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**Teen Wolf - Stiles' Remix**

by Arcxus

**Summary**

When had Stiles' life gone so pear shaped?

He was a werewolf now, there was a creature murdering people, and a really hot guy next door - who was kinda scary, but also kinda helping them. Also - hunters. Let's not forget the Argents, especially since Scott was dating one. Lady fate was really screwing him over.

Fine, then.

He was gonna be the best damn werewolf there ever was.

(EDIT: I had to re-embed some of the images using a different source)
(we go looking for trouble - and find it)

INTO THE WOODS

IN RETROSPECT, WE WERE VERY NAIVE back then, when actually looking for crimes to solve was something to do because life was so terribly, horribly, boring. Back then, in our small and insignificant town of Beacon Hills where everybody knew everyone, nothing interesting ever happened. A few suicides, maybe a robbery - but this was per year. It was nothing like what I'd heard about in big cities like NYC, where a movie-worthy crime occurred at least once a month. Now, it remains painfully obvious that actively looking for trouble was a mistake.

Now, you might be wondering - why the hell would someone want crime to happen? Isn't a low crime rate something good?

Well, the short answer is that I was bored. Cut me some slack here - I was the Sheriff’s kid, and trying to solve cases before the police did was my sort-of hobby. As of late, there'd been nothing, so I was bored. I was also young and stupid and was confident that I could handle anything that came my way, no problem.

In retrospect, I was wrong.

This story takes place when I was in high school. I went to the local place - Beacon Hills High. It was where everybody went. Kids I had gone to kindergarten with now passed me in the halls, but with new friends that didn't include me. Kinda sad, really, but that’s life. You gotta move on.

I had perfectly normal, dull, mundane life ahead of me, but I wanted some action. Who doesn't? It was all very routine: wake up, go to school, come home, do homework, goof off with Scott, ask Dad about new cases, go to sleep. Rinse, repeat. I was certain that nothing was really going to change, no matter how much I'd hoped. Somehow, though - somehow, my pleas for adventure were answered.

Just not in the way I'd wanted.

Only a moment was needed to jumpstart a sequential series of unfortunate events that managed to land me in an insane adventure worthy of a TV series.
It all began the when I decided to go looking for the dead body in the middle of the woods. Well, technically, it was the the other half of the dead body - they (and by they, I mean a pair of unfortunate joggers) had already found one half. The other half... now that was up for grabs.

It was a split-second choice, between studying for like, the third day of school (where nothing significant happens. We all know that the first and last weeks are freebies), or roaming a forest in the middle of the night looking for a dead person, to throw our normal lives into crazyville like a sock in a dryer on spin.

In retrospect, I now realize it was all my fault, really, that we ended up in the middle of a supernatural war. Yikes.

We're not gonna tell anybody that, though. Especially Scott. Do. Not. Tell. Scott.

Anyways, before my ADHD riddled mind goes off on another tangent, let me introduce myself. I'm Stiles Stilinski - nice to meet you. Stiles is a nickname. No, you are not getting my real name, because you’d never be able to pronounce it. I’ll give you this though - my real name is polish, super fucking hard to say, and begins with an M. Good luck.

I’m - well, I was - a 16 year old kid, of average build but on the skinny side, rather tall, and clumsy as fuck. At this point in time I sported a buzz cut; the aftereffects of getting gum in my hair. It was a stupid teenage mistake. We were trying to make catapults out of rubber bands, and Scott decided it'd be a brilliant idea to use chewing gum as ammo so it'd stick to the board. The gum landed in my hair and Dad decided to shave it all. Now I looked way younger than I was. Thanks, dad.

My hair was brown, my eyes a sort of honey-brown color, my skin was pale, and I had a bunch of moles. Lydia says that I have a nice forehead, full eyebrows, a nose that somewhat points upwards and square jaw. She also tells me to be more descriptive. I’m not gonna win any rewards for writing, so I’ll just ignore that. I’m also gonna assume that you’ve got a fairly good image of me? Tall, gangly, nondescript highschool guy with some muscle tone thanks to lacrosse. My only standout points are my sarcasm (which is always on point) and my penchant for finding trouble.

My partner in crime - since, well, forever (aka kindergarten), is Scott McCall. Scott, well, he’s like a lost puppy. No joke. If I was to stick spirit animals to the lot of us, everyone would agree that Scott's spirit would be a golden retriever. He’s kinda buff, in the sense that he can actually put on muscle while I remain skin and bones, and he’s got this kinda odd crooked jaw. I honestly don’t know how that happened. His jaw’s always sorta been like that. I bet his douchenozzle of a father, Mr. holier-than-thou FBI agent Rafael McCall dropped him as a kid. If mama McCall kicked him out because of that, my respect for her just increased tenfold. Nobody likes Agent Douche anyways. Melissa McCall, on the other hand, she’s a goddamn queen.

Oh, Sorry - I was supposed to be describing Scott. Back to it, then.

Scott’s also got these huge brown eyes that have a downright lethal puppy-eyes setting. He’s got tan skin, broad shoulders, a kinda hooked nose and this sorta dopey smile. He’s also an adorable puppy that must be protected from evil. I swear, he’s like one of those anime protagonists who get power-ups via the power of love.

Not that I know about anime. At all. Totally in the dark here.

In the beginning, it was just the two of us - Scott and Stiles - and the bro code was the law. The Bro Code is something we came up as kids who were completely invested in Assassin's Creed and Uncharted, and a part of it states that if anything interesting happens in our little town of Beacon Hills (in the middle of nowhere, known to no one, etc.) we tell each other immediately. Therefore,
when I overheard my father - John Stilinski, Sheriff of the county - getting a call from dispatch about half of a body two poor, unfortunate joggers found that evening, and there was no chance in hell I wasn’t gonna drag Scott with me to find the other half.

Why? Because It was an unknown dead body! The first interesting murder in Beacon Hills since, well, forever.

Once my brilliant master plan to sneak away had been formulated, I stepped away from the wall I was hiding behind right on to stair #2 - the creaky one. Dad heard it. Shit.

“Stiles, you there?” He called. I grimace. **Busted.**

“Yeah…?” I say. “I was just, sorta, gonna go upstairs and do my homework…?” I gestured at the stairs. If I'm lucky he'll just buy the excuse, and assume I came down for a midnight snack or something.

He walked over to the hall I was kinda hiding in and leaned on the doorframe, crossing his arms. Dad’s a pretty good looking man in his mid 30’s (he says it’s rude to tell the exact age of old folks, so humour him), and he was all dressed in his work gear. He's the Sheriff of Beacon Hills County, and a damn good one at that. He was also onto me.

“Do you listen in on all my phone calls now?” He asks. Ah, shit. He was onto me. I blame the fact that my excuse sounded like I was trying to convince myself, let alone Dad. He's the sheriff - of course he picks up on when people lie.

Dad's the one who raised me since mom - her name was Claudia Stilinski - died in ‘04. She had frontotemporal dementia. It was horrible, and we really don't talk about it. At all. Pray that when you end up dying, it’s short and sweet and never drawn out, wearing down on you and your loved ones for months and months.

Mom’s death hit us both pretty hard, and I don’t think dad ever truly recovered. It’s up to me to take care of him now, because we’ve only got each other. He turned to alcohol to drown out his grief at first, but then realized he had a kid to raise, so he pulled his act together. He's... distant as times, but at least he’s not drinking himself senseless anymore.

“No, no, just the interesting ones.” I shrugged, trying to be completely and utterly non-threatening. Judging by the unimpressed look I received, I'm pretty sure I failed. “So, you going out? To find a dead girl?”

He sighs and shakes his head. “Well, someone has to. I’m gonna assume you know the gist of what’s happening then?”

“Oh-huh, yup, so…” I grinned and rubbed my hands together, “Dead person. Well, half of a dead person. Do you know who it is?”

“No, only that. As I’m pretty sure you overheard...” Cue the disappointed look. "...it was a girl, supposedly in her late twenties.” He frowned at me, using his patented Dad Face™. “And you’re not coming with me this time. Honestly, I'm not supposed to take you anywhere on a case in the first place. It’s dangerous. For all we know it could be a serial killer.”

I shook my head. “Nah. I bet it was a car crash.”

Serial killers are usually smarter than this. Huh. Maybe it was a moron serial killer. Or a moron attempting to be a serial killer. But that meant the girl was actually alive..? Was this just one big prank? The thought made me snicker.
“Stiles.” uh-oh. See how my mind works? One thing to another, with unreliable reasoning. Imagine an attic, full of books, inhabited by spiders, bats, insects, birds and the occasional ghost. Then they throw a party. And there you go - an questionably accurate description of my mind.

“Right. Death. Serious business, as in not funny. At all.” I mutter.

“Stiles, I mean it. You are staying at home, completing your homework, and going to bed. No sneaking around..”

“Riiiiiight. Got you, daddy-o, crystal clear.” I give him a thumbs up for added sass.

“Okay then.” He gives me one final look. "I’m heading out. Sorry about this.” He gestures to the table, set for a family dinner that's not gonna happen.

“No prob. We’ll just have dinner together another time. See you.” I wave, watch him leave, then turn to head back up the stairs. I try not to let it bug me, but we've been drifting apart ever since her death. I'm unsure if he truly knows me anymore.

Just as I make it to my room, I hear the front door close and the car sputter to life.

Alright then.

I pump a fist in the air and do a weird victory dance because -

Yes!

A freakin’ dead body!

Do you know the chances of this kind of shit happening at Beacon Hills? Almost nada, nil, zero, never. An opportunity like this was way too good to give up.

Yes, dad told me to stay in but really - he should know me better than this. It’s sad that he doesn’t. There was no way I was doing nothing. Imagine, what if Scott and I (because, duh! Scott’s coming along to) found the other half?

We’d be heroes, kinda. It’d be the talk of the school, the pinnacle of the rumour web. Maybe, Lydia Martin - the epitome of what a perfect girl was - would actually notice me. Everyone knows I’ve had a crush on her since, well, forever. I’m not sure, actually, what came first - Scott and I’s friendship, or my epic crush on Lydia? I’ve loved (or I think I’ve loved) her ever since she slapped me in the face on the first day of kindergarten.

Anyways, back to the matter at hand: a dead body. Up for grabs.

I wait a grand total of ten minutes just to be safe, then get moving. I need to leave soon if I want to find that body before the police.

After donning my lucky red hoodie and stumbling down the stairs, I grab my keys and make my way to the Jeep. Yes, the Jeep - with capitals, because she’s got a real personality. It’s a sturdy, old thing, baby blue and covered in rust spots, but it’s mine, and I loved it. Derek thinks it’s old and dusty and disgusting, smells of wet dog and only works 60% of the time (lies. All lies), but he doesn’t get an opinion this time - especially since the Jeep’s saved his ass several times.

Starting up my trusted ride, I back out of my driveway and head to Scott’s house, which is really only several houses down. Parking my baby as stealthily as possible, I shimmy up the drainage pipe, using the overgrown tree in his front yard for support, and climb my way onto his roof. Well, sorta
his roof. It’s really the overhang above his porch, but - the crux of it is that I have access to Scott’s bedroom window from here, and I can sneak in easily enough without Melissa finding out.

You know how earlier, I mentioned that Mama McCall was an angel? Well, she can also be a demon when she wants to be. Truly and utterly terrifying. Do NOT get on her bad side.

So I make my way up to Scott’s window and surprise - he’s not there. Well, he probably heard the Jeep anyways. I hook my feet in the overhanging tree branch and lean backwards, swinging upside down and getting ready to flip off onto the ground (seriously - anyone who’s played with monkey bars should know how to do this) when -

“AHHHHHHH!” a voice yells.

“AHHHHHHHH!” I scream, jerking backwards.

“Dude!” Oh thank goodness, it’s just Scott.

How the fuck did I get scared by Scott? Oh right - it was probably because he screamed. He screams, I scream, you scream, we all scream ‘cause Scott’s a wimp, sometimes.

“What the hell?!” I hiss, because at this point I’m sufficiently annoyed. He could’ve bashed my skull in with a bat. “It’s just me!” I flail my arms even more, proving to him that yes, it’s just me, your spaz of a friend. He should have known that it’s just me; the Jeep’s not a quiet ride.

Scott relaxes. “I thought you were a predator!”

“A- A- what? Seriously, Scott! Also, why do you have a baseball bat? You don’t even play baseball. You play lacrosse.”

“Dude,” he grins, now that the perceived danger has been deemed nonexistent, “Why are you even here?”

“Look, I know it’s late but you’ve got to hear this - My dad left like 20 minutes ago. Dispatch called. They’re bringing every officer in Beacon Department. Even state police.”

“For what?” Scott asked, puzzled. He leans in though, curious.

I flip back and land on the ground, then jerk upright and grab Scott’s shoulder, bringing him in.

“Two joggers found a body,” I grin, literally buzzing with excitement.

“Like a dead body?” Scott says, looking intrigued. He is kinda slow sometimes, but I love the dude anyways.

“No, a body of water - yes, dumbass! A dead body!” I jerk him a little, just to prove my sarcasm riddled point.

Scott’s eyes go wide, “You mean a murder?”

I shake my head. “No-one knows yet, only that it’s a girl in her late twenties.”

Scott stepped back, “Hold on, if they’ve found the body, then what are they looking for?” Ah, good. He was paying attention.

“That’s the best part,” I said, “they only found half.” Hook, line and sinker, Scott’s in, I grabbed his hand and pulled him to the Jeep. “We’re going!” I announce, and Scott, shaking his head, follows.
It didn’t take us long to reach the Beacon Hills preserve - a swath of land adjacent to the town, stretching across both a ravine and ridge. The ridge was an awesome place to watch the city lights from. Great spot for date night, if you don't mind the trek to get there.

“I still can’t believe we’re doing this.” Scott grumbled, shaking his head as he followed me. I’d brought a flashlight, but Scott only had his phone. There were no plans to split up tonight, so I figured we’d be fine. The moon shone ominously overhead. It was seriously eerie. The creepy-ass forest wasn’t helping either, but I was NOT gonna let my nerves show. Especially to Scott, since I was the one who dragged him here in the first place.

“You’re the one who is always bitching about how nothing happens in this town.” I jested.

“I was trying to get a good night’s sleep before practice tomorrow.” Scott whined.

“Yeah,” I shot back, “because sitting on the bench is such a grueling effort.” The sarcasm wasn’t lost on him, though he definitely didn't appreciate it.

“No,” he said, “because I’m playing this year. In fact, I’m making first line.” Scott, severe asthmatic, making first line? It’d take a miracle.

“Hey, that’s the spirit!” I clapped him on the back. “Everyone should have a dream, even an unrealistic one.”

We walked some more, until Scott stopped, abruptly. “Stiles, what part of the body are we actually looking for?” He asked. Whoops.

“I, uh, I didn’t really think of that.” I answered, shrugging. Oh well.

Scott glared, “And what if the killer of the girl is still out here?” Now that’s a terrifying thought.

“I… didn’t really think of that one either.” I winced. Ok, so maybe my super awesome genius plan had holes. Like, a lot. Guess I didn’t think this through, but it’d be fine. That’s what I told myself, anyways.

Scott glared. “It’s nice you thought this out with your usual level of detail.” He paused, wheezing as his lungs began to protest the strenuous pace I had set. “Maybe the severe asthmatic should have the flashlight?” he huffed. Well, he had a point.

“Fine, here you go.” I pause and hand it to him.

“Hey, Stiles,” Scott’s head jerked towards the distance, where I could just begin to make out the lights of the police force’s flashlights. Unfortunately, it seemed like my dad was heading this search. We had to move, fast.

“It’s them!” I hiss. “let’s go.” I was planning to move at an angle to them - this way we could bypass the officials and still head in the general direction I planned.

“Wait,” Scott paused and turned off the flashlight. Good thinking. “Okay, now let’s go.” he says, moving to take the lead.
We creep away from the search party, trying to keep as silent as possible. It was tense as fuck, and for a moment, I could have sworn we’d gotten caught. It turned out to be a rabbit, thankfully. If we had gotten caught, well... I don't think I want to think about it, especially after dad told me explicitly NOT to do this.

Five painfully anxious minutes later, I figured we were in the clear and stood up from the pseudo-crawl we had adopted, only to trip backwards over a root and fall into a ravine. The flashlight had switched possession again so it came down with me, and then somehow switched off. I groaned as my already spinning vision was swamped in blackness. Luck was NOT on my side tonight.

“Stiles!” Scott yelled, shuffling about, trying to find where I had fallen.

“I’m fine!” I called back. “Just a scrape.”

“You sure?” He asked, worried.

“Yeah man. You should probably head back towards home. I’ll figure a way out, I’ve got the flashlight, right?”

“No way.” He disagreed vehemently. “I’m not leaving you.”

“Scott, Scott, what are you - ”

A rustle of leaves and several thumps later, Scot landed next to me. Of all the stupid things he could’ve pulled -

“DUDE! Why’d you do that?” I shook him.

“Well, at least we’re together?” He turned to me with those puppy eyes on max, and I caved. I always end up caving. It was a good point anyways - bad things happen to those who split up.

“Okay, fine.” I huffed. “Let's get out of here.” I stood and helped Scott to hid feet, then dusted the leaves off my body. We were in some weird bowl formation, but there was a path out. I could see haze of the city lights over the south (I think) ridge, so we headed that way…

Only to get interrupted by a stampede of deer. We fell to the ground, scrambling to get away from the thunderous hooves overhead. Eventually, we found a dead log to take refuge behind, and waited out the mass panic. The deer seemed to not notice us, continuing their frenzied race above. The whole thing lasted maybe thirty seconds, but it felt like a lifetime. They were gone just as fast as they came.

I looked at Scott, and we shared a few hysterical giggles on how insane this night was becoming.

DEER. Freakin’ DEER. At a time like this. I’d expect them to be asleep or something. Seriously though - we could have died, painfully, under hooves. We had to leave.

It was at this point that it became apparent to me that this was, in retrospect, a very, very, VERY, bad Idea. I told this to Scott.

“See, I told you so.” He glared, after we had gotten to our feet and continued our trek back to civilization. "We really should be home by now."

"Agreed. Hey, dude, where's your inhaler?” I ask, noting that his wheezing hadn't stopped.

"Shit, I must have dropped it. C'mon, help me look." He took out his phone and began to shine the light on the ground.
"We have a flashlight, you know." I pointed out.

He scoffed. "Well, where is it now?"

Oh. I realized that I actually didn't have the flashlight. Must have dropped it during the mass panic. Way to go, Stiles.

"Elsewhere," I said, gesturing the way I thought we had come from. "But also not the point. You better find that inhaler before you get another attack."

"Well, help me, then!" Scott huffed, moving a little further out. I shook my head and took out my own phone - the battery was super low - and helped him look. We continued in silence, drifting slightly apart when -

"- AAAAAH!"

Scott violently jerked backwards and fell on his butt. I ran to help him, suspecting he was hurt. He really was a klutz sometimes... But once I glimpsed what he had found, I almost did the same. It was a total jump-scare moment. I shone my phone light towards where Scott had been.

The other half of the body. We had found it.

Trust me, it wasn't a pretty sight. One, the body had been ripped in half. The innards were literally covered in blood. Two, it stunk. Horribly. Three, the girl's eyes had rolled back so all we could see was the whites. The hair was matted, the skin pale and nearly translucent. Blood and torn flesh were almost artistically strewn across the dead figure. It looked like she's been dropped here, to be disposed of or something...

“I-It's the..” Scott gestured to the corpse.

“Yeah.” Now, I was sufficiently freaked out. "You know what? Let’s just leave this to the others to find. I’m like, getting ridiculously bad vibes from this place. We need to get out of here.”

At least, that's what my gut was telling me, and from experience, I’ve learned to always listen to my gut feelings. It was like a ESP sixth sense.

Then all of a sudden, the forest became void of sound. Nothing. My senses went haywire. This was wrong. Ohhh, this was very, very, wrong. I felt like the protagonist of a horror film, right before they died.

As if on cue, my phone flickered and screen cut to black. Crap. No battery.

Scott had noticed too, the nothingness, and then the soft growling behind us. He began to turn around.

I wanted to scream at him.

No! NO! DON'T TURN AROUND.

The thing was behind us.

Some freaky supernatural monster - the girl's killer - was behind us.

I was frozen in place, even though my heart felt like a jackhammer in my chest, my own self-preservation instinct in high gear. Everything was too much.
Scott finally saw what was behind us and yelped, turned around and ran. Of course, at this point, I had already taken off.

Unfortunately for us, the thing gave chase and caught us at record time. It pinned me first (why me? Chase Scott! He’s got more meat!), and I squirmed, kicked, punched, violently fought as much as I could to get out of there. I’m pretty sure I nailed a crotch shot at some point, but to no effect. What kind of monster feels nothing when their balls get pummelled? Then there was a sharp pain on my shoulder and the weight of the beast was gone.

Slowly, once I was absolutely sure it was gone, I opened eyes - that I had not realized I’d shut - and scrambled to my feet, clutching my shoulder - and GODDAMN, THAT HURT! I felt the blood trickling from what I was pretty sure was a bite mark, but grit my teeth and tried to focus on where I was. I must have been out for a while, because the eeriness from earlier had dissipated and now it just seemed like a normal forest at night.

Oh my god, Scott. I forgot about Scott. Was he dead? Oh god I -

“Scott?” I called, “Scotty? Bro, are you there!!??”

Nothing.

I was… alone, and kinda panicking at this point. Given what I had just survived,, I figure it was justified. I stood and turned in a circle, taking in the setting. Neither Scott nor the beast were anywhere in sight. I wandered around for a while, searching for my partner in crime, before some part of my brain registered that blood loss was bad and it was time to get out of there.

After stumbling around with zero sense of direction, I somehow managed to crawl out not far from where I had parked the Jeep. Climbing into my trusted ride, I hightailed it home as fast as I could.

Driving alone though, at some point, I could have sworn I heard a wolf howl, but that was impossible. There hadn't been wolves in California for over 60 years.

But if it wasn’t a wolf that attacked us (and if I hadn’t known better, I would have pegged it for a wolf for sure), then what?

________  ________

I woke up to Katy Perry singing about barbies on the barbecue (T.G.I.F!) before I turned my ridiculous alarm off. Unfortunately, it was a Tuesday, no such luck. Friday was still an eternity away.

As I stretched, the nightmare-inducing events of the previous night came back to me, and I froze when I realized that I had my arms above my head, and neither shoulder hurt, at all.

I then removed my ratty batman shirt (that now had blood on it, poor shirt) to inspect the wound. Only to realize that there was nothing there, only smooth, unmarred, mole-riddled skin. The bite mark had disappeared. It was like it had all just been a super lucid nightmare until I saw that my trashcan was full with the torn and bloody clothes I had worn yesterday.

So, last night happened, but my wound had magically healed?

Something was seriously not right.
I was about to get up and head to the washroom when I heard my Dad waking up, in his room, an entire floor below me.

That should not have been possible.

My mind started going haywire, coming up with worst case scenarios and the like, but a small part of me still though that there HAD to be a rational explanation to this. I did not just become magic overnight.

That was impossible.

Some tiny sliver of my mind remembered the wolf howl, and remembered the moon, and connected wolf + almost full moon + supernatural healing + bite = werewolf…?

Nah, impossible.

But… but, the evidence, it was there….


So what? I was kidnapped and turned into a mutant?

Well, when you put that way, werewolves seem more sane than government experiment.

… also, how is it that I’m able to hear and smell things otherwise known to be impossible, huh? Things I couldn’t do until right now. Someone might also point out that these traits are akin to those of a wolf - the hearing and smelling.

But werewolves are not real, right?

The thing that attacked me in the forest looked pretty damn close to a werewolf.

Oh my god.

OH MY GOD, I’M A WEREWOLF NOW.

Jesus tap-dancing Christ on a pogo stick.

THIS CAN’T BE HAPPENING???

I grabbed my head and fell back on my bed. Holy crap. This was a nightmare. This WAS NOT real.

And then I promptly freaked out for the next few minutes.

I still say my freakout was entirely justified, even though it lasted until fell on the floor. I guess it knocked me out of it, but still -

WEREWOLVES. Holy fucking shit werewolves.

It was the only explanation that made sense.

Still, I needed further confirmation. I called Scott. He picked up almost immediately.

“Stiles, man, are you ok??!” He asked, definitely still worried.

“Yeah, I’m fine. I got home well enough. What about you?”
“Same here. I saw the thing go at you and then when it came after me I thought for sure you were dead and-” Scott blurted on a single breath.


“Yeah. But anyways, you weren't answering your phone-” Scott barrelled on, forgetting my question.

“Battery died. Did the beast bite you too?” I interrupted him.

“Huh, actually, yeah. It only bit you? “ He paused, “I thought you were in the hospital or something. It looked like it mauled you.”

“Nah, I’m ok. It actually healed.”

“Already?” Scott’s voice was incredulous. “No way.”

“Check yours.”

“I, what?! Stiles, it's gone.” He exclaimed, awed, and also terrified.

“I know.” I couldn’t help but feel a teeny bit smug that I had figured things out. Kinda. Like, 75% sure, and slowly climbing.

“But.. how?” He sounded lost now.

“I think I know. Werewolves, Scott. Think about it.”

There was a pause.

A very awkward pause, then:

“Stiles, c'mon, we all know that Werewolves aren't real...” And now he thought I was messing with him. Great. I just had to wait and shove the glaring evidence right in front of him. I hung up on him before he could finish.

Now that I had sorta come to terms with the fact that I had been bitten and was now a supernatural entity, I was honestly super pumped. I hadn’t felt this good in a while, both physically and mentally. This was insane. My life was now insane. It was like I was a protagonist in a manga, about werewolves. Like Cirque du Freak or something. Damn!

I realized, ironically enough, that during the trip to the woods I berated Scott about bitching about having a boring life. Well, it wouldn’t be so boring anymore.

Once I convinced Scott I was right, of course.

But damn, Werewolves. I was a freaking werewolf. This was never gonna get old.

I only got to bask in this new discovery for a few minutes until -

“Stiles! You’ve got School!” My dad yelled from downstairs

With a glance at the clock - holy crap, I was gonna be late! - I rushed back into my morning routine, getting ready for the equivalent of Azkaban for muggles, also known as high school. For once though, the day was looking up.
“Okay, Scott, you are not gonna believe this but -” I ran in front of him, placing a hand on his shoulder, and tried to get him to stop and look at me. We were at school, right in front of the main entrance. Thankfully, I wasn’t late, but Scott was being so goddamn stubborn! Like, the evidence was right in front of him!

“You’re right - werewolves - I don’t believe it.” Scott huffed, glared at me, then pushed forwards.

“Alright man, but come on! What else could have bit you in the woods?” I remedied my earlier statement. He was probably in denial, but - it’s proven that denial is the first step in the road to acceptance!

“I don’t know, a mountain lion?” He guessed.

“Dude, you’d be dead by now. They always go for kill.” I deadpanned, just the teeniest bit sardonic.

“Stiles!” He shoved me, and I stumbled into Jackson Whittemore, jackass extraordinaire. Oh, thanks Scott.

He sneered at me, then shoved me off. “Watch where you're going, loser.” I watched as he walked away with his prosse following shortly behind.

Then I flipped him the bird, both hands, to make a point.

Scott grabbed my arm, “Dude, let it go.” I glared.

“Jackson’s an ass. He’s Jackass.” I stated.

"Yes, Stiles, and everyone knows.” Scott rolled his eyes.

“Alright, true, but c’mon - werewolves are real!” I rerouted us back to the important discussion. Scott wasn’t pleased.

“I don’t know. Yesterday was horrible though. I’m going to have nightmares for months.” He mock-glared at me, like it was my fault.

Okayyy, so maybe it was my fault. That wasn’t the point, though -

“But this is freaking amazing! We found the body!” I grinned, because mission accomplished, even with the horrifying detour on the way back. Positivity rules, right? “This is the best thing that’s happened to me since… uh, the birth of Lydia Martin!”

As if beckoned, Lydia walked by us right then. I quickly turned to her, half hoping she's pay attention to me. “Hi Lydia, you look - ” I called, only for her to ignore me. Rude. “...like you’re going to pretend I don’t exist. Again.”

Lydia, well, she was GORGEOUS. Beautiful strawberry blond hair, expressive doll-like eyes and perfectly painted red lips. She was lithe and flowy and prowled everywhere like she owned the place. In terms of social standing, she totally did. Her fashion sense was impeccable and as much a pretty picture as she was, her real asset was her mind - sharp as a diamond. She was a certified genius! Like, one day, she was gonna win a nobel prize or something level genius. In my opinion,
she was the queen on a pedestal from which one could compare any other girl to, but never come close because Lydia Martin was truly one of a kind.

That may or may not have been rehearsed.

Now Jackass Whittemore, he’s an ass, enough said. But honestly, he acts like he’s a stereotypical jock, but takes on a course load rivaling Lydia’s or my own, and somehow manages to remain an A student. We might have been friends if he didn’t envision anybody who wasn’t him, Lydia or Danny as plebeians.

Lydia Martin and Jackson Whittemore, people. The Queen and King of Beacon Hills High.

I turned towards Scott, who was smirking at me. “This is your fault, you know,” I poked him, “Dragging me down to your nerd depths by association. I’ll never be part of the cool crowd.”

“Uh-huh.” He grinned, still making fun of me with his face.

“Scarlet-nerded by you.” I huffed. Scott shook his head.

We had reached Scott’s locker by now, and he was getting out his stuff for first period. Bleh. School, the ban of my existence. Huh, bane, wolfsbane. I wonder what wolfsbane actually looks like… I guess I hit the library at lunch, then.

“-iles, Stiles!” Scott snapped his fingers in front of my face, jerking me back to reality.

“Huh, what? What did you say?” I attempted to pretend like I was listening. I failed.

“Dude, stop zoning out! We need to get to class!”

“Riiiight. Right. Lead on, McDuff!”

Once we had settled into our seats for first period, the teacher began his intro. Which sucked by the way. 3/10 would not use, ever.

“As we all know, there was a body found last night in the woods. And I’m sure your eager little minds are coming up with various macabre scenarios to what might’ve happened,” the prof rambled.

I glanced at Scott. The truth was pretty macabre, to be honest.

“But I’m here to tell you that the police have a suspect. So now you can put all of your attention on the work that’s on your desk.” He finished, and I rolled my eyes. Nice job, teach. Tell the students to not think about exactly what they are going to think about now, thanks to your little announcement.

Once I was left to my own devices however, I realized that my werewolf-enhanced hearing was picking up all kinds of cool things. Like the cute girl outside who was chatting with her mum, and the dude who dropped his notes in the far hallway. There was another thing as well - a dull thud-thud sound coming from within, well, everyone. It only took a moment for me to realize that these were heartbeats. I could hear peoples heartbeats!

After that stunning discovery, I spent the rest of class not paying attention at all (it was like the
second day - nothing important happens today) and instead testing my enhanced senses.

Sometime in the middle of the period, that chick who was talking to her mum came in and was introduced as Allison Argent, a new student. She sat in the seat immediately behind Scott, and Scott offered her a pencil (since she had forgotten hers - which we only know about because we were werewolves), and then the two of them spent the rest of the time making bedroom eyes at each other when they though the other person wasn’t looking.

Puppy love, huh. Kinda sickening, actually. Too fluffy for my tastes. But if my bro had finally nabbed a girl, I wouldn’t rain on his parade.

Once clas had finished, and we were lingering in the hallway, Scott and I bore witness to the monumental event Lydia declaring Alisson to be her new BFF. Like, how????!! Seems like the girl beside us - Tasha, I think her name was. She had English with me. Also, was she a mind reader or something because she voiced my exact question.

“Okay, can somebody tell me how the new girl is here for two minutes and she’s already in the same clique with Lydia Martin?” Tasha drawled, giving Alisson a pointed look.

I shrugged. “She’s hot. Beautiful people herd together?”

“Yeah…” Scott sighed, bitten by the love bug.

It wasn't long before Jackson joined the duo and caught Lydia in a drawn-out kiss. Eugh. I seriously wanted to hurl. Like, so, so bad. It didn't help that my wolf hearing picked up every... sickening... noise...

Lydia could do so much better than him. Like, SOOO much better.

“- you mean like football?” I heard Alisson ask.

