha eyes had no physical effect on him like it did the wolves.

“No. Of course not.” Chayton said to break the tension. “We just need the truth to tell our dad, naturally a bond with a pack who had a mage for an emissary would be very important to my dad.
But, he will be happy with a bond to a pack whose emissary was being trained by a mage, if that old man really even is one. And Kohona’s happiness is even more important and she obviously is finding a reason to stay here. And, as long as she's here, you'll have a treaty with the Tillamook tribe.” He gestured to her sister who was glowing with her own happiness at the words.

Stay here like permanently? Now, would be an excellent time to admit that you're not available! Stiles glared at Derek pleading with him to read his mind and come clean and claim him as his mate in front of that whore! Please, Der, please…

It didn't happen. Instead Derek asked Stiles to apologize for his rude behavior and for taking the spotlight off of Lydia and Jackson.

“No.” Stiles said, voice cold. “No, Derek. I'm done.” He turned to Lydia who looked confused by the tears welling up in her friend's eyes. “I'm sorry about ruining your moment. Congratulations, again.” He whispered to her with one last hug. He didn't stop when Isaac asked him to wait. He didn't come back when Scott ordered him to. He got into his Jeep and drove away. He drove out of town. He kept driving well into the night. He finally stopped when he felt woozy, pulling over near a cheap hotel and deciding to get a room for a few nights.

“Sir is that…blood?” The lady at the front desk asked him when he inquired about any available rooms. Stiles looked down and he did indeed seem to be covered in blood. The white shirt Derek loved was ruined. He told her it was an old stain even though the shininess made the lie apparent. She didn't seem to care and gave him a room regardless. Stiles quickly made use of the bathroom, eyeing his mating mark in the mirror. It looked like someone had freshly branded him. The burn seemed to have seared through his skin and was slowly bleeding. He used the already wrecked shirt to apply pressure to the wound. The use of that word when thinking about his mating bite was jarring. He felt ill. Not long after he emptied his stomach in the toilet as he shivered from a cold sweat.

*** meanwhile ***

The pack was shocked by Stiles's open defiance. He had refused to stop when his best friend and alpha had ordered him to do so. He had also refused to apologize to their guest after their other alpha and mate had asked him to. Everyone sent him multiple texts throughout the rest of the night asking for him to respond or come back. Derek pointedly had not joined in the texting brigade. He was actually really mad at Stiles for acting that way and for the first time since asking him to go to his dad's, Derek was thankful that his mate wouldn't be sharing his bed, because he was pretty sure he'd have slept on the couch instead.

It wasn't long after Stiles had left that Kira pointed out a dark mark on Lydia's dress.
“Oh I don't know what it is?” Lydia took a napkin to dab at it revealing what was unmistakably blood. She panicked a little checking herself, but Jackson quickly sniffed it.

“Stilinski! Was he bleeding?” The werewolf questioned.

“I doubt he knew, he was wearing that nice white shirt of his, like the only one that didn't have a cartoon character on it.” Lydia reminded the group.

Derek frowned. Was his mate injured and didn't tell him? What did he do to get a wound? In his anger he blamed the late revelation on his mate as well and found himself stewing at the fact that he had left in such a fashion all over again.

His anger grew throughout the night, and while most of the pack talked baby talk and laughed as Allison shared horror stories with Lydia, the older alpha just couldn't fake his happiness any longer. It was of no surprise to anyone when he excused himself to leave for the night early-on. Kohona had asked him to stay longer and he snapped at her. Her cheeks redden at being treated that way from a guy she was falling for and excused herself not long after, tears brimming in her eyes as well.

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The next morning the pack had no hope of Stiles returning to make their traditional breakfast, so everyone naturally stayed away. That was until Cora sent the pack group text a picture of the huge breakfast Kohona had made. It was all Native American traditional food and looked delicious. Erica and Boyd were the first over after that and the she-wolf had added her usual emoji explosion to the group text saying how good the food was. Isaac sent one back saying he was stopping by after Lucas’s soccer practice and to save some of the salmon ceviche for Allison. Jackson sent one reminding the group that Lydia was now eating for two and they were on their way. Scott sent one claiming his alpha status means they have to wait until he arrives for the rest to eat. Erica quickly sent a picture of the dining room table with Cora, Derek, Boyd, Chayton, and Kohona all with their mouths full; telling Scott he was too late.

The problem was, Stiles was included in that initial text and woke up to see all of his pack enjoying their Saturday morning without him. The pang of hurt jealousy was now very familiar. He checked his burnt mark and was relieved to see it had at least stopped bleeding. He didn't really feel better, though. On the contrary, he felt feverish and decided it would be best to skip his own breakfast for fear of not being able to keep the food down.

It took over an hour, but eventually he fell back into a restless sleep.
Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

Beta'd by Splash_of_bi! Thank you!

And thank you for all the love!!

Derek was not surprised to find that no one had heard from Stiles when the pack met the following day for training. That quick question was all that was mentioned of their missing emissary. The Tillamook wolves probably thought all pack activities were optional for the human, they have seen him so many fewer times than they had the others by now. The alphas kept training light and to the point, because the girls planned a surprised baby-themed movie marathon for Lydia. They planned on watching Knocked Up, Bad Moms, Baby Mama, and What To Expect When You're Expecting. So they needed an early start.

The pack all stayed, even though Scott fell asleep by the second film, and made plans to meet again on Tuesday for an impromptu pack dinner. Derek was thinking that Stiles may contact one of them by then and hoped they could get him to come to dinner and clear the air a little.

Keeping Kohona happy seemed a lot less important all of a sudden. Derek repeatedly heard the words 'I'm done' in his head coming from his mate's mouth and he just couldn't shake the feeling that something was really wrong with his other half.

Cora, at her brother's request, kept the visiting wolves out of the house on Monday. Chayton was growing suspicious, he felt the Hale-McCall pack was still hiding something about the emissary from him. He couldn't get a straight answer on if Stiles was emissary in training or not, and everyone claimed the old man was a mage, but he had yet to see the proof. He found it particularly odd that Cora continued to find activities away from the house, however, and he kept trying to catch her in a lie. This kept Kohona distracted, which was a good thing, because she was starting to feel a little hurt with how much the older alpha had ignored her all weekend.

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By Tuesday’s dinner no one had yet to talk to Stiles. Scott told the obviously upset alpha that he would stop by the Sheriff's on his way home and talk with their emissary in person. The ladies all chatted away through the rest of dinner, including Kohona. She didn't notice Derek's permanent scowl.
Scott, as volunteered, stopped by the Sheriff’s and quickly spotted the lack of the familiar blue Jeep in the driveway, but proceeded to scope out his best friend’s room regardless. He was shocked to find the room now sported pink wallpaper. The wallpaper was accompanied by a sleeping pig-tailed girl. Scott in his horror at peeking into a little girl's room like a creeper, quickly ran to the front yard to double check that he had the correct house. He did at least get the house right, although it was obvious the room no longer belonged to Stiles. Scott called his fellow alpha and asked him to come over to the Sheriff's as soon as possible.

Derek immediately stopped his conversation with Chay and Kohona, and ran out the door. He ran all the way to his boyfriend’s old house. Scott was waiting outside.

“What happened?” Derek was panicking.

“When Stiles said he was going to stay at his dad's, did he mention that his dad's new wife's daughter had kind of taken over his room?” Scott questioned. He was trying to think back through conversations to see if this tidbit of information was ever expressed.

“What, no!” Derek looked confused by the odd question. “It's a three bedroom house, right?”

“Yeah it is, but it looks like the sheriff kept his home office.” Scott replied. It hadn't occurred to either of them that Stiles had been staying on a couch for two and a half weeks.

Derek needed proof and hopped around back to spy through the window. “It's pink."

“He never asked to stay with us…” Scott added.

“Pink. Where has he been? I think we should knock.”

The front door opened at those words and deputy Parrish invited the other two inside.

“You’re lucky I don't arrest you for lurking near my step daughter’s window.” The Sheriff said as a way of greeting. “Parrish told me everything you two said, it sounds like you lost my son. Take a seat.”
The Sheriff explained that Stiles had stayed at his house on occasion over the past two weeks. The deputy added that he stayed with him too that one time. Derek was visibly upset by this and glared at Parrish for the remainder of the Sheriff’s speech about Stiles trying to find odd and end jobs to keep himself busy at his house, and how his son was obviously avoiding going home to Derek. He told the wolves that Stiles said the pack was mad at him.

Scott quickly denied that claim, but Derek hushed him and reminded him that everyone was kind of upset after the night at Jungle. Derek sort of explained the situation while leaving out the reason behind Stiles dislike of the visiting wolves. Mr. Stilinski was good at his job, however, and easily put two and two together. Parrish piped up saying Stiles was in tears that night and clearly regretted drinking as much as he had. Scott pointed out how offensive it was for Stiles to blatantly flirt with others while being mated to an alpha of the pack. Everyone took it as disrespect and felt he didn't care for his mate’s feelings.

“And what were you doing while my son was being so promiscuous?” The sheriff asked his son's boyfriend.

Derek froze. Scott looked guilty as he tried to explain, “it's just…one of the visiting wolves has a bit of a crush on Derek.”

“So, what were you doing? Flirting with her? Dancing with her? Making out with her?” The older man was clearly annoyed with how dense the two wolves were acting.

“I would never! We were just dancing a little, that's all. She's really persistent, and I just wanted to shut her up.” Derek tried to explain but it sounded flat even to his own ears.

“And, Stiles was just dancing a little as well?” The mage’s father continued.

“Yes, but…” Scott tried to argue again.

“But what, Scott? You guys are all clearly okay with making my son watch the love of his life flirt with another girl for the sake of your pack. What can you really say to defend such actions?” Scott stared at his father figure as the older man raised his voice for the first time that night.

“We… we haven't seen him since Friday.” Derek tried to change the direction on the conversation.
“Friday!” The sheriff seemed surprised. “It's Tuesday. He hasn't been at Issac’s or Danny’s or something?”

“No. No one from the pack has heard from him. He is ignoring our texts, understandably so, given the situation…” The older alpha trailed off.

“He hasn't been here. I sent him to go work things out with you last week, I think after he spent three nights in a row on my couch, last Wednesday, if I recall….” Noah pondered this for a moment. “He was running out of chores to do around the house, he cleaned the gutters and removed all my Christmas light hooks…he needed to stop, it was becoming counter productive.” He muttered as he pulled his phone out to give his son a call. It went straight to voicemail. He left a worried message for his son.

Parrish tried as well with the same conclusion.

“Hemmm, let's call this in. He's my son and I don't like that he is missing, so even if it annoys him I want an APB out for his Jeep.” Parrish radioed it in and the Sheriff rattled off the plate from memory.

“You two are going to go look for him, all his usual haunts. He likes that damn tree. Go there. And visit with your former boss, Scott. The vet and Stiles had always gotten on okay.” The sheriff was all business now.

A beautiful for her age lady walked in wearing sweats and a baggy shirt, obviously ready for bed. “Everything okay dear?” She questioned as she waved hello to all the guests. She hadn't seen Scott since the wedding and Derek since the holidays.

“I think it'll be alright. Stiles didn't go home, and they came here looking for him but he's not here either so we're starting a bit of a search party. Unfortunately for my son, you can't just disappear even if you want to when your dad's the Sheriff!” He puffed up his chest at that.

“I'll make a pot.” Lorraine said as she made her way to the kitchen.

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Hours of looking turned up nothing. Derek was starting to get really concerned. As soon as his mate's father had mentioned the Nemeton, he was sure that would be where they would find him. It was apparent that the mage was there recently. The forest had towering trees full of vines of ivy and an assortment of overgrown wild flowers surrounding the Nemeton’s clearing, but the mage himself was nowhere to be found. And despite the beautiful foliage around it, the Nemeton seemed to sense the absence of its counterpart, because it looked dull and lifeless and had a thick jagged crack down its center that was certainly a new addition.