Jackass scoffed. “Football here is a joke.”

The conversation then turned towards the party Lydia was throwing Friday night. Lydia's parties were legendary. EVERYONE knew about it, and all the notable people had been invited. I figured we could sneak in if we tried. Jackass asked Alisson if she was going, and she replied with the ‘family night’ excuse.

That was a lie. I bet my birthday cake pop tarts that she lied. I turned to Scott, who was still drooling over the new girl.

“You ok?” I asked.

“Yeah. I’m… fine.” He sighed. Okay then. Off in dreamland, but clearly fine.

I shook my head as I walked away. Did Scott not realise that, by normal human standards, we should not have been able to even hear that conversation, going on at the other end of the hall?

Jeez. He was really thick sometimes.
Later in the day, we had lacrosse practice. After quickly changing into our gear in the stinky, grimy, horrible boys change room that they clean like, never, (okay that was an exaggeration, it’s actually not that bad. My nose is just hypersensitive now, so it reeked), we jogged onto the field where some of the guys had already begun warming up.

“McCall!!”

It was Coach. Coach who was savage as fuck and kinda looked like Larry from the Three Stooges (i think). Or one of the villains from Home Alone, because I forget their names. He’s a good person.

“Yeah?” Scott asked, now paying attention.

“You’re in goal,” he said, throwing a goalie stick at him.

Scott looked confused, “But I’ve never played net before,” he protested.

“I know,” Coach said, metaphorically steamrolling right through Scott, “Scoring some shots will give the boys a confidence boost. First day back kind of thing.”

Oooh, BURN.

“What about me?” Scott asked, glancing uneasily at the net, which was seriously taking abuse from several whip shots.

“Try not to take any in the face,” he advised, then walked right on.

Scott looked at me pleadingly.

“I’m just glad it’s not me, bro.” I said.

Scott huffed and geared up, them moved to the net as I sat back on the bench. As I was waiting for the scrimmage to start, I overheard a conversation between Allison and Lydia, regarding Scott. Judging from the glances he kept shooting at where the girls were sitting, he must have heard it too.

Did he seriously not realize that something was up?

Anyways, now he was going to try to impress Alisson. I hoped he wasn’t gonna screw it up too bad.

The whistle blew, and the game was on! I followed the ball with my eyes, kinda itching to be out there, to prove myself. What was this? Some weird wolf instinct? Anyways, a player had the ball and he shot it at Scott, and I expected it to sail right past and into the net.

But it didn't.

Scott caught it.

SCOTT FREAKING CAUGHT IT.

There was a moment of surprised silence before the stands erupted in cheers. I then realised that our werewolfitude must have given us a physical boost as well. I hadn’t tripped or bumped into anything
that day, save for when Scott pushed me into Jackass, and Scott didn’t seem to need his inhaler. Score another one for the Pros column.

Scott was just staring at the ball, astonished at his own abilities, before he grinned and gave into the team’s cheers. Even Isaac, the shooter, praised him for the save.

In the next round, Scott saved ANOTHER near impossible shot. This time, I was backing him all the way.

“WHOOOOO! THAT'S MY FRIEND!!” I cheered, leaping to my feet and throwing my hands in the air.

But damn, how could he still be in denial after that?

“Alright! Settle down!” Coach said, waving his clipboard. “A good start but we’re not done yet. McCall, why don’t you park it for now,” he gestured to the bench “Mahealani, you’re up!”

Scott left and let Danny Mahealani, our regular goalie take over. “Dude, that was epic!” I grinned as he came to sit next to me, accepting the high-five.

“Thanks!” He huffed, with this dopey smile across his face. It was kinda adorable.

“Next!” Coach yelled. “Get going!”

I was on. I hoped I didn’t get killed.

As I played, keeping to the edges so not to draw too much attention to myself, I noticed that I wasn’t actually clumsy at all. My body moved exactly as I wanted it too, and my awareness of my surroundings was also amplified. Like spidey-sense.

In short, it was awesome.

I feel like I’m overusing that word. It’s an awesome word. Case in point, right there.

Anyways, the team set up for another round, with Scott in the play and me benched, and Scott’s miraculous abilities continued. Unlike me, he wasn’t holding back. Scott twirled, ran, doged, jumped and blocked like he was some world class pro player. Watching him was awesome.

Jackass wasn’t taking this too well. In the final round, he chose to play defense and came right at at Scott when he was trying to score, but then Scott sorta rolled over him? I’m not sure, but it looked damn cool, and scored.

The entire team was cheering like crazy! These tryouts had gone super well, and Scott had even impressed his girl. I was so proud of him! … as long as he didn’t wreck this chance in typical Scott McCall fashion by trying to hard, he was golden.

The only one not riding the high was Jackson, who seemed to realized that something was up. Dammit, ’d have to keep an eye in him.

I dragged Scott away from the group to change. We had places to go, like, now, and find Scott’s inhaler while we were at it. Melissa would definitely ground Scott if she found out it was lost, because those things are expensive, and Scott really can't be grounded right now. I needed him.

I also be needed answers. Library, here we come!

After going inhaler hunting, of course.
I grabbed him by the shoulders and looked him in the eyes. “Please tell me you believe in werewolves now.” I asked. He HAD to have noticed something was off by now.

“Aww, Stiles. Not this again.” He shook me of and headed towards the showers, leaving me gaping at his back.

Really, Scott? Really!!???

He was my best friend, but sometimes I really wanted to strangle him.
DURING YESTERDAY’S DISASTROUS ADVENTURE, Scott had dropped his inhaler. Now we had to look for it. It was kind of a priority, since Scott getting grounded is not something we could deal with right now. So we were searching, in the middle of the woods, amongst the tall, dark, moss covered birch and poplars.

Sunlight filtered through the sparse patchwork canopy, falling onto the countless fallen leaves littering the forest bed, in varying earthy shades with an occasional fiery orange oddball. Those ones were my favorites. There wasn’t a trace of the spooky atmosphere from the other night. The forest felt peaceful, it felt free. The forest itself wasn’t the least bit intimidating at this time of day. My wolf, or the part of me that was more wolf than human, loved it. I wanted to run around and roll in the leaves, breath in the crisp fall air and earthy scent. Be free.

I guess it was a given that I’d feel more at home outside now. Other than us, there were a few animals milling around. I heard squirrels and some birds, and a woodpecker was busy making its home in a tree some hundred meters away. It was an eye opener. Before, I wouldn't have noticed any of these things. It was like looking through a different set of eyes. Like looking through a wolf’s eyes.

I smiled, enjoying the relaxed atmosphere. I guess it helped that I was in a good mood from practice, and the natural beauty of the forest definitely helped my mood. I stepped out of the Jeep, dragging Scott with me. I could tell be his awed expression that he felt the same way I did. Unfortunately, there was a task at hand. If there wasn't, I'd give in and go wild. The wolf wanted to chase something, follow a scent, and discover the forest anew.

I made a mental note to come back here once I got some free time and do just that.

As we began our trek to an approximation of where we were the other night, the conversation turned to Lacrosse.
“I don’t know what it was,” Scott gushed, still kinda high from practice, “It was like I had all the time in the world to catch the ball.”

I wanted to face-palm. I wish he'd just accept the werewolf angle. He'd get there eventually, I just had to be patient.

“So kinda like you had ESP?” I teased.

“ESP?” He asked, looking like a confused puppy, with his head tilted to the side and such.

I guess even monumental patience had to have a limit…


“Well, kinda?” Scott shrugs, brushing it off. “It was awesome, though!” He grinned. "I have a real chance at first line!"

I rolled my eyes. “Never doubted ya, buddy. Now, will you finally admit that you might be a werewolf? What you did today, that- that wasn't normal.”

Scott grimaced. I could almost see the gears turning. “Ok, you do have a point. Something’s up.”

Jesus tap-dancing Christ on a pogo stick, FINALLY.


Scotts eyes went wide. "With what?" he asked, intrigued.

"A rare strain. Viral. Symptoms include heightened sense of smell, hearing and sight, superior reflexes and increased aggression. Unfortunately, there's no cure.”

"What is it?"

I paused for dramatic effect “… according to my sources, it's called Lycanthropy.”

“What’s that?” Scott asked.

“Scientific term for werewolf, in a sense.” I simplified.

“C'mon Stiles!” He rolled his eyes. I just gave him a look. The 'I-swear-I'm-not-fucking-with-you' look. This made him pause. “Say you’re right," he said. "Say that we’ve become monsters... so what, then? What do we do?” He turned his big puppy eyes towards me, and for the first time I realized that his denial might not have been because he was thick-headed but because he was terrified.

“We do nothing. Well, not nothing," I amended. “We survive.”

“Okay.”

“Okay.”

We settled into a tense silence, but after a while, I truly couldn’t stand it. I had to say something.

“But it’s not that bad,” I started. Scott scowled at me.
“We’re monsters.” He stated, flatly.

“Not all monsters do monstrous things,” I shot back.

“Werewolves, Stiles!” he huffed.

“Is it bad that you can do things that better than normal humans can?” I asked. Time to redirect.

“Well, no,” he agreed, “But there has to be a catch.”

I nodded. That was a good point.

“Yeah. For now though - I’ve got you, bro. Always.” I nudged him.

“Sure.” Scott nodded. "But it still seems kinda far-fetched."

We searched for some more time, slowly inching deeper into the woods. Still, absolutely zero sign of Scott’s inhaler. Like a needle in a haystack, I suppose, but actually an inhaler in over 20 square miles worth of land. At least we had a general idea of where he dropped the thing. It seemed a fruitless effort. We found nothing, and after an hour or so, I was just about ready to call it quits. Blame the ADHD, and none of my meds seemed to be working. It's a sad day when a triple dose of adderall does nothing.

In our searching, Scott and I had somehow wandered near the old Hale house. The Hales were a large family, well-loved by most. I remembered that Talia Hale and my mum had been friends, back in the day. According to the police reports I filched from my dad, the house had been set on fire, killing all residents except Derek, Laura and their Uncle Peter. Apparently Derek and Laura only survived because they were at school. Last I heard, the two of them were in New York, and Peter was in a coma.

I guess interesting thing do sometimes happen at Beacon Hills. Horrifying and horrible things, but interesting nonetheless.

Scott suddenly stopped, and I realized we were in a dip that looked vaguely familiar. He turned in a circle and gestured to the ground.

"This is it. I could have sworn this was it. It's where deer came running. I dropped it here, I'm sure of it.." He said, combing through the leaf litter with his fingers, but they came back empty. Then he looked up, meeting my eyes. "... and the body, it's gone!"

I put my hand on my hips and surveyed the surrounding area.

"Maybe the killer moved it?" I shrugged.

He did have a point though. This was highly suspicious. I know that the police were still sending out search parties, so they hadn't found it.

"If he did I hope he left my inhaler. That thing costs 80 bucks." Scott huffed. It made me snicker.

"Maybe the rabid werewolf ate it? The body, I mean." I said.

"My inhaler too?" Scott asked, incredulous.

In the corner of my eye, I noticed a figure, and whipped around to face this intruder. Well, actually. I guess we were the intruders, but anyway- it was a guy, wearing jeans and a leather jacket. He had black hair that was attractively spiked, piercing green-grey eyes and an impressive scowl. Hot stuff.
Like, really hot stuff.

Did I forget to mention that I was the tiniest bit gay? I see an attractive person, and I can admire that. Gender doesn't really matter. Hot is hot.

That being said, the hot dude looked pissed that we were trampling on his turf. He started towards us, with his eyebrows being super judge-y.

"What are you doing here?" He glared. "This is private property."

Oh really? It hasn't been private property since- Wait. Wait wait wait. If we were near the abandoned Hale house, and this dude claimed it was his property, then-

Holy shit, this dude was Derek Hale! But why was he back? I figured he left for NY because he wanted to get away from his family's deathbed.

Derek was actually a rather intimidating figure, but I refused to let him get to me. Scott looked like he was gonna piss himself though.

"Sorry man." I said, trying to be apologetic, "We didn't know."

Scott nodded. "Yeah. We were just looking for something..." Derek's scowl now morphed into a full out glare. "...but, forget it." Scott amended. "We'll just go."

Derek then reached into his pocket and pulled out something, his face impassive. Somewhere in my brain it registered that he'd be ace at poker, but I was too busy trying not to stare at his face. Derek tossed the thing to Scott, who caught it without a fumble.

Huh. It was Scott's inhaler. Nice of Derek to return that. I kept my eyes on him as he turned and began to walk away. Scott placed his inhaler safely in his jacket pocket.

"Alright, I have to get to work." He sighed.

"Dude," I stopped him. How had Scott not noticed? "That was Derek Hale, remember? A few years older than us. His entire family died in a house fire like ten years ago."

Oddly enough, the Hale fire case still remained unsolved. Nobody caught the murderer - because yes, it was murder. I was sure about that. Otherwise, some others would have also survived. There was something up with the whole event, something I just hadn't figured out....

And Derek, I was pretty sure - like 60% - that he was also a werewolf. There was something wild and untamable about the dude, like he'd feel better in the wilderness than in a domestic setting. He also smells wild - like pine and smoke. It wasn't what I'd come to expect from normal humans, who smelled like plastic or clothes and perfume. Then there was the way he moved, like a predator, almost silent, even though there was a bunch of crinkly leaves on the floor.

Scott shook his head, still watching Derek's retreating form.

"I wonder what he's doing back." He said.

For some reason, this sent alarm bells ringing in my head. What was he doing here? Also, where was Laura? Unless... he was looking for someone, who could have been Laura, who might have come back to check on Peter, or something. It was plausible.

But then, had he not found his sister yet? or.. or, something happened. Something definitely
happened. Derek was a werewolf, he should have found his sister easily, unless... unless Laura was dead. Unless Laura was the body in the woods. She would have been in her late twenties by now.

Nah. It's too intertwined and specific.

But, also possible. All the pieces fit…

This required further inquiry. I needed my crime board.

"Stiles, man, you ok?" Scott's question brought me away from my musings. For a moment, I had forgotten where we were.

"Yeah. Let's go."

As we left though, I couldn't help but wonder…

Was half of Laura Hale the body we found last night?

After dropping Scotty off at the animal clinic, I immediately headed home. There was stuff to I needed to clarify. Werewolves, yes, check, that point was pretty much certain. But what did that mean? What was the catch? For all I know, Scott and I and Derek might become mindless beasts on the full moon, killing everything in sight. A bit too macabre for my tastes.

Wait, mindless beasts? Could Derek have killed his sister?

Nah, he didn't seem like the murdering type.

Walking inside, I realized that my dad still wasn't back, probably pulling a late shift at the station again, trying to catch the killer. I felt kinda awful, then, because the killer was probably a werewolf and the Police Department were in way out of their league. It wasn't like I could simply tell my dad this shit either, so if more people got killed... well, I guess it fell to us to stop it.

What a terrifying thought. The lives of others, in my hands…

Our house was old. Really old. According to my dad, the family that lived there before had built it in the 60's or 50's, or sometime around there. But because it was old, it was also cheap, and we were able buy it easily enough. Mum and dad picked the house because mum said it felt like someplace from her childhood. Looking at the rich but worn wooden floors and supports, I guess I could see that.

An unfortunate side effect is the creaking. All the goddamn creaking. There was a zero percent chance of sneaking around in this place unless you weighed less than 20 pounds. Didn't stop me from trying, though.

Case in point, as I went up the stairs, several of them protested, loudly. I wasn't even that heavy - 147 pounds of pale skin and fragile bones!

On the upside, I always heard when dad was coming upstairs. Even more so since I was a werewolf now.
Anyway, the main matter at hand - was Laura Hale the body in the woods? and if so, who killed her?

I walked over to my evidence board, or crime board, and surveyed the news clippings and photos I had already set up. There wasn't much, really. The case was new after all. After sticking up the posts using thumbtacks, I connect them using coloured string to try and see a pattern. Green is solved, yellow and orange mean that I have a theory, and red is unknown. The board was mostly red.

But the killer - what was his motive? Was it because Laura was a threat, the Alpha of her pack? ...and even if she was, what's be so strong as to kill a werewolf - my bets were on another werewolf. Derek was a suspect, but he wouldn't kill off his only remaining family, right?

There were too many unresolved variables.

I went back to my pacing, trying to see a pattern. Maybe there was none? All just a bunch of speculation? ... nah, there must be some kind of connection. Something freaky and supernatural. I reached the wall and turned around-

-only to fall backward at the sight in my window.

"WHAT THE HELL??" I yelled, flailing. There, perched on my windowsill, was Derek freaking Hale, scowling at me.

"You should have known I was there," was the curt reply.

"Yes, maybe if I wasn't trying to figure out who killed you sister!"

In a flash, Derek had moved forwards and grabbed my neck, pinning me to the wall. I'd find the whole situation kinda hot if it wasn't for the fact that it was my windpipe being crushed.

"How do you know that? How do you know about Laura?" Derek growled. Literally growled.

"Wait, I was right? The body was Laura-" the claws tightened, "AIR! I need air!"

Derek huffed, and glared, but let me go. Still, I was pinned with a tell-me-or-die look. What a sourpuss. Actually, no - Derek's not a cat; he's a wolf. A sourwolf. Yeah, that sounded better. He still looked like a slightly more murderous version of grumpy cat though, so I got talking.

"I mean, it's not really that hard to figure out? Like, why else would you come back to Beacon Hills if it wasn't for something truly important - and Laura was super important to you... and the body! That was Laura, well, I'm pretty sure that was Laura because she looked like the Laura I saw volunteering at the library, but older. I just didn't recognize her until I saw you." I rambled.

All the while, Derek was looking at me with an increasingly impressed expression. It made my stomach flip and I felt super self-conscious all of a sudden. I trailed of into silence, and after an uncomfortable minute, Derek seemed to accept my theory.

"Not bad." He nodded, "I guess you're not a complete idiot after all."

Excuse you, you little-! ...wait, was that an underhanded compliment? Choosing to not get not the bad side of the big bad wolf, I forced my indignation down.

"Uh.. yeah. So. Why are you here?" I asked.

"I had to check something."
"Wait, how are you even here? I thought you had been pulled for questioning." This is info I acquired via another eavesdropped phone call, between my dad and the station. They were calling in people with any relation to the body, who they'd identified as Laura via a DNA test. They also still hadn't found the other half of the body.

"They let me go." He crossed his arms

"...and?" I prompted.

"What?" He scowled.

"Why are you here?"

"You were the better choice."

Huh. really. "Wait, what? Why?"

"Your friend doesn't realize." Derek sounded put out.

"Aww, c'mon. Are you gonna give me something more than half-answers?" I said, my hands moving animatedly, "I need details!"

This got me an eye-roll. "Maybe," Derek sighed. "McCall doesn't realize the danger." I raised an eyebrow. Dude's gotta give me a bit more than that.

I rolled my eyes. "About what? Details, remember!"

"Being a Wolf. For turned wolves, increased aggression is a problem." He moved away from the window ledge and leaned against the wall. But, oooh, he was giving more of an answer now. I wasn't gonna waste this chance.

"Really?" I grabbed a notebook and pen and sat cross legged on my bed. "Tell me more."

Derek looked affronted. "What are you doing?" What? Dude, I thought the notebook spoke for itself!

"Taking notes, duh." I told him, scribbling down 'werewolves' across the top of the page, "I haven't had much time to research but I'm gonna guess that the lore is probably all wrong. Who am I to pass a chance on an interview with a primary source?"

He stared at me, and for a moment I thought he'd just turn around and leave, but he finally rolled his eyes and gave in. "Fine. I don't have anything better to do. Your police people are persistent."

I nodded. "True that. Now, get talking?" I meant it at a statement but it came out like a question.

Derek raised an accusing eyebrow at my failed threat. "First thing you should know is that your aggression levels are going to increase because the full moon is near. Both you and McCall. Anything could set you off, and you don't want to shift in front of everyone." He tried to look threatening, "If you do, I'll rip your throat out. With my teeth."

Ignoring the barb- "Uh-huh. Nice try, big bad. You don't scare me. What do you mean by shift? Like, can I turn into a wolf or is it going to look like Moony from the Prisoner of Azkaban?"

"Something like that." He shook his head, "Here." and well, he changed.

His face morphed into something more animalistic, raised ridges and harsh lines, and sharp fangs
took over for his teeth. His ears also pointed and his hair became like a dark furry mane, kinda, with these ridiculous sideburns. That were kinda adorable. Did I mention that his eyes also glowed? Like, an epic ice-blue color.

I jerked back at first, but then once I realized he looked nothing like the beast from last night, my fear dissipated. Needless to say, I stared.

But excuse the fanboy moment, because holy fuck, I WAS RIGHT!

I wanted to do a victory dance right then and there but wasn't going to risk embarrassing myself even more.

"This, this is seriously so badass," I whispered, awed.

Derek rolled his eyes. "That's not what most people do."

"Well what do most people do?" I snarked.

"They run away, screaming."

"Well then, I guess I'm not most people, then." I winked.

...and holy crap. I was flirting with Derek Hale, who's basically a male model and way to of my league.

And I'm pretty sure I was mostly straight, and only like 10% gay up until now.

But nooooo.... now I was probably more gay than straight. That's called bisexual, right? Shit, I'm confused...

Screw you, Derek Hale. Preferably sometime in the future.

And oh my god, I need to stop, like right now. Pay attention, Stiles!

However, Derek only seemed amused at my rapidly reddening face, making this sort of chuffing laugh noise and shifting back to his more human state. I shook my head to clear those distracting and highly unwanted thoughts, and refocused on our conversation.

"Wait, so since you basically confirmed that you're a werewolf, I'm a werewolf and werewolves are real, am I gonna be able to do that?" I asked, gesturing at his face.

"Yes. We can turn into full wolves too." He informs me, smug. I grin. I could turn into a wolf? Awesome! Then another thought occurred to me.

"...how did you know I was onto the werewolf thing?" I asked.

"I heard your conversation with McCall."

"Super senses, huh?" Then another thought occurred to me. "Oh my god, you were following us in the forest." How I didn't notice him, I had no idea. "You're a stalker. You're a stalker wolf!" I snorted. This was so bizarre.

Derek... looked like he was pouting? Nah, Derek Hale doesn't pout. He was probably scowling.

"No," He grumbled.
I grinned. "Never mind that," I said, "Why are you pissed at Scott?"

Derek frowned. "Who said I was pissed at Scott?"

"Your scent got all sour when you mentioned him." I pointed out. Taken out of context, that probably sounded super weird. Wait a second- "Hey, can werewolves smell emotions, like dogs?" I asked.

"Somewhat."

Score one for me! "So you were pissed at Scott." I teased. Unless, of course, that was another emotion I had scented.

"Maybe."

"Please don't go back to one-word answers."

Derek rolled his eyes. "He won't know how to manage the change. You both need training. Meet me Saturday afternoon at my place."

"You mean your old house? Don't tell me you're staying there!" I exclaimed. Was he for real? That wasn't habitable. That was charred ruins.

"..."

"...you are, aren't you?" I frowned.

"Maybe." He huffed.

"Anyways, how do you even know where I live?" I questioned. Seriously, the dude's a stalker.

"I followed your scent." He answered. You know, the fact that I'm not gonna even bother thinking how weird that should sound just proves how quickly I've adapted the this werewolf gig. I settled on labelling all of Derek's odd quirks as 'it's a wolf thing' and then stop obsessing over them,

"Ok. Sure." Yup, totally normal conversation going on here. Absolutely.

Then, the sound of a car driving closer reached my ears. This car I knew - It was the police cruiser my dad drove. By the way Derek's head shot up from where he was glaring a hole into the ground he heard too.

"That's my dad," I told him. "You should probably get going."

He didn't reply, just nodded and hopped right back out my window, making the 20 foot jump down to our backyard with ease.

"Bye, Sourwolf!" I called.

He flipped me off. I laughed.

It was moments like this that I was so very thankful that my window faced the back and not the front. Not sure how I'd explain Derek to my dad…

Anyways, whew. Derek was gone, and save for his lingering scent, it was like he had never been here.
I guess he wasn't a bad dude. He was just kinda... emotionally constipated? Losing all his family as a teen must have done a number on him.

And then here I was, with my emotions going haywire.

I sighed and lay back down on my bed, hearing my dad park and turn the car off.

So, some other rabid werewolf creature killed Laura Hale, Derek came back to- what? Avenge her death? ...or something. Scott and I were bitten by the beast, and now we're werewolves too. Derek now wants to train us before we blow our cover and endanger ourselves even more.

What a mess.

At least we aren't going into it blind. That'd really suck.

I stretched and turned around to head downstairs. It'd be dinnertime soon, and maybe dad would have more info in the case. As I climbed down the rickety stairs, I wondered if he was overworking himself too hard. Several night shifts in a row was not easy feat, and it was probably draining on him more than he's like to admit.

He's the only parent I have left. I can't lose him too.

I heard him enter the house and click the front door shut. It was time to make my entrance.

"Hey Dad. How's the investigation going?" I ask cheerily. I was leaning on the railing of the staircase, watching as my father fumbled with his coat. The conversation I had with Derek was still fresh, and honestly, it just brought up even more questions than it'd answered.

"It's going," my dad scowled, not willing to give any more of an explanation. Well, too bad.

"Do you have a suspect?" I tried changing tactics.

"No yet. It seems to be just an animal attack."

Werewolf attack, more like, I thought. I felt bad that I couldn't tell him what was really going on, but if I did, I'd put him and probably the entire police force in danger. This supernatural shit was a little out of the police's limits.

"...cougar?" I asked.

"They think wolf, but there are no wolves in California."

"So they're going with cougar."

"Not exactly." He shook his head. "The DNA testing came back from the lab, and it turned out to be wolf."

"Wolf?" I asked, feeling slightly panicky.

"Yes, odd, isn't it? Perhaps a stray wandered in or something."

"...and it's killing people." I snarked.

"Yes. Fine. There's something seriously fishy about this, but enough of that topic." He grinned at me "How about you? How's school?"
"School is school. It sucks." I shrugged, filing away the info he'd given me for later. "But nothing interesting, really. Save for the murder, of course."

"Animal attack, Stiles."

"Right, absolutely. And how's everything with you diet?" I narrowed my eyes.

"Eating healthy...?" Dad tried, but it was obvious. He had probably (definitely) caved at lunch.

"Sure, dad, sure." I rolled my eyes. "Like I don't know about your daily lunch trips."

He had the decency to look sheepish. "You can't blame a guy from wanting to have lunch with friends."

"But have you seen you stats?" I cried, "You gotta take better care of yourself. Just for that, I'm making buddha bowls for dinner."

Now, he looked confused. "...and that is?"

"Rice and veggies with grilled chicken." I deadpanned.

He raised an eyebrow. "Stiles, come on. That sounds like hippie food."

"It's healthy hippie food, then."

"..." He refused to acknowledge my answer. Arguments with dad usually ended in an impasse, but there was no way I was backing down. Especially since he'd basically admitted to eating junk at lunch.

"Daaaaad." I drawled, trying for puppy eyes. "C'mon."

"Fine," he relented. "But pizza on Friday."

That was doable. "Deal."

He set his stuff down as I went about making dinner. The atmosphere was weary, but relaxed. I'd promised myself to try and be a better son, to spend more time with him, and family dinners seemed like a good first step. With all the recent crazy in my life, something familiar was just what I needed right now.

But later, when he was asleep, I was definitely snatching those case file updates he thinks I didn't him sneaking out of his bag. Primary sources always had the most legitimate details!

In the middle of an... interesting... dream about, well, something I forget, I was jarred awake by something rapping on my window. A sharp tik, tik, tik, noise. Like a rock. I groaned, it was probably just a bird, but why now? It was a little past 1:00 am. I drowsily peeled myself from the sheets and went to remove the annoyance. Unfortunately, this wasn't the kind on annoyance I could remove.

"Derek?" I asked. "What the hell?"
"Shh," He made a down gesture, "It's the Alpha."

"What about who?" He'd woken me up in the literal middle of the night. This had better be good.

"He's gone feral."

"The who has gone what now?" He wasn't making any sense.

"The Alpha," he repeated, "Was the one that bit you. He also bit Scott. Alpha werewolves are the only ones with the power to turn humans." As he was explaining, I put on loose t-shirt Being shirtless around Derek Hale? No way. I’d die, just a bit more, from humiliation..

"For some reason," Derek continued, "The Alpha has gone feral. Rabid. Insane. He's attacking people."

"He was the one who killed Laura." I pointed out. It was all starting to come together.

"Yes, I need you to come with me. I suspect he's going after another."

My eyes widened, "Another innocent?" I asked.

"Yes. Hurry up." He grabbed me roughly by the forearm and hauled my out the window and onto the tree in our backyard.

"Fine, sourwolf. Claws to yourself."

He glanced at his hand, seemingly surprised that his claws were out. "Sorry." He muttered.

"It's fine," I shook my head. "Let's go."

"Follow me."

He led the way through the rooftops and shadows, the night life in BH being almost nonexistent. Derek moved like an apex predator. It was beautiful. I, well, I wasn't to bad? Definitely not a predator, but not nearly as clumsy as I expected. We hadn't gotten caught by anyone.

"But why," I asked Derek, as we trekked through a particularly deserted part of town, "Did the Alpha want to kill Laura?"

"Be quiet." Derek growled.

"Just answer the question? I'll shut up after, I promise."

He rolled his eyes. "Fine. Because Laura was Alpha as well. The power can be transferred by killing the old Alpha."

I swallowed, mouth suddenly dry, as my mind digested this tidbit of info. That was... gruesome. Unfortunately, it just gave way to another boatload of questions, but I kept quiet. There was a time and place, but not now. I'd be grounded for life if I was caught, especially by my dad. He did have the graveyard shift patrolling tonight. They were hoping to catch the killer - and it pained me to think that it was a futile effort.

We silently prowled through the maze of streets. From the looks of it, Derek seemed to be following a scent - stopping to (rather obviously) sniff the air from time to time. I followed him through the winding streets until we reached a battered, overturned bus that reeked of death.
"Dude! I smell blood." I hissed.

"I know. The bus driver is dead." Derek remained unfazed.

"What do we do?" I flailed, "I'm gonna call 911. There’s a dead person. You call 911 when there’s a dead person."

Derek shook his head. "I already did. Right before I got you. This was the alpha's work. Your friend Scott was here."

True to his word, I faintly heard EMS sirens in the background. But holy shit, Scott was here?!!

"Was he..." I was overcome by a sudden feeling of dread, "Was he helping the Alpha?" I asked, horrified at what this scenario could have been.

"I don't think so. He's gone now."

"No shit, Sherlock." I glared at him. I wondered why he's gotten me. If Scott was here, why not bug him in the middle of the night instead? He was already awake. "What do I do?" I asked.

"Nothing." He replied.

"Then why'd you drag me here?" I cried, seriously fed up.

He grabbed my shoulders and looked me right in the eyes. "Because I needed you to know what we are up against." He said.

I sighed. The dude had a point. "A monster capable of flipping busses?" I snarked.

"A monster without morals." He replied, voice devoid of humour.

I looked down. That... that was a good point. I couldn't help but feel like I was quite a bit out of my depth. Suddenly feeling very tired,

I looked at him. "So I guess I go home, now?" I asked.

"Yes. Your friend needs to pull his act together."

"Cut him some slack," I glared, "He's been at this for what, twenty-four hours?"

"The full moon is Friday." He pointed out. And damn, he was right. Today was what? Thursday-no, Friday, since it was past midnight. Well, this was getting worse by the minute.

"Right. I'll try. Don't expect any promises." I sighed.

"Don’t tell your father."

“What do you take me for, an idiot? I won’t. It’s not like he’d believe me.”

Derek looked like he wanted to say more, but just nodded, turned around, and essentially melted into the shadows.

I seriously needed to learn how to do that.

The howl of the sirens was getting close, and I figured it’d be a good idea to get out of here before they arrived. Shaking my head, I turned in the direction of my house. Damn werewolves, cutting into
Later, at school, right before lacrosse practice, I overheard a conversation between Scott and Jackson. The day itself had been rather uneventful. Scott ditched me for Allison, I ate lunch alone, I tried to talk to Lydia and she shut me down - again. Jackson was annoying, the Teachers never shut up, etc. The usual. I hadn't been feeling any 'increased aggressiveness' either, so that was a pro. Since the day was so mundane, I was really looking forwards to Lacrosse, when Jackson cornered Scott in the change room. There was no need for him to know I was there, so I leaned back against the hall wall behind the corner and shamelessly eavesdropped on my best friend. Werewolf hearing, man. Gotta love it.