Scott had no luck with the vet either, although Deaton was able to tell them that Stiles was experiencing signs of mate rejection. Scott was livid with Derek over this. Chayton seemed to pick up on the aggressive behavior between them, and was interested to see how two alphas would resolve their issues. He was disappointed when they took the fight to a soundproof room. The two spent the better part of an hour having heated words in one of the spare bedrooms. Derek insisted that he wasn't interested in Kohona in anyway and wasn't trying to hurt Stiles. He loves his mate! Scott insisted that you couldn't damage your mate without it being intentional and asked Derek if he was experiencing signs of disloyalty with his own mating mark. Derek actually dropped his drawers right then and there to check but was pleased to see the mark looked healthy and normal. Scott slammed his eyes shut.

“See!” He spat at his co-alpha. “Our marks are fine!”

“Your mark is fine. Deaton said Stiles's looked like someone seared it into his skin, he said it looked painful!” Scott protested.

“Why would it only affect one of us?” Derek asked. “Why is it so bad for him? I've never heard of mating bites burning like that?”

“Deaton wasn't sure. He told Stiles to talk to the Council about it. He thinks it's a mage thing or a magical thing, or a bonded to the earth thing…” Scott looked confused.

“It's not like I was actually unfaithful, I didn't mean to hurt him, he just didn't understand.” Derek tried to defend himself.

“I would never hurt Kira like that, how could you?” Scott accused.

“I didn't do anything Scott! You were there and agreeing with me and telling me just a week ago that Stiles would come around and apologize!”
In the end Scott agreed. They called an emergency pack meeting. Allison stayed home with her son, but everyone else was gathered in the Hale kitchen at two in the morning, sleepy eyed and grumpy. Derek launched into how no one had seen or heard from their emissary since Friday, confirming for Chayton that Stiles was indeed the emissary. He then learned that the man in question was supposed to be the mage himself and he snorted with disbelief.

“You expect us to believe that that boy is a mage! It takes years of practice for anyone to reach that level. And that old man who came over pulling rabbits out of hats? Who was that then?”

“That was also Stiles. He has an aging spell, he likes to use when assisting others, it helps to keep him a secret, less of a target, but that doesn't matter now. He is missing and we need to find him!” Derek was exasperated with having to explain the obvious.

“Wait. So he is a mage?” Kohona question. “He is your emissary and a mage, why do you think he is missing? He can take care of himself, right? Why do you care so much? You've been upset since he left on Friday!” She whined, reaching for the older man.

“He is my mate!” Derek yelled back at her. She instantly recoiled. “Sorry. He is my mate. You kind of assumed I was single and we were trying to win your favor so I asked him to back off while you two were in town, and now he is done. And he's missing.” Derek tried to explain.

The hurt and shock was clear on Kohona's face. She reached for her brother's hand for support. “You, you all have been lying to us!” She accused. “And you!” She slapped Derek across the face with her free hand. “You had me played!” She was in tears.

“Listen we'll help you find your missing pack member and then I think we should head home.” Chayton offered. He held his crying sister in one hand.

“But, Chay! I thought we were at least friends!” Cora piped up. “I think we all knew your sister wasn't even close to Derek's type and we were just trying to please her, that's true. But I considered you both friends! Please stay for the remainder of the moon cycle! It'll be so much better once everyone apologizes to Stiles…”

“Apologize!” Jackson interrupted. “For what? We're here in the middle of the night when we all have jobs to attend in the morning, because he was upset and ran away? What the hell am I apologizing for?”
“For not being good friends.” His wife supplied. Her red hair was pulled back into an uncharacteristic sloppy bun. “He said it hurt seeing Derek flirt with Kohona in front of him all the time. And we didn't do anything. I told him he had nothing to worry about because of the mating marks.”

“Yeah, I told him the same thing “ Erica admitted. “I didn't think it was that big of a deal.”

“But, he was right. I would go insane watching you flirt and carry on with someone else in such a manner.” Scott said to Kira. The kitsune agreed reaching for her lover’s hand.

Isaac looked determined. “We talked about it a little. He stayed over our house a couple of nights and babysat Lucas on Thursday when we all went out to dinner. I invited him to come and he said he didn't have a place in the pack anymore, and I immediately disagreed, but Allison had pointed out that he really didn't. Stiles has been sitting on the floor or the end of the table since the night of the welcoming dinner. We took him out of group texts to avoid making him obligated to come over, too. He kind of has been pushed out a little.”

“Oh! He must hate me!” Kohona looked heartbroken. “Derek Hale! You are a despicable person, doing that to your mate and to me!”

Derek remained silent. He agreed. This is what Stiles meant when he asked him if it was worth it. Losing him for some stupid ally? And the answer was no. Of course it wasn't worth it, but so much damage was already done.

“So he's been sleeping in his car when he wasn't on his dad's couch? That's harsh! He's been homeless and he felt like he couldn't come to any of us for help… we all let him down.” Boyd unhelpfully summed up.

“Let's continue the search. Derek did a good job in the preserve, but Erica you and Boyd should go the north route. Isaac and myself will take the south. Lydia, you're pregnant and need to sleep, so Jackson you should take her home, but keep trying to call and text him. He might pick up for you, you’re like his best friend after me.” Scott said to the banshee with a half smile before he continued. “Kira and Derek can take the town. Chayton if you'd like to help your welcome to, but as our guest I think you should both get some sleep. Cora will stay here, report in if he shows up.”

Everyone agreed.
Over the next several days, tension was high in the Hale house. Most of the blame was on Derek's shoulders, who blamed himself as well. It was self wallowing at its best. Kohona, it turned out, didn't care for this side of Derek at all. She was bored with the lack of fun activities and sick of the self pity. She actually started to go venture off on her own into town and met several interesting people. Chayton would escort his sister, but was more interested in finding the fate of the supposed mage.

He officially decided that the emissary was certainly nothing more than average. He over heard Scott telling Derek that Deaton was attempting to contact the Council. Chay was certain this attempt wouldn't go through. If Stiles was a mage as they said, the Supreme Council would probably be on a first name bases with the entire pack.

Lydia had taken over Stiles’s role and was doing research into magical mating bites. It seemed like it was almost unheard of. A mage simply didn't associate with others enough to form those close bonds. From her research Lydia discovered that most mages were pretentious and stuck up and generally treated others around them as if they were lower beings. This was so unlike their Stiles, that she was in disbelief. But book after book referred to the mages as if they were the most ostentatious group of people to ever exist.

Lydia found herself in Stiles's study to see if he had anything on his mating mark and discovered several grimoires from former mages in his private collection. She was amazed by some of the things she read. And then she found that Stiles had started a personal grimoire for himself. It was the largest book in there and mostly blank, but what he had filled out was incredible. Stiles had detailed almost all of his battles and spells used as well as accounted for all pack related events. Both of her wedding ceremonies were in there, Stiles had performed several spells during the first to ensure personal happiness for each and several more spells during the second to encourage a long and faithful marriage that would bring mutual happiness to both parties. She laughed at his notes, showing that he had gotten it wrong in the first marriage. She thoroughly loved reading about Lucas's birth. The little man was carrying around more protection spells than all of the rest of the pack combined! She grew hopeful and curious about what would be written for her own son's birth. And then she realized what was so different. All the previous grimoires mentioned spells for personal strength or good looks or longevity. It seemed like mages were obsessed with longevity. But Stiles book was so different. It was about saving lives and celebrating family. It was about pack.

She scrolled through until she found what she needed. Stiles’s inscriptions about his own mating ceremony. There were a lot of details. She read how he needed approval from the Council, which they all knew about because he complained loudly and often throughout that entire year, but she had no idea the lengths he went to ensure the Council would approve. He tied his life to the land and to the pack when he became their emissary. If that bond was severed in anyway he would die and so would the Nemeton. It wasn't worth the risk to the Council to allow the tree root to become unstable by allowing its vessel to make himself more vulnerable by mating. So Stiles had let the
Nemeton drain his power slowly to build up its own reserve to hold itself overtime should anything ever happen to himself and upon Stiles's eventual death he would be returned to the tree by the Council and the tree would ultimately claim him and his power as its own in a last ditch attempt to keep the area free from the constant attacks they once faced in their high school days. This meant that Stiles hadn't been operating with his full capabilities for a while now. The pack often expected him to just perform his tricks and spells as needed, but he was constantly being drained by the Nemeton. He blessed Lydia's unborn son just a few nights ago without so much as a thought for his own well being, but by doing so he was draining his supply further. So essentially he is never at full power, but he does have the ability to draw strength from the Nemeton in case of emergencies. While this was good to know, she was more concerned about him facing death simply because his bond with the pack is damaged or even worse his bond with Derek. Both ties were currently very stretched and could easily break. Would this kill her friend?

Lydia thought about his choices. If this was the only way he would get the Supreme Council to approve for him to be a werewolf’s mate, and Stiles so desperately wanted to be Derek's mate, she could see him choosing it, giving up a part of his power for the chance to be the alpha's. Stiles loved Derek, so it was worth it. He truly was unique when compared to the other mages.

They needed to talk to the Council as soon as possible and see how they could reverse any unintentional damage done to the emissary's mating bite, because frankly, Stiles's life depended on it. Lydia called Derek into the office to explain.

“We need to find Stiles, now!” She stated with urgency.
Chapter 6

Stiles woke delirious and out of it. It took some time, but he managed to stumble his way into the bathroom where he proceeded to empty his stomach. Unfortunately, he hadn't eaten in quite sometime, and the contents of his stomach included lots of blood. Magical or not, puking up blood was never a good sign. He knew he needed to talk with the vet and do it soon.

But first, he needed a shower. His hair stuck to his forehead from sweat. And he was still sticky with dried blood from the mark on his chest. The bite continued to ache with a dull pain. He also plugged in his phone, which had died sometime during his long slumber.

***

It was midday on Friday when Stiles had finally called his father back.

“I'm okay Dad, sorry to worry you. I'm a few counties over at a motel. I wasn't feeling well. Had a bit of a fever. I was kind of out of it.” Stiles rushed through the phone as soon as his dad had picked up. He had over twenty missed calls from his dad alone, several more from Lorraine and Parrish, and close to a hundred from the pack.

“Okay kiddo. Are you alright? Can I come get you?” His dad was flooded with relief at hearing his son's voice, despite noticing the croaky-ness from lack of use over the past few days.

“No need dad. Tonight's my last paid for night, anyways. I'll come home in the morning. I'm feeling better, I'm going to head across the street and see if the local restaurant has soup on the menu for takeout.” Stiles lied.

“Okay son. Do you mind if I tell the pack that you called and that you're okay?” His father asked.

Stiles paused. “…Sure. I'm just not ready to face Derek yet. Can I hijack your couch again tomorrow night?”

“Sure, anything, Son.” His dad was just so relieved he would agree with any demand from the young mage.

“Okay dad, I'm going to give Deaton a call, in case my fever is anything…you know…hocus pocus related.” Stiles tried to make himself sound as normal as possible, but knew he was failing.

“Son. Are you sure I can't come get you? I don't want you driving if you're tired and out of it…” His father tried to protest.
“Neh, dad, I just slept for like, four days straight… I think I'm well rested.” Stiles joked.

“Hemm, well call me if you change your mind. Lorraine and I will come get you and I'll drive your beloved Jeep back. Had an APB out for that car, where did you park it?” The Sheriff asked out of curiosity.

At these words, Stiles immediately checked through the window and spotted his mother's old Jeep sitting in the hot son where he left it. Sighing with relief, he told his dad it was parked out back of the motel and promised he would call if he changed his mind.

Stiles had one more call to make before going through the mountain of missed texts.

“Deaton! I think I need help! I probably should have listened to you…” Stiles started to say when the cryptic vet cut him off.

“It's already taken care of. It wasn't easy but I've contacted the Council. With luck, I should hear back from them soon. Where are you?”

“I'm uhh, not doing well. Out of town. Those stuck up old dudes can probably fix me, but I'm not sure what's wrong exactly… I told my dad I'd see him tomorrow. I have another night paid for already.” Stiles rambled.

“You're suffering from bite rejection. You need to come back into town, come back to the Nemeton. You can stay with me, but if I tell you to go to the hospital, I expect you to go immediately!” Deaton said firmly.

“It's okay. I'll be…” Stiles started.

“No. I mean it. You feed the Nemeton, right? Well, I have a theory, I'm not sure if it's possible but I think the Nemeton will feed you back. Did you get worse the further you went? You need to return and talk with Derek…”

“No. I don't want to talk to him…not yet.” Stiles broke into Deaton's speech.

“Stiles, this is important. Your life could depend on it,” The vet was being surprisingly straightforward, which ultimately forced Stiles to take him seriously.

“I'll head back today instead, okay. You can give me a check up.” Stiles ground out.

“Okay, come straight to the clinic.” Dr. Deaton requested.
“Yes, sir,” Stiles said mockingly.

“I mean it!” The vet warned.

“I will….”

“You will do as you wish, as you always do…” The former emissary finished, exasperated.

“So, we're on the same page then,” Stiles said with a light hearted chuckle that turned into a coughing fit, resulting in a fresh splatter of blood on his hands. “I'm leaving now. About two hours.” He managed to stammer as he recovered.

“Stiles. I'm telling the alphas.” Deaton left no room for argument.

***

The mage hadn't even finished going through his missed texts when the group text with the picture of everyone enjoying breakfast popped up with an incoming new text.

Scott: Found Stiles, going to Deaton's. Council will help him there.

Lydia: He okay?

Scott: He will be.

Stiles was just about to pipe up and tell them he was in this group text, and that he is fine, when another one came through.

Cora: Bro wants everyone out of the house tonight. Jungle?

Erica sent the music note, guitar, and red heel emoji which the girls interpreted to mean she needed new dancing shoes.

Kira: Come over. We can buy new outfits!

Cora: We’re coming too
Allison: Lucas has been really clingy lately so, Isaac's gonna stay home with him but I'll be there!

Jackson: start a new message with Danny! And not me! wife will get her way, see you tonight

And that was the end of that group chat, Stiles waited for a minute before packing his phone, just in case. It seems the pack got over the case of the missing Stiles pretty quickly. But, hey at least he could go and collect more of his belongings if everyone was at Jungle.

With that sad thought, he started his long drive back.

***

Deaton was right, the closer he got to Beacon Hills, the better the mage felt. The vet actually had some decent advice too, and recommended Stiles go out and visit the Nemeton after a thorough examination and that he refrain himself from using magic. He also had some good or bad news, the verdict was still out. Claire, a sorcerer who specializes in healing magic and Edwin, an elderly mage who has served the council for over a century now, would be visiting with Stiles soon. While he had yet to meet Claire, Stiles was awarded the privilege to mate by Edwin, himself, so he assumed the older mage was making the journey to either strip Stiles of his mating bite (if that was even possible?) or to make sure Stiles fulfilled his agreement and died on the Nemeton. Either way, just knowing the little mage was heading to the States for an unscheduled visit was enough to cause the younger man's stomach to ache. But, bringing with him a world renown healer was promising, right? After Deaton declared that there was no apparent cause for Stiles's maladies, he ordered him to visit the Nemeton and, true to his word, offered his home for the night, although he highly recommended going to the Hale house to lessen the distance from his mate.

Stiles still had a slight fever and chill, so despite the warm weather he bundled himself up in his worn out red hoodie and took the familiar path to the Nemeton's clearing. The forest appeared healthy. A fact he was hoping would please the Council. He felt like a child who was trying to avoid punishment by passing off his accomplishments to hide his glaring failure. But as soon as he saw the Nemeton, he knew Edwin wouldn't be happy. The old tree root looked faded and had a large burnt out crack in the center, as if it was struck by lightning. Stiles apologized as he climbed on top, coughing up some blood as he went.

Without meaning to the young mage fell asleep.

***

When he woke it was dark outside. A quick glance at his phone told him it was almost midnight. Rather than return to his truck at the clinic, Stiles opted to head to the Hale house. It would make the vet happy, and as everyone would be out at the club, he should be able to pack a suitcase with his remaining clothing and other personal items, and maybe even crash in one of the spare rooms.
The emissary felt better after his nap in nature and enjoyed the moon lit walk through the woods. The Hale house has always been impressive from the moment his alpha had decided to rebuild it, but viewing it from the backyard under the stars, this was what the house was made for, with its bright lights and huge windows, it was a sight to behold, Stiles thought as he approached.

He was lost in thought and hadn't considered the fact that someone was most likely home if the lights were on.

Entering through the back door, which opens into the kitchen, he saw it. The small breakfast nook table that was rarely used was set with the remnants of a candle lit dinner. The candlesticks had burned low and blue wax dripped over the side of the fancy silver holders that Stiles had purchased years ago for his one year anniversary with Derek. They rarely used them, and Cora never had. A whole new chill ran through the mage, who had eaten dinner here tonight? Stiles just knew in his gut that it had to be Derek, and if the alpha had made a romantic dinner and Stiles was to the best of his knowledge at the vet’s house, then the other place setting was most likely for Kohona. A strangled cry escaped his lips. He used a little magic and felt out the territory for his mate. Sure enough he was in the house with him. In their room, to be exact. Was she up there too? He didn't dare let his magic find out. The young mage remembered the group texts from earlier that day asking the pack to make themselves scarce tonight. Was it so Derek could finally have some alone time with the Tillamook wolf? His eyes landed on the alpha’s discarded shirt. It laid haphazardly over a kitchen bar stool.

Stiles covered his mouth as he felt an instant wave a nausea hit. He barely made it to the sink in time. He caked the sink with a fresh bout of blood that hit so violently it splashed back on the man himself. He turned around and sprinted out of the yard and into the forest as fast as he could, no destination in mind…
Derek felt so guilty. He had neglected his mate, ignored his emissary's advice, and now Stiles was missing. It had been a whole week since he had watched him walk away shortly after Lydia and Jackson had announced their wonderful news. The pack and his father were actively searching for the young man, but to no avail. The sinking feeling of despair that had gradually gotten worse every day was starting to physically hurt. As a werewolf, the alpha had so rarely experienced a pain like this, but he knew the concept. He had a tummy ache. A real, physical tummy ache, and his mating bite ebbed on occasion, it was an odd sensation.

Derek had tried desperately to locate his mate by sense alone. He thought he would always be able to feel out Stiles’s whereabouts, it seemed to come so naturally to the two after they took that next step and exchanged bites. He couldn't do it however, and that was rather alarming. The Sheriff and Derek had planned to scour the neighboring towns to the east today. His mate's father had put in for some extra time off for the occasion and only had to work until noon. Derek headed to the station to pick him up, so they would waste as little time as possible.

Deputy Parrish greeted Derek with a welcoming smile at the front desk. “Hello, any luck?”

Derek scowled deeper, “No.” He didn't care for the hellhound’s constantly pleasant demeanor. And he certainly didn't want him giving his boyfriend a place to sleep. The alpha hadn't forgotten that fact.

“Ah, good, you're here. Let me just grab my coat and we can…” The Sheriff came around the corner after spotting the station’s latest arrival to greet him, when he was distracted by a specific ringtone. Stiles had changed his personal tone to “Stunting Like My Daddy” a while ago, and despite the eldest Stilinski’s distaste for the sound, he knew his son would only select something more grating on his ears if he changed the ringtone without his son’s approval.

Derek and Parrish were quick to listen in as Noah picked up.
“I’m okay Dad, sorry to worry you. I’m a few counties over at a motel. I wasn't feeling well. Had a bit of a fever. I was kind of out of it.” Stiles’s voice cracked from lack of use. He sounded rough, the Sheriff held a finger up signaling for Derek to stay quiet and he could listen in.

“Okay kiddo. Are you alright? Can I come get you?” The relief was visible on his boyfriend’s father's face.

“No need Dad. Tonight's my last paid for night, anyways. I'll come home in the morning. I'm feeling better, I'm going to head across the street and see if the local restaurant has soup on the menu for takeout.” Derek couldn't hear his mate's heartbeat but he doubted the words. Where was he? Surely the man wasn't feeling better, he sounded so sick.

“Okay. Son. Do you mind if I tell the pack that you called and that you're okay?” His mate's dad asked, eyeing the two listening in pack and pack adjacent members with trepidation. Stiles had called his father, not them, and the older man would respect his son’s wishes the best he could.

It surprised Derek how long it took Stiles to answer. “…Sure. I'm just not ready to face Derek yet. Can I hijack your couch again tomorrow night?” The alpha’s heart sank with those words.

“Sure, anything Son.”

“Okay Dad, I'm going to give Deaton a call, in case my fever is anything…you know…hocus pocus related.” Derek could just picture the way his mate would flail his arms along with that sentence and it brought a small smile on the otherwise surly face.

“Son. Are you sure I can't come get you? I don't want you driving if you're tired and out of it…” The Sheriff tried to protest. Derek held out his keys signaling they could leave right away.

“Neh, Dad, I just slept like four days straight… I think I'm well rested.” Stiles joked.

“Hemm, well call me, if you change your mind. Lorraine and I will come get you and I'll drive your beloved Jeep back.” Noah stressed his wife's name as he shook his head no at his son's boyfriend. “Had an APB out for that car, where did you park it?”
“I parked it in the back, listen Dad, I've got to go, gonna call Deaton, I'll let you know if I change my mind on that ride, though, promise! Love you!” Stiles rambled through the phone and hung up just as it sounded like the young man was going to cough.

He sounded rough and that call was not enough to settle Derek's nerves. Quite the opposite, actually. The alpha had half a mind to demand they trace his cell again now that it was turned back on, but his mate's father seemed okay with the short interaction and was willing to wait a day to see his son.

Derek grumbled his thanks to the Sheriff and shot off a text to Scott telling him Stiles had called his dad.

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He returned to his house where an anxious Scott told them that Deaton had just called and said he just got off the phone with Stiles who would come home today at the vet’s request. Dr. Deaton was really concerned for their friend and hoped that the Council would be able to help him and feared what would happen if they couldn't.

Derek immediately called the vet and demanded that he ask Stiles to come to the Hale house after his check up. Shockingly, Deaton agreed. The cryptic ex-emissary thought the two needed to talk and hoped Derek would do everything in his power to reverse the damage done to their bond.

Derek asked his sister to make sure the pack stayed out of the house for the day and begged her to find a new place for Kohona to stay. He wanted the girl out of his territory, if he was honest with himself. But that was unlikely to happen and he only had a few hours to prepare for his mate's return and that was a far more important concern.

Scott volunteered to host the Tillamook wolves for the remainder of their time here, which was incredibly nice as he and Kira shared a small two bedroom apartment, it was surely going to be crowded. Cora started texting and assured her older brother that he would have the house to himself.

Kohona rounded the corner and heard that last part and questioned what was going on. Her temper flared as soon as she spotted Derek. The two had been successfully avoiding each other all week. Scott, in his best diplomatic attitude, explained the situation to the she-wolf and her brother. The two surprisingly agreed, and Kohona quickly cheered up when Cora told her the pack was planning a night out, sans Derek.
The girls immediately started planning their outfits and made arrangements to meet up with the others.

Derek had other arrangements to make. He knew several of Stiles’s favorite meals and had to decide which he would cook. He wanted to give his mate the world’s most romantic dinner to make up for the previous failed date nights. It was Friday after all. Derek needed a shave. He had to find those candle sticks Stiles secretly liked. Perhaps he would stop by the bakery and have them bake an apology cake. Tonight would be perfect and Derek would tell his mate how much he loved and appreciated him and beg him for forgiveness and Stiles’s mating mark would get better and they would survive this ordeal, despite what Lydia told him she read in their emissary's grimoire.

Derek quickly took off to the store.

***

Six hours later, it was 7:30 p.m. and Derek had just set the table. He made veal marsala with roasted potatoes and vegetables. A small red velvet cake sat ready in the refrigerator for later. Derek himself was freshly shaven in a nice collar shirt. He changed the bedsheets and cleaned up his room, hoping they would be returning his mate's clothing and belongings to their rightful spot later that night. Back downstairs, he lit the candles. Flickering light was perfect for setting the mood. Now he just had to wait for his mage to arrive. He hoped the vet was able to convince him to come home, and soon.