Jackson basically stalked right up to Scott as Scott was getting his gear out, face contorted in a sneer, and slammed Scott's locker door viciously. It certainly startled Scott.


Jeez, he thinks Scott was on steroids? Scott, sweet naive Scott, on steroids? I wanted to giggle, but held it in. Couldn't blow my cover. Although.. once I thought about it, Jackson's reasoning had merit. At least he noticed something was wrong, and I had to give him props for that.

"What?" Scott asked, confused.

Damn, he didn't get it. This was.. gonna be painful. For Scott.

"Where are you getting your juice." Jackson repeated, talking like he was explaining something to a small child.

Scott shook his head. "My mom does all the grocery shopping." He answered.

At this point, It was a herculean effort to not erupt in giggles.

Unfortunately, Scott's answer just made Jackson even more pissed.

"Listen McCall, you're gonna tell me what it is you're taking and who you're getting it from because there is no way in hell that you're kicking ass on that field without some kind of chemical boost." He hissed.

"Oh, you mean steroids." Scotts eyes widened, "Wait, you want steroids?"

Oh my freaking god, I was gonna give myself an aneurysm from not laughing.

Jackson narrowed his eyes, finally snapping and grabbing Scott. "What the hell is going on with McCall??!!" He yelled, pinning Scott against a locker.

I guess that was it for Scott too, 'cause he flipped. "You really want to know?!" He yelled. "Well so would I, because now I can see, hear and smell things that I shouldn't! I'm doing things that should be impossible and I'm sleepwalking three miles into the woods and I'm going out of my frickin mind!"
Great, wonderful job Scotty. Spill it all to Jackson....

Wait. sleepwalking three miles into the woods? I guess that's what he did after whatever he did at the flipped bus scene. But he didn't seem to remember anything. That was odd. Something was wrong. I filed away this info to ask Derek about it later.

Scott was breathing heavily, but appeared to be relieved that he's gotten it all out. Unfortunately, to the wrong person.

Jackson wasn't buying it. Or, I guess, he bought it too well.

"You think you're funny, don't you McCall?" He snarled. "Something is going on around here. With you and whatever you're in on, and I'm going to find out what it is. I don't care how long it takes but I am going to find out." He slammed the locker door once more to drive his point home.

I sighed, then hustled to get my ass on the field before warmups started. If Scott was gonna try for first line, then I would too. I wasn't gonna leave my bro behind. However, I wasn't gonna go all out either. The spotlight is NOT where I wanted to be right then. Scott could have it all.

Jackson though... he was gonna be difficult. I made another note to talk to Derek about him too.

Scott joined me on the field, shooting odd glances at Jackson. I had stuff to tell him though, so he could forget Jackass for the moment.

"Scott." I made my way over to him. "Scott, you are never going to believe this! I overheard my dad on the phone and-"

"Stiles, I'm playing the first elimination. Can't it wait?" he turned to finish getting his gear in line. Rude, man. Why don't you just shut your best friend down?

I wasn't giving up though, this was important!

"The fiber analysis came back from the lab in LA." I told him, speaking quickly. "They found animal hair on the body found in the woods!"

"Look, I gotta go." Scott said, uninterested. He grabbed his helmet and went to where they were converging for the scrimmage.

Dammit, Scott! Just listen, for once!

"No, wait!" I called. "Scott, you're not going to believe what the animal was," Aaaaannd he was ignoring me now, "it was a wolf..."

Oh well. I'd get to him later. Eventually.

Listening in, I heard Coach give his usual pre game speech, which I bet was ripped from some cheesy sports flick. I also noticed that Allison and Lydia were on the bleachers again, watching the practice. I rolled my eyes, huffing. The chances of Scott doing something stupid just increased, exponentially.

The game started decent enough, but only got rougher as they played on. I visibly saw Jackass goading Scott, trying to get a rise out of him. A swell of overprotective rage overcame me, but I fought it down. Derek said that aggression triggered the change. I couldn't lose my cool now.

The rough and tumble game wasn't making things any easier, though. I hoped Scott had the sense to
Then Jackson slammed into Scott without warning, an I could have sworn I faintly heard Scott growl. This could get... really bad, fast.

Then, THEN, Jackass freaking PUSHED Scott, just for the hell of it, making him fall down and then laughing at his humiliation. That was it. The last straw. I was gonna go right up and pummel Jackass-

Before I made any move in that direction, my mind registered a pain. In my hands. I paused, and uncoiled my fingers - which had already formed fists.

My fingernails weren't nails anymore though. They had shifted, forming deadly looking claws that had gouged shallow cuts into my palms when I squeezed my fists too tight. Ouch.

My rage and overprotectiveness disappeared at this though, and I forced myself to calm down, watching in wonder as the claws receded to reveal perfectly normal human hands.

Anger seems to trigger the change, but pain seemed to bring me back. Interesting.

Oh shit, Scott!! I had forgotten about him!

I immediately turned towards the field, fully prepared to see my friend wolfed out and terrorizing people. But no, he wasn't. He seemed to be, doing alright, actually. Good for him! He'd upped his game, though. Going full out, and demolishing the competition. He dashed past Jackson and sidestepped the next defender, then braced himself as two of them came ready to ram him. I figured he's duck or something, but he essentially jumped over their hunched forms, dashing the rest of the way and scoring the goal. It was pretty damn impressive.

The whole team - minus Jackass - came to congratulate Scott on his insane technique. I remained in the bench, though. Kinda shocked. If I had tried, would I have been able to do that? I also noted that the whole sequence replayed in my mind somewhat slo-mo, and I was amazed at the amount of detail I had noticed.

But anyways, there's be repercussions for this. I was sure of it. Too much of a good thing never lasted.

"McCall, get over here!" Uh-oh, it was coach. I watched their conversation with an increasingly incredulous expression.

"Yeah, coach?" Scott asked, grinning.

"What the hell was that? Are you trying out for the.. gymnastics team!??" He yelled.

"Uh, no." Now Scott looked confused. "I was trying to make the shot."

Coach beamed. "Well, you did. And you know what else. You're starting buddy. You made First line."

Did I hear that right?

Scott McCall, formerly severe asthmatic, had just made first line?! I was so proud of him ~

But damn, now I had to get real. I couldn't let him leave me in the dust.

Once the true implications of Coach's announcement had set in, cheers erupted all throughout the team, myself amongst them. But then I realized that there was a problem. Info, on werewolves - I
don't know shit! Well, amending that, I knew what Derek had told me yesterday but that was just a sliver. If I wanted to truly deal wit this, without drowning in the crazy, I had to be prepared - and that meant the library, and research. Lots and lots of research.

I got up, gathered my stuff and left as fast as I could. I'd have to hurry if I wanted to get this done - if only a small bit - before I had to head to Derek's this Saturday. With Scott in tow, of course, but I'd find him later. Better let him enjoy his twenty minutes of fame before Derek shot it down.

It was around 6:00 pm, and I was surrounded by notes and books, scouring for any info about werewolves and lycanthropy legends. I had come upon a story - mentioned several times - about the Beast of Gévaudan, a wolf-man creature that terrorized a small region of southern France until a hunter lady, whose last name was Argent, killed it sometime in the 1700's. Argent, French for silver. It's funny how legends get twisted over time - I suspect it's not the silver metal that kills werewolves (because otherwise I would have burned my hands on our silverware while setting the table) but the family.

The Argents, beginning with the woman who killed La Béte, were a long line of hunters - hunters of the supernatural. That name seemed strangely familiar to me, but I couldn't seem to place a claw on it. Oh well, it's another thing to ask Derek about later.

This ended up covering about a third of my evidence board, connected with orange string. I linked La Béte (the beast) directly to the rabid alpha. There was probably a relation.

I also learned about the legends of Lycaon, the rumoured first of the werewolves. He was mentioned in some Greek mythos, as a former king of Arcadia. In the most popular translation, Lycaon essentially pissed Zeus (or Jupiter, if you prefer the Roman version) - king of the gods, ruler of lightning - by serving the god the cooked flesh of his own son, Nyctimus, in order to test if Zeus was really 'all knowing.' It's really twisted. Zeus immediately recognized Lycaon's gruesome actions, and, in reparation, transformed him into a wolf-beast. Zeus also brought Nyctimus back to life, since the poor kid had been sacrificed for essentially nothing.

Plot twist though: despite having committed a horrendous crime, Lycaon was remembered by the ancients as a culture hero, since he had founded the city Lycosura, established a cult of Zeus Lycaeus and to have started the tradition of the Lycaean Games, which Pausanias thinks were older than the Panathenaic Games (a precursor to the first Olympics).

This ended up taking another chunk of the board. It was so interesting! I linked Lycaon to La Béte, because although they had taken place at separate times, maybe an occasional super-alpha-wolf was a thing?

But see - it's all very, very twisted, intertwined, connected.

There were other legends too - about how wolves had super-healing (which I tested by stapling myself - not a well thought out plan, but it worked, yay!) and stamina, were stronger than regular humans, etc. There were also the claws I had discovered, and Derek's fangs while in his shifted form. All seriously super cool.

I was so caught up in my research that I overlooked one crucial point. Therefore, it was around 6:00 pm, and I was surrounded by notes and books, scouring for any info about werewolves and
lycanthropy legends when I realized that we were screwed.

Monumentally and epically screwed.

The full moon - when Derek warned me that werewolves are unable to control themselves - was TONIGHT.

FREAKING TONIGHT.

The night of Lydia's party. That Scott was going to, with Allison.

Before the full panic could set in, there was a soft knock on my bedroom door. I opened it to reveal Scott's grinning face.

"Oh good, get in." I said, pulling him inside.

Scot frowned at me. "Stiles, what was with that disappearing act at tryouts? You missed your elimination."

Ah, crap. Forgot about that. Never mind, this was more important.

"Yeah, I know," I sighed, but then gestured wildly to my evidence board, "but I've been looking up everything I could since last night. You've got to see this."

Scott studied me, not impressed. "How much Adderall have you had today?" he asked.

"None, actually." I grinned.

Scott was taken aback. "None? Like, you haven't taken any?"

"Well I did, but it didn't seem to worked, so I sorta stopped. But that's not the point. Look!" I once again, gestured wildly at the board.

Scott settled himself on my bed.

"This about the body? They find out who did it?" He asked.

"No, they're still questioning people. They even pulled Derek."

"Derek Hale? The guy we saw in the woods?" He asked.

I groaned. "Yeah, but that's not it!"

"What then?"

I cleared my throat, getting the nerves out. "So, you know the whole werewolf thing? Yeah, well, me might be kinda in a pickle."

"So?"

"Like, it's a full moon tonight, and there's a rabid werewolf on the loose! It's whats behind all these murders."

"Wait, you're telling me a werewolf did it?"

"Yes!"
Scott scowled. "Ok, fine, but what's this got to do with me? You know I have to pick up Allison in an hour."

Oh Scotty, that's exactly the problem.

"Yeah, but your a werewolf! And tonight's a full moon!"

"Sti-" He began, but I wasn't having any of it this time.

"Don't deny it. I saw you on the field - you played like a pro. It was insane. Awesome, but insane. That shouldn't have been possible. Like, you CAN'T improve that much, magically, overnight!" I argued.

"Alright. Fine." Scott sighed. "So what's the point, again?"

I growled, and Scott's eyes widened at the noise. "No, Scotty, you don't understand!" I cried, "You're gonna go crazy tonight. It's the full moon. Werewolves can't control themselves tonight!"

"So what, Stiles?!" Scott cut in, fed up. "Okay, I made first line and I have a date tonight with a girl I can't believe wants anything to do with me! I'm perfectly in control! For once, everything in my life is somehow going right, so why are you trying to ruin that?!"

That was it. I snapped. "RUIN IT?! Scott, I'm trying to SAVE both of our lives. You wanna not believe it? Fine. I can't make you. But I'm gonna damn well try to convince you because I don't want YOU to turn into a MONSTER tonight, a monster like, like, the one that ATTACKED US! I roared, breathing heavily. I didn't realize then that my eyes were glowing a fiery amber, or that my canines had become more pronounced. Scott, somehow, didn't either. It probably helped that he was glaring at the floor. I huffed, taking in several breaths to simply calm myself.

"Don't you get it, Scotty?" I asked, finally calm-ish again. "We're cursed. The full moon, it, it's not just going to change us physically. It's going to affect us mentally. It's gonna be when our bloodlust will be at its peak."

Scot glared at me, seemingly undeterred. "Bloodlust," he deadpanned.

"Yeah, you know...the urge to kill." I said.

"Well, I'm already feeling an urge to kill Stiles."

Scott looked really pissed now. It was time to change tactics. If he wasn't gonna listen to me, then maybe he'd listen to facts? I grabbed the book I was reading and opened it to a bookmarked page.

"Look, listen to this," I started, pointing at the page, "Change can be caused by anger or anything that raises your pulse." I snapped the book shut. "Alright, and I haven't seen anyone raise your pulse the way that Allison does."

I glared at him, trying to make him understand that this date could be disastrous. "You've got to cancel this date." I stated. Then I went for his phone, since he probably wasn't gonna do it himself.

"What are you doing?" Scott asked, trying to retrieve the device.

"Calling Allison and cancelling your date." I told him, flatly.

"No!" Scott shouted, and threw me against the wall. I wasn't expecting the sudden outburst, or the man-handling, and it took me by surprise. I kinda stayed there, dazed. Scott rarely got THAT angry,
but this proved that my theory was correct…

"Scott, STOP!" I yelled, just as he was about to punch me. I jerked and his fist slammed into the wall where my head was a second ago. Luckily, it didn't leave a dent in the plaster.

Scott then pulled back and threw my chair across the room. We were both breathing hard, and flat out glaring at each other. This was... absolutely NOT how I wanted this conversation to go.

Scott backed off a bit, then grabbed the abused chair and set it upright. I remained leaning on the wall, trying to figure out where I went wrong.

"I'm sorry. I have to go." Scott said, grabbing his bag to leave. He then stopped again at the door to look at me. I was... still leaning against the wall. "I'm sorry," he repeated, then left.

Once he was gone, I let out a long exhale threw a mini-fit, knocking some stuff off my desk and kicking the char. Dammit, Scott! He HAD to ruin it all, and possibly end up getting someone killed with his recklessness.

As I was cleaning up the mess, however, I noticed that the back of my chair had long gouges in the fabric - claw marks, and they weren't mine.

I glanced at the door, in the direction Scott had left. This was bad. He was already shifting...

We were screwed. Monumentally and epically screwed.
SCOTT MCCALL, MY BEST FRIEND SINCE FOREVER, WAS MAKING A BIG MISTAKE. A huge, monumentally disastrous mistake. I lay on my bed, staring at the ceiling, hoping that by some miracle, Scott would change his mind. Just a scant twenty minutes ago, Scott and I had a HUGE argument about recent developments. These developments being our newly contracted lycanthropy, and what it meant tonight. Any other time, I’d be thrilled tonight because tonight, Lydia Martin was throwing a party.

Everybody who goes to Beacon Hills High knows about Lydia’s parties. Lydia’s parties are legendary. She comes from a filthy rich family, who own a top tier suburban home as well as a lake house on the preserve. Lydia herself is essentially the Queen of our year, and she’s an exceptional hostess. It’s not like I know her personally though; I’m the one that she pretends doesn’t exist. Doesn’t stop me from admiring her, though.

I sighed, laying on my bed and glaring at the ceiling. Ever since Scott had hit off with Allison, the whole ‘we got bit and are now werewolves’ issue seemed to be thrown to the back of his mind. I guess it was a defence mechanism, ignoring the problem because he didn’t understand.

Now, Scott’s not a bad person. Hell, he’s a better person than I am! He always tries to help, to be good, to do his best in everything. Unfortunately, he’s also got a one-track mind, that’s now been filled with Allison. I’d talked to Allison once, and I can agree that she’s a real nice catch, but Scotty, come on! You’ve got other, more life-threatening problems!

Like a crazy Alpha werewolf, running around and killing people in the dead of night. Like the fact that he’d wolf out tonight as well, and it couldn’t be in front of everyone.

Well, I’d be heading to the party anyways now. Someone had to keep an eye on things, and who better to do that than our resident werewolf, Derek Hale. Yes, I was gonna drag Derek to the party with me. He’d come once I told him about Scott.
I rolled to the side and scowled at my alarm. 6:45 pm. The party was at 7:00, so if I wanted to go with this plan, I had to get moving. I rolled up and stretched, blinking away the weariness that clung to the corners of my eyes. Despite the fact that I should have been exhausted by the earlier blowout, my mind remained alert.

Under the surface, though, I could feel a sort of restless energy gathering. A passion, some anger, but most strongly - a desire to run free. It was the change, and I was beginning to feel the first effects.

I stood up and changed into jeans and a nice-ish dress shirt, mentally preparing myself for the worst-case scenario. Before leaving to Derek’s though, I grabbed a pair of handcuffs as an afterthought. Just in case. Dad wasn’t home yet, so I simply grabbed my keys and locked up, leaving a note saying that I’d be gone for the night. It was Lydia’s party, and as far as he was concerned, I had a monumental crush on Lydia. He wouldn’t question it.

The truth however, is that what I had with Lydia was not a crush per se, it was more like admiration. She was essentially as close to a perfect girl as one could get, but she wasn’t the type of person I’d spend the rest of my life with.

The drive to Derek’s was uneventful, and I parked the jeep right outside the hale property fence. The Hale house looked very somber, and gloomy, and sad. A perfect place to brood, and it fit Derek perfectly. A part of my felt awful for him, having to live in the house where you’re entire family burned to death, trapped inside must be killing him. He also probably felt like it was his fault that they’d died, so the pain was something he deserved. Survivor’s guilt. I felt like the truth was - as in most cases - the exact opposite, because he was supposedly at school when the fire happened. He only survived because he was at school. How the hell would it be his fault?

“Alright, Sourwolf!” I called, knowing that he’d hear me. ”Come on out. We’ve got a problem!”

True to my word, not a minute later Derek opened the front door and made an angry face at me. He hated the nickname, I could tell. He was wearing what looked like workout clothes - a wife beater and sweatpants.

“Don’t look like that,” I snarked. “It’s serious. I wouldn’t get you if it wasn’t an emergency.”

He seemed to accept that and nodded, getting out and walking towards me. He opened the gate and I let myself in.

“Well?” He asked.

“Right, so, y’know how tonight is the full moon,” I began, “and tonight is when we’re gonna turn, but Scott’s not listening and he’s going to a party instead.”

“WHAT!”?

“A party.” I said. “Full of people, and I don’t think he can control himself either. He shredded my chair earlier.”

Derek shook his head violently and grabbed my arm. “What about you?” he asked.

“Okay, I guess. I ended up flashing my eyes at Scot earlier, and my claws came out in the middle of lacrosse practice, but I’m feeling pretty in-control right now.” I replied.

He nodded, then let me go. “That’s good. Now, your friend, we need to stop him.”

“Yes, totally, I agree 100%. That’s why I came to get you.” I deadpanned. “What’s the plan?”
Derek shrugged. “Stop him.”

I rolled my eyes, “How?”

“Oh… somehow.”

I grinned. “Alright, Sourwolf. Let’s go.” I made my way to jeep, but Derek stopped me.

“We’re not going in you Jeep.” He stated. “It’s crap. Come on.” he beckoned me to follow, and headed back towards the house. I followed him, of course, ignoring the jest at the Jeep. For his information, the Jeep was NOT a piece of junk. Well, not entirely.

But, then, “Wait, are we going in your car? Do you even have a car?” I blurted.

Derek smirked. “Of course I do. How do you think I got to Beacon Hills?” Ah, true. I should have realized. My brain’s not working. Come to think of it, it’s often not working around Derek. I blame teenage hormones, and the fact that, objectively speaking, Derek’s pretty damn hot.

But damn, I wasn’t ready for Derek’s car either. He led me around the dying house and to the front where, sitting in the driveway, was a gorgeous shiny black Chevrolet Camaro.

“Oh. Oh, WOW.” I drooled, taking in the sleek lines and spotless finish. “That is one fine ride.”

“No touching,” Derek warned, and headed inside.

“Where are you going?” I called, painfully pulling my gaze from the road candy.

“To get changed. Don’t move.”

Uh, yep. I can do that. I look back at the beautiful car I’d never be able to afford and seat myself on the front steps. Derek Hale, an enigma. He really was the whole trope behind, ‘tall, dark and handsome,’ wasn’t he? The perfect bad boy…

…and oh my god, I think I have a crush. On Derek freaking Hale. This… this, when did this happen? I could have sworn I was straight a week ago. Actually no, not really. Actually, I don’t think I was ever truly straight… but anyways- I, Stiles Stilinski, had a man-crush on Derek Hale, after knowing he existed for like two days.

I’m pretty sure at this point, it was more about his body than his personality. Who’d want to date a Sourwolf? There’s no point in it really. I’m like 99.8% sure that Derek’s straight. This wasn’t anything more than simple teenage infatuation, that’d pass in a week or so.

Telling myself that didn’t stop me from blushing, though. Damn Derek, and damn me for gushing like a teenage girl. I was NOT a teenage girl. I was the manliest of men. Abso-freakin’-lutely masculine.

But wait, he agreed. He’s coming to a party, with me. If he’s driving me there does this mean he’s my date?? Holy crap, I need to get rid of these thoughts, like now. Before Derek comes back, and sees my cherry-red face. I took a few calming breaths, and licked my lips. My throat suddenly felt really dry.

I turned around to the sound of a door closing, and saw Derek. In a pair of quality jeans, a black shirt and his signature leather jacket.

…and all the heat rushed back into my head at the sight of him.
Nobody should be allowed to look that good, and it wasn’t even formalwear! I squashed these thoughts as fast as they popped up because if I thought of Derek in a suit, I’d also have to deal with a hard-on and that’d be impossible to explain without dying of embarrassment. Think of Coach in a thong!

Oh. Wow. Problem solved. That’s an awful image. I’m sorry I sprung it on you. Moving on-

“Oh, h-heyy. Looking goood.” I stuttered, waving. Derek smirked.

“You said it was a party,” He replied.


“It was a gift. From Laura.” He bit out. Ouch, painful memories. Time to redirect.

“Well, you could always re-paint it yellow with black racing stripes and call it Bumblebee.” I joked. This got me a half smile.

“The Bay movies suck.” He informed me. I was honestly surprised he got the reference. Then again, you’d have to live under a rock if you hadn’t heard about transformers, even in passing.

“I gotta agree with you there. Let’s go?” I asked.

“Let’s go.” He answered.

Once Derek unlocked the doors, and we slid in. He was driving, duh, I took the passenger seat. After taking a moment to marvel at the fine piece of craftsmanship that was Derek’s car. Then I clicked my seatbelt into place and looked at him, he nodded back and we were off.

Hopefully, or presence would change the outcome of tonight for the better.

Once I entered the fray and took in the sensations of music, lights, hot bodies and alcohol, I grinned. THIS was a party. The thing was taking place at Lydia’s house, the one with the pool, and the venue was already alight with a vivacious atmosphere. Fairy lights were strung across the ceiling and a DJ pumped music in the backyard. It was only 7:15, but it was already quite crowded.

Two girls dressed in sparkly too-short skirts and off the shoulder tops that clung to their curves winked at us as they passed us by, giggling about one foolish thing or another. I nodded at them, and one of them winked at us. Derek simply huffed, placing a hand on my shoulder.

“Don’t like parties?” I teased.

“I don’t like people.” He growled.

“Come on,” I said, grabbing his hand, “Let’s find you a corner to be all broody in.”

Derek rolled his eyes, but gave no resistance as I dragged him along. I pulled a chair and sat at an abandoned table in a corner of the backyard patio. Derek opted to stand in the shadows. Or try to, which looked kinda ridiculous with the disco light flashing on him every twenty seconds. Tough luck.
To any other person, this seemed like the place to be. Lydia’s house really was beautiful in its architectural design, and the lights were a nice touch. The scene was washed in neon and glitter, people dancing and junk food. I snickered as I watched a drunk dude try to roll an empty beer keg, only for it to fall in the pool, dragging him with it.

The food was arranged as a buffet, and it was all fancy high-end stuff. However, at one corner there was pizza, so I nabbed us a slice or two. When I offered one to Derek, he sniffed it and looked disgusted. He accepted it anyways. If I hadn’t been forcibly trying to subdue my enhanced sense, I would have gotten a headache just as I walked in. For me, even now, the music remained a tad too loud and the smells assaulting my nose made me a little nauseous. Judging by Derek’s discomfort, he felt the same. People, unfortunately, smell kinda gross.

In the centre of it all was the hostess, Lydia Martin, welcoming guests and stealing kisses from Jackson whenever he passed her way. A few of the crazier guys did their own thing, but most people settled for either milling around and chatting, dancing, eating, drinking or passing out in the bushes. I was content to sit back and watch the partygoers do stupid things, but also keep an eye out for Scott and Allison.

Derek and I didn’t talk much. It really was quite loud. We just sorta sat in a comfortable silence, and I continued to eat my free pizza. It was only a scant fifteen minutes before our guests of honor arrived, Scott McCall and Allison - uh, I don’t know her last name.

The duo didn’t notice either of us yet, so they continued doing... Whatever it was they were doing.

“What are you gonna do?” I asked Derek, gesturing to Scott and Allison. He gave me a feral grin.

“Nothing. Watch this.” He said, moving to stand right in Scott’s line of sight. Scott froze the moment he saw Derek. I guess having him stand behind a fire and cloaked in shadows only made Derek look scarier. A dog began barking in the backyard next to us, and Derek silenced it with a look.

Scott looked terrified. Allison noticed, and her face melted into a concerned expression.

“Scott?” She said. “Are you ok?”

“Yeah.” He said quietly. “Everything’s fine.”

He took Alison's hand and led her to the dance floor, trying to ignore Derek. For doing ‘nothing,’ Derek sent a rather certain message. The ‘i am always watching you’ kind. Derek only remained near the fire-pit for a moment more, then moved back to our little corner.

“Dude, did you see Scott's face?” I held my hand up for a high five. “He’s terrified of you.”

“I know,” Derek said. “Hopefully, he’ll leave now.” he ignored the high five though. Boo.

I shook my head “Y’know what, I think I’m gonna go dance. To much energy.”

It was true. I felt like a live wire. Better to get some of it out now, than later. The wolf inside wanted to be free, and I would be lying if I said i wasn’t terrified of what it would do. On a whim, I turned to Derek.

“Wanna come with?” I asked.

“No.” He replied flatly. “Go dance. Keep an eye on your friend.”

Oh well. Sourwolf’s loss. I left my chair and made my way to the dance floor, swaying with the
crowd. The music was peppy and upbeat, with a decent bass. Some kind of house or future bass remix of a pop song with a name I didn’t know.

Then I noticed Jackson pinning Lydia up against a wall, gnawing on her bare shoulder while his hands were busy… elsewhere. Just the sight of it made me want to either kill him or hurl. I felt a slight burning in my eyes and abruptly realized that they were probably glowing gold. I shook my head, clearing the pressure. Shifting here would be disastrous.

It wasn’t easy though, and I allowed my hands to form claws as a planned out Jackson’s murder in my head. Nobody was looking down anyways, so they wouldn’t notice my clawed hands, which had curled into fists, if I kept them at my side.

Lydia was, for some reason, staring right at Scott while Jackson did… what he was doing, and it was making Scott super uncomfortable. The situation made me snicker, and the anger slowly ebbed away. The energy remained, and my attention turned back to the music and hot bodies surrounding me.

Not for long, though.

Lydia began making increasingly lewd moaning noises as Jackson’s hand moved further up, under her skirt, all while staring at Scott like she was challenging him. I heard Scott’s heartbeat pick up as he blushed, and then just kept rising. I stopped dancing and focused my attention directly on Scott, who now had a hand to his temple like he had a bad headache. He backed away from Allison. She paused.

“Scott, what’s wrong?”

“I’ll be right back,” He muttered, and moved to leave. He seemed to have trouble walking straight, like he was dizzy or something. This was bad. I made my way over to him.

“Scott, buddy, what’s wrong?” I asked.

He didn’t seem to hear, but he began to run, frantically pushing through the crowd. Finally, he made it to the door and disappear outside.

I watched where he had left for a while longer before turning around to see Allison’s lost expression. Oh no… Scott, you better thank me later for saving you date! I made a move towards her, but noticed Derek doing the same, and then moved to intercept Derek.

“Go get Scott,” I said, placing a hand on Derek’s forearm. “I got this. I think. I bet she’d feel better getting a drive home from her date's BFF versus a stranger.”

He nodded and tossed me the key to his Camaro.

“Don’t wreck it. This is a one time thing.” He warned. I glanced disbelievingly at the keys.

"Dude, seriously?"

"One. Time. Thing." He glared, then disappeared into the crowd. I studied the keys in awe for a moment before I turned to Allison.

“Sorry about that.” I said. Allison startled, but then calmed once she realized it was me.

“Will he be okay?” She asked.
“Yeah. It looked like an asthma attack. Scotty probably forgot his inhaler in the car.”

She frowned. “That didn’t really look like an asthma attack.”

“No, it was more like the beginning of one. Lack of oxygen leads to lightheadedness which leads to dizziness. Or something like that.” I was totally making this up on the spot. Hopefully, she wouldn’t call me on it.

“Okay…” She said, accepting that as an answer. I relaxed.

“Don’t worry about it. Derek went after him. He’ll be fine.”

“Derek?”

“Uh.. Derek's an old friend of ours. He’s the one who was here earlier. He’ll get Scott home safely.” I explained.

“Um, alright then. Why are you here?” She asked.

“To drive you home.” I waved the keys. “Scott picked you up, right? Also, please don’t be too mad at him. He’s a good person, he just forgets things sometimes.”

She smiled. “I’m not mad, just worried. You’re Stiles?”

“Yeah. Stiles Stilinski. Nice to meet you.”

“Allison Argent. Same.”

We shook hands and exchanged smiles, but inwardly I was panicking. Argent. Her last name was Argent. Argent, as in Silver. She was a silver. Her family were supposedly werewolf hunters.

Scott had a crush on her. Scott was a werewolf.

Her dad could literally kill Scott, and not just for dating his daughter.

What the actual hell. This was like Romeo and Juliet all over again. I felt sick as I realized that both of them might end up dead in the end. Bad omens… I couldn’t let Allison know about any of this, though. Hell, I wasn’t eve sure she was a hunter!

“You recently moved here, right?” I asked, gently leading her away from the party and to where we’d parked the car. Hopefully, I’d be able to weasel out some info without her getting suspicious.

She nodded. “Yeah. My parents… well, dad really - he sells weapons to the government. For some reason, he doesn’t like staying in one place a lot.”

I could imagine why. She’d kinda just confirmed that there was a super high chance her parents were hunters. I didn't have actually proof though, and I wouldn't act on just a half-cooked theory. Either she was a skilled liar, or Allison truly believed her family were arms dealers. I already felt like she was an honest person, so the latter was probably true.

“Oh. Huh, that’s cool.” I replied, trying to cover my panic. “My dad’s the Sheriff. I’ve, um, lived here all my life.”

“You must have a lot of friends then,” She said softly. "Moving a lot means a lot of goodbyes."

“Not really. Just Scott.” I said.
She giggled. “He’s nice.”

“Yeah, but so’s Lydia. Jackson’s a jerk.”

"He seems extremely sure of himself." She admitted.

I opened the door for her, and then got in myself, and then pulled onto the road.

"Still a jerk." I muttered. Allison just shook her head, still smiling. I grinned and turned my eyes to the road. Driving the Camaro was awesome - almost better than my jeep. Almost.

Anyways, Allison and I made simple small talk about school, Beacon Hills in general and Scott. I only realized later that mentioning Scott was a mistake - because I made one comment, and then Allison gushed about him for ten minutes straight. She talked about his adorably floppy hair, cute eyes, handsome jawline (even if it was crooked) and many other qualities that I'm not going to rephrase simply for the sake of my sanity. Scott does the same about Allison, and her beautiful looks, soft hair, enchanting eyes and whatnot. They really were made for each other.