The alpha spent the first thirty minutes sitting at the table. The food smelled amazing, it was hard to not cave and nibble a little here or there. He had to get up and move around, if he stayed at the table any longer he would end up eating by himself.

An hour later, Derek checked the temperature of the meal he had worked diligently on, it was cold. Grumbling to himself he poured a glass of wine, Stiles's favorite, and downed it as he covered the plates, hoping to preserve them a bit longer.

It was ten when Derek unbuttoned and removed his nice shirt as he tried to walk down the private road leading to the Hale house in hopes of spotting the Jeep’s lights.

By eleven, the werewolf blew out the candles, miserably. They had burned low, wax coated the table. Fifteen minutes later, he tossed the uneaten dinner and rinsed off the plates. The kitchen was mostly cleaned and he could work on the candle wax in the morning. Derek felt dejected. This was supposed to be his big apology, his chance to show his lover how much he was missed and
appreciated. But Stiles stubbornly refused to show. The alpha planned on stopping by Deaton's in the morning, in hopes of at least a conversation with his emissary, would the young man even allow it? He trudged up the stairs and fell into a nightmare filled sleep.

It was half past midnight when Derek woke screaming from a horrible dream. His mate was lost in the woods blood dripping from his mouth, his nose, ...his chest. The dream-Stiles had collapsed on the side of the road close to town, his face twisting in agony until he finally went still.

Derek struggled to fall back asleep after that. He couldn't get that look of sheer pain on his mate's face from his mind. He was sure that image would haunt him for the rest of his life.
Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

Huge thank you to Splash_of_bi who has not only this chapter but the next beta'd and ready to go!

I really liked this one, but if the povs are confusing let me know!

Thank you for all the comments, kudos, and love! The comments are great, they make my day!!

Officer Handley was a new deputy to Beacon Hills. It was rumored among the regional police stations that the town was cursed because they used to go through staff so quickly, although it had been at least half a decade since the last tragedy struck the station. The rumor and hopes for an exciting career were what led the young officer to relocate to the Northern California town.

The move proved to provide as expected because it was just his second day in the force when he spotted a dead body off the side of the road. He was on the outskirts patrolling near the preserve in the early morning hours when he spotted something pale and red. Before exiting the vehicle, he knew it was a body and he called it in.

Back up arrived shortly after so a team of officers could start the investigation into the mysterious young man's death. The deputies who arrived, having much more experience with cataloging crime scenes, immediately started the process referring to ‘the body’ as the body without giving it much of a glance.

An EMT was dispatched to the scene to collect and deposit the body at the hospital’s morgue.

The EMT staff were barely awake at the early hour and an older lady who was used to the routine looked over the pale face made indistinguishable because of the amount of blood and tutted about youth dying at such a young age. She held up the body so the crime scene personnel could properly photograph the evidence and quickly placed the corpse in a body bag. It was unceremoniously dumped on a cold table in the hospital’s basement morgue some thirty minutes later.
Derek, as promised to himself, made his way over to the vet's house as soon as the sun had risen. Dr. Deaton was not pleased with the early morning call. He seemed confused by the alphas request to talk with Stiles, informing the younger man that he had last seen the mage as he made his way to the Nemeton yesterday. He told him his Jeep might still be at the clinic and the two went there immediately, but not before Derek called the Sheriff.

Lorraine had answered her husband's cell and informed the caller that Noah was in the shower. Derek asked if Stiles had spent the night on their couch again. She seemed uncomfortable with answering the question as she knew a little about the reason behind her stepson’s affinity for sleeping over as often as he had as of late. It had a lot to do with his boyfriend, that she was sure of.

Derek settled for having the Sheriff give him a call as soon as he could.

Deaton arrived at his clinic with the alpha, and sure enough, Stiles's blue Jeep still occupied the same spot in the lot. The vet suggested they check the Nemeton as Stiles had planned to go out there and could easily spend hours in meditation with that stump.

The alpha had little patience for the druid and barely waited for him to keep his pace, but eventually they both had made it to the clearing.

“Oh my!” The cryptic vet said under his breath as he took in the sight in front of him. The tree root’s crack that Derek saw during his last visit was much larger. It looked like a dark burgundy colored liquid was slowly dripping over the sides pooling on the forest floor. The forest around the Nemeton was still as large and robust as ever, but it was missing its usual glow and seemed dimmed, as if he was viewing it through a dirty window.

The alpha didn't need to use his werewolf senses to know the liquid was blood. The Nemeton was actually bleeding. This couldn't be a good sign. He quickly sent a text to his co-alpha informing him of the situation. They needed to find Stiles now.

Deaton took several photos and pulled a plastic bag from his pocket to take a sample for the liquid. “I'm going to run some tests, I suggest you find your emissary as soon as possible.”

The vet made his way back to his clinic.

Derek promised the tree stump he would fix this, all of it, and took off, following the scent trail left by his boyfriend the night before. He was surprised it led to his house. Derek had Cora assist in
searching the entire house for any signs of the young man. The only thing they found were the remnants of dried blood in the sink that was unmistakably their mage’s.

The rest of the pack was organized into groups to search too. Kohona and Chayton helped, even though the latter commented on how often their supposed mage managed to get lost. The two worked with Lydia and Jackson who searched the city library and high school because sometimes their mage was spotted doing research there. They needed a Hale to search the vault, so they had to skip that spot for the time being.

***

Derek told the Sheriff everything he knew for certain when he had called back. His boyfriend's father was angry at first as he had thought his son was still out of town and no one, his son included had updated him on that matter, but he quickly switched to protective dad as he declared the entire station will be on the look out for him.

The pack gathered at the Hale house not too long after that. It had started to rain so any hopes of catching a scent trail were lost. Cora remained adamant with her brother that the trail led to the house itself, but despite looking again they couldn't find their missing pack mate. It was troublesome to say the least.

A sleepy Lucas asked his mom where Uncle Stiles was. No one had an answer for the poor boy.

***

Officer Handley reported in from his second shift ever, and immediately noticed the change in the atmosphere. The once calm station was in a bit of an uproar. Apparently the Sheriff's son had been reported as missing and possibly injured. He was last seen yesterday afternoon near the preserve. Handley had worked the area near the preserve just that morning. He had found a dead body of a young male near the preserve that morning. His heart started to sink. Had he in fact found the Sheriff's son earlier? He quickly looked for the crime scene officers but couldn't find them. Handley was already able to access the evidence from earlier that day however and pulled up several photos on his computer of the boy in question. He wasn't familiar with the Sheriff's son, but Parrish had just reported in and had already been so friendly and helpful towards the new officer. He flagged the more experienced deputy over.

Handley didn't have to say anything. Despite the blood covered face and slicked back hair, Parrish immediately recognized the mole splattered pale face. Very, very pale. Deathly pale…
“Is he…” Deputy Parrish questioned the newer officer, unable to finish that sentence.

Handley simply nodded. “Hit the coroner’s table by eight…”

***

The Sheriff was a fair man, a good man. He valued family and had been known to pick up shifts even when it meant he would be working a double, whenever his officers needed it. This was just one of the reasons everyone was doing their best to find his son, who most of them knew personally too, alive. The officers all hoped to be the one to tell the Sheriff they found him, it's going to be okay. No one dared dream they'd have to be the bearer of bad news, because well, had it been anyone else's son, the Sheriff would of course stepped up to the plate.

Parrish gulped. He couldn't let the new guy do this, it would be too impersonal. He thanked Handley and wrote down the case file to pull up in the Sheriff's office if it came to it and marched his way across the station. His boss had his head in his hands, rubbing at his temples.

“Sir, I need to tell you something.” Deputy Parrish closed the door behind him.

***

Melissa McCall was nearing the end of a fifteen hour shift in the ER when she got a call she hoped to never receive. She just sat down, her aching feet propped against the nearby wall, when she jumped back up telling the person on the other end of that call to calm down and let her check. She raced through the hall in her teal scrubs, tears already streaming.

“Wait! Wait! Hold that elevator! My son…almost son…” she yelled to the janitor. He held the door as requested and allowed her to hit the basement level, even though he needed the third floor.

Melissa thanked him profusely as she continued to cry, losing connection with the screaming man on the opposite end of the phone as the elevator descended.
The shaking nurse made her way to the morgue with apprehension. Not Stiles, no way, not Stiles…. 

There was only one new body in there, still in a body bag on the table, yet to be worked on. They were a small town with only one forensic pathologist, it wasn't unheard of for an examination to take a day or two. That's what the the mortuary refrigerators were for. But this one was irresponsibly left on the metal table. Melissa cautiously approached. Tears streamed down her face as she pulled back the zipper.

It was indeed Stiles and he was so unnaturally pale and covered in dried blood. To see someone she loved sit so still and lifeless she couldn't help but sob. No no no no no……not her sweet Stiles, her second son, the cause of her forehead wrinkles… she loved that boy.

Stiles's hair stuck together in clumps from accumulated blood. His mouth and nose were crusted in it. His eyes, thankfully, were shut, probably sealed from the large amount of dried blood covering his face. He was so, so pale wherever the blood had not covered. His lips were colorless. There was no doubt in her mind that he was indeed dead….

Except…except his shirt sported bright red blood that was not in agreement with the dried darker shade on his face. She unzipped the bag further and discovered that his shirt was soaked in the crimson substance. This was unusual. Right up the alley for the only nurse in on the supernatural. She lifted his shirt to examine the chest wound. It had a bite mark. A werewolf bite mark, one that Melissa knew was there even if she had never seen it. It was caused by Derek Hale and meant to be a sign of love and commitment. This she knew. The mark looked fresh, well, fresher in the sense that it was opened and slowly, very slowly, continuing to bleed. It also appeared inflamed and infected. With ugly blisters forming the edges.

It looked painful.

But, it was continuously bleeding and that meant that Stiles was in fact alive!

***

The next hour things happened very quickly. Melissa was able to call a doctor down to confirm the earlier misdiagnosed death and have Stiles rushed up to the ICU. He was extremely low in blood. Medical miracle, record setting low. Melissa knew his blood type and they had several quarts administered right away. He would soon be setting other records for draining the blood stock at the hospital.
Doctors diagnosed him with acquired hemophilia. Which basically meant his body couldn't stop bleeding, his blood wouldn't clot on its own. This was a rare autoimmune disorder, and they had never seen a case of it diagnosed quite like this with a bite mark and clotted blood in the facial area. It just didn't make sense and Stiles was placed in an observational bubble. No visitors allowed, no exceptions.

Melissa called the Sheriff as soon as she could. He was relieved to find out his son was not dead... yet. But devastated to hear that he had set the hospital record for blood loss. The Sheriff was already on his way to the hospital when he got this news and he had to be escorted out and disarmed by an equally angry deputy Parrish after the doctors and nurses told him he couldn't see his son. Melissa was officially off duty and joined her long time friend in protest in the hospital parking lot and the two shared shoulders to cry on.

Before the Sheriff arrived however, the nurse was able to call her son and inform him that they found Stiles and his condition looked bleak. It sounded like her son may have broken something with his werewolf strength, but he recovered quickly and composed himself well enough to tell his mother the pack would be there soon.

Parrish excused himself from the Sheriff's line of fire and offered to bring his wife to the hospital, this was news that should be given in person. The Sheriff agreed.

***

Derek and the pack happened to be together and all of the werewolves were able to listen in on Scott's call from his mom. It was apparent immediately that the Tillamook wolves were uncomfortable with the situation and volunteered to keep to themselves at the Hale house while everyone else visited the hospital. Kira called Danny to let him know, he was a friend to Stiles and would want to know this current crisis.

Derek was devastated. He shattered a barstool when he heard what Melissa had said. Lydia attempted to comfort her alpha, it seemed pointless, but at least he put the claws away as Lydia was currently extra vulnerable at the moment. Allison took her son aside and explained that Uncle Stiles was really sick and that his dad would go visit and they would join them later. She didn't want her five year old around things until they had settled, such as their alpha's tempers, because Scott had accidentally crushed his phone after hanging up with his mom.

Before anyone could make it out the door, Derek's phone rang. It looked like the older alpha was more than content to allow the caller to go to voicemail, but Cora noisily announced it was Deaton.