But this romance couldn't last, because Allison came from a hunter family and Scott was a werewolf. It'd end in a disaster, and possibly with someone dead. But maybe…

I thought about it from another angle - iron Scott's angle. For him, after years of being the asthmatic dork who was friends with the spazzy weirdo, he finally found a beautiful girls who saw his best qualities. A girl who, by school hierarchy, was out of his league and still wanted to be friends with him. Allison wasn't a bad person. She was kind and compassionate, and had a sharp wit and intelligent mind. She was quick on the uptake and I got a sense of fierce protectiveness about the things she loves. Her spirit animals would be a lioness. A huntress. But maybe, maybe she could be convinced otherwise. Maybe Scott and Allison and a chance.

I filed these thoughts away once we reached Allison’s home. They all got added to the growing list of things I needed to discuss with Derek.

“Bye,” she said as she stepped out. "Thanks for the ride. Tell Scott I'm not mad at him, okay? She made her way up the porch steps.

"Will do!" I called, watching the door open and shut, then immediately hightailed it out of there.

That house… I only realized once Allison had gotten out of the car, but it was wrong. It smelled like metal and gunpowder and some kind of nauseous plant. I felt like I was suffocating; like I wanted to puke. My wolf wanted OUT. I managed to hold on until I turned the corner of the street and parked the camaro.

I was losing control.

A look in the rear view mirror reflected glowing amber eyes and sharp fangs. I glanced down at my hands and noticed that the claws were coming back…

This couldn't be happening now!

I then looked outside, at the night sky, and saw that unfortunately - yes, this could totally be happening right now. The moon was glaring at me, luminescent and full amongst the sparse clouds. The night seemed wild, and the call was almost irresistible. The wolf wanted out, it wanted to be free. It wanted to run amongst the tees and find its pack. I had to get out of there, out of town, before I ended up having to truly let go.
"C’mon, Stiles. You’ve held it together this long." I muttered as I shifted into drive and revved out of there. The ten minutes to Derek's house aren't gonna kill me.

Hopefully.

You know what would result in my death though? Scratching up Derek’s car with my claws. Yikes.

I swallowed thickly and forced myself to take deep breaths, forced myself to calm dow. It didn't really work, but there was only a little while longer to go. I could already see the edges of town and the road I knew led to the Hale house. The dirt cloud rose up as I drifted through the last corner and onto the dirt road. Hopefully, Derek wouldn't kill me about the dust. At some point during this mad dash, an old lady yelled at me to slow down. I ignored her. I was probably breaking more than a few road laws, anyway.

It felt like forever when I finally pulled up to the gate. Parking the car, I grabbed the handcuffs then jumped the fence and ran inside. I had made it! I let out a victorious howl, feeling the wolf thrum with wild energy. I looked around for Scott and Derek. Hopefully, they hadn't killed each other.

... Nevermind, the house was deserted.

Well shit. This was an unexpected plot twist.

I thought about it for a moment, before I realized I was a huge idiot. It was Scott who ran off first. Derek would be chasing after Scott, and Scott would probably be heading to his house, because that's where he felt safe.

Uuurgh. Why didn’t I realize that? I guess it was good thing that I’d returned Derek’s car though. The wolf in me had no intention of getting into that thing again, despite of how nice a car it was. It wanted to run. I sighed and took off in the direction of Scott’s house. With any luck, I’d make it in time.

It took a mere five minutes to reach Scott’s place, but wolf speed (and holy crap, werewolves can run really fast) plus a multitude of shortcuts means I got there in record time. The McCall's car was back, but I couldn’t smell Melissa - the scents were stale, meaning she wasn’t home. I assumed she was taking graveyard shift at the hospital. Again. Both that woman and my dad worked way too hard.

Regardless, it was around 8:00 now, so I’d only lost about twenty minutes in my (stupidly) mad dash to Derek’s place. The path to the front door actually smelled like Scott - fresh cut grass and mint - but I detected subtle undertones of panic and anger. He’d come through, but this was not good. I couldn’t see any signs of Derek either. Where was Sourwolf when you needed him? I groaned and realized that I’d have to calm Scott down by myself now. Derek was dead when I next saw him... I reached for the door and was was just about to open it, when -

“Stiles.”

I swear I jumped like ten feet in the air, only to turn around and come face to face with Derek freaking Hale.
“Derek!!?” I yelped. “What are you- wait no, stop doing that!! Scaring people. Not nice."

“You should have noticed me.” He scoffed. Was this gonna become a regular thing with us now? I groaned.

“Yeah no, buddy. Not this time. We got problems. Where’ Scott?”

“In his room. He hasn’t left the house.”

Well, that’s a relief.

“How’s he doing?”

Derek frowned. “Not well. Get him to the woods. It's the safest place for a new wolf on their first moon.”

I nodded. “Right. I’ll do that. Hopefully he won't kill me in the process.” Derek narrowed his eyes at my harsh tone.

“Are you in control?” He asked.

“Uh, yeah? For now, maybe! I'd be better if stupid werewolves didn't try to scare the living shit out of me!” I snarled. Wait... I was losing it. My eyes, they were glowing again. And my teeth were pressing sharp points into my lips. I took a deep breath, blinked and let the power dissipate. “Sorry. I’m good now.”

Derek nodded. “I’ll be out here. Hurry.”

Steeling myself, I opened the - surprisingly unlocked - door and let myself in. Scott’s room was upstairs, so that’s where I was heading. Quickly making my way up the stairs, I noticed that one of the spherical structures on the ends of the railing had claw marks on it. Not good.

“Scott?” I called. “Buddy, you there?” I rapped lightly on his room door. I could tell he was in there, if the fear-scent was anything to go by.

“Go away!” was the reply. I wasn’t going to do that.

“’'Scott, it’s me. Let me in. I can help!”

“No... Stiles, you don’t understand, somethings happening to me!”

I rolled my eyes. It was understandable that he was terrified, but I’d been telling him about this all day.

“Scotty, just let me in. I promise that I can help.” I said in what I hoped was a calming tone.

“...”

But then, the door opened a crack. I creeped in, mindful not to make any sudden movements. At this point, instinct would have a strong hold on him, and I didn’t want to set that off. Hell, instinct was telling me to scram. I wouldn’t do that. I refused to let my best friend deal with this alone.

Inside, I found Scott hunched over, sitting in the side of his bed, His face was buried in his clawed hands, and he was breathing heavily. I smelt a faint trace of salt, and realised that Scott was... crying.
“Hey, buddy,” I walked to him and placed a comforting hand on my shoulder. “Look at me.”

He slowly met my eyes, and I saw that his own eyes were bright gold. His face was all wolfed out - with the ridges and fangs and silly sideburns. I flashed my eyes in turn (well, I tried, and I think I succeeded, judging by his reaction) and Scott flinched.

“Woah, none of that. Stop being so afraid.” I said.

“Stiles… how- how do you control it?” He asked, sounding broken.

“Um, well, the thing is… I’m not?” I showed him my own hands, which had shifted into the clawed wolfy ones. “It’s about not being afraid to let go.”

Scott exhaled. “But what if I let go and hurt people?”

“You won’t. I know you - you wouldn’t hurt a spider.”

This got him to smile, even if it looked weird with the fangs.

“That’s debatable,” He jested.

“Well, you gonna admit that werewolves are real now?” I asked.

“Well, I am one, right?”

I nodded. “Yeah, but you still have to say it.”

He looked at me with a ‘what the hell’ expression, but complied anyways. “Werewolves are real. Happy?”

“Totally. Let’s go for a run.”

“In the woods?”

“Yup. Derek said that it’d be the safest place to let your wolf free.”

“Derek? As in Derek Hale?”

“Yeah. He’s a werewolf too.” I explained.

“Wait, but he’s the one who did this to us! I saw him at the party!”

I rolled my eyes. “Scott, I promise you it’s NOT Derek. He’ll explain why. We were at the party in case you lost control.”

“Wait, you were? Are you sure he didn’t turn us?”

“Yeah. Absolutely. Let’s go?” I asked.

“Okay,” He agreed.

I led him downstairs and into the living room, where I grabbed the nearest jacket I could find and handed it to him. He looked at it questioningly.

“Why?” He asked.

“Dude, have you seen your face?” I pointed out.
“Oh. Right.”

He put it on and I pulled the hood up over his face.

“She, not the best, but it’ll do. Don’t look at anyone.”

I didn’t mention that at this point, his face had actually shifted to mostly human. His heart rate was kinda slowing down too. A small part of my mind recognized this as pack. Scott was pack, and pack was home, and home was where one felt safe. Therefore, my wolf felt safe around Scott, and I guess he felt safe around me in turn. Cool.

I opened the door, walked outside, and noticed that Derek was leaning on a nearby tree. He looked up once he registered my presence - which was immediately - and made his way towards us.

“All good?” He asked. Scott and I nodded. “Let’s go.”

And we were off.

The next morning, I awoke to the sounds of birds chirping and the sun hitting me right in the face. Thank goodness it was a Saturday, because I was going right back to bed. No school, no homework, so why the hell wouldn’t I sleep in? I rolled to my side, still with my eyes closed, and attempted to go back to sleep.

Or not, because my brain finally woke up and the events of last night slowly trickled back into my mind's eye. Needless to say, it was... concerning.

...I raced over the uneven terrain, unafraid of stumbling or crashing into trees. The wolf in me had the chase mastered - it was a fine art, the battle of instinct versus self awareness. Losing could mean becoming a mindless beast, and without letting go, losing was inevitable. Everything needed to be in balance. It was what set us apart from the other animals. It didn’t stop us from enjoying the wildness of a full moon night and for that, my wolf was thankful.

Running as a wolf was different. For one, I had four legs to take care of. The perspective also took some getting used to, but I was fast. Really fast. It felt like flying. My nose and ears picked up everything. Well, not everything, but I certainly felt like it. Tonight, I was discovering the forest - out territory - anew.

It’s hard to describe, this sense of freedom. It’s the kind of thing you get when you relinquish control in order to remain yourself. It’s complicated, but also so, so worth it. In short, it was EPIC.

There was nothing overly complicated in what we did with our game - I sometimes chased Scott, and he sometimes chased me. Derek opted to watch. We howled a few times, like a call to arms, then ran with the pack. Our small pack of three, brought together due to unusual circumstances. The alpha was there - his presence, in a tiny blacklog alley of my mind - but I squashed him down, packaged it, and mentally incinerated it. He was NOT my alpha. Our pack had no alpha, and for the moment, that was perfectly fine. For the moment, the wolf and I were in agreement.

It was, in retrospect, kinda like watching a movie. While I simply felt like I was along for the ride, Derek seemed to be fully in control. I guess it came with the experience. Scott was a literal wolf pup,
stopping to smell everything and chase all movement. It was hilarious.

I had shifted into a large gray wolf - we were all bigger than normal wolves - with brown, black and red-ish splotches. Scott was a large dark brown wolf with big eyes and Derek was a huge black wolf with white ear tips. Our eye color was the same as when we were human, save for when we flashed our ‘wolf eyes.’

On the way to the woods, we had filled Scott in on the do’s and don’ts of being a werewolf. I was actually surprised, given his initial rejection, that he accepted the information so readily. Anyways, we all knew about the Alpha now, and the tentative plan was to figure out his identity, then probably kill him. The killing part kinda made me sick to my stomach. When the time came, I resolved to let Derel handle all of that.

Before I forget - a note about werewolf eye color. A standard bitten or born wolf, called ‘betas’ if the were in a pack, had golden eyes. A wolf whose eyes were blue was a wolf who had killed an innocent. Derek’s eyes were blue, and I couldn’t help but wonder who he’d killed. Only alpha wolves have red eyes. They also have some sort of instinctual command over the rest of us that we can’t refuse. Unless, of course, we reject them as an alpha. That’s what I did to the wolf who turned us. The wolf within me did NOT want an unstable Alpha, and I totally agreed.

There were two forms of shift - half, which was the one where we’d remain mostly human, and full, which was when w’d turn into real wolves. Tonight, Derek warned that we’d probably end up going full wolf.

We’d gone to Derek’s house first, where we took our clothes off and shed the human disguise. I hadn’t actually wanted to strip in front of the others, but it was a matter of my dignity, or destroying my clothes - which would lead to even worse embarrassment later. Once I weighed my options, it was a no brainer. Derek said that since our wolves recognized each other as pack - even though our human selves did not (cough, Scott, cough) - the whole personal space thing was kinda skewed. Personal space, or privacy in general, was simply different for wolves. Way more relaxed.

Moving on, our jaunt in the woods was actually going really well. We’d even gotten Derek to join in a game, which he totally won. Were were near the place that the joggers had first found Laura’s body when Derek froze.

“Quiet.” He growled. Scott and I shared a look.

“People?” I asked. Derek didn’t answer, still listening.

“Too late. They’re already here.” He barked, “RUN!” He sprinted deeper into the woods. I followed without a second thought - and not a moment too soon, as an arrow impaled the tree behind where Scott had been moment ago.

We kept running, heading uphill. I yelped as I felt something sharp pierce my thigh, but didn’t stop. By now it was obvious. We were being hunted.

Eventually, we found safety in a thick clump of bushes. I crouched low, panting heavily, belly to the ground and watched as three men came into my field of view. They continued trekking through the ravine below, searching. Scott and Derek were at my sides, and all three of us tried to remain as still as possible.

“I saw two,” one of the men stated.

“Are you sure?” Asked another.
“There were two for sure,” spoke the third man, and as he stepped into a shaft of moonlight, I realized that he looked familiar. I just couldn’t put a claw on it...

The trio surveyed the area once more, but didn’t notice anything.

“They’re gone now.” Sad the third man again. “Let’s go.”

The two others nodded, and then they all started to move to another part of the woods - to the right of us. We remained frozen and without a sound until they were gone and even we couldn’t hear them anymore.

“Who were they?” Asked Scott.

“Hunters.” Derek growled. “They’ve been hunting us for centuries.”

“No duh,” Scott snarled. “We almost got killed!”

Derek paused. “Is it really so bad, Scott?” He asked, “That you can see, hear and smell better? That you’re stronger? The bite is a gift.”

“As if. All it’s done is ruin my life.”

“Stiles gets it.”

I wanted to point out that, no, I only got about 50% but that arrow was starting to really hurt, now that the adrenaline was wearing off. I let out an involuntary whine that didn’t go unnoticed. Derek nosed my side and grimaced.

“This is going to hurt,” He warned, then quickly pulled (read: ripped) it out with his teeth. I yelped when the arrowhead broke skin.

Fucking OUCH!

“Damn... “ I whimpered. He wasn’t kidding. Thankfully, the wound was already beginning to close. Gotta love werewolf healing.

Derek snarled, “You’re lucky it wasn’t poisoned”

I grimaced, trying not to think of the worst-case scenario. Scott also seemed to be deep in thought. The wild atmosphere from earlier was nowhere to be found.

“Let’s go.” Derek said. “Only an hour until sunrise.”

I blinked. It didn’t feel like we’d been out for around eight hours. But Derek was right; the sky was already beginning to get marginally lighter.

With Derek in the lead, we ran to the Hale house, letting the final traces of the night wash away the terror from before. It eventually ended with the three of us curling up in the backyard to get some sleep, in what was undeniably a puppy pile (although Derek would NEVER admit it). My first full moon was terrifying, but now I was safe. I was with pack, and in the heart of our territory. My wolf was content, and I was out like a light the moment my head rested on my forepaws.

...

Well, that was interesting. I was actually surprised that I’d remembered most of it. I rubbed my eye with the palm of my hand. Hopefully, the next full moon run wouldn’t be a lifer death situation. I
mulled over the events for a minute, then my brain caught up with my current clothing situation.

Well, shit. This was embarrassing...

I shifted back when I was sleeping. Shifted back to human.

Meaning that I was naked. In the forest. Even worse, I was in Derek's backyard. I wanted to die.

What even is this hell, masquerading as my life?

Rapidly turning redder by the second, I dashed inside the wreck of a house to find my clothes in a neat pile on the charred couch. They would smell like ash for days, and my nose wrinkled in protest, but clothes! Better than baring my birthday suit. I quickly put them on.

But wait, where were Derek and Scott? There was no way Scott woke up before me, he never does...

“Right here.” Said a voice behind me.

THE HELL??!

I spun around and nailed the owner of said voice in the face with a punch.

Then I blinked and realized that it was Derek. I had punched Derek Hale in the face, right after being naked in his living room a moment before. Why me???

Actually, this might be the karma from hundreds of childhood pranks finally cashing in.

Derek was on the floor, holding his jaw. “Not bad,” he admitted. “But you need to be more self-aware.”

I rolled my eyes. “Where’s Scott?” I asked.

“Still asleep,” He said, gesturing to a pile of brown fur on the porch.

“Last night. The hunters.” I started, getting right to the point.

“Get used to it. I suspect the Argents. We’ll have to be more careful.”

I nodded, but a tiny detail stood out to me. The Argents, Derek had said. Argents, as in Allison Argent. This just confirmed my earlier suspicions - the Argents were a family of hunters, and last night… The leader of the hunter trio, he was familiar. Like I’d seen him somewhere else…


But it fits. It’s like the werewolf thing. Nothing’s really coincidence anymore. I met Derek’s eyes in surprise, and not a small amount of dread. I think, though, that Derek knew exactly what I’d figured out.

"One of the hunters last night -the one who was the leader, I- I think, that was Allison’s father.” I whispered, and Derek nodded in confirmation.

Oh, we were fucked.

Correction - Scott was screwed. We were fucked by association.
… and then another terrifying thought occurred to me.

Who was gonna have to break the news to Scott?
(It's a problem for wolves)

WOVER SAID WOLVES WERE LIGHT SLEEPERS was a liar. Or maybe it's just Scott. Probably just Scott. Regardless, I ended up being the one who had to break the news - that Allison’s dad tried to murder us the other night - to him. I didn’t want to, Derek didn’t want to, but because my inner wolf saw Derek as the de-facto leader of our pack, I couldn’t argue against him either. Believe me, I tried. It ended with me pinned to the wall and a snarling werewolf in my face. I may or may not have called him a coward…

Let's recap: so far, Scott and I went looking for the missing half of a dead body, in the middle of the night. Just by that sentence, I (and you) have already realized that it was a stupid idea. A really, monumentally stupid idea. But it happened, and while we were lost in the middle of the woods, we got bit. By a crazy rabid alpha werewolf.

So we (Scott and I) are werewolves now. It's really not that bad, discounting the 'learning control' stage, the hunters - like the ones who shot an arrow into my thigh last night - and the whole 'lying to your parents' thing. I've got supers-speed, better sight, hearing and smell, claws, fangs and my eyes now glow a badass golden color. It's actually pretty awesome. Don't tell that to Scott - Scott disagrees. Vehemently. He thinks it's a curse.

Oh, and did I mention that Scott somehow ended up dating an ARGENT? A silver. She's descended from a long line of werewolf hunters. It's not the metal silver that kills werewolves, it's the family. Seriously, silver bullets are about as effective as normal bullets - which is not much. Also, I have a suspicion that Allison's dad - Allison is the name of Scott's date - was the one who shot me with a crossbow.

I might've been a wee bit mad at Scott, before. I'm less mad now. But that was what Derek and I were fighting over - who'd have to tell Scott that his girlfriend's dad led a hunt against us last night. Last night was a full moon - and it was awesome, until it turned terrifying.

I rubbed my eyes with my hand and glanced at my watch. Unfortunately, I'd left my phone to charge
at my house last night. Wait - last night was a Friday. I can actually, literally call that crazy night, 'Last Friday Night.'

Ironically enough, that song is also my alarm tone. There's nothing like waking up and hearing, 'barbies on the barbecue' at 6:45 in the morning.

Anyways, It was around 9:00 by now. We were at the old Hale house (which burned when Derek's family was killed in a fire six-ish years ago). Scott was still in wolf form (lucky him - I awoke as a naked human) and still asleep. Well, that's unfair. If we were up, he'd also have to get up. I sat cross legged in front of him and poked at his furry form. He growled. I poked him again, and was rewarded with an even bigger growl.

“Nice try, Scotty.” I said, “But that’s nothing compared to Derek. Get up, up!” I shook him. He whined - five more minutes mom - so I tapped his snout. He sneezed, then glared at me the best he could, as a wolf. It looked hilarious. His glare made him look like he was actually trying to sneeze. I rolled my eyes, unable to keep the grin off my face. “Yeah, sorry. It’s time to get up, and get you home. You’re still a wolf, by the way.” I tapped his forehead and leaned back.

His eyes widened as he realised where he was. He looked at me questioningly, and I couldn’t understand what he was asking so I just nodded. The answer was probably a yes. Scott then got to his feet, and padded over to where his clothes were, picked them up, and looked at me again. I gesture to the washroom - or rather, what was the washroom. At least it had a fairly intact door. He went inside and I close the door behind him.

Derek was leaning against the wall, watching our conversation with a raised eyebrow.

“What?” I asked. He just snickered, then looked in the direction Scott had left, then back at me, and made a 'really?' face. I glared. “I'm not telling him NOW.” I explained. “I'll tell him once he’s calmed down.”

“He seems pretty calm to me,” Derek said.

“Yeah, no. Last night was traumatizing. You might be fine, but normal people need time to process things.”

“What about you?”

“What about me?”

“You seem fine.”

“Yeah, AFTER my little freak out earlier. Sorry about that, by the way.” I rubbed the back of my neck. Derek just huffed and turned away. Nobody wanted to be reminded of how I had woken up, outside, NOT as a wolf, then run naked into the house looking for my clothes. That was horrifying, embarrassingly so for me and probably just plain horrifying for Derek. Nice going, Stiles. Way to ruin a conversation.

An uncomfortable silence descended on the room until Scott finally came out of the 'washroom,' tugging on the hem of his shirt.

“What did I miss?” He asked.

“Nothing!” I said, quickly. Then I caught a glance at my watch and groaned as I realized that our parents would be up by now, and wondering where we were. Uh-oh. “Holy crap -! We need to get home!” I grabbed Scott and dragged him out the door. Derek blinked and moved out of my way.
“The time,” I explained, waving my watch in front of his face.

Derek nodded. “Your Jeep is still here.” He said.

“Hey!” Scott made a noise of protest once he realized I was pulling him, but was either not awake yet or too surprised to resist. Lucky for me actually, since Scott’s physically stronger. Always was. If he truly wanted to resist, I wouldn’t be able to move him. I led him to where I’d parked the jeep last night. The forest looked wonderful in the dawn sunshine. A faint frost glimmered in the shadows, but the rest of the area was alight in rich morning sunlight. The Hale house didn’t even look so beaten up today.

“Bye, Derek,” I called over my shoulder as I leapt over the porch steps, “and thanks!” Derek looked confused for some reason, but still waved from the doorway, seeming amused at my frantic rush to get home. Stupid Sourwolf.


“Sorry. Can’t.” I said, unlocking the Jeep's doors and sitting in the driver's seat. Whoooo, baby. I have missed you, I thought as I slid an appreciative hand over the worn dash. I turned back to Scott. “We’re already pretty late. Think of an excuse on the way home.”

Scott winced. “Right. I forgot. Can’t I say I went to your house after the party?” He asked. I shook my head as I started the Jeep and backed out onto the dirt road.

“Yeah, but I wasn’t at my house yesterday. The only way this would work is if I say I was at your house, you say you were at my house, and hopefully our parents didn’t bother asking each other or we are screwed.”

“Uh, yeah. Let’s do that.” He agreed.

I rolled my eyes. “Okay. But at the party yesterday night,” I began. Scott groaned and hit the back of his head on the seat.

“Alison probably hates me.” He sighed. I grinned.

“Actually, no, she doesn’t. I told her that you were beginning to have an asthma attack and that you forgot your inhaler in the car.” I told him.

Scott looked relieved. “Are you sure?”

I nodded, keeping my eyes on the trees blurring by. “Yeah. Don’t worry about it. I don’t think anyone can actually hate you. You might wanna apologise to her today, just in case.”

“Thanks man, I owe you one.”

I grinned. “You owe me way more than one, Scotty.” He rolled his eyes and shoved my shoulder playfully.

“Last night was a mess.” he mused.

“Well, I thought it was pretty fun until the hunters showed up.” I said. By now, we had reached the end of the dirt road and rolled onto smooth, smooth pavement.

“Really, Stiles? Fun? We could have been killed.” Scott said, sounding hurt. “Don’t you want to find a way to fix this?”
I narrowed my eyes. “What’s there to fix?” I asked. In my opinion, this werewolf thing was totally
total killer (pun intended). “You’re the one who wanted a little excitement around here.”

Scott shook his head. “Yeah, but I didn’t mean the life-threatening kind.”

I scowled. Alright. He had a point, but if we didn’t cause any trouble, then the hunters wouldn’t
come after us. Derek said they had a code. The killer alpha broke the code; It was all his fault, really.
Simple.

“Scott, I know it looks bad now,” I started, “But it’ll get better. We’ll figure out how to control this. I
mean, look at Derek - he’s not a crazy rabid monster. That’s something else.”

He sighed. “Alright. I just don’t like lying to everyone else.” His statement brought to mind another
thing I should have told him - like the fact that his girlfriend's dad tried to kill us - but I didn’t want to
kill his relatively good mood right now. It left a sour taste in my mouth because pack shouldn’t lie to
each other, even lies of omission. I squashed the feeling, boxed it up and banished it.

“But, look at the upsides - you’re a lacrosse star now! Maybe get voted as MVP this year?” I jested,
elbowing him in the ribs after I took a left turn. The streetlight turned red and I stopped.

Scott laughed, “Alright, true.” He agreed. “About last night, I’m.. sorry I didn’t listen.” He looked
down.

“It’s fine. You were scared, I was scared and Derek had no idea what to do.” I said. “It’s the full
moon. I hear it makes people do crazy things.”

Scott grinned. “Gee, Stiles, what big teeth you have.” he teased.

“The better to eat your lunch with!” I growled, and tried to tickle him once I’d parked at his house.
He laughed as I succeeded in my mission, then scrambled out of the car when his mom called his
name. I leaned out the window to get a better look, then immediately felt sorry for Scott.

Melissa looked pissed. She stood on the front step, arms cross and more terrifying that Darth Vader
right now. I just smiled and waved and peeled outta there. Sorry, bro. You’re on your own!

The drive to my own house was way too short. I knew I’d be in trouble the moment I noticed the
police cruiser parked in the driveway. Dad wasn’t sheriff for his good looks - he probably already
suspected something was up. Hopefully, I’d be able convince him well enough.

I opened the front door and slowly creeped inside. My dad’s scent - of cinnamon, coffee, paper and
gunmetal - lingered in the foyer. Dad was home. That much was certain. I could hear his breathing
elsewhere, and hopefully I’d be able to sneak upstairs without him knowing. I turned the corner to
the staircase and… ran right into the one person I was avoiding.

“Stiles…” My dad scowled.

“Hi, dad. Uh, good to see you too.” I said.

“Where were you?” He demanded, getting right to the point. I grimaced. Let’s see if I’ve gotten any
better at lying:

“Um, right. So,” I began, “there was a party, and some people snuck in alcohol, and we might’ve gotten a little bit drunk.”

He glared at me. “You got drunk?” was the flat statement.

“Yeah? I’m really sorry about it. We had NO IDEA there was even alcohol in the punch. Lydia’s parties don’t usually have alcohol.” I rested my hand on my temple, trying to pretend like I had a hangover. At least my voice sounded sufficiently tired.

Dad nodded. “That’s true. We don’t usually get called for a house party.”

Oh. Well, this was new. “What happened?” I asked. “Scott had to leave early because he forgot his inhaler. I ended up having to drive his date home. We crashed at Scott’s place for the night.”

Dad sighed. “I’ll tell you. Did you eat breakfast yet?”

I shook my head. Then I caught whiff of something that definitely smelled like fast food. “Don’t tell me you got take out, for breakfast.” Dad scowled. Busted. When he didn't answer, I raised a questioning eyebrow.

“Subway’s healthy.” He argued. I just rolled my eyes.

“Sure,” I muttered, taking a seat at the table and accepting the remaining sandwich. Once it was unwrapped and I had swallowed my first bite, I turned back to Dad. “Okay, so what happened?” I asked.

“We got an anonymous tip from someone in the neighbourhood, at around seven forty-five, about a party getting a little crazy. Turns out that there was alcohol there. We still have no idea who managed to sneak it in, but it’s not my case.” He explained. He then spoke about stupid teenagers doing stupid things and how he wished their parents kept a better eye on them.

I nodded, pretending to listen. But internally, my mind was on full overdrive. What are the chances, of my excuse coincidentally aligning with something that actually happened once we left? Almost none, and I was beginning to lose faith in coincidences after all the insane non-coincidence situations in my life. Once, maybe chance, Twice? Then coincidence. The times? Now that was a conspiracy.

Thankfully, it seemed like dad had no problem believing my lie. The whole alcohol incident helped, I bet. Dad also rambled about how he Laura Hale murder case wasn’t moving along, at all. They had no witnesses, and no leads to where the other half of the body was. Again, I felt bad about having to lie, both directly and by omission, but I deleted the feeling. I was doing this to keep both of us safe. Me, from the hunters. Dad, from us.

Later, while adding more pins and photos to my evidence board, I’d pause for a moment when a suspicious thought entered my mind. Seven forty-five. Dad had said that the anonymous tip had called around 7:45 on that Friday night. That matched exactly with the time I dropped Allison off - which was around 7:35-ish. Could Allison's dad have been the one?

Nah. Coincidence.

But given all the other crazy shit that’s happened, is coincidence even a thing anymore?
It was around late afternoon when Derek showed up in my window - again - and told me to come to his place. I made a mental note to get his phone number, if he had one, because somebody was going to notice if he kept going through my window. The neighbours were nosy.

I grabbed the same red hoodie I wore the night I got bit - the blood actually hadn’t really stained anything since the hoodie was blood red to begin with, and I had already sewn up the bite mark. It was my nicest hoodie, and I really didn’t want to throw it out. One: because sentimental value, and two: I was broke. I couldn’t buy another one right away.

Yeah, I guess it was mainly because I was broke. Also, my dad would ask questions if I suddenly stopped wearing that red hoodie because I wear it everywhere. At all stages of my life, I had at least one blood-red hoodie. Kinda morbid that my favorite red ended up matching the color of my blood. Ew.

Anyways, I raced downstairs and grabbed my keys off the wall. My dad looked up from the table, where he was going over some files (I suspect it’s just police paperwork).

“Where are you going?” He asked.

“Out,” I said, waving a hand at the door. “With Scott. It’s a project.” He gave me a ‘I-don’t-believe-you’ look.

“Stay out of trouble,” He warned.

“Yeah. See you!” I called as I left the house and hopped in the jeep. Derek tapped on the passenger side window. I rolled my eyes and opened the door for him.

“Let’s go get Scott,” I said, starting the car. Derek shook his head.

“Scott’s not home.” He said.

“Huh. Why?” I asked. Scott hadn’t said anything about being busy. Derek shrugged. I huffed and pulled out my phone, calling him. It went straight to voicemail. I narrowed my eyes at the device and tried text messages. There was one new message from Scott - “Srry. Im grounded. Can’t come tomrwr.” I winced at his text-speak. It was atrocious. I showed the message to Derek and he made a dismissive gesture.

“I’ll get to him later,” he told me.

“For some reason, that’s zero percent actually reassuring. Also, how did you know? Are you stalking him to?” I asked. The non-answer I got was answer enough. “…. Oh my god, you are totally stalking him too. Am I not good enough for you, Sourwolf?”

He rolled his eyes.

"Okay, but can I get your phone number? Assuming you have a phone."

Derek looked offended. "Of course I have a phone. Why do you need my number?"

"So you can text me, instead of having to climb up to my window. The neighbours are gonna tell my
He eyed me suspiciously, but held out a hand. I fumbled my phone out of my pocket and handed it to him. He made a new contact and set his number, then handed the phone right back to me. Thankfully, it was a red light at the intersection so I had enough time to change his contact name to 'Sourwolf' and send him a text. His phone 'ping' -ed and he checked the text. It read: Hi stalkerwolf, its meeeeee ~

Derek glared at me with a raised eyebrow. He looked really stupid. I snickered.

"What?" I said when he continued to stare at me. "You know you love me." I winked.

Derek just huffed and glared at his window. “Just drive,” He muttered. I grinned and did just that.

It wasn’t long before we pulled into the Hale property. The fence was open this time, but Derek closed it as soon as I parked the Jeep.

“So…” I began, “What are we doing?”

Derek looked at me like it was obvious. It probably should have been. “I’m teaching you how to fight,” He stated. I blinked.

“I know how to fight.” I said. Of course I did - I was the 'Sheriff’s kid. Dad made sure I knew basic self defense. Derek just raised an eyebrow.

“Really?” He drawled. I glared. Derek didn’t answer, but walked behind the ruined house and into the backyard area. I followed. He stopped in the middle of the field. “Why don’t you show me.” He said, gesturing to the grass. I stopped about two meters in front of him and put my hands on my hips.

“Show you what?” I asked, looking around.

Derek smiled, all teeth. “What you can do. Attack me.”

I paused. “Seriously?”

“Just do it.”

Well, okay. Fine. I dashed at him and threw a jab. He parried, grabbed my elbow and did an over-the-shoulder throw. I landed on the ground, on my back, with the air knocked out of me. Derk just leaned over and grinned at me. Again, taking pleasure in my pain. I scowled.

The second time I rushed at him, I managed to parry one of his punches before he grabbed my arm and pinned me using a backwards throw.

“That was pathetic.” He deadpanned. “You can do better.”

I wanted to punch him, so bad, right then. Until I understood what he meant - that time I ran at him, I was prepared with what I could do as a human. Derek just used his wolf speed on me. The truth is, I could do better - I had super speed, reflexes, strength and freakin’ claws. Yeah, I could do better. I just had to stop fighting as a human. I nodded and got back on to my feet. Third time’s the charm.

This time, I unlocked my claws and let my fangs show. Derek just smiled and made a ‘come-at-me’ motion. I didn't. Not right away. I circled him first, letting the wolf take the reins, because I was at a disadvantage. Instinct was what I needed to rely on. When I thought I had a good idea of what I
could do, from this angle, that would actually work, I charged.

Derek was prepared. Even before I got to prepare a strike, he had a clawed hand ready and aimed at my face. I simultaneously parried the blow and ducked, sliding bending a knee and kicking my foot out. Derek brought his arm up to block as I kicked his shoulder with a roundhouse. He tried to grab the limb, but I immediately rolled forward and got my foot free. I got back to my feet, realized that Derek was right there and tried to claw his stomach. He twisted out of the way. We both pause as we reset out footwork, then I rushed him again. This time, I attacked first and tried to claw his face. He blocked and tried to grab my arm. I twisted the limb out of his reach and followed through by raking the other side of his head. He caught that too. I turned around and elbowed him with my free hand, then tried to follow through with a spinning knee. The elbow connected, strongly, but he grabbed my knee and pushed me back. I tried to keep my balance. I failed. Derek knew this, and used the advantage of grabbing onto the leg that was still up and twisting it so that when I landed on the ground it was on my stomach. He followed through with a palm to m back, leaving me breathless.

I huffed and tried to ignore my protesting ribs. The whole thing lasted maybe less than thirty seconds but Derek hit HARD. I looked up, and was surprised to see him actually holding out a hand. I grabbed it and he pulled me to my feet.

“Not bad.” He said. “You telegraph your moves too much. Try sticking to the basics. Move faster. You need work. We have time.”

I nodded. “Thanks, I think” He walked back to the center of the yard and looked at me. This was actually…. Kinda fun. Exciting. Thrilling. Like the run through the woods. The wolf wanted in on the action, the rush, the challenge. The wolf inside craved it.

“Again.” Derek commanded. I took a deep breath. With a feral grin, I attacked, claws ready.

The following Monday, I was saw Scott apologized to Allison about Friday. Honestly, I wanted to run to him and tell him about my suspicions on her father, wanted to scream in his face, “NO! THIS IS A BAD IDEA - YOU’RE A WEREWOLF DATING AN ARGENT!” But I didn’t. Of course I didn’t - it’s Scott’s life, not mine.

Allison had come up to him with a shy smile. “Hey,” She said.

“Allison,” Scott had grinned. “Look, I wanted to apologize about Friday night…”

Allison shook her head. “It’s fine,” She said, placing a comforting hand on his forearm. “Your friend Stiles? He told my everything.”

“Allison,” I could feel Scott’s heartbeat rising.

“Really?” I said.

Yeah, he said you had to run home to get you inhaler. Are you Okay? That asthma attack looked really bad.”

Well, she bought it. Time for me to leave. I grabbed my book bag, which was resting against the wall, and headed to second period, tossing an Orange Crush can in the trash as I left.

Second period - for me, anyways - was history. History isn’t boring, in theory. In fact, it’s one of my
favorite subjects. Learning about who the people of the past were and what led them to make the choices they made actually is worth listening to. My favorite thing about history, however, is all the freakin’ conspiracy theories. What the government tells us is extremely paraphrased at best, and by now nobody really knows the truth. Was J.F.K’s death really a terrorist assassination or a government plot to place another into power because they could not allow such an influential man remain unchecked?

Next, there’s all those unsolved police cases, even in our own Beacon Hills. It’s not history, per se, but since dad doesn’t let me access files on current cases, the past unsolved ones are what I gotta make do with. Even then, the info is faulty at best, but it keeps things interesting. Solving cases is like my hobby.

However, regardless of how engaging a subject may be, the lesson depend on the teacher. This teacher, well, sucked. She wasn’t even remotely interested in the subject! All she did was put on a powerpoint and then go on her phone! Last month of the year, sure, I’d understand. But on the third week? Unacceptable. It’s even worse for my ADHD wired mind because if the lesson is uninteresting, I’ll start thinking on a tangent and lose focus, completely.

This is why I like when teachers set up a homework chart or something of the like. This way, I can do all the required work before class and zone out when my mind quits in the middle of a lesson without falling behind. It’s how I manage to keep an A average, even with my spastic study patterns.

Still, this class… I just can’t. Who freaking’ cares about what personal hygiene was like during the second world war? Not me. Well, yes me - but later. When I’m not thinking about how to find out the identity of a murderer. I sighed, resting my head in my palms. Forty-five minutes to go…

The rest of the day dragged along in a similar fashion, with the teachers droning on and me zoning out. Finally, it was time for after-school lacrosse practice. I was so done with learning by now. The day really couldn’t end fast enough.

I walked into the locker room and made my way over to Scott. The other team members were busy getting changed.

“Hey,” I said. “Did you apologize to Allison?” Yes, I overheard their conversation earlier. Scott didn’t need to know that.

“Yeah,” He said, only half paying attention. I watched as he re-tested the strings on his lacrosse stick.

“Did she give you a second chance?”

“Yeah.”

I grinned and clapped his back. “Everything’s good, then! Why’re you so glum?”

“No.” Scott huffed. I paused my victory dance.

“No?”
“You remember the hunters? Her dad is one of them.” He said. I froze. Well, that’s one secret brought to light. I guess not telling Scott right away didn’t even matter.

“Her dad?” I said, disbelievingly. Had to keep up the act after all.

“Yeah. He shot you…” Scott muttered, dazed.

“Allison’s dad.” I repeated, trying not to panic since my brain finally started working and the thoughts of - yay! Confirmation - but also - no! Scotty, break up with her - and the various horrible ways this could end became clear.

“With a crossbow,” Scott confirmed, still out of it. I shook my head - stop, STOP! - there was no reason to panic over something I’d basically already known was true.

“Her dad?” I repeated, trying to get Scott out of dreamland. It worked


I rolled my eyes and patted him on the cheek with my gloved hand.

“Hey,” I said, trying to sound soothing. “Scott, breath. He didn’t notice you or anything, right? We were wolves.”

“Uh. Right, no. I don’t think so.”

All of a sudden, a brilliant thought occurred to me. Scott could find out, for sure, if Allison was a hunter! Somehow…

“Wait, does she know about him?” I asked. Scott froze.

“I don’t know. What if she does!!?” He seemed to be going in full panic mode. Uh-oh. I looked around and saw that most of the other guys had already left for practice.

“Scott,” I said, grabbing his shoulders. “Okay, um…” I grabbed the gear that was still on the ground. “Look, take this and,” I paused. And what? “Focus on lacrosse. Yeah, it’s all about lacrosse now. Got it?” I shoved the stuff at him. Scott nodded, grabbed the gear and went of to change.

I leaned against a locked and let out a long breath, slowly sinking to the ground. Only Scott, I thought, would end up a werewolf and end up dating the princess of a hunter family, whose dad wants us dead, and has already shot me.

When I finally got onto the field, Coach was already organizing the first line of scrimmages. Some kids were still doing warmup, and I tugged on a green pinnie and went to join them.

“Jackson!” Coach yelled after a piercing whistle shriek. “Take a long stick today.”

I watched Jackson grab a goalie stick. He looked… determined. This was bad, for us. I mean, he already thought we were on steroids, and I didn’t want to give him any more reason to believe that ridiculous theory.

But I also wanted to put him in his place. Badly.

Coach got us to line up in front of the net, with Jackson in goal. This exercise was simple - shoot at the net, try to get the ball past Jackass. 80% will fail, because I admit that Jackson’s actually good at
lacrosse. He’s have to be, to make team captain. Look, I might really, really hate the guy but that
doesn’t mean I can’t respect his talents. Only his personality.

I watched as they went through the line. The first guy scored, and so did Danny (but this I suspect is
because Jackass and Danny are BFF’s and Jackass probably let the ball through), but that was it.
Everyone else’s was either a miss or caught. Eventually it got to Scott, who seemed to be in
dreamland. Again.

“McCall, what are you waiting for??” Coach called, blowing his whistle (and killing my ears, again).
At least it snapped Scott out of it. I watched carefully as Scott moved in front of the net and dashed at
Jackson. He mustn’t have been paying attention or something because Jackass easily bodychecked
him. Scott fell to the ground, but got to his feet quickly.

“‘You sure you still want to be first line McCall?” Jackson sneered. Scott huffed, glaring at Jackson.

“My grandmother could move faster than that. You think you could move faster than the lifeless
corpse of my dead grandmother?” Coach jested. This was not good. I heard Scott’s heartbeat pick
up.

“Yes, Coach. I can.” Scott grit out through clenched teeth. I bit my lip in worry. If Scott lost his cool
now, we were all done for.

“Then do it again!” coach bellowed, turning to the rest of us. “McCall’s going to do it again!
McCall’s going to do it again!”

I saw as Scott bared his teeth at Jackson and sped towards the net, inhumanly fast. He loaded the
strike and put all his anger into the shot. The ball sailed true and hit Jackson on the shoulder. Then,
THEN, Jackass freaking fell over, backwards, into the net. It was beautiful, and I’d have hugged
Scott if he hadn’t run away. I watched him head in the direction of the bleachers. Not good. I ran
after him.

“Scott, man, you okay?” I asked, although I was pretty sure he wasn’t.

“I can’t control is, Stiles.” Scott growled. Shit.

“Oh no, dammit! Not here,” I looked back to check if anybody was watching us, but they all seemed
to be content watching Jackass taking out his anger on some other poor goalie. I grabbed Scott’s
shoulder and led him to the locker room. If I was paying any less attention to Scott, I might’ve
noticed Derek watching us from the trees.

But I didn’t. I just somehow got him into the locker room and quickly shut the door behind us. Scott
sat down, but he was breathing heavily. His pulse was through the roof, and I could see the glowing
eyes and fangs emerge. I took a breath for courage and placed a hand on his shoulder again.
Hopefully he wouldn’t bite it off.

“Scott, breathe.” I said. He turned to me and snarled.

“Get away from me!” He growled. He shoved me across the room. I tripped over one of the benches.
Scott literally pounced on me and was inches away from biting my face off before I kicked him in
the chest, as hard as I could, and sent him flying.

I let my own eyes and claws appear as Scott stood up and growled a challenge. He leapt at me again,
but I ducked and swiped his torso. He tried to claw my face, undeterred, and I raked his arm and
sidekicked him. Scott landed on the floor, but one of his hands managed to scratch my cheek. I
heaved several deep, uneven breaths and watched Scott, still weary of an unexpected attack. Scott
however, seemed to have finally come to his senses.


“You tried to kill me,” I told him, flatly.

“What?”

“Yeah. When you attacked, my wolf also wanted to kill you.”

“Wha- But how? Why?” He said, disbelieving.

“Remember what I tried to tell you on Friday? About pulses, and what happens with them rising? It was your anger. It’s a trigger. You got so angry out there on the field that you triggered your change.” I said. “And, then, when you attacked me, I was scared enough to wolf out myself and go at you.” I grimaced and gestured to his arm. It was already healing. “Sorry about that. I’ve been trying to stay calm all day. I kinda snapped when you threw me across the room.”

Scott glanced at his arm-the cuts was almost gone - then turned back to me. He seemed kinda dazed. “But… it’s Lacrosse.” He said. “It’s a pretty violent game, if you hadn’t noticed.”

“Yes.” I deadpanned. “It’s violent, and it’s going to become deadly if either of us loses control out there, on the field, and SLAUGHTERS all the players. You want to be the one responsible for killing your teammates? Because losing control on the field seems to be becoming a trend. You want to put our lives in danger, even more than they already are? Because I DON’T.” By the time I finished, I was actually growling in my frustration. Scott looked like I had just killed his unicorn.

“But I’m first line,” He protested. I met his sad brown eyes with my own frustrated, glowing, amber ones.

“Sorry buddy,” I said, and Scott hung his head as the weight of the situation finally got to him. I really wish I didn’t have to kill his dream, but until he learned better control, lacrosse was a no. “Not anymore.”

‘‘Hey,” I said as I watched his face come onto focus.

“Hey. What’s the news?” He asked. I winced.

Later that night, I set up Skype and sent a message to Scott. I touched my cheek as I waited. The wound had been hell to explain to my dad, but I managed with ‘someone’s stick went flying and hit me in the face.’ It was only a faint scar, now. I glanced at my hands, noting how raw my fingers looked. I’d scrubbed them like crazy to get the scent of Scott’s blood gone from underneath my claws. I… felt horrible, actually. Scott was my best friend, and if I had lost control, I might’ve actually killed him. I was also terrified - because while I had accepted the wolf, and we were learning to work in tandem, Scott hadn’t. He repressed it, which only led to a bigger explosion once the wolf finally got free.

Scott was taking forever, so I sent another message. It didn’t take long for him to accept the video chat, this time.

“Hey,” I said as I watched his face came onto focus.

“‘Hey. What’s the news?’” He asked. I winced.
“Well, it’s bad. Jackson’s got a separated shoulder.” I told him.

“Because of me?” He said, eyes wide.

“No, because he’s a tool.” I scoffed. Honestly, Jackass had it coming. He wasn’t getting any sympathy from me, Scott’s fault or not.

“Is he gonna play?”

I shook my head. “They don’t know yet. So, it looks like everyone’s counting on you for Saturday.” Scott’s eyes widened, then he bit his lip and looked pensive. I was about to tell him that he couldn’t when I noticed a dark shape moving behind him. What the-? Oh god, it looked like someone else was in the room!

The thing attacked before I could warn him. Unfortunately, I realized only after it grabbed Scott that the ‘thing’ was Derek, and he’d somehow gotten into Scott’s room. Probably through the window, the stalker.

From what I could see, Derek had tripped Scott, and then pinned him against the wall in a very uncomfortable way. They were off screen, but I could see some of Derek’s leg and hear the scuffle.

“I saw you on the field!” Derek growled. I jerked, then brought a hand to my mouth as I realised that Derek had been stalking us. Again. Why hadn’t I noticed?

“What are you talking about?” Scott gasped, still fighting to free himself. Derek kept him against the wall.

“You shifted in front of them! Everyone! And then you made Stiles shift too,” Derek snarled. “Do you realize how damn lucky you are that you were able to snap out of it before someone came along?! If they find out about you, then they find about me, about all of us! Then it’s not just the hunters after us, it’ll be everyone.” He finished his rant and shoved Scott, hard, but let go after that.

“No-one saw anything! We made sure, I swear!” Scott said, rubbing his neck.

“Woah, HEY! Derek, dude, calm the fuck down!” I yelled, hoping he’d hear. Derek didn’t acknowledge it, but he let out a breath and stepped back, giving Scott some room. He then turned to the computer and glared at me. I glared right back through the screen. Derek growled and turned back to Scott.

“Yeah and no one will. Because if you try and play that game on Saturday then I’ll personally kill you!” He warned, then leapt out the window and into the night.

“Hey, Scott!” I called. “Are you okay?” I watched as he turned back to the computer and took a seat, his heart still racing.

“Yeah,” he said. “I’m fine, Stiles.” I looked in the direction Derek had left and rolled my eyes.

“I heard everything. Nice guy. He really knows how to make new werewolves feel welcomed.” I snarked. Derek was… well, he was being Derek. I’m not sure if he’s had practice with any other emotions except anger and angst since the fire. I watched as Scott ran a hand over his face. I felt just as bad as he looked - which was, quite frankly, plain awful.

One thing was for sure: We were in deep shit.
THE NEXT DAY, AT SCHOOL, IT ALL SEEMED TO GET EVEN WORSE. First of all, coach wasn’t letting Scott pull out of the game - and honestly, ‘anger management issues’ was a stupid excuse, especially for lacrosse when aggression was a good thing for most players. If only Scott had gone with the ‘afraid’ excuse Coach assumed.

I was frustrated. Alright, so claiming to be afraid might kill Scott’s reputation with the rest of the team, but then at least he might’ve been excused from the game. Unfortunately, Scott picked not looking like a pansy over stopping a possible murder spree.

Secondly, I saw (read over his shoulder) a text from Scott’s mom telling him that she’d taken a saturday off work so she could come and watch him play. I wanted to bang my head on a locker - there go all chances of him not playing. The best we could do now - and this is plan ‘b’ for backup - is train Scott so he learned how to control the shift while on the field.

Then I overheard Lydia threatening him to ruin things between Scott and Allison if Scott didn’t play, since it was his fault that Jackson was out of commission anyways. Well, I guess we’re going with plan b, then. No sane person would go against Lydia because she actually goes through with her threats. All the way. It’s terrifying.

Anyways, it was the mid-period break between third and fourth period when I saw my dad in the halls. It wasn’t unusual to see him at school, since he was sheriff, and this was a small town, and sometimes the police force will come and do ‘drug safety’ seminars and the like. This time, I was willing to bet my dad’s visit had something to do with Laura’s murder. The police still hadn’t found anything.

I turned and followed Dad, grabbing Scott as I passed him in front of his locker.

“What?” He asked, tiredly. I pulled him along and stopped behind a corner.

“Come here. Listen to what they’re saying,” I said, pointing at where my Dad and the principal were
talking. “You can hear them, right?” Scott nodded and moved in front of me, carefully watching the conversation. After a while, he turned back to me.

“Yeah. They’re putting a curfew because of the body.” Scott said. I nodded. That was pretty much what I’d picked up as well.

I sighed. “It’s kinda sad that the police have no idea about what’s really going on. I don’t want them going after the beast either, because they don’t know how to deal with rabid werewolves.” I rubbed my nose - a nervous tick.

“Yeah,” Scott agreed. “We can’t really tell them about any of this.” Then an idea occurred to me…

“But wait - we can do something.” I began. Scott turned to me in confusion.

“Like what?”

“We can find the other half of the body! I’ll even ask Derek to help.” I said, waving my hands. Scott seemed uninterested, though. He’d caught sight of Allison. I moved away as he went towards her, sticking my hands up in an ‘I surrender’ gesture. Ever since the two of them found each other, everything else seemed to fade away into the background.

Of course, I still hung around to listen to my dad. They were talking more about the 9:00 curfew, and how the police suspected the killer was still around, they still hadn’t found the other half of the body, etc.. Since it was stuff I’d already known, I tuned it out and found myself drawn back to Scott and Allison’s conversation.

“Like who?” Allison was asking.

“Like Derek,” Scott replied. I raised an eyebrow and pretended to be checking my Instagram - which was equal parts conspiracy theories and fluffy dog pictures (nobody follows me... well, 187 people do, but that's still pretty close to nobody)

“Your friend?” She frowned.

“He’s not my friend,” Scott huffed. “How much did you talk about? What did he say? What did you say?”

Allison shifted uncomfortably. “I- better get to class. I have to go.” She gathered her things and turned away.

“Allison!” Scott called. She turned back and gave an apologetic wave.

“Sorry, Scott. I have to go.” She said, then walked away. Just as she left, the bell for the final period rang and I speed walked (read: ran) through the halls to class - which was Science. Well, biology. Bio wasn’t too bad this year. The teacher was... decent, and the material just vaulted off what I already knew.

Currently, we were covering simple multicellular organisms and evolution and mitosis. Really basic stuff, honestly. I opened my binder and pulled out my notes, then checked my phone. No new notifications. Sighing, and mentally congratulating myself for picking a window seat on the back row, I opened my messages and tapped on Derek’s contact. Nothing.

Well, the teacher wasn't looking and I'd done the work at home, so I sent Derek a text.
Sourwolf

Did u find the other half of the body yet?

What kind of question is that?

Laura's other half. The police r still looking.

Yes.

Why haven't u told police?????

She's my sister. I buried her.

Dude, U CAN'T DO THAT POLICE R STILL LOOKING

They need the body for murder case.

They won't find anything. I'm not digging up her grave.

I understand. That'd be bad mojo.
Btw, Scott's mom took time off work 2 go 2 lacrosse game on Saturday.

He's definitely gonna have to play now.

If he can control himself I won't kill him.

It would take a miracle.

We'll work on it. U need to be there, tho. Scott's not scared of me.

Fine.

(*/ω*)/

U r the best!

WTF is that.

A happy face.

Wait, u I don't know what these are !!!??

(=-ω=)

^^ it's a cat.
Sourwolf

Don't send me cats.

Sad face

Stiles, stop.

Stop.

Sourwolf

Sad face

Stiles, stop.

Stop.

Goodbye, Stiles.

BYEEEEEEEEE"EE
Well, that was … enlightening. At least Derek was giving Scott a chance. His adverse reaction to emojis was… something (*ahem* adorable). I looked up from my phone, fully prepared to pretend to be studying but my view was interrupted by a piece of paper in front of my face. I blinked. What the - ?

“Are you going to pay actual attention now, Mr. Stilinski?” The teacher - Ms. Cortez - said, giving me an unimpressed look. “I hope you know that nobody looks down at their crotch and giggles unless they're on their phone. Your girlfriend maybe, hm?” The class broke out in snickers. Most of them knew that I'd never get Lydia, but who cares - I had Derek. Derek who was probably straight and not into teenage guys. I sighed and tried to sink deeper into my seat.

“Sorry, ma’am.” I muttered, rubbing my nose and trying to fight the embarrassed blush threatening to crawl up my neck at the thought of Derek. Thankfully, Cortez thought that I'd gotten the message so she turned back to the class, who were still gossiping.

“Attention everyone! Those handouts will be due next day. I want proper answers for….” She said, returning to the lesson, and I tuned her out. Instead, I looked at the sheet. 15 short answers, based on textbook pages 67-73. Already done. I glanced at the clock - 30 minutes to go. I turned back to the sheet and made a face. School never seemed to end fast enough.

It was later, at around 4:00 in the afternoon when my phone pinged. Derek had texted me again:
The fact that he called emojis 'stupid faces' made me giggle, then my mind caught up with what Derek had told me. I groaned.

Well, It was nice to know that my best friend was doing things behind my back. Potentially illegal things. Like trespassing in private property. At least Derek was (probably) nice enough not to report him. I squished my face into my pillow and glared halfheartedly at my half-done homework. This was a mess. I had to find a way to get Scott to trust Derek.

I was musing about said mess that had become my life and halfheartedly picking at my homework when I got an urgent phone call from Scott, telling me to get to his place, immediately.

I sighed and dragged myself to the door. Time to make Scott rethink the ‘jumping to conclusions with half the evidence’ plan.

I made my way quickly over to Scott’s place, parked the jeep, ran inside, said a quick ‘Hello!’ to Mellissa, then made my way up to Scott’s room. I opened the door to find him sitting on his bed, picking at his lacrosse stick. He looked up when I entered.

"Okay, what is it? You found something? What? Where?" I said, pretending to be excited, then let out a breath. I might have overdid it. “Whoa, that’s a rush.”
“I found something over at Derek's.” Scott explained, frowning.

“Really? What did you find?” I asked, internally face-palming at my cringe worthy 'surprised' act. Of course I knew what he'd found - where Derek had buried Laura's body.

Scott repeated what I already knew: “There was something buried there. I could smell blood.”

“You did?” I gushed. I should get an award for all the acting I've been doing... "That's awesome. Well, that's terrible. You know what I mean,” I shrugged, then pretended to think about it. “Whose blood? Did it smell familiar?”

“No but you're going to help me find out,” Scott stated, "Then your dad busts Derek for the murder and you help me learn how to play without changing. Because there is no way I’m not playing on Saturday.” I winced. Scott seemed so sure of this plan, but it'd only get us in more trouble in the one run. I could plainly see, even now, that Derek was the only one who actually had an idea of how to be a werewolf. Scott and I were just floundering in the dark. We needed Derek.

"Actually, I don't think so.” I countered, mentally running over what I'd have to say next. I needed to explain to Scott what happened, but not in a way that made it seem like I was intentionally leaving him out of the loop, because I wasn't. Everything just happened so fast, I didn't get the chance to explain it to him.

Scott blinked. "Huh. Why?"

I grit my teeth. "Because that blood you smelled? Is Laura Hale's! It's where Derek buried his sister. Y'know, the one who got killed by the alpha? Ripped in half and found by some joggers!?” I ranted. Scott made a face.

"Why would Derek kill his own sister?” He asked. I blinked in surprise. THAT was the conclusion Scott came to!?

"Wha- no, NO, he DIDN'T! There's another werewolf!"

Scott tilted his head, his expression stating that he still didn't believe me. "Really? The evidence is all there. Derek's the one who killed her!”

I dragged my hand through my hair and glared at him. "Did you forget everything we learned the other night?" I asked. "During the full moon." This made him pause.

"Well, no.." He muttered, "But, if Derek didn't kill her, then why is the body at his house?"

"Because it's his sister and maybe he buried her so she could rest in peace?” I snarked. Scott looked ashamed at that. The sense seemed to be coming back to him. Why do they call it common sense when it seems to be, actually, really uncommon amongst people?

"Yeah your right. Oh my god, I was such an idiot!” He face-palmed. I sat down on the bed, beside him, and patted his shoulder reassuringly. I could actually smell the anxiety on his person.

"Derek's not mad at you." I told him, figuring that'd be the main reason why Scott was worried. "Okay, maybe he is. But he won't call you out for trespassing.” Scott shook his head.

"That's not it,” He began, then paused as if gathering his courage. I felt an uneasy feeling pool in my gut as Scott turned to me, "Once I found out that the body was there, the first thing I did was call the police and tell them that Derek was the murderer."
My brain short circuited. What?

Then I realized what he'd said and fought a strong urge to smash his head in with a bat.

"You got Derek arrested, already." I said slowly, incredulous. Scott winced and nodded.

"Yeah. I was stupid. We need to get him out." He whined, "But I was really, really pissed at him last night." I felt my eye twitch.

"Okay! Okay, assuming that you were mad about Saturday's game and Derek threatening to kill you if he played and completely disregarding that, do you have ANY IDEA how bad you messed up!?" I growled.

Scott winced, but nodded. "Yeah. We can fix it through."

"Um, maybe not!? Because when the police go to look for the body, they're ACTUALLY going to find one. That's plenty of evidence." I said scathingly.

"No need to rub it in!" Scott muttered, then looked at me with an uncertain expression. "By the way, your eyes are glowing." He said, and I jerked backwards. Wait, they were? Sighing, dragged a hand down my face, letting the anger break away. Nothing good would come out of getting mad at Scott now. What's done is done.

"Better?" I asked.

He nodded. "Better."

I stood up, already making a game plan in my head. "Well, it's kinda late now," I said, looking at the clock - which now read 6:35 - "And it's getting dark out. The police are probably going to inspect Derek's place in the morning."

"Why not now?" Scott asked.

"Because you are a single caller. They'll take what you said 'into consideration,'" I said, making air quotes with my fingers, "But they aren't going to arrest him right away. What exactly did you tell them?"

"That I think Derek was the murderer because I think he has the other half of the body in his house," Scott admitted. I bit my lip. That wasn't good, but it was better than the worst-case scenario.

"Yeah, see - that's a lot of 'I thinks,' not much concrete proof. Hell, it almost sounds like a prank call, if Derek wasn't already a 'person of interest,'" I explained, using more air quotes, "I bet they'll wait until morning. We can stop my dad then."

"Alright." Scott agreed. "Wait, can we?"

I frowned. "Can we what?"

"Actually stop your dad from arresting Derek?" Scott asked. I though about it, and it wasn't... impossible, really. I mean, in theory it was very simple, but a lot of variables were out of my control so it was impossible to say for sure. What if the police did decide to check it out tonight? ...But now wasn't the time for uncertainty. I turned to Scott and placed an encouraging smile on my face.

"Yeah, just tell them it was a prank call. You were the caller, anyways." I reassured. He gave me a wry smile.
"Okay." He nodded. "Um, sorry."

I sighed. "No prob. Just, tell me before you call the cops next time?"

"Sure." He promised.

I made my way to the door and opened it. "See you tomorrow morning, at Derek's."

Scott frowned. "What about school?" He asked.

"What about school?" I echoed, fighting the urge to hit my head against the door. Come on, Scotty - this is a bit more important than school, don't you think? "We'll just skip. It's only the start of the year."

Scott winced. "My grades are already pretty bad."

I rolled my eyes. "Okay, fine. You, you can go to school," I made a dismissive gesture in his direction. "I'll go convince my dad."

Scott grinned. "Nah, I'll come. If... you do my homework." I narrowed my eyes. That little sneak...

"Fine, I'll do it." I relented. "But you owe me another one! One day, I'll cash all those in and then you'll be sorry!" I warned. Scott knew I was joking though, and simply shook his head.

"Yeah. Bye, Stiles!" I heard him call as I walked into the hallway.

"Bye!" I waved, then made my way down the stairs.

I said goodbye to Scot's mom, who looked like she was making dinner. She smiled and asked me about how we (as in my dad and I) were doing. I told her the usual, that school was fine and dad was overworking himself, then I made my way home.

Dad seemed suspicious of me when I finally got home, but then let it go once I told him I'd been at Scott's. I spent most of my time at Scott's house, anyways. He had the better gaming console. After assuring my Dad that I was fine, and there was nothing else I needed to tell him, I went upstairs to my room, and was left alone with my thoughts. Derek was probably gonna get arrested in the morning. We were no closer to finding the true identity of the killer. Scott might lose control at a lacrosse game this Saturday.

Sleep didn't come easy that night.

I woke up the next morning, at around 7:30 am, not to my alarm, but to my phone. Without opening my eyes I picked up the offending device and rolled back too my back, sliding the answer button and placing the slat screen to my ear.

"Hello?" I muttered.

"Stiles! What the hell did Scott do?" Derek frantically asked on the other side.

I frowned. "What do you mean?"
"There are police sirens coming this way." He growled. With that, the events of yesterday evening came back to me. *Oh shit.* I actually whimpered, and Derek heard it.

"Stiles..." He warned. I winced. Hopefully he wasn't the kind of person who'd kill the messenger.

"Um. About that - Scott called the police." I told him.

"On me." Derek stated, flatly.

I sighed. "Yeah. He found Laura's grave, panicked, and assumed the worst. Then he called the police - before he called me."

"..."

"Oh, and he was pretty mad at you for stopping him from playing Saturday, and threatening to kill him." I said, turning my voice obnoxiously cheerful to annoy Derek. Karma, for waking me up *before* my alarm, which was already pretty early. On that note - I turned to my alarm and switched it off, before it could actually ring.

"Can you stop this?" Derek asked. I shrugged.

"Maybe? I don't know. I'll be there soon. The plan was to stop them from arresting you by telling my dad it was a prank call." I heard 'thunk' noise, which I assumed was Derek punching the wall or something.

"Just get here." He said, then cut the call.