“Answer it!” Her brother snapped.
“Hello Doctor.” She said tentatively. “It's me, Cora.”

“Ah yes, well, I have interesting news, Scott's phone went straight to voicemail, but I'm assuming the whole pack will want to know as it…”

“What? What is it, now?” Derek was fed up with the vet's long unhelpful speech and grabbed the phone from his sister's hand to interrupt.

Dr. Deaton huffed. “It's the test, that was indeed blood coming from the Nemeton, and believe it or not, it had a full DNA match to our young mage. It's his blood…very unusual, I've never heard…”

“Thank you,” Derek interrupted again. “He is dying at the hospital, now, so…”

The vet cut him off in turn. “I think the tree may be connected in more ways than we know, perhaps it's the only thing keeping him alive at the moment?”

Derek didn't know what to say to this but if that was true they had to get to the hospital, to their pack mate, to his lover…

“Allow me to suggest that you have some pack members keep watch and monitor the Nemeton for changes. I'm sure the two are connected. The Council representatives should arrive shortly. They will have more answers, hopefully.” The ex-emissary suggested.

Derek glanced at the group. Everyone averted their eyes. They all wanted to visit Stiles. “What are you doing today?” The alpha asked of the vet.
Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

Beta'd by Splash_of_bi and then I went and added stuff so all mistakes go to me, you can let me know in the comments and I'll fix it in time....

We are nearing the end.... uahhh thank you so much for reading!
Love you all!!

Stiles has yet to move. While the doctors told the Sheriff he hasn't gotten any worse, he also hasn't improved. He won't stop bleeding despite the medication they've given him. He won't wake up. The best the doctors can do is continue to give him blood. No one will say it to his father, but they won't be able to keep Stiles alive forever this way. What he needs is not an unlimited resource. Fortunately, with much persuasion and threats of suing as his son spent several hours in the hospital’s morgue prior to being properly looked at, his father and other immediate family members can now view Stiles’s room. It's a clean room and no one is allowed inside.

The pack was quick to ensure their family ties were approved with the help of the good nurse McCall. Melissa just happened to find the group plenty of chairs and recommended they are given the room next door to Stiles's clean room to keep the rather high number of ICU visitors out of the hall. This was largely due to the lack of lawsuit as well.

After things had settled, Allison brought Lucas up to visit. And Erica and Boyd were the first set of wolves to go relieve the vet who was monitoring the tree root. The Nemeton's condition had yet to change either.

Derek was devastated.

Kohona and Chayton came by to pay their respects but that must have been the wrong terminology to use in front of the surly alpha, because Derek was asked to leave after his outburst. The Tillamook siblings announced that in light of the tragic turn of events they would indeed be leaving a little early. The full moon was this upcoming Friday and despite the ups and downs, the two were sure they would remain friendly with most of the Hale-McCall pack. Their father and tribal leader would collect them in person the next day. Everyone exchanged hugs, and the ladies chatted about some of the funny mall exploits they had gotten up to. It was almost a cheerful mood in the side room, almost. Scott had barely stopped staring at his friend, his hands were pressed against the plastic tarp walls, as he stared on with longing. He deeply regretted the way he had treated his friend over the past month. The younger alpha brushed off his concerns and overall was not there
for him when the young mage needed it. As best friends, this behavior was inexcusable, and now he may never have the opportunity to apologize.

The Sheriff took a temporary leave from work. His wife was more than understanding of the fact that Noah had barely left the hospital since his son's admittance. The older man took the only chair with a cushion as his permanent residence until further notice. He too stared longingly at his son, begging him to wake up and fix this. He wanted to be mad at Derek, to be mad at the pack, to be mad at the supernatural world that engulfed his son in his sophomore year of high school and has yet to let him go. But he couldn't, not yet, maybe not ever, he didn't have room for anger because his whole being was consumed by worry.

***

Doctor Deaton arrived late in the afternoon on the following day accompanied by two odd looking individuals. “I give you Claire and Edwin.” Claire dressed like a nun, in all black robes and wore an old fashion nurse style hat on her long, sleek, ebony hair. Edwin was half the height you'd expect for an adult, especially one of his age as he was rumored to be at least two centuries old, his hair was thick and bristly, it appeared to fall where it liked, in an untamed fashion. He, at least, was dressed more appropriately modern. “These are the promised members of the Supreme Council, you may not appreciate everything they have to offer on the subject of our young mage here, but please respect them. They ultimately are here to help.” The vet announced, it may have been a warning for the Hale-McCall pack to behave just as much as it was a reminder to be helpful to the Council.

Claire smiled a wide welcoming smile. Edwin looked like something smelled horrible to him, he kept his face scrunched up. His long fingers held firmly locked together in front of him giving off a ‘closed off’ vibe.

“Thank you so much for contacting us! I specialize in healing magic, so I’d like to take a closer look at the mark in question. His tie to you,” she addressed Derek without being told who he was, “is very strong, it's true, it may just save him, if I can just examine the mark a bit, perhaps, yes, well, maybe…” she seemed to lose herself in thought.

“What my sorcerer friend here means is that the damage is most likely caused from the unfaithful mating bond and not the entire pack bond. Perhaps removal of the mating mark would save the young one. It's tough to say at this time however. The call of nature is begging for my attention, I feel your forest may tell me more…” Edwin stated ominously.

Everyone in the pack exchanged looks. Derek looked livid. They were talking about taking his mating mark away. His emotions must have been noticed, because Scott placed a calming hand on his co-alpha's arm.
“If it meant the difference between losing him as a mate and losing him altogether?” He questioned the older man.

Derek nodded. “I'll show you the forest, I'm not sure how you'll get close enough to exzam….” Derek addressed both of the newcomers, however Claire was already dressing in scrubs and must have done some sort of magic spell because a nurse had her in the prep room readying her to enter the clean one. She seemed unusually chipper.

Edwin placed a hand on Derek's forearm. He was half the alpha's size. “Show me. He introduced us once. When your mage was displaying the great love between the two of you for me to see. You wouldn't remember, I appeared different to you, but he showed me and I believed in it, your love. I never experienced anything like it myself, never had the need, I thought it may be an interesting experiment… he is shortening his life by simply serving the pack as emissary, shortening it dramatically further by mating you, but he acted as if it didn't matter, he may only live for one or two centuries and he seemed to believe that would be long enough… always thought your mage was a strange one, but we haven't had a new mage appear in over a hundred years… maybe they make them… a little odder these days?” The extremely old man continued to ramble.

He was calling Stiles odd. This man who's white and grey hairs stood straight up looking like a lawn mower buzzed random path ways across his scalp called their mage the odd one? Derek continued to ponder all the new information he was taking in when he ran into a familiar face. Three familiar faces. Kohona and Chayton were blocking their path to the door flanking the sides of the Tillamook tribal leader, their dad. He was a larger jovial man and broke into a wide grin at the site of Derek. So Kohona hadn’t shared all her experiences?

“Ah Derek good to see you, good to see you again! I'm sorry it's under such trying circumstances, for you to lose your emissary…” the round man shook the alphas hand with a wide grin, looking anything but sorrowful.

Derek cleared his throat. “This is Edwin, Supreme Council, they are here to try to save him, our mage, that is.” Derek attempted to sound put together, it was difficult his own mating bite mark was throbbing painfully and he didn't feel like wasting time with pleasantries. Edwin said the forest was calling, and you don't ignore what a mage tells you, that much Derek had learned the hard way.

“Ahhh, I see.” The tribal leader looked pointedly at his son who looked guilty. Chay must have told his dad that their emissary was a fake as he suspected him to be.
“Please, the rest of the pack are up there, just tell the nurses you're family, they won't question it.” Derek moved to get around but the larger man stayed firm.

“When you're all done with your business here, it would be an honor for you to visit our tribe!” He said to the small mage. The Council member was dwarfed by Derek, but that was nothing when compared to the large man looming over him now.

“Ah, no, I came for the young emissary, Nepal is my home, I must return.” Edwin answered honestly.

It made the tribal leader frown but he nodded his head and indicated for his children to lead the way.

***

Edwin was fascinated by the forest. He commented happily on its size and robustness. His smile faded however when they came across the clearing and he saw the Nemeton. The old man wasted no time for gloves as he dipped two fingers into what they now know to be the emissary's blood.

Jackson, who was guarding the tree at the moment, was asleep on the other side of the clearing and yet to stir from the commotion. Derek placed a swift kick to the werewolf’s shin to wake him.

“What…oh uh…” Jackson stumbled through an apology. Derek flashed his ruby red eyes and silenced him.

The three stayed by the tree for the remainder of the evening. Edwin did several experimental spells, but the point or purpose was yet to be seen. He finally announced they should return to the young mage’s side by nightfall.

***

The short time away was enough for all hell to break loose. As Derek approached his boyfriend's room, he was quick to pick up on the cause, the Tillamook tribal leader was still there with several hundred sets of flowers in his arms and his reluctant looking children stood carrying even more. They were trying to pull their father out of the way but to no avail. The sheriff stood between the Tillamook tribe and his son's adjacent room, refusing to let them enter and threatening to open fire.
with wolfsbane bullets if they wouldn't leave.

The rest of the pack looked exhausted behind them and Claire was uncharacteristically frowning, it looked out of place on her usually much happier face.

“But Chay loves him, don't you son.” The tribal leader was attempting to tell Noah.

The older Stilinski wasn't having any of this however, and refused to budge. “Just a minute ago, you declared your daughter had feelings for my son, until I informed you that he is gay! So please leave, I've had it with this mockery, my son is dying!” The anger was clear in the sheriff’s voice.

“What is going…” Derek tried to question but the tribal leader interrupted.

“What I mean is I am in love with him, love at first sight, you see… he’s just so, pale and fragile looking, I couldn't help myself!” The Tillamook leader protested as a last ditch attempt.

“Dad, no, what about Mom!” Kohona exclaimed. While Chayton simply shook his head.

“What is going on?” Derek asked again.

Scott explained. Claire told them all about bite rejection symptoms and suggested an act of true love could perhaps save Stiles from his fate. The Tillamook werewolves were in hearing range at this and have returned several times now with different tokens of their love. They were essentially trying to win their emissary's favor. But he is of course, completely out of it.

The Sheriff was understandably not okay with this and had asked for the three wolves to remove themselves multiple times now.

“That is my mate you are courting!” Derek's eyes flashed red at the older alpha for just a second. “Get out now!”

“Mate?” The tribal leader looked confused as he glanced at his daughter. “I thought, I was under the impression that you were getting on well with Kohona here?” He questioned.
No one really had the time or patience to explain. Chayton grabbed his father's hand in an attempt to lead them towards the door. Thankfully they took their mounds of flowers with them.

“Stiles can't stand it when flowers are cut just for décor. He would have hated those, his love of nature and picking fruits and vegetables only for consumption rules and what not.” Kira said shaking her head.

“It took me a month to explain to Lorraine that she couldn't have flowers at the wedding.” The Sheriff agreed as he sat down somberly.

Derek looked around the small room and noticed the strange new additions; a golden necklace, a sleek wolf statue, a painting of Kohona and what must be the artist’s attempt at Stiles (he was unnaturally pale and skinny and looked sickly even in the oil paints), and a diamond engagement ring! Before he joined the others the alpha collected all these things and placed them in the trash outside his room. A nurse eyed the jewelry boxes.

Claire and Scott continued to explain. An act of true love could possibly save Stiles's life. But not from just anyone, it has to be his mate, it has to be Derek. He instantly felt the pressure at those words? What could he do? He did love Stiles, does love him with all his might, and Stiles is dying regardless. What could he do differently now to prove his love? Everyone was looking at him.

“What do I need to do, anything, I'll do it!” Derek pleaded with the sorcerer.

Edwin looked contemplative as he spoke, “Is it wise to encourage such an act? As these two already proved that mating and love is just too complex for a mage. We like things simple. It's affecting young Stiles negatively in more ways than we have known. By feeding the Nemeton his power, the tree has grown dependent on him. It needs its mage’s presence. I feel it might be best to take the poor man to his tree to die peacefully.”