I got to the Hale house as quickly as I could, after picking up Scott, and parked a little ways away. Scott got out and sat on the roof of the jeep, watching. I got out and made my way over there. Dad had Derek in cuffs already, and was fading him in the back of the cruiser. Derek was glaring lasers at us. I waited until the police had gotten Derek inside, then gone around to the back of the house before I dashed over and snuck into the car.

"For the record, this is not my fault." I hissed, when Derek simply glared at me, murderous.

"I am going to kill your friend." He growled.

"Yeah. I kinda wanted to do that to. But you can't - then they'll have an actual reason to arrest you." I whispered. "Anyways, are you doing okay?"

Derek let out a long breath. "Why are you so worried about me when it's your friend that's the problem? If he plays in that game, and changes in front of everyone, what do you think will happen? Do you think everybody's going to keep cheering him on?" He snarled.

I grimaced. "Yeah. I know. We're working on it, but we need you. That's why I'm going to try to get you out. By the way, where's your phone?" Derek looked at me with an unreadable expression.

"Why?" He asked.

"Don't let the cops have it!" I explained. Derek nodded.
"It's inside. I hid it in one of the couch seats." He muttered, and I let myself relax.

"Yeah, okay, I'll go get it." I said, then quickly got out, sprinted inside the house, found Derek's phone - under the couch seat, how completely unoriginal - and stuffed it in my pocket. I then headed back to the car, only to run into someone as soon as I'd gotten past the door. Said person then grabbed me and yanked my right off the porch steps. I looked up. It was Dad. Shit.

"Just what the hell do you think you're doing?!" He asked, letting me go once we were a good distance away from the house.

"I'm just trying to help." I lied, stuffing my hands in my pockets and feeling some comfort from the weight of Derek's phone. At least they weren't getting that evidence. Or the evidence that he had my number. I don't think I could explain that one without spilling everything.

"Oh, then could you help me in understanding how you and Scott even came on any of this?" Dad looked at me with an 'I-want-answers' expression. I let out a breath, then launched into my excuse:

"We were looking for Scott's inhaler and-

"That he dropped when?" Dad frowned, cutting me off.

"The other night." I blurted, then I wanted to slap myself once I realized the mistake.

"The other night? The night when me and my deputies were looking for the body?" He asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Yes," I muttered, then shut my eyes and wished I could disappear. "I mean no."

"So, you and Scott were out there. You know, I can't even feel surprised. You were listening in that call already."

"No." I said, shaking my head.

"Are you lying to me?" Dad asked, in a tone that suggested he totally knew I was lying.

I gave him a weak smile. "It depends on how you define lying."

He raised an eyebrow. "Oh, well I define it as not telling the truth. How would you define it?"

"Um," I wracked my brain for an excuse. Aha! "Laying your body in a horizontal position?" I tried, moving my hands in a horizontal gesture. Dad didn't buy it.

"Get the hell out of here." He scowled, shoving me in the direction of the jeep.

"Yes, Sir, right away." I muttered, moving to the jeep. I wanted to hit my head on something. Something really, really hard. I was such an idiot.

I didn't even get to start on my 'Derek's not the murderer' speech, and now dad knew we were there in the woods that night. Why was it all going downhill? Oh right - because of me. I sighed, closing the door a little harder than usual, and let my head hit the steering wheel.

"Not good?" Scott asked.

"Yeah." I huffed. "Dad caught me. Couldn't do anything."

He winced sympathetically. "Yeah, I saw. Let's get out of here."
I nodded. I'd try again later. The best thing we could do now was find the identity of the actual killer, whoever that was.

Back at Scott’s house, I’d just parked the Jeep and unlocked the door when I heard Scott yelp. I turned around and studied my friend, who was cradling his hand and backed into the door.

“What?” I asked. He pointed at something in the seat behind him.

“This flower. It burned me.” He said. I glared at him.

“Why do you have a flower in the first place?” I asked. Scott shrugged.

“It was pretty. I was going to give it to Allison.” He explained. Oh, that made sense - it was because of Allison.

I leaned back even more and got a good look at the flower. It was purple, and the buds were in a triangular clump. The leaves were like fuzzy holly leaves. Wait... Oh, shit. Of course this looked familiar! ...And of course Scott would pick this exact flower. I wanted to face-palm.

“Scott,” I said slowly, “This is wolfsbane. Why do you have wolfsbane?” Scott looked surprised.

“Shit, really? Is that why it burns?” He asked, still rubbing his hand.

“Yes! It's poison to werewolves!” I groaned.

“I picked it up by the stem before and it felt normal then.” He argued. This made me pause.

“Huh. Must be just the petals, then. Anyways, gimme that -” I reached and delicately picked up the deadly flower by the stem. Scott let me take it. “Come on. I need to find out what kind this is. You could be seriously poisoned right now.”

“I feel fine!” He protested, but I dragged him with me, regardless, into Scott's house and upstairs. I figured that since we weren't going to school anyways, we'd get actual research done. That, and the fact that Scott's life might be on the line.

Thankfully after a long Google search (because when it came to life or death matters, information had to be verified by at least three trusted sources before it was taken into consideration. It's a general rule when have, after I tried to stitch a cut closed using sewing materials when I was eight) I learned this version actually wasn't very poisonous at all. To humans, that is. For us wolves, it'd burn us when we touched it, and maybe nearly kill us if ingested. Right then, I thanked whatever supernatural deities who were up there that Scott didn't actually EAT the plant.

We also learned that while most forms of wolfsbane are poison, there was a spectrum. Purple being the least poisonous, and black and yellow being the more poisonous. That's not saying much since long exposure or ingestion (or getting it somehow into one’s bloodstream) for most types will result in death, anyways. As an outlier, white wolfsbane actually did nothing except remain pretty to look at.

Alternatively, while wolfsbane was primarily a poison used to hunt werewolves, it was also the
medicine that could cure a poisoned werewolf. If a wolf was poisoned, they'd need to obtain the
same type of wolfsbane that poisoned them in order to cure themselves. I wasn't sure exactly what
was needed to make a cure for a poisoned wolf, but I tacked it onto the list of things I needed to (and
haven't yet been able to) ask Derek.

Then a thought occurred to me, as I was spinning lazily in Scott's computer chair while my best
friend flipped through a comic on the bed.

“Scott, “ I said, “Was this flower anywhere else? Like, where exactly was it when you picked it up?”
Scott frowned, thinking.

“There were a few, scattered around the house in various clumps, I think. I remember seeing one
placed on what smelled like Laura’s grave.” He said. “Why?”

Yes. Yes! This was exactly what I wanted to hear right then.

“Because look,” I said, picking up the flower and moving it near Scott's hand, and we both watched
as his nails lengthen into claws and the back of his hand sprout fur when the flower was near. Scott
turned to me with wide, glowing eyes.

“How did you know that?” He asked.

“It was mentioned in paying on an old site, somewhere,” I made a gesture at the computer - which
was still open to the wiki page on wolfsbane. “But do you know what this means?”

“What?” He frowned.

I grinned. “If this was on Laura’s grave, then it's because Derek must have wanted her to be buried
as a wolf!”

“Yeah, and so?” Scott said, making a ‘go on’ gesture.

“So when the police go digging for a body, they won't find a human one!” I crowed, and Scott
blinked as he realized the implications of this.

“So Derek won't get arrested?” He asked.

“As long as they don't move the body to far away from the wolfsbane.” I agreed. “Scott, we have to
go back!”

And go back we did, racing down the stairs and into the Jeep. It was past midday now, and the forest
looked alive as we made our way back to the tattered house. The police had mostly cleaned up by
now, but for some reason my dad was still there. Once I noticed him, I looked to Scott, and we
unanimously decided that this would have to wait for now - because making my dad even more
suspicious of us wasn't gonna help - and turned the Jeep around.

We then went to the public library, where I pestered Scott into helping me research more about
wolves. It was though - since neither of us had very long attention spans - but we learned a few more
new things. Apparently, hunters weren't that subtle. Some idiot had made a whole website about
materials and how to contact a known supernatural arms dealer. It was hidden in some deep, dark
corner of the Internet though. I have to give them props for that. Hell, the entrance link I found was
only after browsing the hashtags “werewolf” “hunter” and “wolfsbane weapons” on Tumblr for an
hour or so.

Scott says I shouldn't trust it, because it's Tumblr, but it seemed pretty legit.
We also tested a few other supernatural protection on ourselves - salt did nothing, werewolves didn't have fatal verses (as in, you can't exorcise a werewolf), fire will burn us and is a bitch to heal. Also, against Derek’s initial assurance that silver was no more effective that any other metal, we discovered that holding and using silverware (actually silverware) became unpleasant and itchy and gave us a rash. Thankfully, said rash healed within five minutes. Iron did nothing, but that was to be expected as we were not fairies.

Later, I dragged Scott back into the woods, but a part far, far away from where the police might still be mingling. Once there, I moved to the middle of the clearing, and turned to him.

“Come at me, bro.” I said, completely serious. Scott laughed at my use of a meme but didn't move.

“What?” He asked, once he'd stopped snickering and realized I was still looking at him with an expectant expression.

“Come at me.” I repeated.

“Why?” He frowned.

I clicked two of my claws together. “I'm gonna teach you how to fight. Derek showed my the other day.”

“Like what?” He asked. I grinned.

“Like a wolf.”

Then, since it didn't seem like Scott was going to move, I attacked.

He didn't actually do that bad. Much better than when I first went at Derek. The first few times I got him too mad, his wolf got loose and then I was in trouble. Eventually though, he gotten better at reigning it in. It helped that we weren't fighting human - eyes, claws, teeth were all out. I bet we looked kinda silly, a actually, with the pointed ears and ridiculous sideburns.

We were rather evenly matched, with Scott taking the higher ground (haha, Star Wars reference) in terms of strength and me beating him when it came to speed. We eventually got bored of just sparring and chased each other around for a bit. For a moment I felt silly, since this was what little kids were supposed to do, but then Scott tackled me and got leaves in my face and I forgot all about maturity.

It was fun, much like the time with Derek. I mentally labeled this as ‘pack bonding time.’ My wolf agreed, 100%. We kept at it until the sky lost its light and the sun moved to rest on the horizon. It was quickly becoming night, and we were tired and sweaty and wanted to go home, but there was one last thing I needed to do.

“We need to go check out the house,” I said to Scott as we got back into the Jeep.

“But it's late,” he countered. I shrugged.

“the police will be gone. Come on, I brought flashlights.” I explained. Scott blinked, then glared at
“You planned this!” He said, pointing an accusing finger. There was no heat behind the words, and I let myself smirk.

“Oh, absolutely.” I admitted. “Now come on.”

Under the cover of darkness, we travelled back to the gravesite of Derek’s family.

Jeez, that's a really morbid way to put it. I'm gonna stick with the 'charred house’ descriptor for now.

Anyways, we drove without tuning the Jeep’s lights on, a perk of wolf night-vision. The forest was eerily clear and void of humans. My gut did something weird as I realizes that ‘human’ didn't exactly apply to me anymore… hmm.

I shoved the feeling to the back of my mind because an existential crisis was NOT what I needed right now.

We snuck back there and checked out the damage the police had done. The interior of the house was clearly messed up, and the car had anxiously been impounded, but they hadn't found the grave. Or, if they did, they must have covered it back up.

The perimeter was still lined in the yellow caution tape, but we ignored it. Eventually, we reconvened at the base of the tree, and my flashlight shone ominously on a sprig of violet wolfsbane atop a mound of dirt.

Immediately, I suspected that this was the grave. However, I was tired, and in no mood to inspect any further, so I just sat there. Scott leaned on the trunk on the tree and followed my eyes to the deadly flower. In this light, it actually looked kinda… beautiful.

“Stiles, let's go.” Scott said, “It's late.”


Just for that, Scott hit the back of my head, hard. I yelped and chased him back to the Jeep, then we drove off back towards Beacon Hills. In the meantime, I was trying to make up a solid alibi so my dad wouldn't have a reason to ring me out in an interrogation over dinner tonight.

Well, in a sense, it was his job, and I was the one in the wrong… but it was for his own safety. That’s what I told myself, anyways. Maybe it would be easier to just tell him. After we proved Derek's innocence, of course. I know I said I wanted excitement, but this already felt like too much. Hell, Scott had accidentally already gotten an innocent arrested!

I grimaced, trying to ignore Scott jamming out to a ‘DJ got us falling in love’ (ha, let's see his chipper attitude when he has to face his mom later!) and kept driving.
WHEN I GOT HOME, IT WAS ACTUALLY REALLY LATE. After dropping Scott off, Melissa had asked if I wanted to stay for dinner. Not one to say no to free food (seriously, what kind of teenage guy says no to free food?) I accepted. She'd made a delicious smelling casserole that made my mouth water, even from what I could smell on the porch steps. However, Dinner was only served AFTER she chewed Scott out for neglecting to mention that he'd be home late. I could understand that, because after roughhousing in the woods (I was obligated by Bro Code laws to teach Scott how to fight, as a wolf) and then inspecting the Hale house once the police had left, it was nearing 9:00 at night. Hell, the police curfew was supposed to be 9:00!

So yeah, our parents would be worried. But on the other hand - we were fine! Not a scratch on us (the ones we'd had were healed by now). I watched the Mother-son interaction for a moment before zoning out... 9:00 curfew. On a normal day, Dad was fine as long as I was home by 11:00 PM. I blinked, then made a face at the reaction Dad would have about me coming home after a police-enforced curfew. I looked at Scott, who was guiltily staring at the ground as his mom ranted. Eventually, Melissa stopped and dragged a tired hand across her face, then pulled Scott in for a hug, telling him not to worry her so much. Then she turned to me.

“And you, young man - I'm going to skip the rant because I assume you heard it to - what do you have to say for yourself?” She said, her gaze like that of a lioness studying a kill. I paled. Remember how I said Melissa was either the sweetest woman in the world or the most terrifying? Yeah, now you get to see the terrifying side.

“Um. Sorry?” I stammered. Yes, I was scared of Mama McCall. She was the ruler of this household, after all. I glared at Scott, who was slowly grinning as he realized that I was gonna get chewed out as well.

“For?” She demanded.

“Staying out late?” I said, trying for the best innocent expression I could muster. I failed.
“And?” She asked. I bit my lip.

“Not telling you where I was taking Scott?”

“Yes, exactly. Now where exactly did you two go?” She studied me with a critical eye.

“Um…” I looked to Scott for help, but that douche was too busy snickering at my plight. I really should have expected this.

Ever since my Mom passed away, Melissa had essentially filled that void. My Mom and Scott's Mom had become good friends at Med School, and it was through them that Scott and I even met. Mom's death hit everyone, and Melissa sorta felt like she owed it to my Mom to make sure I got taken care of when Dad was busy. Melissa and Dad eventually ended up co-parenting Scott and I. She's told me that she sees me as much as her son as Scott is. Turning back to her, I realized that we must have scared them something fierce, disappearing like that. “We went to the library, then to the woods.” I said. "The library was for a project."

She sighed. “Why would you need to be in the woods after dark? This isn't about trying to find that body, is it?”

Yes. “No,” I said. That exactly. By the way, your son's now a werewolf, surprise! ...but I can't tell her that... hm.. oh! Glow in the dark stuff! “No. We've got a science project on bioluminescent mushrooms.” I lied, all the while silently congratulating myself on the quick save. "I thought we could find some on the preserve." Behind her back, even Scott looked impressed by the excuse. Melissa studied me for a moment more before nodding.

“Alright.” She said, then pulled me in for a bone-crushing hug as well. "About those mushrooms - I don't think there are any at Beacon Hills.” She said once she'd finally let me go. I shrugged.

“didn't hurt to try.” I said. She smiled.

"Alright you two. Don't worry me like that. I've got enough stress in my life as it is.” She said. I immediately felt bad, though. She was right - she worked all sorts of extra hours at the hospital to make ends meet. Us running around without any indication was not what she needed, especially with the 'animal attacks' going on. I made a mental note to remind Scott to let her know when we'd be late next time.

Scott caught my eye, and I nodded. "Sorry, ma'am." We chorused, just like we'd done as kids.

Melissa returned it with a weary smile. "Okay." She said. "apology accepted. Now, dinner!” And then she led the way to their small dining room.

Unfortunately, dinner turned out to be a rushed affair as I really did have to get home, before Dad really got suspicious. Still, the casserole was delicious, and Melissa was kind enough to pack me some to take home for Dad. It wasn't exactly healthy food, because cheese and beef, but I let it slide since it was a total sin to not try this. Mama McCall's cooking is heavenly.

When I returned to my own house, Dad was waiting for me. On his face was the classic look for 'what the hell were you doing?'

I sighed and waved a hand. "Hi, Dad."

“Stiles. Where were you?” He said, arms crossed and pinning me with what was now an interrogative look.
“Looking for bioluminescent mushrooms.” I lied. It was best to stick to what I'd told Melissa, especially in case the two decided to call each other. I wouldn't put it past my dad - he's the Sheriff, and an overprotective (because I think he fears that'll lose me too) father.

“What were you- nevermind, did you know that there’s a police-induced curfew tonight?” He asked, stressing the 'police-induced curfew' part. I frowned at that.

“Yes, of course I knew about the curfew. I'm only late because we went to Scott’s house first, then Melissa let me stay for dinner. She sent casserole by the way,” I gestured to the plastic bag with the tupperware. Dad blinked.

“Oh. Well, alright. Tell her I said thanks.” He accepted the bag, but wasn't letting me pass. I sighed.

“The mushrooms were for a science project. We were inside by nine! Just, at Scott’s house.” I insisted.

“You didn’t tell me where you were going.” Dad said, flatly.

“Yeah, um, sorry about that. We had no idea it was gonna take that long. Apparently there are no glowing mushrooms in the preserve.” I stammered. Dad raised an eyebrow.

“You went looking for magic mushrooms.” He deadpanned. I grimaced.

“Yeah, when you put it that way it sounds stupid.” I said. Dad looked at me, not saying anything for a long moment.

“Stiles, why are you lying?” He asked. Crap. How the hell does he always know??

“I’m not lying!” I protested, throwing my hands in the air in the ‘surrender’ pose. “Seriously, ask Scott.”

“Scott would lie to cover you.”

I groaned. “Ask Melissa, then.”

“Stiles, tell me the truth. What were you doing in the forest today?”

“Looking for mushrooms!” I paused. Might as well mix in a bit off the truth. “Well, at first we went to see what was with all the police cars around the Hale house.”

“There was a call about someone suspecting that Derek Hale is the murderer behind the killings, animal attack or not.”

“They suspect who?” I asked. Playing along.

“Derek Hale. He moved here, from what I can tell, right around the time of the murders.” Dad explained. I made a face. This was bad. Thankfully, Dad misread the expression. “Unfortunately, the case isn’t solved. There’s no proof it’s him, and the murders look far more like an animal attack than anything a human could do.” I paused.

“So then police don’t think that Derek Hale is the murderer?” I asked.

Dad sighed, “There was no evidence, except the corpse of a dead wolf, and Hale said the animal attacked him the night he returned to the house. Apparently, he came back to see if there was any salvaging the wreck.”
I felt the tension drain from me at that. Thank god for those wolfsbane flowers - they must have kept Laura's body in wolf form. Derek wasn't the prime suspect anymore.

“Are you letting him go?” I asked, tentatively. Dad frowned.

“Not yet. They want to keep him for questioning. He’s still a person of interest.” He turned his gaze back to me from where he was studying the floor tiles. “What do you know about him?” Shit shit shit shit shit, think of something!

“What makes you think I know about him?” I blurted.

“Stiles.”

“I don’t know anything!”

“…”

“No really - someone mentioned his name at school, that’s all!” Dad seemed to realize that this was all he was getting from me. He sighed and turned towards the kitchen. I could tell that he didn't believe me, though. He shouldn't - anyone who knows me would know that I'd be trying to solve the case before the police did. It was my hobby, after all.

“Alright kiddo. Whatever you’re up to, I hope it’s not dangerous.” He said.

“What makes you think that I’m up to something?” I asked, feigning innocence. Dad paused and turned back to me with a raised eyebrow.

“Stiles, you’re always up to something.” He deadpanned. I grinned. He's got me there. As long as Dad didn’t bother investigating too deep, we’d be fine. Not for the first time that day, I felt thankful that I’d managed to swipe Derek’s phone before the police got to it. How the hell would I explain those texts to my Dad? Answer: none, save for telling him the whole truth - which I couldn’t.

I watched my dad set up his dinner for a moment more, noting the stacks of paperwork and how his eyes seemed sleepless. After that initial murder, there had been two more: the bus driver, on the night Derek and I had snuck out, and a trucker on the highway entering Beacon Hills. All three bodies were marked the same way - torn in half, and mauled like some large predator had gotten to it. I knew who the large predator was: the Alpha. The mad, rabid, insane, sick Alpha who’d bitten us. The Alpha that my inner wolf refused to accept.

On Wednesday, after school, I told Scott my grand plan.

That being said, the school day had been awfully mundane, save for lunch, when Scott told me more about the goddess that was Allison Argent and I tried to ignore him. That is, until Allison came to actually sit with us.

Then I just subtly interrogated her about her family. ….And that seems really horrible when I put it that way, but it’s the truth. The Argents were, throughout history, a huge Hunter family who specialized in killing werewolves. This made Allison, hunter or not, still a possible enemy. Information was key.
Neither of them - Scott or Allison - noticed anything, anyways. They were too absorbed in each other. I wanted to gag.

However, I learned that Allisson had been switching schools ever since she began. Her family never seemed to stay in one place for more than two years and she hated that it barely gave her opportunities to keep any friends. I felt kinda bad for her at that. Friends were one of the things that made school feel less like prison. Scott must have felt the same, because after that, he gallantly invited her to sit with us at lunch if she wanted to, and she accepted.

I also saw Lydia giving us the stink-eye from the middle of her clique’s table. I caught her eye and quickly turned away. I wouldn’t put it past her to already suspect that something is up, especially since I wasn’t fawning over her like I used to. That spot belonged to Derek.

Derek, the same person that my best friend got arrested. Any chance I had with him before had probably just gone out the window…

Anyways, back to my Master Plan. I cornered Scott right after the bell at his locker.

“Dude, don’t pack up!” I said. Scott startled.

“Stiles!” He yelped. Then realized what I’d said. "Wait, what?"

“We’re not going home yet. Don’t pack up!” I repeated.

“Why?” He asked.

“Because of my Master Plan.” I beamed. Scott looked confused.

“What master plan?” He said.

“The Master Plan, Scott! In capitals. It’s to get your heart rate under control so you can play at the game on Saturday.” I explained. Scott rolled his eyes at my insistence of ‘capitals' (it was The Master Plan, and it was brilliant, and nobody was gonna convince me otherwise. Trust me, you’ll like it), but eventually nodded in understanding.

“Okay. What do we need to do?” He asked.

I grinned. “First, help me steal Coach’s heart rate monitor.”

“WHAT?”

True to the plan, we managed to steal Coach’s heart rate monitor. It wasn’t even that hard, and a part of me is almost disappointed. The oaf was asleep in his office, and the device was sitting plainly on the desk. A simple grab’n’go operation.

Then we headed to the lacrosse pitch, decked out in our gear, and I made Scott stand in one of the empty nets. I stood about eight meters away from him, and had a bunch of spare lacrosse balls near my feet.

“Ready?” I asked. Scott adjusted his stick. We had hooked him up to the pulse monitor and the little device (there was a wristband to put on their person, and another remote screen thing that showed he heart rate).

“For what?” Scott asked.

I didn’t answer, just whipped the ball at him. It nailed him right in the balls. He didn’t even have time
to doge. I watched him tumble backwards.

“OW! THE FUCK WAS THAT FOR??!” He yowled, once he’d managed to sit up again. I snickered and checked the monitor, which was beeping rapidly.

“Watch your heart rate.” I warned. “But don’t worry, I won’t go the family jewels again.”

“THIS is you master plan!?” Scott asked, eyes wild and gesturing madly.

“Well, yeah. Don’t lose control.” I chirped. “Check your teeth.” Scott blinked and ran a tongue over his sharpened canines. I could literally see the moment he understood what I was trying to accomplish.

“Alright. You have a point. No more crotch shots though.” He agreed, managing to get his teeth to melt back into dull human ones.

“That was me cashing in one of the ‘you owe me’ chips.” I snarked. He has had this a long time coming. Scott made a face.

“That was supposed to be ONE of them?” He said. I grinned. Oh, this was going to be fun.

Usually, I’m not an extensively mean person. In fact, I often go out of my way to help people. However, listening to your best fiend moo about a girl at lunch for THREE DAYS STRAIGHT with no other conversation topics except werewolves was seriously trying my patience. Seriously, I DON’T WANT TO KNOW about what brand of shampoo Allison uses and how good it supposedly smells. I don't think I was even this bad with Lydia! Well...

Anyways, that’s not the point. The point is, this is me getting some well-earned revenge.

“There’s about seventeen more. Brace yourself.” Scott paled, but still got ready. I picked up another ball and whipped it at him. This one hit his shoulder.

He yelped and the monitor went nuts again.

"Control" I warned. He nodded and stopped his eyes from glowing.

"Why do you even need the heart monitor if you can hear my heartbeat?" Scott asked.

"Just double-checking. I want to familiarize myself with when exactly you lose control so I can stop you before it happens." I explained. Scott scowled.

"Alright, but why aren’t you doing this?"

"Because I’m not the one who made first line." I teased, then picked up another ball. Scott grimaced, and I gave him a feral grin. "Ready?"

This went on for a while, until all shots had been taken. Scott was glaring at me, murderously, but he’d managed to get his heart rate down by the final few. A successful mission, in my opinion. Scott didn’t think so.

“This is revenge for having to listen to me talk about Alison all the time, isn’t it?” Scott asked, later, when we were doing research back at my house (I say research, but it was really just us goofing off).

“Maybe…” I replied as I pulled up BadLipReading’s Star Wars videos on Youtube. Yoda and Seagulls always made for good giggles. I made a mental note to show it to Derek one day. Sourwolf
would HATE it. I snickered, and Scott looked at me oddly.

"Just a thought." I said.

Scott sighed. "I regret the day I ever met you." He muttered, but still sat next to me and laughed with me at the internet’s multitude of memes.

By the way, for all of those who were wondering, Yoda and Seagulls:

It was the evening of Thursday evening when I saw Derek again. By evening, I mean night - it was 10:30 and I was, obviously, not asleep. I probably should have been, through. I pretended not to notice as he came in through the window, as usual. Then I spun around right before I guessed he would speak, hopping to scare him at least a little. Unfortunately, he remained unfazed, watching me with a raised eyebrow.

“Hay, they let you out!” I said. Derek ignored the greeting.

“Phone.” He demanded, holding his hand out, straight to point. I grinned, because even if he was kinda a dick at times, I still had missed Derek (and the eye candy that was Derek’d body) the two days he'd been confined at the station.

“Here you go.” I said, dropping it into his palm. He eyed the device like it was booby trapped. “Didn't touch it, promise.” I assured. Derek simply nodded in acknowledgement and pocketed it. Then he turned to my wall with a fierce scowl on his face.

“Your friend is an idiot.” He stated. I rolled my eyes.

“He’s sorry. Besides, they didn’t find anything, right?” I said. Derek huffed.

“No. But Argent suspects me now.”

“Yeeeeah, Scott’s still dating Allison. I’ve given up trying to convince him otherwise.” I shrugged.
Derek growled. “He’s a fool.”

“I thought we already established that? Besides, we managed to get his control good enough for the game.” I amended. Derek looked at me with a puzzled expression I had the feeling he thought of Scott as a hopeless case.

“How?” He asked. I grinned.

“By shooting lacrosse balls at his balls.” I snarked.

“WHAT?”

I waved a hand. “Don’t worry. I had him hooked up to a pulse monitor and he didn’t actually wolf out.” Derek looked conflicted.

“That’s… either incredibly stupid or brilliant. I don’t know.” He said.

“It was brilliant. And fun.”

“And you?” Derek asked. “Did you get him to do.. that.. to you?” I snorted.

“I’m fine. I rarely lose my temper anyways. What are you doing here?” I asked, because Derek rarely goes places without an ulterior motive in mind. That much I already knew. Derek scoffed.

“Come with me,” He said, then crawled back out the window and onto the roof. I rolled my eyes, and after taking a moment to form my pillows into a convincing appropriation of how a sleeping teenage human looked like, and pulling the covers over that, I followed.

Derek led me to the nearest crime scene - the one with the trucker on the highway. There was a lone police cab there, with the lights off and the driver asleep. The truck was on its side, much like the bus was, and the front cab had been clawed, viciously.

There were no other sounds except the natural ones one would expect from a forest at night. An owl hooted somewhere in the distance, crickets chirped in the tall grass, and the soft rustle of leaves drowned out the last of the city sounds. The highway wasn’t busy at this time (it wasn’t very busy at all, really), and the road had been blocked off with yellow police tape, surrounding the wrecked truck, which looked like a simple a unbranded delivery truck with a dark green cab. A foggy blue haze seemed to have settled over everything, adding a (rather cool) element of mystery.

Without talking, Derek and I scouted out the area. Prior to our arrival, we’d decided to look and take in as much as we could, silently (because making noise, waking the sleeping policeman and getting caught was not what we came here to do), then head back to Derek’s car and talk about what we’d found there.

After about fifteen long minutes of simply looking, Derek signalled that we were done and we made our way back to his car - which was parked a good hundred meters away from here. Once we’d gotten in, Derek turned to me.

“What did you notice?” He asked. I thought for a moment, then answered:

“The body is gone. I bet the police took it back to the morgue. From the scene, I think the Alpha might have jumped at the truck while it was moving, then clawed open the door and killed the driver. The truck must have flipped over from the Alpha’s weight and the out of control crash. The crash didn’t kill the Alpha - it got injured, at most - and you even said that it’s easy for a werewolf to walk away from a car crash.” I explained.

“Well, I only caught the scent of the Alpha - which was the same scent around the bus the other night - briefly, but it was stale. That’s understandable because the attack was a day ago, and other humans have been all over this place. Also, on the inside of the truck’s cab, I saw a bunch of holes that kinda looked like…” I closed my eyes and thought for a moment, “Bullets! They looked like bullet holes! Wait - why would a cab river have a gun?” I asked.

“Because that wasn’t just a cab driver. That man was a hunter. Those were wolfsbane bullets.” Derek growled. My eyes went wide.

“Wolfsbane bullets? Is that even a thing?”

“Yes. Don’t get shot. They can kill you.”

“So, that's that icky scent on the inside of the cab,” I said, finally understanding. At first I thought it was just leftover from the ambulance. Hospital smells make me somewhat nauseous now. Then something else occurred to me: "Wait, the Alpha is injured?"

Derek shook his head. “I don’t think so. The blood on the truck, that was all human. I don’t think any of the bullets that were shot actually hit”

I didn't respond, simply thinking about the situation. A crazy Alpha, who was going after what? … hunters? I'd peg it on coincidence, but certain former events have ruined my faith in such. It seemed like coincidence wasn't a thing when it came to the supernatural.

“Was the bus driver a hunter?” I asked, thinking back to the other prime scene we'd investigated.

“Maybe.” Derek muttered, "There's no way to find out for sure." I paused.

"Actually, there might be. We just need to break into the Police Department's files first." I said. Derek gave me a flat stare.

"We're not doing that tonight." He stated. I snickered.

"No duh. Maybe later?" I asked.

"Maybe." We drifted into another period of silence before I asked Derek the glaring question at the tip of my tongue.

"So you think that the alpha might be just going after hunters?" I asked. Derek nodded.

"It's an option. I know that he only went after Laura to gain her Alpha powers." He confirmed. I grimaced. That was a morbid way to transfer power.

"So he was a normal wolf before this." I said. Then another - obvious! - thought occurred to me. Why hadn't I bothered to ask this earlier? "Wait, do you know any other wolves in Beacon Hills?"

Derek shook his head. "No. Just us."

"So you have no clue about who the Alpha is?" I asked.

“Not yet.” Derek confirmed. For some reason, that admittance - that we really had no leads at the moment - seemed to make the situation a whole lot more desperate. I turned back to him. I leaned against his shoulder.
“What will you do once you find out?”

“Kill him.” He said, in a tone that stopped any further conversation.