No one dared respond to that proclamation. Except Claire who giggled. “Of course you would recommend such a course of action, you're so sour in your old age. Just look at him, he loves his mate. That much even you should be able to see. Have faith.” Her soothing voice was calming, but now everyone in the room looked at Derek as if he held all the answers, especially the Sheriff, who appeared to have found a new target for his anger.

The group talked in hushed whispers for the remainder of the night dispersing slowly until only Stiles's dad and boyfriend remained.
“Would either of you like to explain to the hospital staff why we had not one but three large bucks delivered to our entry way throughout the night?” Melissa McCall asked as she had just reported for duty at the crack of dawn.

“What!?” The Sheriff looked like he couldn't take anymore.

“I'll handle it. Do you have the security tapes?” Derek asked the nurse.

“Just snuck them out. She said as she pulled them from under her shirt. “One of these days I'm going to be fired for all of the off the book medical stuff and sneaking around I do for your pack! It will be my retirement and I expect a nice settlement!” She raised her eyebrows as she handed them over, but the statement was said in jest, mostly.

Derek thanked her and made his way home to the pack some of who were gathered at the Hale house. Half the members had jobs to attend at this time. So not everyone was there. Isaac was, however, as he had just dropped Lucas off at school and the two watched the tapes with trepidation.

Sure enough at different times of the night, three different werewolves appeared with their kill, offerings to Stiles most likely. Each deer was larger than the last. It would seem the rumor of the mage needing a true act of love had spread quickly.

The first man was hard to place. The second was without a doubt the alpha of the Solie pack to their south. They had helped them negotiate with the local hunters just last year. Their alpha was single and had commented on Derek's ‘nice catch’ in his mate. His blood boiled at seeing this. The last man to arrive was not unsurprisingly the Tillamook tribal leader himself. It seems he was not giving up, and completely forgot that he was already mated and married.

Derek wondered how long this would go on.

***

It went on for the next several days. They received animal carcasses nightly. Stiles set another hospital record for having the most amount of mail delivered to one name. His father opened letter
after letter of werewolves expressing their undying love for the young mage. Most got his name wrong. He received multiple packages with everything from a poorly made love potion, which Claire was quick to say would certainly kill the drinker instantly, to shiny gold bars. Most of the letters and trinkets were tossed immediately. The Sheriff kept some balloons that arrived with a singing quartet, because he said they brightened up the place. And items of value were to be donated to the hospital or the sheriff's station, Derek agreed. They had caused damage to both through the years after all.

It was tough to screen all of the emissary's visitors too. Half the station wanted to pay their respects to the Sheriff's son in person. That was how a werewolf accidentally slipped by and attempted to slice through the clean room plastic tarp to deliver her own mating bite to Stiles. She was a blue eyed omega. Scott tackled her and the two were kicked out of the hospital for making such a commotion.

Officer Handley tried to visit not long after that and the Sheriff looked confused by the name and dismissed him without a second thought. Parrish apologized profusely to the newer officer when he was told the story later that afternoon.

But, the most unexpected guess was none other than Peter Hale, himself. The wolf had fled from the Beacon Hills territory shortly after the business with the dead-pool had concluded. He took off and neither Cora nor Derek had seen him since. The older Wolf came bearing gifts of knowledge in the form of large unique books, some of which once rested in the Hale vault. He also came with a younger second in command tottering behind him as Peter was an alpha again. Derek was furious.

“Ah now nephew, you had your turn. Perhaps you're not the Hale this mage needs?” The once dead werewolf said teasingly. “Did the boy get sick of being shoved into walls?”

Derek glared. Scott however jumped to his friends defense. And the three alphas had a war of red eyes, until Peter's lackey reminded them all that they could bicker over who had a bigger one when less nurses were around. The confrontation was moved out of the hall.

“What are you doing here?” Derek snarled at his uncle.

“Well, its become common knowledge that the Hale-McCall pack had finally screwed up their hold on that precious mage of theirs…. You couldn't expect me to let that opportunity pass? It's Stiles! I've always enjoyed our bickering, I'm sure we could enjoy a whole new battle of tongues…”

Derek's eyes were scarlet again but the sheriff beat the wolves when coming to his son's defense. He had his side arm pointing at the oldest Hale right between his eyes.
“In the hospital with all these witnesses Sheriff?” Peter questioned with a raised eyebrow.

“It's wolvesbane.” His second commented as he sniffed the air and stepped aside, out of the blast radius.

“Do not test me.” Noah said, voice even.

“Ahh you may be my new father-in-law, how would your son feel….”

The sheriff switched the safety off.

“Fine, okay then, okay.” Peter raised his hands in concession. “You may keep the books, and if your mate so chooses, he'll know where to find me.” The older alpha added to Derek. “Always thought he chose poorly… now where is my favorite niece?” The older Hale peered around the room.

Derek hesitated. “She's your only niece.”

“Well, yes, that was unfortunate…” Peter frowned. “I don't mean her any harm, promise, I'd like to catch up, offer her a position in a Hale pack without a hyphen.”

Derek scowled deeper. But, his boyfriend's father tilted his head towards the door indicating he wanted the newcomers to leave, now.

“I'll take you to her.” Derek gave a glance to his co-alpha silently communicating to keep an eye on things here.

***

Derek escorted Peter to the Nemeton where Cora, Clare, and Edwin were keeping watch and in the latter’s case meditating. Cora was surprised by her uncles return, shocked by his eye color, and blown away by his request for her to join his pack. It turns out the alpha he took down to gain his
eyes was abusing their power in their east coast pack. While everyone agreed the old alpha had to
go, no one wanted Peter to be the one to do so. So when he did land the killing blow, they had split
and his pack was fairly small. Cora quickly declined telling him this was her home. Peter was
uncharacteristically understanding and exchanged numbers with both of the Hale siblings. He
wanted to be kept up to date on their emissary's condition, or so he said as his excuse, but they
could hear the blimp in his heartbeat and saw the genuine smile he wore while chatting with
family.

Perhaps the Hale-McCall pack gained an ally after all.

***

It was Friday morning, soon to be the night of the full moon that would have signified the end of
their moon cycle with the Tillamook visitors. Derek sat on the hospital floor, head resting on his
knees, as he stared at his mate in the other room. Over the last few days they had reduced the
amount of blood he was receiving. The Sheriff couldn't hear, but Derek could, as the doctors talked
about rationing his intake until they would have to stop it all together the next day.

Stiles would die tomorrow. If Derek couldn't prove his love, he would die tomorrow alone in a
hospital room no one was allowed to enter…
Chapter 10

Chapter Summary

See ending note for trigger WARNING!

Updated to beta'd version on 9/11/17

Beta'd by Splash_of_bi, she is truly amazing!

Thank you everyone for reading!!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Derek had to do something. The doctors were giving up on Stiles, throwing phrases around like ‘lack of receptivity’ or ‘unresponsive coma’ as justification for pressing his mate’s father with his bleak options for once the constant blood donation had ceased.

The sheriff is unable to handle the decision making, however, and has yet to sign anything. He has aged ten-fold in the last week, his beard is growing out unevenly, and his eyes are permanently puffy, red, and raw. No one should have to think about funeral arrangements for their son, ever.

The two were joined by a forlorn Scott in the late afternoon. He too looked as if he had cried more then he was capable of as well. The younger alpha was shaking and moved robotically to comfort his best friend's dad.

Derek had a grim, last ditched effort, sort of plan that would at least bring peace to his dying boyfriend as well as please the Council members, whom he was sure were just sticking around now to make sure Stiles's final resting place was with the Nemeton.

“Can you do me a favor, get the sheriff out of here for an hour or two, I need…I need some time with…” Derek couldn't finish his sentence. His voice was hollow.

“What? No!” Scott protested instantly. “No way he is staying and so am I!”

“Just for a bit, get your mom and Lorraine to insist on taking him out for dinner or something. I
need to…do something.” Derek was being vague on purpose, but there must have been something in the way he pleaded that struck a chord with his co-alpha.

“What do you need to do?” Scott narrowed his eyes with suspicion. “Your act of love!? Maybe, I'll see what we can do…” the younger man pulled out his phone to text his mom.

Derek could always count on Scott.

***

It was half past seven in the evening, a week ago to the day and time that Derek was setting up his romantic dinner gesture, six days since he first laid eyes on the dying man in the hospital's ICU, when Scott had come through, as Lorraine and Melissa arrived to collect the sheriff and Scott himself.

Derek assured the older Stilinski that he would keep an eye on his son. If Scott caught the guilty expression or a skip in his co-alpha's heartbeat, he didn't say anything.

Derek had to move quickly, he didn't fully think about how he would achieve this particular goal. Looking around he decided the sheet on the bed in the adjoining room the pack had taken over would have to suffice. Getting into the clean room was another issue.

But, he did have claws, and as that omega had shown several days ago, the tarp was just a simple plastic barrier. He looked around and was pleased with how the hospital floor was mostly empty. A few nurses passed, but no one eyed him with suspicion as he gradually made his way closer to the room’s door.

Taking a deep breath, Derek yanked the glass door slider back and quickly clawed his way through the plastic barrier that surrounded Stiles's bed. His mate looked so small and frail and lifeless. His hair was an oily mess from lack of a proper wash. The mage’s skin was almost translucent he was so pale. His eyes were closed and his lips were full and slightly parted.

Oh how Derek wanted to kiss those lips right then and there, but he couldn't. He had to move quickly. He threw the sheet over the dying boy and bundled him up in his arms bridal style. He used a clawed finger to sever the cords connecting his boyfriend to the many machines in the room. A shrill beeping ensued.

As fast as the alpha could, he took off towards the stairwell with the young mage cradled in his
arms. This was the hard part, he could lose any security guards in the forest behind the hospital, he just had to make it to the tree line first. His exit from the stairwell was blocked by several, at least one of which was armed but it wasn't anything lethal to the werewolf.

Derek used brute force and momentum to get past the men, he was told to freeze and he did for a second while he located the exit he needed and then he pushed on and out the door. He was gone in a blink of an eye. The hospital security was left speechless staring into the forest on the other side.

Derek heard the shouts and cries as the men immediately started to look in the trees. He heard the radio call for backup and knew they would be calling the sheriff's department too. He didn't care as he trudged on, his destination the only thing on his mind. That and the slight stirring he felt in his arms.

His phone rang not a minute later, it was Cora. Derek boldly answered it and told his sister he loved her before hanging up. It rang again, this time it was Scott. The alpha tossed it against a nearby tree with such force it shattered instantly.

Derek continued on with large strides.

***

The clearing with the Nemeton was abandoned, the alpha wasn't sure who was supposed to be on guard and he didn't care. He suspected the Council knew what he was up to, and could see Edwin having a hand in the empty clearing…

Stiles wiggled a bit but had yet to open his eyes as Derek placed his mate on the blood soaked tree stump. Derek slid his way along the top until he sat in the middle carefully avoiding the crack. The imperfection was even larger than the last time he had seen it and it formed a pool of dark liquid. It was almost black with just the slightest tint of red, giving it away for what it was: Stiles's blood. The alpha steeled his nerves as he pulled his mate on to his lap, unable to avoid the blood, covering both himself and the young mage in the liquid. Derek didn't care. As he held his lover in his arms, he thought the young man had never looked as beautiful as he did now, his pale face shown almost angelic-like against the all the dark crimson behind him.

Derek allowed himself a kiss. Just the one, one sided, closed mouth, but his lips lingered just a bit longer than normal on his mate's. A tear dripped from the older man's lash, falling on the mage's cheek, before rolling down and joining the liquid mess beneath them.
“I love you, Stiles.” Derek whispered. “I always have and I always will, and I can't imagine living in a world without you.” With these words, the alpha’s eyes glowed brightly in the dusk. He held a clawed hand up and plunged it deep within his own chest, clawing away, fighting against howling in pain as he tried to remove his own heart.

Chapter End Notes

Warning: main character attempted suicide! Graphic and violent with little detail
Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

Beta'd by Splash_of_bi on 9/11/17, she's wonderful! Thank you!

See end of the chapter for a continuation from previous trigger warning!

Well, are you mad at me? I did it I killed Sterek, they died together on the Nemeton.....

Seriously, I'm curious about your thoughts and I'm considering writing a gritty angst field horrible long alternative ending so if you hate this let me know, maybe we can work something out...

Thank you all so much for going on this ride with me!

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Stop! Stop!” Cora yelled as she broke into the clearing in a full on sprint. The Supreme Council members were right behind her as well as Kira, Erica, Isaac, Boyd, and Jackson.

Scott appeared out of breath from the other side. “The sheriff is…coming!” He panted.

No one responded however as all eyes were locked on the two slumped over figures on the Nemeton. It was completely silent for a full minute.

“I don’t… I can't hear a heartbeat…” Isaac stammered.

Cora slowly walked up to the two, her eyes glued on her brother, but Edwin put a hand out to stop her.

Claire looked unusually somber as she sent questioning eyes towards the short mage.

No one moved. Edwin eventually looked behind Scott as not only the sheriff emerged from the tree line but also so did Melissa and Dr. Deaton. “Ah now that we are all here, shall we begin?”
“My son, is he…” Mr. Stilinski actually dropped onto his knees as yet more tears streaming down his already wet cheeks. “My son…”

“Ah well, yes, I suppose, but that tree. He has such a bond with it. It won't let him go, he would have died days ago, had the Nemeton not taken such a strong hold. And, your emissary is actually sustaining that irrational alpha of yours, so, even though neither has a heart to beat or blood to flow, they are not as dead as you might think.” Edwin said casually as he walked over to the stump. He was unable to touch it. “Very interesting, protective defense, do you think?” The old man asked Claire.

Deaton quickly agreed. The sorcerer and mage simply stared at him.

Noah was shaking from the ground floor. “Is my son alive then? He looks so…”

“He is neither, more in a state of inanimation. I don't think it will be permanent.” Edwin addressed the sheriff.

“I can't help them if the stump continues to protect them. That is very powerful for one so young.” Claire stated as she joined the mage feeling out the protective barrier for herself. It zapped her.

“Hemm, I see.” The mage shook his head at his fellow Council member. “How about a time reversal, not on time itself, but just the mating mark.” He sighed. “I wanted to immediately, but I doubted his ability to live through the pain, but now he is much closer to his reserves… I think he just might…”

“Do you need assistance?” The sorcerer asked with a frown. “I'm surprised, it's just, their love is genuine, I can feel it, even now.”

“What is love, really? Just an emotion…Nothing special…” Edwin looked confused, like he was trying but failing to understand the sorcerer’s meaning.

“Love is love, there is no other emotion with as much power, it can overcome hate, and outlast rage. Do not be the fool to underestimate Love for what it truly is…” Claire answered vaguely.

“Hemm well, agree to dis…” Edwin stopped in his argument as Stiles began to stir.

The young mage’s eyes fluttered as he registered the man’s weight on top of him. “'Erek… Derek…” his voice cracked from disuse. He tried to push him off of him but he couldn't. Stiles was too weak.

The clearing erupted into motion. Almost everyone attempted to get closer to the pair on the tree root, but no one was able to cross the barrier.
“Son! Stiles!” The sheriff yelled as he zapped himself by placing his hands in the edge of the tree. Stiles registered the voice and vaguely looked in the direction of his father for just a minute before he fully took in the state of his boyfriend.

“Oh Derek, oh no! Oh my…” the young emissary rolled the other man off him and almost paled at the site of all the blood. “No, no…” he was crying. He placed two blood covered hands over the obvious self inflicted chest wound. “No, no, no, I forgive… please don't be dead… I forgive you.” The younger man whispered as he placed a chaste kiss on his lover’s forehead. “I love you, too.”

The two stayed like that, Stiles hovering over his former mate protectively, pleading. Out of habit he placed a hand on his heart. The wound there no longer hurt, it no longer bled. It didn't feel like anything. Stiles looked down inside his hospital gown and was shocked. His mating bite was gone.

“Ah, the price, I'm sorry dearie.” Claire said somberly. “While your love for one another may have saved you both, the price was your bond… you are no longer mates…”

“Oh.” Stiles sighed.

“Less painful, this way.” Edwin stated, “nice to see you awake young one.”

Stiles blinked, what could he say. He was exhausted and shaking from the effort to simply hold himself up.

“Is Derek okay too then?” Cora asked. Her eyes brimmed with more tears, but her voice was hopeful.

Claire nodded as Stiles said, “…yes.”

The barrier on the tree stump remained up much to the Sheriff’s and Scott's dismay. It took several more minutes but eventually Derek began to rise. His chest wound had knitted itself back together, and, while he wasn't fully healed, he was healing again.

“You killed yourself!” Stiles accused the older man with a whisper, he knew everyone in the clearing could hear regardless. No one looked away, even to pretend to give the two blood soaked tree stump occupants privacy.

“I couldn't live in a world without you.” Derek whispered back.

Stiles narrowed his eyes. “I saw the remnants of your date with Kohona, we're no longer mate's, so if you'd like to pursue her, you're fre…”
Stiles was interrupted by a kiss. It was one sided at first as the younger man initially pulled away. But, reflexes and years of practice took over and the mage leaned in hungrily to taste his alpha. The couple broke apart for a quick breath before continuing to passionately kiss. “I would.” Kiss. “Never.” Kiss. “Leave you.” Kiss. “For her or anyone, ever.” Derek held his former mate's head in his hands as he rested his forehead against the other. The two stayed like that sharing breathing space while Stiles digested the words he had just heard.

He pulled away. “But the date, our candlesticks…”

“It was for you, an apology dinner… a terrible one, as you didn't show, or so I thought…” Derek whispered with tears. “I thought… I thought I lost you!”

“You did in some ways.” Stiles took his boyfriend's hand and placed it underneath his hospital gown and guided it up to his former mating mark location. “We're no longer mates…”

Derek shook his head. “No… we are… I love you.”

“We're not, not any more…” Stiles sighed. “I'm sorry…”

Derek's eye shown red and his fangs elongated and without warning he sunk his teeth into the emissary’s wrist where their hands were still connected.

There was a deep red mark that glowed scarlet for just a second before it faded and the wrist was as white as ever.

Noah screamed as he pushed on the barrier separating him from his son again. “No teeth!” He yelled.

Stiles looked apologetically at the alpha facing him, ignoring the commotion beyond.

“I'm sorry! I'm so…fuck, Stiles! I'm sorry for everything, I ruined everything!” Derek raised his voice a little with that.

“It's okay, Der.” Stiles took the other man's hands again. “It's going to be okay.” He turned to Edwin, “is it permanent?”

Edwin looked thoughtful. “No. But, I do not give you permission to mate again, you may not ever…”

Stiles contemplated his options. “How about a year?” He asked hopeful.
Claire shook her head.

“Two?” Stiles pleaded, eyes going wide.

“Ten.” Edwin, smiled. “Because I find you interesting…”

“Five!” Stiles declared.

And to everyone's surprise Edwin nodded.

“You're lucky the Council is so bored these days…” Claire sighed with a smile on her face. “Congratulations.”

“Thank you, both of you.” Stiles smiled.

Derek still looked a little saddened as he stared at the wrist which didn't hold his mating bite.

“I didn't want it there anyways,” Stiles informed the alpha. “Here, only here.” He placed his free hand on his heart again. “Five years isn't that long…”

With these words the barrier broke and Cora was the first to reach the pair, she pulled her brother into a reluctant hug. Scott did the same with Stiles but quickly had to release him as the sheriff scooped his son up as if he was a little boy and held him so tightly, nothing was going to come between them.

The group made their way back to the Hale house informing Stiles that he was currently being courted by every single werewolf in the country and a few that were well known to have mate's of their own. Derek told his ex-mate of their daring hospital escape. The sheriff was not pleased with hearing this side of the story either. And had to excuse himself to call the station as soon as they made their way inside.

***

Stiles and Derek headed upstairs to clean up, and, in the mage’s case, put on more clothing. They took longer than usual to get dressed as both seemed reluctant to leave the others side long enough to wash a face or put a shirt on.

It took some time for the entire pack to gather, but gather they did. Lucas spiritedly jumped on his Uncle Stiles as soon as he could, asking him if he felt better now, hinting that they could play a game of Go Fish if he was. Lydia became overwhelmed with emotion as Claire retold the love
conquers all story of how the two had saved each other, and she bursted out in tears, hitting Jackson in the chest, claiming he would never volunteer to die with her. Jackson was speechless. Erica and Boyd seemed unable to keep their hands off one another as they listened to the story they saw be retold. Kira and Scott eyed each other with affection. Allison grabbed for both Lucas’s and Isaac's hands. Stiles's dad excused himself again to phone his wife, who had gone home when their dinner was cut short, to update her on his son's condition. The Supreme Council, Deaton, Cora, and Melissa all awkwardly didn’t have a significant other to cling onto during the retelling, but Melissa couldn't keep a hand off Stiles's shoulder, she was so relieved. And Cora held her brother's free hand tightly.

Derek had a protective arm on Stiles's lap and the two sat so close together on the couch you couldn't tell where one began and the other ended. Stiles had both of his hands clamped around the alpha's in his lap, as his head rested on the other man's shoulder.

It took sometime for everyone to fully accept what happened, even if no one aside from the Supreme Council representatives understood. Eventually Erica reminded the group at large that it was a full moon. She recommended a pack run.

Derek turned to Scott and asked his co-alpha to take the lead, because it’s his date night. Stiles beamed at the words.

“Hale house is off limits, go…get out of here!”

“We have guests!” Derek protested, nodding his head towards the Council.

“Actually, we will be returning home. Doctor Deaton, care to escort us off as the emissary appears to be busy?” Claire asked the vet with a knowing smile.

“We’ll be in contact soon, young one,” Edwin addressed Stiles.

Stiles’s dad was reluctant to leave him, but with some persuasion and promises of brunch and dinner the following day, the older Stilinski finally left.

Cora volunteered to stay at Erica's after the run. Lydia was going to wait for Jackson at Allison's house with Lucas. Danny was going to meet them there so he could be updated.

It was just barely ten and the two no longer mated boyfriends had the house to themselves.

Stiles smiled. “I feel like I've waited a long time for this.” He said as he wrapped his arms around his counterpart.

“You have.” Derek agreed. “I am so, so sorry, for, well…everything.”
“Yes, I know.” Stiles nodded. “Me too. I can't believe I thought you would with her…”

Derek noticed the happy scent give way to sadness. “Not now.”

***

The two made love for the first time in over two months. It was the longest the young couple had ever gone without. They chose to keep it slow and passionate, facing each other and idly kissing in between terms of endearment.

Afterwards, as Stiles laid naked in the other man's arms, Derek questioned the mating bite.

“Will it really not take?”

“No. The Council, they are all knowing even if they arrive late to the party…”

“May I?” The alpha asked as his teeth elongated again. Stiles leaned back exposing his chest.

Derek bit with the right intent. They both watched as the mark flared red briefly before disappearing all together.

“May I?” Stiles asked indicating the alpha's thigh where his mark no longer was.

“No. I want it here,” he placed a hand on his neck, “ or here.” Derek pointed to his arm.

“Somewhere where everyone will be able to see.”

“How about here?” Stiles kissed the still slightly off colored expanse of skin above the alpha's heart. “We can match.”

“I'd like that.” The older man agreed.

Stiles continued to kiss his way down until his mouth hovered above the location that formerly held his mark. “I miss it.” He said as he placed a kiss there.

“I do too.” Derek laid a protective hand over the other’s heart.

Stiles smirked as he grabbed the alpha's flaccid cock and proceeded to take him full in his mouth, sucking heavily as the member hardened. He worked his way back to the tip eyeing the man he loved the entire way up and made an obscene popping noise as his mouth became empty once
again. “Round two?”

Derek leaned over to pull the younger man's face up to his so he could capture the lips he so loved in yet another heated battle of tongues that evening. They broke apart. “Do you want to top this time?” He asked with a knowing smile.