I could understand why killing was the only option, but it still made me feel icky. Derek drove me home in silence, and I quickly snuck back into my room. AFTER giving Derek a goodbye hug, of course. He didn’t punch me or anything, but he was certainly surprised. The constipated expression his face made still makes me snicker.

It was then that I made it my life goal to re-introduce Derek Hale to emotions, even if it killed me. It probably wouldn’t, though. Derek wasn’t that severe. Well… maybe I’d get killed by a hunter before….

Nope. NOPE! Not a thought line for right before going to bed. I banished the thought from my mind and tried to go back. A quick glance at my alarm made me mentally thank Derek for keeping this adventure short. 1:00 AM, it read. I sighed - seven hours wasn’t too bad - and closed my eyes, shedding reality and entering the dreamscape.

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Finally, it was the day of the game! Now, you might be wondering - what about Friday? Well, I skipped Friday. Nothing relevant to the story happened on Friday, so we can just forget about that. It was a normal, generic, boring school day with an event-free lacrosse practice (Scott seemed to have good enough control for Derek to admit that he could play on Saturday), homework and no midnight visits from a certain blue-eyed wolf. I was simply waiting for the day to end. But a thought - what DID Derek do with all that free time? Y’know, when he's not nabbing me for late-night excursions to crime scenes... I mean, he might have a job, but he's never mentioned it.

Anyways, we were sitting in the locker room getting ready for the big game when Scott bustled up to me and sat down, eyes far away.

“You okay, man?” I asked.

“Allison’s dad hit me with his car.” He said, breathless.

“What!!?”

“No - it was an accident! I just went to see her and then he hit me as I was trying to get away. Then he gave me a ride here. Oh my god, what am I going to do?” He rambled. I slapped him in the face with my glove, cutting him off. Not the time for a panic attack - or whatever equivalent Scott was about to have.

Then I thought about what he’d said - Allison's dad had hit him with a car, in the driveway of Allison's house. What the hell was Scott even doing there?? Oh wait...

“You were stalking Allison.” I deadpanned.

“NO!” He yelped, then had the grace to look sheepish because I had totally busted him.” .. well, kinda? I just wanted to see her.” Scott whined. I grinned. It was sickening at times, but these two really were Romeo and Juliet.
“You’re turning into Derek!” I teased - then realized that I had compared Scott and Allison to me and Derek and flushed bright red.

“Stiles!” Scott laughed, shoving me. I shook my head, and them grimaced as my thoughts ran back to what exactly was at stake.

“I just hope you’ve got yourself in control well enough.” I said.

“Yeah.” He agreed.

"But something still tells me I should convince you not to play, but I get the feeling that you're going to play anyways." I added, because it was the truth. This game was giving me al sorts of bad vibes and worst-case scenarios ending in death, and I honestly felt it wasn't worth it. Yes, we had been working on Scott's control, but how well would that stand against Jackson? All that asshole had to say might just be one line, insulting Scott's mom or something, and it'll be all over. Scott, obviously, isn't share my sense of self-preservation.

“If I don’t play then I lose first line and I lose Allison.” He said. I wanted to slap him. Allison wasn't that kind of girl, who based a relationship on a single lacrosse game. I've met her about three times and even I could sense that.

I shook my head. "Look, Allison's not going anywhere." I wish he wouldn't understand! I was pretty safe because I was on bench but everyone would be watching Scott out on the field. Especially Allison's dad, who was a hunter. He'd know what to look for, and if he connected the dots were all done for. "It's just one game, Scott! One that you don't even really need to play. Look, I'm not playing either. Tell coach you sprained your ankle or something and sit on bench."

“I want to play. I want to be first line. I want to date Allison. I want a semi-freaking normal life. Don't you get that?” He ranted. I sighed - there was no convincing him otherwise, was there? When he wanted to, Scott sold me the most stubborn person on earth. It's usually just easier to give in at this point.

"I know. I know you want to be normal." I began, "But we're not. For some divine and stupid reason, this shit happened to us, so now we're going to deal with it, and sometimes that means making sacrifices. Like men!" I laughed. Scott gave me a small smile at that, but he was still down. I grimaced. We couldn't have that - if Scott was going to play (and he probably was) then I'd want him to play his very best.

"Okay, look, since I know I can't convince you otherwise, you have to get out there and do your best." I said, tapping him on the shoulder. "Just be careful, okay? And I've always got your back."

Scott looked at me. "How? You're on the bench."

"Urg... technicalities," I waved a hand. "You worry about keeping yourself from sprouting hair and claws in the middle of the field. You know, just don’t get upset, or too angry."

“I got it.” Scott nodded.

"Or stressed," I added.

"I got it.” He repeated, but I kept rambling.

"Don’t think about Allison in the stands. Or that her father’s trying to kill you, and me too. Or that Derek’s probably going to try and kill you. Or that girl that he might or might not have killed. Or that you might kill someone if a hunter doesn’t kill you first - and then you'll end up dying a painful and
horrifying death and you'll still be a virgin.” I said. Scott glared at me, clearly disturbed. I snickered. So maybe I was a little mad that he wasn't taking this as seriously as he should have been. "Good luck out there, okay?"

After that, and with Scott feeling considerably more excited, we made our way to the field. Immediately, Allison made her way down to us, with Lydia in tow. I eyed the approaching figures, and Lydia’s predatory look, then Scott - whose eyes were on only Allison - and figured I should probably go.

"I'll just, y'know, go find coach." I said, then jogged ahead. I did not want to see any mushiness tonight.

I made my way over to the bleachers, which were quite full now, and set my stuff down. Looking around the scene, I could see our own team - in red "Beacon Hills - Lacrosse" jerseys and the opposing team - who were wearing green - both warming up. The field itself was about the size of a soccer field, with goals on each end and several white lines in the grass. By now, it was already dark out, and the pitch was lit by strong arena lights on the outer rim. It was kinda eerie, but also had an excited air to it. The bleachers were on opposing sides of the long lede of the field, and each team's spectators had a side for themselves. It was kinda chilly out, so there were only a few people sporting team colors since most had opted for jackets and scarves. Coach was off to the side, talking to Jackson. Jackson was sitting on the bench, scowling. It seemed like he wouldn't be playing tonight. Serves him right.

Suddenly, I was grabbed and pulled in, to the space underneath the bleachers. I turned to face my assailant and came face to face with Derek.

"Oh, uh. Hi. What are you doing here?" I stammered, trying to ignore how closely pressed together our bodies were. I failed. I could feel my neck getting red.

"I wanted to see you." He said. I tried to calm my racing heartbeat and the giddy feeling I felt at hearing those words.

"Um. Alright. You didn't have to come, you know." I said. Derek smiled.

"I came just in case something got out of control. I also came to wish you good luck." He leaned forwards and gave me a quick kiss on my cheek, and my brain short-circuited. "There. Good luck," He said, winked, and immediately turned and walked away into the shadows.

I stared, dumfounded and bursting with ... feelings, at his retreating back. Did Derek Hale just kiss me? He did. OHMYGOD, HE TOTALLY DID.

Granted, it wasn't a true kiss, but that didn't make it any less real. Blushing, and fighting the urge to pump a fist in the air, I touched my cheek, remembering how soft his lips felt. Score! Did this mean he liked me? It probably meant he liked me. I hope it meant he liked me. Damn, Stiles, mission accomplished!

Oh my god, I didn't even realize Derek was flirting with me (because, in retrospect, those last few days were totally flirting. Derek's way of flirting), but I was totally flirting back. There was also like, ZERO indication that Derek was even into guys, until like two minutes ago. He freaking kissed me!!

I guess surprising people every chance he got (especially by sneaking up on them) was simply a
Derek thing. Still ridiculously giddy and fighting back a grin, I made my way back and found my usual spot on the bench. Jackson was still talking to Coach.

“Feeling any pain?” Coach asked.

"No," Jackson said, shaking his head.

“What if I gave it a big ole punch? Would you feel any pain then?”

Jackson shrugged. "Maybe."

“Well just go out there and do your best. If it looks like you get into any pain-“ Coach started. I paused. WAIT, wait, wait, Jackass was playing? I shook my head. Stubbornness truly had no bounds.

Jackson cut Coach off mid-sentence. “Just keep playing?” He guessed. I smothered a snicker.

“Yeah, but if you can’t don’t worry. One of your teammates just said that he was worried about his captain.” Coach explained. Jackson scowled.

"Who?” He asked. Coach looked to the left, and we followed his gaze to see Danny talking to two other guys. On a side note, Danny is the most un-stereotypical and absolutely fabulous gay guy I have ever met. Why he and Jackson were friends, I had no idea.

Still, warmup was going pretty well (for those who were doing warmup - so not me, since I was on bench and was probably not going to play), when I felt a strong hand clap me on the shoulder. I turned to see me Dad.

"Hey, kid." He said. I grinned.

"Hey." I replied. Dad gave me a smile, and I felt some of my anxiety melt away in his presence.

“You think you might see some action tonight?” he asked.

I took a glance at Scott, who was running pylon drills on the far end. "Action? Maybe."

Soon, It was time for the match to begin. It was all going well and good until Jackson pushed Scott down when Scott found an opening to snag the ball, even though they were on the same team. I felt my inner wolf bristle at the display. Jackson then stole the first goal, challenging Scott. Scott seemed to be keeping it pretty under control for now, but I worried about how long it'd last. Jackass had made baiting Scott his life goal this game.

It got even worse when Allison and Lydia, who were in the stands, Raised a banner that said, "WE LUV U, JACKSON!!" I could literally feel Scott's frustration.

"Brutal...” I whispered, grimacing. Still watching Scott, I saw as he caught sight of the banner, huff, and stalk back to the starting position. I made another face. "This isn't good." I muttered. “I hope he’s okay,”

As the team was reconvening, I heard Jackass talking to the others.

“Only to me.” Jackson said.

“But what if he’s open?” another player asked. I immediately knew they were talking about Scott. I looked around and saw Derek, hiding in the shadows, but still watching the same conversation.
"Who’s captain? You or me?"

"Jackson, come on." Danny argued. "I just want to win."

"We will win." Jackson stated.

"But-


"Don’t pass to McCall." Danny admitted, looking down.

I scowled - one day, I would give Jackass what was coming for him - and turned my gaze back to Scott, who didn't seem to be doing that well, if the tightening of his grip on his stick was anything to go by. I made a fist and noticed that even my own control was slipping. The claws were out.

Taking a few deep breaths, I managed to calm myself. If I was losing it here, on the bench, then Scott really wasn't doing well.

Soon, the next set started. Scott thankfully, hadn't wolfed out yet. Derek was also keeping an eye on him from the shadows, and that made me feel a little better. I zoned out the game and found my attention moving to a conversation on the stands.

"Which one is Scott again?" A voice asked. Soon, I pinpointed it as Mr. Argent - Allison's dad.

"Number 11," said a voice that I knew was Lydia. "Also known as the only guy who hasn't caught a ball this entire game."

"I hope he's okay." Said another voice. That was Allison.

"I hope we're okay," said Lydia. I shot a glance at the scoreboard. She was right - we were down by two points and there was only five minutes left on the clock.

I saw the girls then hold up another sign, this one reading "JACKSON'S #1!" When Scott saw it, I noticed that he seriously upped his game. Immediately after the ball was dropped, Scott snagged it and raced towards the opposing team's goal. He darted, twirled, sidestepped and dogged all those who tried to stop him. It was incredible. He reached the goal and shot the ball straight in, pulling us closer to the other team's score. The whole thing lasted maybe twenty seconds, at most.

"Yes, that’s what I’m talking about!" Coach called. "Pass to McCall! Pass to McCall!"

As the teams set up for the final play, I heard the opposing team's captain strike a conversation with Jackass.

"What the hell is your guy on?" The player in green asked. I scowled. Yeah, if Scott kept playing like that - even if we needed those points, desperately - then people were going to notice. The stunts he sometimes pulled weren't possible at times, especially for a regular, human, player on a school team.

"I don't know, yet." Jackson bit out. Despite how potentially horrible this could be for us werewolves, the exchange still made me snicker. Jackass.. he was so close to the truth, yet so far. I don't think werewolf-ness counts as steroids, though it gives the same benefits without the side effects. Werewolf-ness came with it's own side effects. I let out a breath once I realized that my nerves were making me hysterical, and sharply reminded myself that Jackass suspecting steroids was not good. We had to somehow get him away from the truth and on the wrong trail, since
convincing him that *nothing* was going on was a moot point by now...

A sharp whistle signalled the start of the next set and I turned my attention back to the field. Scott *was* trying his best, but I could tell that his resolve was wavering. Nobody was passing to him, and that was getting on his nerves. I scowled and grit my jaw at the thought of Jackass again, bringing a hand to my face like I was thinking just in case my fangs were visible. That moron... his immature quest for glory was - in the worst-case scenario - going to push Scott over the edge and probably end in Jackson's death. Not that I didn't want to rip Jackass a new one at the moment, but he *was* a human being and killing someone was a horrible thing to do.

I blinked. *SHIT*, I was growling. Subconsciously. I cleared my throat and cut off the sound. At least nobody noticed. It was already a rather loud environment.

Jackson scored another goal, but then the other team scored a succession of three. Whatever lead we had, we were back down by two again. At one point, one of the opposing players were stopped by Scott, and Scott must have unconsciously flashed his eyes or growled or something, because the other player looked like he was going to wet himself and simply passed Scott the ball.

"Did the opposing team just pass us the ball?" Coach said to me. I snickered. Derek somehow heard from across the field and gave me the sink-eye. I stuck my tongue out at him. C'mon, It was funny! I turned back to Coach.

"Yeah Coach, I believe they just did." I snarked. I paused. Alright, maybe it was bad - because this meant that Scott's control was slipping even more. I looked at Scott, and saw that's face was contorted in an angry snarl. Turning back to Derek, I saw him giving me an 'I told you so' expression. I grimaced. Of course he'd notice it.

"Scott," I said under my breath, knowing that he'd heard me when his head turned briefly in my direction. "Stay calm. You can do this. You're not going to wolf out. Jackson's got nothing on you. We all know he's a jerk." I whispered. "Don't let it get to you."

He seemed to be listening, but his posture was still tense, rigid, taking in harsh breaths. I bit my lip and continued, "You're doing this for Allison, remember? Don't lose control - her dad is watching you." I kept my eye on him, and frantically hoped that he'd gotten the message...

Amazingly, Scott nodded. I saw his shoulders loosen as he found his anchor and reigned the wolf in. There were no more 'scare the other players shitless with wolf eyes' situations after that. Jackson hopefully, wouldn't get mauled to death.

I let out a long breath and leaned back. He'd passed the final test, but Scott's heart rate was still pretty crazy. I bit my lip in worry.

The game now continued - thankfully - without a hitch, with Beacon Hills finally gaining some momentum now that Scott was back in the play. Coach had overused Jackass' 'don't pass to Scott' rule after Scott's blitz goal. I cheered the best I could from the bench, and watched as Scott scored one more goal using his 'rush at the net ASAP' technique. It was a tie! I looked at the clock - we somehow still had time left. We could win this!

The final set started, and I watched as the ball passed back and forth between the teams. Nobody seemed to want to give up this final goal. Eventually, one of the opposing players actually tripped - and then Scott was right there, stealing the ball. He dodged and weaved once more, and then finally scored one last goal as the clock reached the 'ten seconds left' mark.

Since the timer was paused between a goal and the start of a new set, this meant that we still had ten
seconds left in the game to go. The teams reset, and the ball was dropped, and the clock sprung back to life. The other team was desperately pushing for a final goal, to end this in a tie, but the timer ran out all too soon. Beacon Hills was in the lead - by one goal.

The stands erupted in cheers as our home crowd went wild! I joined in, throwing my hands in the air and whooping in excitement. That was a fantastic game! Everyone was shouting an yelling in victory. Well - except for Lydia, who I noticed was politely clapping like the Queen incarnate she is.

I removed my helmet and ran to where Derek was, glomping him in a hug.

"Did you see that?" I said, breathless and grinning like a moron. "Scott stayed in control! We- we did it, we freakin' won!"

Derek smiled. "Alright. I guess you did. I won't kill him now." He teased. I bit my lip, my mind going straight to what happened under the bleachers.

"About earlier, was that-?" I paused, finding my courage that had seemingly chosen to desert me right then. "Was that for real? Like, do you want to, um..." I tried off, not exactly sure what to call the thing Derek and I had.

"Only if you want to." Derek said, meeting my eyes.

"Yes, yes! Totally and abso-fucking-lutely yes!"

"Okay." Derek actually grinned, and gave me a shy kiss on the lips. I froze, and the smart part of my brain shut down. The kiss lasted about five long, sweet seconds before he pulled away and studied me with a purely happy expression (that I thought was the most beautiful thing in the world). Then his lips quirked up in a smirk, and I realized that he probably found my blushing red and speechless face funny. "Okay. But we'll take it slow, I don't know how to do... this." He said, letting me out of our hug. I immediately knew that 'this' meant being in a relationship.

"Me neither." I said, leaning on him and finally regaining the ability to make a words that weren't unintelligible squeaks. "We'll figure it out." Then we settled into a comfortable silence and watched the after-game festivities, the shaking hands, congratulations, etc. A sudden though occurred to me, and I turned to Derek.

"Does this mean I get to call you my boyfriend?" I asked with a shit-eating grin. Derek groaned.

"Stiles!"

Later, I made my way back to the change room, where I walked right in on Allison and Scott making out. Right then and there, I almost turned around and walked back out before I realized that Allison was pulling away. She said some things to Scott - that I tried my very hardest not to hear - and then grabbed her bag and made her way out. She also noticed me trying to be invisible.

"Hi, Stiles." She said on her way out.

I nodded. "Hey, yeah." Then I walked towards Scott. He turned to me.
“I kissed her.” He said, clearly in dreamland.

“Yeah, I saw that.” I replied.

“She kissed me.” He continued, a huge, dopey grin finding its home on his face.

"Saw that too." I teased. “Pretty good huh?”

“I don’t know how, but I controlled it,” he said softly, still grinning. “Maybe I can do this. Maybe it really isn’t that bad.”

"Yeah," I agreed. "But maybe without as many close calls as this time."

"Thanks Stiles, for having my back out there."

"Well, all I did was talk to you. You would do the same for me…I’m guessing." I said, letting out a breath and bouncing on the balls of my feet. "But we’ll talk later. Listen - there was another attack. A trucker. But other evidence shows that the trucker was actually a hunter."

"A hunter?" Scott said, eyes wide.

"Yeah. Derek has a theory that the Alpha is going after hunters, but we kinda have no proof except that one case."

"Oh. Well, at least you have something." He said.

I sighed. "Yeah, but we kinda have no other leads until another person dies." Scott made a face.

"That sucks." He said. I nodded.

"Yeah"

I left him to finish packing up my gear and made my way outside. I told dad that I’d be coming home a bit late, since I had to drive Scott to his place first. It was only a partial lie. I found Derek leaning on the side of one of the bleachers, silent and easily unnoticed. He lifted a finger to his lips in the universal ‘quiet’ sign as I approached and pointed towards the field. I followed his gaze and saw Jackson, stalking to the centre of the (now empty) field with something I recognized as one of Scott’s gloves. He must have dropped it somewhere... Anyways, Jackass walked near one of the lights and studied the glove, which - OH SHIT - had holes at the tips of the fingers. Like, claw holes. I turned to Derek.

"This is bad!" I hissed. Derek nodded, watching the lone figure. His face stone cold.

"I know."

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**Another Unknown Variable**

Chapter Summary

(is what life feels like right now)

**ANOTHER UNKNOWN VARIABLE**

WHEN I WOKE UP SUNDAY MORNING, MY MOST IMMEDIATE THOUGHT WAS RELIEF. Total and utter relief because the big game last night had been a *success*. Nobody had gotten killed because Scott managed to stay in control, we'd won the game, and Derek had kissed me.

Derek had kissed me. Then he'd said that he wanted to try being in a relationship. He was adorably shy and kinda unsure about it too. Of course I said yes.

I grinned, rolled onto my back, and looked at the ceiling. It was too good to be true.

I was still mentally congratulating myself for being good-enough boyfriend material, in Derek's eyes. In my opinion, I'm really nobody special. I'm just... well, me, I guess. Average high school kid, who solves crime for a hobby, and accidentally got tried into a werewolf. Then my phone pinged.

I blearily dragged my still-half-asleep arm to the bedside table and grabbed the device. Huh. Derek had texted me.
I grimaced. He was right. I was sixteen and Derek was what? Twenty-one? Dad would kill Derek, then ground me for life if we had sex, he found out. I was minor... and this might be the teeniest bit illegal. I quickly sent back a message.

Sourwolf

We need to set down rules.

About having a relationship.

Because you're unfortunately underage.
We need to set down rules.

About having a relationship.

Because you're unfortunately underage.


1. No sex until you turn 18.

2. I need to somehow get your dad's permission.

3. You need to want to.

YES, I WANT YOU.

And yeah, those make sense. Might want to wait a bit for my dad - he thinks you're a delinquent.

U USED AN EMOJI! I am so proud of u m.
I glared at the screen for a moment, because this was crazy. Braking into the morgue? That's the kinda thing I came up with, not Derek. Derek is supposed to be the responsible adult. I guess I must be rubbing off on him or something... but yeah, I was clearly going to help. He'd never manage without me - Derek's acting skills are shit.
HE WAS?? I ran to my dad's room and checked his window and, sure enough, there was Derek's sleek black Camaro. I sighed and face palmed. No warning with this dude... Anyways, it was lucky that my dad had decided to sleep in the basement - where his at-home office was set up. The couch down there was a pull-out, and he must have just clocked out at 2:00 AM or something. I'd berate him on getting more sleep, but he'd sacrificed work time to come to the game yesterday and I was thankful for that. It'd be wrong to get upset at him now.

I winced at the thought of having to explain why Derek Hale was picking me up. Speaking of Derek, I sent him another text:
As fast as I could, I washed up and got dressed. Racing down the stairs, I grabbed my lucky read hoodie from the coat rack and shuffled into my shoes. I shot a longing look at the kitchen - there'd be no time for breakfast - and then suddenly remembered my dad. Oh, right. I had to tell him where I was going. Shit.

I raced back upstairs, grabbed my sticky note pad and the first pen I could find, and scribbled a message:

Going to the library 4 research, will be back. Sometime. Not sure how long this will take. Breakfast is leftovers from dinner, do NOT go to McDonalds. I will know if you do. Love you.
- Stiles.

I stuck the note on the fridge right at eye-level, where I know he wouldn't miss it. Then I raced out the door and made my way to Derek's car. The door was open, and I slid into the passenger side seat.

"Good morning," I greeted. Derek smiled, then leaned over and gave me a quick kiss on the forehead. I felt my face heat up.

"Good morning." He replied. Then he shifted the car into drive and pulled out of the curb and onto the road. I watched for a moment as my house faded away, then turned to my - boyfriend?

"As nice as it is to see you too, this is not how I expected to spend this morning." I teased. Derek huffed.

"There's food in the back, if you want." He said. I perked up. Really? Turning my head around, I saw a subway bag resting on the back seat. I grabbed it.
"Huh. Thanks. What about you?" I asked, while unwrapping the sandwich.

"I already ate. It's all yours. I wasn't sure what you wanted so I just got a Ham sub." He said, a faint rose blush colouring his cheeks. Cute.

"Thanks." I said. Then, a wicked idea found root in my mind.

Once the paper had been cleared off the sandwich, I took a bite - DAMN, Derek had good taste in subs - and moaned appreciatively. Then I internally snickered as Derek's face got even redder. I made another noise and watched with increasing glee as Derek filed to fight the blush. He glared at me once he realized that I was doing it on purpose, and I reluctantly stopped making the lewd noises.

"Stiles." Derek muttered. I snickered.

"Sorry. Actually no, that'd be lying." I said. "You're cute when you blush." Derek just pouted. I turned back to the road. "Do you even know where the Hospital is?" I asked.

He nodded. "Yes."

"Well. Alright. What's your plan on getting in?" I asked. Derek shrugged.

"I'll distract the guards. You open the door. I say I have to go to the washroom, then we sneak in." He said. I thought about it. That wasn't really a plan - more like the idea of plan - but it could work. Somehow. Wait... except for one thing.

"How do you expect to distract the secretary?" I asked.

"By talking to her." Derek said, like it was obvious. I made a face. That was the 'one thing.'

"Your acting skills are shit." I told him, bluntly. "What are you going to say, even?" Derek scowled, then paused, and I knew I'd got him.

"...something." He eventually muttered. I shook my head.

"Yeah, no. That's not going to work. I'll be the one who asks the questions. The people there know me. They know I go snooping in my Dad's cases all the time. They'd suspect you." I explained. Yeah, that'd be a much better plan. The worst they could do is tell my Dad, and he was probably expecting me to visit the morgue at least once this case.

Derek though about it for a moment, then finally gave in. "Fine," He conceded. "Don't fail."

I nodded. "I don't plan to."

Eventually, we made it to the Hospital. The morgue was just the place where they kept the dead bodies for autopsy and storage before burial. Derek parked the car a block away in some shady back alley, then we entered - at different times, of course. Derek went first, and walked straight in through the door. I followed a minute later, but lingered outside in the lobby to keep watch.

While looking around, I saw Lydia sitting in the corner. Huh. Well, I assumed she was here for Jackson's physical re-evaluation (for his hurt shoulder) after yesterday's game. This was a good time as any to maybe get to know her a little, especially since she was Allison's best friend, and if I was going to hang out with silicon, there's be a high chance I'd run into her too. I made my way over there.
“Hey Lydia.” I said. She ignored me. Rude.

I looked around, and saw there was an attendant who’d also called her name. Lydia ignored her too. Hmm... Oh.

"Wait, are you on your phone right now?" I asked. This got her attention.

"Oh, hang on," She said, taking out an earbud. "I'm sorry, what?"

“I was just wondering if - you wanted to - we could have a chance to get to try and know each other.” I explained. "You know since Scott and Allison are kind of a thing now. She’s your friend, I’m his friend, it might make sense to try and... well, be friendly.” She gave me a confused stare.

“Oh, uh, who are you again?” She asked. I wilted. Am I really that low on the social food chain?

“Stiles.” I deadpanned.

“Right, well, I’m kind of busy right now. Do you mind if we talk later?” She said, then got her bags and head towards the attendant, who repeated her name.

"Nope." I said, moving out of the way, "Don’t mind at all. I’ll just be-" I stopped as I noticed she'd stuck her earbud back in. "...and you don't care." I muttered, then sighed as I moved away. She really was an ice queen, and I hoped that she didn't hate me outright. That would make lunchtimes really uncomfortable.

I was still waiting for Derek to return when Jackson and Lydia came back to the lobby. Jackass was complaining about painkillers for his arm, and how they weren't working. Then Lydia suggested that he could always just take more than the doctor prescribed. I shook my head - bad idea. But if he wanted to be stupid, I wasn't gonna stop him. Then the two of them started to snuggle of all things, and banter back and forth. I narrowed my eyes. It wasn't like I had a crush on Lydia anymore, but it was my firm belief that Jackson was bad for any girl. I was so focused on eavesdropping on them while pretending to look through a pamphlet that I jumped when Derek seemed to suddenly appear behind me.

"Find anything?" I asked, turning to him. He shook his head.

"You were right - the scent was stale, but still strong enough that I could memorize it. I can probably pick it up again in the woods." He explained.

I nodded, "Okay. Let's go do that now?"

"Hm." He made a noise (that I assumed meant 'yes'), then stalked out of the hospital with me following. On our way out, we passed Jackson and Lydia (Derek was a fast walker) and I noticed Jackson trying to glare lasers into my skull, but I ignored him. Let him be mad he wants to, that douche. My gut told me that Jackson was only interested because he wanted to gain whatever "power" Scott had on the field. I wasn't going to let him find out.

We went to Derek's house first, dropped off our clothes and full-shifted into wolves. Apparently, we can shift in skintight clothing only - anything else would get torn to shreds. When I asked Derek
why, he simply shrugged and said "magic." I stopped questioning it after that, just settled for being thankful that if we did shift back we wouldn't be completely naked. Then a though occurred to me and I grilled Derek on why he hadn't told us that the fist night. I would have saved myself from a lot of embarrassment. He just grinned and told me that he did, but I was to far gone at the moment to listen. I could understand that, and I grudgingly conceded. My wolf still didn't like losing.

As wolves, we tracked the scent rather deep into the forest, and it led us past the site of he las attack. The police had cleaned up the area, and the scent of gasoline was almost over powering. Did human know that their roads reeked of tar and carrion and death? Not pleasant. I think roads may have become my least favourite place, as a wolf. We also, unfortunately, lost the scent at the highway. Derek wasn't happy.

However, by a stroke of luck, he somehow managed to pick it up again on the far side of the road, and we were off. This trail led us a long ways, through a deep ravine and up several ridges. I hadn't been to this place of the woods at all, and we were really far form beacon hills. I estimated that we'd traveled at least six kilometres or more.

"Where are we?" I asked, when Derek had finally paused. He huffed.

"Still in the preserve." Derek answered. "The scent disappears here..."

I pointed my muzzle in the direction that the scent trail had been leading us, where another ridge barred us from seeing any further. "What's over there?"

"A... mental institution." Derek said. "My uncle, Peter, is there."

I paused. "Wait, could he be the alpha?" I asked. Derek scoffed.

"He survived the fire, but was horribly burned and ... his mental state is... essentially that of a vegetable." He bit out, voice sharp and cutting, "If he was human, he would've died."

"Isn't it a good thing that he lived?" I asked, trying to catch the silver lining. Derek snarled.

"That's not living - it's existing. There's a difference. It would have been better if he'd died." He growled. Oh.. well, now I felt like an insensitive douche.

I touched my nose to his cheek in an instinctive gesture of comfort. "I'm sorry." I whispered. Derek just shook his head, as if dismissing the moment of weakness.

"You didn't know. It's.. a sore subject." He muttered.

"then I won't bring it up again." I promised, then paused as my human self added his two cents, "Well, not until you're ready. It's bad... to keep things bottled up."

Derek turned to me and licked my face. "I know." He said. "I'll tell you, someday. Not today." I blinked. My wolf told me that this meant I was forgiven.

Derek stepped away and shook himself. "We should head back." He stated.

I nodded, and padded back in the direction we'd came. "Yeah, let's go."

Together we ran back through the old forest, following our own scents to find our way. We entered the preserve, made it to Derek's house, shifted back and then realized that it was 4:00 PM. We'd been gone a long time. Yikes.
Derek dropped me off at the library, and while still in his car (with the tinted windows) gave me a shy kiss goodbye - that I returned, eagerly - and it set set my blood on fire. Pulling apart, I only waited a moment to catch my breath before leaning in to steal another one. That was mistake (of the best kind!) - because I didn't get out of the car until 15 minutes later, hair mussed and with a huge grin on my face. Derek Hale was a damn good kisser, and I was so lucky that he liked (loved?) me.

That being said, Scott was right, and I'd never be able to fault him again without being a huge-ass hypocrite, because making out was awesome. Light and fiery passionate and burning, the start of a path that could lead to so much more, but a path we couldn't take. Not until I turned eighteen, anyways. Derek's car scored extra points because of the newly tinted windows. It'd be a real disaster if Dad was patrolling and saw us making out... Derek would be dead the next day. Probably. Dad was terrifying when he needed to be.

The next day - Monday - at school, I was subject to Scott explaining a rather disturbing (his words, not mine) dream. In his dream, Scott and Allison had been sucking each other's faces behind a school bus, but Scott had lost control and wolfed out. In front of Allison, scaring her and -

"So you killed her?" I asked. Scott shook his head.

"I don't know." He muttered. "I just woke up. I was sweating like crazy and couldn't breathe. I've never had a dream where I woke up like that before."

"Really?" I asked, grinning, and thought about what I remembered of my dreams involving Derek. "I have. Usually ends a little differently."

Scott rolled his eyes. "A, I meant that I never had a dream that felt that real before and B, never give me that much detail of you in bed again."

I was about to snicker at that last comment, but then realized that what Scott had experienced was a nightmare that played on the one thing he feared the most. I sighed. "It's okay Scott. Honestly, with what's happened to us, things could be a lot worse."