Stiles replied with a kiss. Before he moved lower…

***

The next morning was Saturday. Pack breakfast day. Stiles grumbled as he woke, clutching his naked boyfriend. “I'm not letting go. You'll have to tell the pack to fend for themselves.”

“A week ago we skipped breakfast looking for you…” Derek sighed at the thought.

“I'm not leaving this bed, and neither are you…” Stiles refused to open his eyes.

Derek chuckled knowing that would last maybe thirty more minutes until his boyfriend's hunger out weighed his stubbornness. He sent a text to Boyd asking him to use his card to pick breakfast up from the local diner today. Stiles wasn't cooking.

He received an instant reply saying the other wolf was on it.

***

As expected Stiles complained about his rumbling tummy half an hour later. They got dressed and joined the rest of the pack downstairs. The head of the table and seat to the right were open and waiting for them. Everyone stopped talking as they entered.

“Listen Stiles, I'm sorry.” Scott started to apologize. “We're all really sorry, we were so stupid and blinded by this opportunity from the large pack, and then you were dying, I thought I was going to loose you man…. There is really no excuse, I'm just… I'm sorry dude.” He finished sheepishly.

Stiles took a few seconds to consider his best friend's words. He swallowed hard before responding, “I'm sorry too. For almost dying, that is…. That had to suck to see your brother like that…” Stiles gave his long time friend a pat on the shoulder and a lopsided grin as he went around the table to sit down. “Man, I'm starving!”

“Don't forget, we have brunch with your dad in a few hours…” Derek reminded him.
“Dude, I haven't eaten in like a week!” Stiles replied merrily as he piled on his plate.

Derek sat down too. The formerly mated pair couldn't keep their smiles from their faces as they reached for each other's hand while they enjoyed breakfast with their pack.

_The end...or is it?_

Chapter End Notes

Main character apparent death, caused by graphic Suicide, please be cautious if this is a trigger for you. It does resolve happily however, so yay magic!
Chapter 12

Chapter Summary

One last time... Thank you all so much for the comments, kudos, love, and thoughts! It's greatly appreciated!

***5 Years Later***

The Hale house back yard looked immaculate. The trees were large and abundant, cherry and orange blossoms were in full bloom swirling in the air as they fell from a light breeze. Two neat rows of white fold-up chairs sat in the center. The large house shown brightly behind them with its big windows all fully lit. Someone had strung lights over head connecting the small herb garden to the larger vegetable patch near the tree line.

The guest sat waiting with baited breath as Derek fiddled with his navy blue bow tie. He wore a white suit, with a matching blue vest.

“Don’t wrinkle it daddy! Dad will not be pleased!” His daughter, Lillian whispered. She was five. She wore a beautiful blue dress that complimented her eyes. Her dirty blond hair was done up in pretty glittering curls. She sat with her grandpa Noah on one side and almost identical twin brother, Jacob on the other. The two werewolves were adopted by Stiles and Derek with a recommendation from the Supreme Council three years ago, and today they would become a real family as their fathers were going to officially marry each other.

Next to Jacob sat Scott with his pregnant wife Kira. In the row behind them, the Sheriff’s wife and step-daughter sat patiently waiting. Lydia and Jackson shared the three remaining seats with their two little girls. Evelyn was four, she loved playing with the Stilinski-Hale twins and the three were inseparable, even now as she poked Jacob in the back of the head. Elise wasn’t even one yet and she was asleep in her father’s arms.

The row behind them had Allison, Isaac, Chris, and Melissa, with Lucas sitting closest to the aisle. Edwin was there too just behind the huntress. The old man had grumbled about this not being important enough to justify making the trip, but Claire insisted saying it would be good for him. Believe it or not, but Kohona had made the journey for the occasion too. She pointedly sat on Stiles’s side of the aisle with her recent husband; she had met a nice officer while she spent a month in Beacon Hills all those years ago and the two dated in secret for some time before she told her father, but they have been quite happy with each other since. Deputy Handley was more than
willing to relocate to Oregon after his disastrous first week. He was sure his boss hated him, and in truth Sheriff Stilinski hadn’t protested the transfer papers. The officer failed to check his son’s pulse after all…

Danny and his current boyfriend as well as Deputy Parrish and his fiancé took up the last row.

Across the aisle sat Cora at the front. She was giving her brother a blinding smile as she clutched her bunny on her lap. She was with her mate, a young she-wolf she had met when filtering through all of Stiles's proposals. This wolf was apparently pressured by her pack to make a move on the available mage even though she had bluntly told them she didn't fancy men in such a fashion. Cora fell for the snarky woman instantly and the two started a long distance friendship which developed into something more over time. Peter came to the ceremony, too! No one thought he would respond when they politely sent the invite, but here he was with his second in command, who was as witty and snarky as ever. Erica and Boyd had the aisle seats of the next row. The two sat holding hands. The blond had a head resting on her lover’s shoulder.

Chayton stayed in contact over the years, as did his father. The two packs certainly started off with a rocky friendship. But as promised, Stiles and his pack came to the rescue when the Tillamook tribe needed a hand with dealing with some invading harpies. They greatly appreciated the assistants and had never, to the best of the Hale-McCall packs’ knowledge, talked negatively about their emissary again. Chayton and most of his other siblings (there was a lot of them) attended the wedding. Their father and tribal leader had stayed away. He never fully forgave Derek for toying with his daughter’s heart. Especially when she chose to be with a human over a more reliable pairing such as another wolf, if not an alpha. Derek was happy with this, however. He had yet to forget how hard the Tillamook tribal leader had pursued his dying mate just five short years ago.

The last two rows on that side were made up of a variety of creatures and people that became friends of Stiles’s or Derek’s as the small Hale-McCall pack’s reputation had grown over the years. Their were some that people who were less in the know, such as Lorraine, were eyeing with curiosity.

Doctor Deaton stood at the alter with a creepy smile planted on his face as he beamed at all the guest. He was prepare to read the two their vows.

Derek stopped fidgeting at his daughter’s request and caught the scent of his soon to be husband who had just stepped out of the illuminating house. The sight took his breath away.

Stiles was also dressed in all white, although his suit had light grey where the other’s sported navy. His fair, dotted skin only proved to intensify his plump lips, which were wet as the man had licked them while nervously approaching. The mage’s brown eyes were glued to their fiancé’s who stood just on the other side of the blossom covered pathway. Music may or may not be playing, people
may or may not be clapping, Stiles wasn't sure anymore. He vaguely recalled giving Lucas a fist bump as he walked by.

Before he knew it he was in his husband-to-be’s arms and the vet had interrupted their reunion to remind the lovebirds that they had a ceremony to complete prior to the kissing part.

Derek reluctantly let go, but as the two broke apart their hands remained intertwined.

The ceremony commenced.

*** Later that evening***

Derek wrapped his husband in his arms from behind as they looked over their now deserted backyard. The strung up lights still sparkled against the black night sky. The moon shown bright, illuminating the tables and dance floor that had replaced the alter and chairs just shortly after they had said their vows.

“You sure you don't want a honeymoon?” Derek asked again, he wanted this night to be everything for his lover. He had spent five years kissing Stiles’s heart daily with a promise that one day, he would be his again.

The mage smiled as he leaned back and placed a kiss on his husband’s smooth jawline. “This is perfect. Lydia has the kids for the rest of the weekend, Cora is heading out of town for a week with her mate, it's just us, and we don't even have to leave our pack, it's perfect…. Walk with me?” He asked.

“Of course.” Derek was quick to agree. The two strolled towards the tree line, hand in hand. “Where are we going?”

His emissary tugged the older man towards a familiar path. “Need you ask?”

They kissed lazily as they made their way to the Nemeton's clearing. The tree stump completely recovered from its injury five years prior, showing off a smooth surface. The mage still frequented the clearing on a regular basis, but it had been some time since the older man was here.
Stiles led Derek to join him on top of the root. The alpha sat down cautiously. He had died here once after all.

“Stiles?” Derek shot his partner a questionable look.

“Do you trust me?” Stiles asked.

“I do.” The alpha replied without hesitation.

“If you bite me here, the bond we share, it will also be tied with my bond to the Nemeton. The amount of magic stored up in this tree..... It's a lot, we can't risk anything happening like…last time, ever again.” Stiles sighed, not wanting to bring it up. “You trust me?” Stiles asked again.

“I do. Always.” Derek assured his husband.

Stiles leaned across the tree and started to unbutton his lover's shirt painstakingly slow. Once Derek's bowtie was removed and his chest was bare, the mage leaned down and traced his fit husband’s abs with one hand while placing soft kisses sporadically. He took his time appreciating everything the older man had to offer as he made his way up to the part of the man's chest that was slightly to the right of the center.

“Here.” Stiles said in barely more than a whisper. "I can feel your heartbeat.”

“I can hear yours.” The alpha stared intensely at the younger man who was having his way with him. “I love you.”

“I love you, too.” Stiles kissed the other man's heart again. As he pulled away an image began to form. Black lines roped themselves together until a clear and full tree formed on Derek's toned chest. “Did it hurt?” The younger man questioned tentatively.

“No, not at all, is this your mark? It's not a bite?” The alpha asked. He studied the beautiful tree, fully appreciating it for what it was.
“Almost.” Stiles sighed. “I don't think anyone has tried a mating bond like this but the Nemeton is apart of me, and now it's apart of you too.” He leaned down and placed a final kiss in the tree bark forming the trunk. The lines morphed to imitate the emissary's impression. If anyone glanced at the tattoo, all they would see would be the tree, but if they looked closely, they'd spot the kiss. In the center.

“It's so beautiful.” Derek was almost for a loss of words. “Thank you.”

Stiles smiled. “Alright big guy, give it to me. Give me your bite!”

Derek's eyes flashed red at the request. Over the years he had tried to mate his lover on multiple occasions. Many times in the heat of the moment. One time when they were arguing over something stupid and Derek looked up and was flabbergasted by how striking his boyfriend was and lost the will to fight and just wanted to claim him right then and there. He felt so much regret in his life. Regret for his actions that cause the loss of his family. Regret for his lack of action that caused the loss of his sister. And an overwhelming sense of regret for almost losing his mate, permanently. He knew he was lucky to have this second chance and he didn't want to take his soon to be mate for granted ever again.

“Derek?” Stiles question as his husband had yet to move.

“I just, I'm so sorry for ruining this the first time. I can't believe you're giving yourself to me again. You're so amazing, and kind, and forgiving, and I just, thank you. Thank you, Stiles.” The alpha grab for his lover's hand and pulled him over to kiss him passionately. As he deepened the kiss, he laid the younger man down on the tree stump and slowly moved his way to his pulse point on his neck. The alpha made quick work of removing the other man’s shirt and tie as he cradled the mage in his other hand, placing kisses and love nips as he went until he too placed a kiss on his husband’s heart.

Derek looked up to his mate-to-be’s eyes for confirmation before continuing. Stiles nodded as he always did when the older man attempted to bite him, knowing that this time it would take.

Stiles let out a cry of pleasure and pain as Derek sank his teeth into his flesh. The alpha kissed his mate’s heart again as he backed a way to watch his mating bond form, permanently this time. The bite glowed a deep scarlet as it always did, but then rather than fading it turned black, which was completely new. Derek looked to his mate with worry.

Stiles smiled reassuringly. The black lines formed just as they had on Derek twisting themselves until he too sported a tree over his heart and in the center of the leaves was his mate’s bite mark.
Almost indistinguishable, but so prominent to those that knew it was there.

Derek loved the uniqueness of it and bore deeply into his mate’s eyes trying to communicate his affection.

They couldn't look away from each other, couldn't move or blink for a full minute. There was so much love and understanding passed between the two in that moment. Eventually, the older man swooped in claiming the younger’s lips as his own.

They made love on the tree stump.

And again on the stairwell back at the Hale house.

And for a third time, which as they were both in their thirties was truly saying something, in their bedroom.

They held one another close, the alpha was still buried deep inside his mate, as they exchanged quiet praises of love and affection for each other in the sanctuary of their bedroom. Both men were sated, and at peace.

They fell asleep in the early hours of the morning tangled together, Derek’s head resting on the tree above Stiles's heart.

The end.... for real.

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