"You mean, dreams where I think about killing people, almost kill people or simply kill people in various gruesome ways, like ripping out there innards and relishing in the feel of their dead flesh and warm blood beneath my claws? Or biting into a tender neck and savouring how easily my fangs rip into flesh and bone? Or breaking every bone in their body just to see if I simply can?" I stopped when I noticed that Scott was getting a little green. Huh. Those were all things I'd seen in video games, but maybe I'd gone to far.... "Nope. Can't say I have." I finished.

"Lucky you." He responded dryly. I sighed.

"Look, I'm essentially in the dark as much as you are. Save for what Derek got around to teaching us the other night, it's mostly stuff we have to figure out for ourselves. Like fining an anchor." I said. I've mentioned it before, but an anchor is the thing that keeps a werewolf human. It's the one thing that splits you from going truly feral. My own anchor was my dad - if I lost control, then I might hurt him, and I would not let that happen. Pain was like a default anchor. Pain increases one's awareness,
and often clears one's mind from the 'rage-haze' that settles when a wolf loses control through anger. At least, that's what Derek told us.

"Well, we should get him to tell us more then." Scott stated. I nodded.

"Good idea. Try not to get your throat ripped out the next time you see him - he's still sour about the fact that you got him stuck in jail." I teased. "Even if it was for like, two days."

Scott made a face. "You are a horrible person," He informed me.

I grinned, letting my canines show. "I know."

We then exited the main building and came upon a school bus surrounded by caution tape, that had investigators with blue surgeon's gloves inside it, and a police car parked near by. A school bus that had an interior that was covered in blood, at least partly human blood, from what I could smell, with a dented side and ripped door - like something had tried to force it's way in, and had succeeded.

A cold, dread-filled feeling filled my chest. Scott's dream, it had taken place behind a bus, and he thought he'd killed Allison... Shit, shit shit shit shit shit. I looked back at the scene, taking in the medical staff who were usually called in for an autopsy.

"Oh damn," I whispered, letting out a breath I didn't even know I was holding. Then I became aware that Scott wasn't with me - he had run back inside. Something was wrong.

I caught up to him in the hall - he had his phone out and was sending rapid text messages. Scott stalked up and down the halls, with me following, ignoring the other students rushing to nest period.

“She’s not answering my texts.” He said, worry clear in his voice. 'She' was clearly Allison. I shook my head. Worst-case scenario aside, it was probably just a coincidence.

"I'm sure she's fine. It's all just a coincidence." I told him, trying to get him to calm down. Scott's pulse had already rapidly picked up, and if he shifted here it was all over. “Just an amazing coincidence.” I repeated, but this time I knew it was to reassure myself. It was futile, though - I'd already established that supernatural elements did not seem to deal in coincidences. There was a reason for everything.

“Just help me find her okay?” Scott pleaded, getting more agitated by the minute. He probably though the killed her. A tiny little voice piped up: well, he might have- I smothered it. NO! No way.

This was Scott. Scott, who wouldn't even let me kill spiders. He simply couldn't have killed Allison. Scott wasn't a killer.

But he tried to kill YOU, that voice repeated. What's to say he didn't try to kill Allison?

Yet again, I ignored it. This was not what I needed right now. I turned back to Scott, who was now leaning his head against his locker, a pained expression on his face, and made a decision.

“Scott, I know what you’re thinking and let me tell you right now that you didn’t.” I said, hoping my voice didn't betray my own inner doubt.

“How do you know?!" He asked, sounding broken.

"Um..." I though, hard, "Because..." Because what? ...oh, that's it! "Because I don't smell death on you. Or blood. Or guts. Or any human remains." I explained. Score! "I've noticed that the scent of death tends to cling to the killer." It wasn't a lie - what little of the Alpha's scent I had caught
certainly smelt like death.

I then realized what I had said, and let out a sigh of relief. So Scott hadn't killed her. Then that insolent voice returned, *That still doesn't mean that he didn't ATTACK her. What about the alpha? What if he maimed her? Tore a limb off? Dying might have been a mercy...*

I was jolted back into reality by the sound of Scott punching a locker, denting it. He stormed off, so dead-set on finding out what happened that he didn't notice when he bumped into... Allison?

Wait, WHAT?

"Oh." She said, startled. "You scared me."

Scott looked down at her, love and relief colouring his gaze. "You're okay," He breathed. From my place, where I was leaning against the wall, I felt the tension drain out of my body as I realized the worst-case scenario had just been avoided. Whoo... too much stress for a Monday.

I watched as Allison bent down to pick up some of the books she'd dropped. "When my heart starts beating again, yeah." She said. Then looked back at Scott, who was watching her. "What?"

"Just happy to see you." Scott explained. Allison smiled.

Suddenly, I heard the telltale static of the school's shitty PA system. I turned to the speaker just as the voice began speaking: "Attention students, this is your principal. I know you're all wondering about the incident that occurred last night at one of our buses. But while the police work to determine what happened, classes will precede as scheduled." Once the message was finished, I turned back to the couple.

"See you at lunch?" Allison was asking.

"Yeah," Scott said, now grinning like a lovestruck loon. Allison then noticed me when I made my way over.

"Hey, Stiles." She said as she left, heading to class. I gave her a friendly wave, then turned back to Scott.

"See? She’s fine. Coincidence." I said, even though deep inside I knew I didn't believe it. Scott nodded, accepting it for what it looked like - a coincidence - and we made our way to class.

On our way to said class, we passed the hall in which Scott had destroyed the locker. I had to suppress several giggles... this was too good to be true. That locker? Guess what - it turned out to be JACKSON'S. I bit my lip and turned to Scott, who was looking at the scene with an incredulous expression.

Jackass himself was studying the locker with a look that was part anger and part disbelief. Unfortunately, we were staring for too long and he noticed us.

“What are you looking at asswipes?” He sneered.

Fighting back laughter, we grinned and hurried to our next class.
Unfortunately, said next class was chemistry. *With Mr. Harris.*

As we settled down, I could almost hear the class collectively groan. You might be wondering - why such a negative reaction? Let me assure you that it certainly wasn't an exaggeration. This class would suck.

Long story short, Harris is a douche who has a legit flagpole stuck up his ass and probably doesn't even know that 'fun' is even a thing. It'd be fine if I didn't have to see him - I don't make a habit of hating teachers - but Harris taught chemistry. That was very, very unfortunate because chemistry *had* been one of my favourite subjects. Until Harris happened, of course.

He also had it out for me and *despised* me and everything I did. There was no getting on the 'good side' of this one. Why the hell would he even become a teacher if he hated teaching this much?

Since I wasn't even going to bother to try to pay attention, I let my thoughts turn back to the bloodied bus. It was *probably* the alpha. I thought back to the night Derek and I investigated the other overturned bus - we'd smelt blood, but there was no body, even before the police had gotten there. It always struck me as odd, but now it seemed like that attack on whoever was driving the bus had failed. Therefore, the Alpha had to attack again.

But somehow, Scott had been involved. There were no coincidences - I was sure of it. I turned to Scott, who'd been trying to get my attention.

"Maybe it was my blood on the door." Scott whispered, when Harris wasn't looking. I poked my cheek with a pen as I thought.

“Could’ve been animal blood? Maybe you caught a rabbit or something?” I asked.

And did what?” Scott frowned.

I shrugged. "Ate it."

Scott looked horrified. "Raw?" He gasped.

I gave him a mild glare. “No, you stopped to bake it in a little werewolf oven!” I said, sarcasm lacing my words. “I don’t know, it’s *you* that can’t remember.”

“Mr. Stilinski,” Harris called from the from, pinning me with a glare. “If that’s your idea of a hushed whisper than you should take the headphones out of your ear. Maybe you and Mr. McCall would benefit from some time apart.”

"No. No thanks." I replied scathingly. What the hell? I didn't have headphones in!

Harris made us split up anyways. What an ass. I grumbled as I moved to my new seat, then shot a glance at Scott. Can't say I envy him - Harris had stuck Scott right in from of Jackson, who was giving him a death glare from behind. Suddenly, someone from the front window spoke up.

"Hey,” He said, "I think they found something!" He was talking about the bus, of course, and we all crowded around the windows, trying to catch a glimpse of what was going on. Harris tried to get everyone to sit down again, but of course no one listened.

I watched, my mouth set in a determined line, as the police pulled out a battered body from the bus. Those injuries looked pretty bad... I briefly hoped that this was the Alpha, then dismissed it. It was probably some poor dude caught in the crossfire.
"Stiles," Scott hissed. I turned to him. He looked pale, and his eyes were wide in fear. "That’s no rabbit."

"Scott-" I protested, then turned back to the window as the class let out a collective gasp. The guy had somehow jumped up and startled the workers. He then began conversing with the EMS nurses. I frowned - that wasn't normal. It was rare to wake up so soon after an attack that severe...

"Stiles," Scott repeated, watching the scene in horror, his voice barely a whisper. "I did that."

I met Scott again at the cafeteria, for lunch. We'd gotten the usual $5.00 meal-deal that was food plus a drink. While walking to out usually empty table, Scott spoke up.

"It wasn’t a dream." He said, sitting down and setting his tray on the table. "I attacked that guy."

"We don’t know that," I said as I found a seat across from him. "You had a dream, that’s all we know."

"Unless I did. Wait, is his blood on me? Or, at the bus, was that my blood? You know how my blood smells like, right?" He asked.

I shrugged. "Not really, and I don't smell any blood on you. Or me. The blood on the bus was at least partly human, but that's all I can tell." Scott frowned and looked down.

"But it was human blood. I attacked a person." He whimpered. I shook my head.

"We don't know. The blood smelled human... ish. I don't know - it's not like I regularly visit dead human corpses." I said.

"What about the body in the woods?" Scott asked. "That thing reeked, even when we were human."

"Uh, no." I cut him off. "Laura Hale was a werewolf. She smells different. It's... hard to determine." I explained. "I can always text Derek and ask him to check it out."

Scott eyed me. "You have Derek's number?"

"Duh. I got it because I needed some way to contact him in case you lost control." I said.

"Oh." He paused. "Wait, why is that? You didn't have problems with control, but I did."

I shrugged again. "Maybe it has something to do with personality. My best guess is it's because we get angry in different ways."

Scott looked confused. "What the hell does that mean?" He asked.

"Um.. It's how, when you get angry, you burn. You rage. Throw a tantrum, hit things, etcetera." I explained. Scott looked offended, but didn't contradict me. I continued, "And when I get angry, I freeze. Push my emotions aside. Ice cold, and then I use my words to hurt others. It's... hard to explain, but people get angry in different ways, and that might be why staying in control is hard for you. You're a physical person - you like actions more than words. I'm reverse."
Scott nodded, and I could see that he got at least part of it. "Yeah. That makes sense. So learning to be patient might help me with control?" He asked.

I nodded. "Maybe."

Scott then shook his head. "I can't go out with Allison, it's too dangerous."

I winced, knowing I'd end up paying later for saying this now, but what the two of them had was special, and I didn't want Scott to lose that. "No, don't cancel. You can't just cancel your whole life. We'll figure this out." I argued.

"Figure what out?" A new voice asked, and I turned to see Lydia come over and take a seat. I studied her with a raised eyebrow. What was she doing here? Then I blinked and mentally hit myself as I realized she was still waiting for an answer.

"Oh, uh... homework." I stammered, then leaned over to Scott. "Why's she sitting with us?" I asked.

Scott simply shrugged in response. We were at loss, until Allison also came over, and then somehow the rest of the 'popular' clique migrated to our table as well. They shuffled for a bit, trying to pick a spot in unknown territory, before finally settling. Jackson even made one of the kids move from their spot next to Lydia because he didn't (in Danny's words) 'want them staring at Lydia's coin slot.' I looked over there for a second when I heard the vulgar phrase, but then turned back to my phone and snickered quietly.

"Hey, what was up with the guy in the bus?" Danny piped up. "I heard they're saying it was some type of animal attack. Probably a cougar."

Danny is tall, handsome and caucasian. He's like the one openly gay person on the lacrosse team. Nobody bullies him about it though, since Jackson's his best friend. Danny has tan skin, brown eyes, black hair and is actually super nice. I'm pretty sure I've mentioned before that I'm at loss to how exactly Jackass and Danny became friends.

"I heard mountain lion," said Jackson, replying to Danny's query about the bloody bus.

"A cougar is a mountain lion," Lydia said in her faux 'I'm stupid' voice. "Isn't it?" Jackson raised and eyebrow. I took a drink, then made a face when I heard her comment. I don't get why Lydia always tried to play dumb around people. She was a genius, and brilliant, and had a sharp wit, and I didn't know why she wanted to show another version of her to the masses. In truth, it kinda made me mad. Just a little.

Then I noticed the way Lydia nervously looked at Jackson, like she was checking something, and frowned. Hm... I had the sinking suspicion that she played dumb so he didn't look stupid in front of her. I thought about it, then internally snorted - everyone looks somewhat stupid in front of Lydia. She's just got that kind of aura. Still pondering this, I let my attention return to the main conversation.

"Who cares?" Jackson was saying, dismissive. "The guy was probably some homeless tweaker that was going to die anyway." I re-checked my phone, and saw that the main news page for Beacon Hills had finally loaded. School WIFI sucked.

"Actually," I interrupted, still half-reading the article. "I think I just found out who it is. Check it out." I turned my phone so they could see the livestream. The first bit showed my dad talking to a reporter, then a picture of the guy floated across the screen, with a name - Garrison Meyers.

Scott's eyes went wide. "Wait, I know this guy!" He exclaimed. All our gazes snapped to him.
"You do?" I asked. He nodded.

"Yeah, back when I lived with my dad. He was the bus driver." He explained. I bit my lip. Why would Scott attack a former bus driver? That's also assuming that the attacker was Scott and not the mad Alpha.

"Can we talk about something a bit more fun please?" Lydia asked, changing the topic. "Like, where we’re going tomorrow night?" Allison looked over at her with a confused expression. Lydia sighed, then elaborated. "You said that you and Scott were hanging out tomorrow night, right?"

I blinked. This was news to me... I watched as Scott turned back to Allison, who looked a little embarrassed.

"Um, we were thinking about what we were going to do." She explained.

Lydia scoffed. "Well, I’m not sitting home again watching lacrosse videos!" She shot a loaded look in Jackson's direction, "So if the four of us are hanging out, we’re doing something fun."

After Lydia's statement, the rest of us adopted expressions of varying discomfort. Jackson looked like he'd eaten a lime. I would have laughed, but I was also uneasy with what Lydia was clearly plotting.

"Hanging out?" Scott asked, unsure, and looked once more at Allison, who bit her lip and continued to sip her water quietly. "Like, the four of us? You want to hang out like us and them?" I grimaced as I realized Scott was in a real shitty situation. Say yes, and have to deal with Jackson and Lydia during what was supposed to be (I assume) a private date... but say no, and he'd hurt Allison's feelings. Yeah, this sucked - for Scott. As a spectator, it was actually kinda funny.

"Yeah." Allison replied, caving under the pressure of three expectant stares. "I guess. Sounds fun."

You know what else sounds fun?" Jackson asked, finally having enough of the tense atmosphere. "Stabbing myself in the face with this fork." I blinked. What? I re-played that last bit. Oh, actually... YES! Yes, yes, yes, he totally should. I wanted to clap him on the back - he's finally come up with a good idea.

Lydia, unfortunately, pried the fork (that could have been our salvation) out of his fingers. "How about bowling? You love to bowl."

"Yeah, with actual competition." He whined.

"How do you know we're not actual competition?" Allison teased, turning to Scott. "You can bowl, right?" She asked.

Oh my god, this was too good! Scott, actually, can't bowl for shit. But I knew he wouldn't admit that to his girlfriend, especially in front of Jackson. Since the rest of them seemed to have forgotten I existed, I was (mostly) content to lean back and watch it all unfold. However, this was now about to go downhill, real fast...


Jackson perked up from his usually lazy position. "Is that sort-of a yes?" He challenged.

"Yes." Scott quickly lied. "In fact, I’m a great bowler."

I wanted to smack him. Did he not realize that he'd ultimately make a huge idiot out of himself? But I didn't. Scott had dug his grave... But I decided to save him, because he was my best friend.
“Are you sure you’re up for it Jackson?” I said, my tone light but still intimidating. “I mean, wouldn’t want anything else to happen to that arm of yours.” I paused. Let that settle in... “Not that I wouldn’t mind.”

I watched Jackson clench his jaw. Shit. I think I just might have made it worse....

I caught up to Scott in the hallways once again, during the break between third and last period.

"You're a terrible bowler." I deadpanned, adjusting my pace to walk beside him.

“I know!” Scott groaned. “I’m such an idiot.”

“Yeah, it was like watching a car wreck." I snarked. "First it turned into that whole group date thing. Then, out of nowhere, that phrase just had to rear its ugly head.”

“Hanging out.” Scott agreed, dejected.

“Yeah that." I agreed. "You don’t hang out with ‘hot girls’. I know that I wouldn’t want to hang out with Lydia.” Make out, sure, but with Derek. I didn't have to worry about girls anymore - I'd found myself a man.. Whoah, whoa, whoa, stay focused, Stiles! I shook my head and continued. “But still hanging out, that’s like death. You might as well be the gay best friend. You and Danny could start hanging out.”

“How is this even happening?" Scott despaired. “I either killed or attacked a guy.”

I didn't pay attention to that. I was thinking about my own gay-ness, even if it was for only Derek. "I don’t think Danny likes me very much." I said, pulling the first thought that came to mind. Scott made a face, but then chose to ignore me.

“I ask Allison on a date and now we’re hanging out.” He continued. I frowned. Well then, if he wanted to play this game...

“Am I not attractive to gay guys?” I asked, pretending to ignore Scott, but also paying attention enough so I saw that my 'random' topic was grossing him out. "Well, he did give me that rather thick stick during practice."

Scott shook his head, trying very hard to ignore what I said. Was it just me or did he look a little green? “I make first line, then the team captain wants to destroy me,” he ranted, then paused to check the time on his phone. “And now I’m going to be late for work!” He said, then speed walked towards the exit.

"Wait, Scott - am I not attractive to gay guys!?” I called, just to see his reaction - which turned out to be a visible full-body shudder.

As soon as he passed the exit doors, I couldn't hold it in. I ended up leaning agains a wall and laughing like a maniac, with the other students looking at me like I was crazy. I paid them no mind. I probably was crazy - but the best kind of crazy. But also, Scott's freakin' reaction! That was too funny.
Just thinking about how he'd turned green at the innuendo sent me into another round of laughter.

When I got home, the first thing I noticed was that Dad's car was actually in the driveway. I parked my Jeep carefully beside it and made my way inside. After school, I had immediately gone to the library to pick up several books on cryptology, the supernatural, werewolves and... meditation. I planned to show the thing to Scott, but well, it'd probably be easier to read it first and explain it all to him later. I'd also stopped by the preserve and picked up several wolfsbane flowers.

Once I'd said hello to my dad and made it up to my room, it only took fifteen minutes before Derek stuck his head through the window.

"Hello." He said, gently stepping inside and greeting me with a kiss. I responded eagerly, and it was a long while (to me, anyways) before we finally pulled apart.

"Hi." I replied, breathless. Derek sat on my bed and studied the various old-looking supernatural books and the few meditation ones.

"What's all this?" He asked.

"Research." I told him. "Not that I'm not totally thrilled that you're here, are you sure it's safe? My dad's still home."

"Scott came to my place today." He told me. I raised an eyebrow.

"Why?" I asked. "Also, keep your voice low. I don't want him to hear."

"Your dad is watching football." He informed me, but listened and talked in a hushed tone. "Your friend wanted to know if he was going to hurt someone."

"What did you tell him?" I carefully thumbed through one of the older texts, studying the picture of the wendigo.

"Yes." Derek said flatly. "He will hurt people. You need to stop him."

I groaned, leaning back into his strong chest. "Why do I have to stop him? Why can't you do that?"

He snorted. "I could, but he doesn't listen."

"No arguments there." I agreed.

"He wanted to know what happened last night." Derek continued.

I looked up at him. "Do you know?" I asked.

"I have a suspicion." He clarified. "Scott will tell you what he needs to do."

I rolled my eyes. "Why can't you just tell me?" I didn't want to wait, dammit! Or hear it from Scott. Hearing it from Derek sounded much better.

"I don't want to. You'll find out anyways." He teased.
"I should call you Jerk-wolf instead." I huffed.

All of a sudden, I heard the tell-tale creak of someone walking up the stairs. Dad was coming, and he'd stepped on stair #2. Big mistake.

I turned to Derek, who nodded. He'd heard it to. Time to go.

"Go," I hissed, gesturing to my window. Derek moved quickly, opening the glass pane and quickly moving outside. I lost sight of him then, but I assumed he was sitting on the tree right outside. Or somewhere. I shut the window, then moved back on my bed, making it look like I was in the middle of research.

And just in time, too. The door opened and dad stuck his head in. I held my breath.

"Hey." I greeted, Dad frowned.

"Were you talking to someone?" He asked. Shit. Shit shit shit.

"Uh, no. Unless I was talking to myself. Which I also wasn't doing." I lied.

"It's just you up here, right?" Dad pressed.

I faked a frown. "Yeah, why?" I asked.

Dad shook his head. "Nothing. Just a feeling. What are you doing here, anyways?"

"Research," I told him flatly. "Middle-ages stuff for history."

"Oh. Alright then." He backed away.

"Hey, did they find anything about the bus attack?" I asked, changing the topic. It was about time I bugged him about it anyways...

"Only that it was an animal attack, like the others. They suspect cougar, but they always go for the kill. This victim survived." He said, sounding weary. I narrowed my eyes.

"And what do you think happened?"

My Dad's mouth was set in a thin line. "Wolf. Maybe a stray pack wandered into the area or something. The other's don't agree." He admitted. I nodded. Dad was so close to the truth.. As bad as this could be, I couldn't help but feel proud of him. He was the best Sheriff this town had seen.

"It could be a rabid animal. A sick one, driven mad or something." I added, deciding to help him a little.

Dad nodded. "Maybe. By the way, Scott was at the hospital."

He was injured? "What for?" I asked.

"Not him. He wanted to check on his mom, I think." Dad explained.

"Scott worries about her." I agreed, but I knew that he'd probably gone - at least partially - to check on the man he suspected he'd attacked.

"Yeah. It's not easy." Dad said. "By the way, there's a curfew tonight, so I expect you to stay inside. I don't want to get a call from the station saying they caught you outside."
A curfew? I nodded, since I currently had no plans involving going out. "Sure. Does it look like I'm gonna be going anywhere?" I asked.

Dad gave me a wry smile. "I know you, Stiles. No sneaking out."

"If I do go out, I'll be back by nine. Promise." I assured. Dad didn't buy it.

"I should probably lock you in." He admitted. "But I won't. I'm trusting you to be back by curfew."

"I will, Dad. I've got work - see." I gestured to the books. "No Stiles outside. Hey, are you working tonight?"

Dad nodded. "Yeah."

"Okay." I acknowledged, then I looked back to the book I had opened, studying the sketch of a yeti. Dad got the hint.

"See you, kiddo. Sorry for disturbing." He said, then moved out of my room and started to shut the door.

"It's fine. Be safe!" I called, then heard the door click shut. I set the book on my bed and let out a long breath. Whoooo... that was a close one.

Once I was sure he'd gone back downstairs, I moved back to the window and opened it, stuck my head out and fully expected Derek to be lounging on the tree branches, eavesdropping on our conversation. But... there was nobody there. I shook my head.

Stupid, impatient, Sourwolf. He'd left.

Well, at least my dad didn't catch him. I don't know how I'd explain that one.

Then my phone rang. I picked it up and checked the ID - it was Scott. I slid the green icon and placed the device to my ear.

"Hey, buddy. What's up?" I said.

"Stiles! I know what I have to do to remember what happened on the bus!" Scott said on the other side, sounding breathless. Oh. Okay, I guess this meant I didn't have to wait too long to find out what Derek had refused to tell me.

"What?" I asked.

"Just meet me at my house, and don't take forever to get here please." He answered, then cut the call. I looked at the now-dark screen, thinking. Then I made a decision.

Sorry, Dad. Change of plans.
"Alright." I hissed as Scott and I finally pulled into the school parking lot. I’d gone to his house, and he’d explained that Derek told him (although, by how he said it, it was less “told” and more like “implied”, but anyways..) how to remember what he’d done the night of the attack. I turned to look at my best friend, who was scanning the lot, alert, and his mind elsewhere. “Hey, Scott.” I repeated.

He blinked. “Huh. Uh, what?” He asked. I sniggered. Spacing out, huh? It was probably the bus murder...

“C’mon, man, stay focused! It’s usually me who has the focus issues.” I teased.

Scott grimaced. “Sorry, my mind is…. elsewhere.”

My smile faltered. Ah. Yeah, elsewhere was usually code for ‘dark, constricting places within ones mind,’ if one knows to read between the lines (well, alternatively ‘elsewhere’ could mean happy dreamland, but I doubt it in this case). Elsewhere was a place I was intimately familiar with. The cold, the accusations, the claustrophobia. The feeling that you’re never going to be enough, no matter what you do. The feeling that you’ve failed, even though they’re all happy. The deep seated knowledge that, if you even let go just a little, it’ll all go spiralling out of control. What was Scott doing with such dark thoughts? Scott had no need for that. I shook my head, deciding to nip the thorn at it’s roots.

“You’re not a killer.” I murmured with as much conviction as I could muster. “You’re not. This is just confirming what we already know.”

He had to believe it, even if I was having second thoughts.

“Stiles…” He sighed, looking at me with such a defeated expression...

Uh-uh, nope. No time for self pity right now - we were on a mission. I shoved him.
“Hey!” He yelped.

“Like I said - focus. Is there anybody around?” I asked. I already knew the answer - two janitors (probably) wandering the grounds, but other that that we were alone - but i asked Scott because he needed to focus on the now, and less on what might have happened.

“Uh…” Scott stuck his head outside, closing his eyes to listen. “Just a night guard.” He confirmed. Just one? I could have sworn there were at least two...

“Are you sure?” I asked.

“Pretty sure.” He nodded. "I mean, you can check on your own as well, right?"

“Nah, I trust you.” I lied, even as I checked again and- yep, there were two guards. How Scott missed one I'll have no clue. But, watching Scott, I realized that I must have said the right thing to say, because Scott’s entire demeanor lit up. I parked the car and turned the power off.

“Well, let’s get to it.” I said, and began to open my door. Scott grabbed my forearm.

“No,” he countered, “Just me. Someone has to keep watch.” I blinked. Good point. But….

“Why am I the one who has to keep watch?” I argued.

“Because there’s only two of us.” He explained. State the obvious, much? I narrowed my eyes, trying to pin him with my most disappointed-looking glare.

“Why is it starting to feel like you’re Batman and I’m Robin? I don’t want to be Robin all the time.” I grimaced. Yeah, I didn't want to be the sidekick... as awesome as Robin was.

Scott rolled his eyes. “No one is Batman or Robin any of the time.” I snorted.

“Not even some of the time?” I teased.

Scott scowled. “Just stay here - they’re my memories, remember?” I sighed.

“Alright. You win.” I conceded. “I'll keep watch. Do you want me to howl if I see anything?”

“Stiles.”

“Fine, fine. I'll text you. Then you get your ass back here ASAP.” I warned.

Scott nodded, then exited the Jeep and trotted over to the flimsy chain-link fence. I watched as he quickly scrambled over it, then disappeared into the blackness.

I sighed and leaned back against the worn seat. It was... unsettling, how this entire wolf experience seemed to be, for lack of a better word, ruining Scott. Well, 'ruining' may be a harsh word, but I couldn't help but notice how stressed he seemed. I also noted that, even though this werewolf gig wasn't agreeing with Scott, I seemed to be doing loads better. I was acing lacrosse, could turn into a wolf - and see in the dark - and I had a goal to work towards. Hell, I met Derek! And honestly, I don't think we would have met if it wasn't for this mess. It was kinda ironic, in a way.

My thoughts took a darker turn, as I thought more about the Alpha, and his motive, and what he would possibly gain from this massacre. Scott was - well, he saw the world in black and white. Good and bad. He always seemed to know what the morally right thing was. Me... I was more of a grey person. I knew what right and wrong were, but I lied, and stole, and played dirty. Always for a valid reason, of course, but I wasn't like Scott. I could understand why someone might kill another person,
and I had my own list of justifiable causes. No. 1 was if said person had my family at gunpoint. Scott, he wouldn't understand that. He shouldn't have to understand that. Scott's the kind of person who makes a good hero. Scott could never kill someone...

But I might. I didn't tell him, but there was a suspicion -in the back of my mind - that I might be the killer. It was highly improbably - like, near impossible - but I couldn't dismiss that possibility. Not yet.

Scott was the hero, the one everyone wanted to follow. I... I'd probably make a better villain, and I don't know what scares me more - the fact that it might be true, or the fact that I - on a baseline level, with probably the tiniest portion of my being - could accept that.

For now though, I was content with letting Scott act as my moral compass. There's probably a bunch of psychological reasons against relying on another person to remind you of your moral standing and why it isn't healthy, but I pulled myself from dwelling on those thoughts. Scott was coming back, and while I couldn't see him yet I could definitely hear him.

I took my tumultuous thoughts, folded them tightly, and stuck them in a locked chest that I carefully placed 'elsewhere' in my mind.

It would probably come back to bite me, but I'd deal with my... questionably adaptable morals another time.

My mind focused back on reality just in time to see Scott scamper back across the fence. He sprinted to the Jeep, got in, and shut the door - and I winced, because he didn't shut it gently - and turned to me with excited eyes.

"Stiles!" He said, grinning.

"Did it work?" I asked, catching onto Scott's excitement. "Did you remember?"

"Yeah, I was there last night!" He admitted. "And a lot of the blood - it was mine."

I raised on eyebrow, inwardly grimacing. "What, so you did attack him?"

"No, I saw glowing eyes on the bus, but they weren't mine - it was Derek." He continued.

I frowned. I doubted it was Derek, but I didn't voice my concern. "And the driver?" I asked.

"I think I was trying to protect him." Scott shrugged.

I blinked, then shook my head. The pieces.. were kinda lining up. This just confirmed that it was the Alpha, not Derek. I just had to make sure Scott saw it too. "Okay, that doesn't make sense. Why would Derek help you remember that he attacked the driver?"

"That's what I don't get." He agreed.

"It probably wasn't Derek." I pointed out.

"Then who? The alpha?" Scott asked. I gave him a look. He growled, "Okay, but why?"

I snickered, inwardly, but kept my face in a 'thinking' frown. "Maybe it's a pack thing. You know, an initiation. Into the crazy Alpha's pack."

"What do you mean?" He questioned.
"You know you do the kill together." I said, gesturing and biting my lip to keep the giggles in. Scott's face took on an increasingly horrified expression.

"Because ripping someone's throat out is such a bonding experience?" Scott asked, a little on the hysterical side.

I patted his shoulder. "Yeah, okay, I was messing with you there." I admitted, and Scott was the picture of instant relief. "Mostly." I added, then watched as he adopted a constipated expression. "But," I continued, still fighting the laughter, "This means that you weren't the killer... which means..."

"That I can still go out with Allison!" He exclaimed happily.

What.


"Actually, I was thinking more along the lines of not all wolves are killers, and that you can resist the Alpha's control." I deadpanned.

Scott nodded, "Oh yeah. That too."

Oh, it was wonderful how that wasn't his top priority. I mean, I know I've got Derek, but at least we don't think about our relationship 24/7?

I really, really wanted to bang my head on a table. Or coffee. Coffee was good. I could use like, seven cups right now.

Later, Derek and I had combed through the forest looking for traces of the Alpha. Long story short - it was a bust, again. However Derek got stuck in a hole that was too deep for him to get out of as a wolf - in retrospect, it was probably a hunter trap - and he refused to change back because our clothes were near his car. I helped him out with a branch, but not before laughing at him for a good fifteen minutes.

He got me later when shoved my face in fox dung, and then we had to go to the stream to wash off. By then, we'd wasted most of the night and it was well into the early morning. Luckily Scott was covering for me and we'd told my Dad I would be staying the night at his place. Ironically, none of us actually did. I went with Derek, and Scott went on that double-date-disaster he'd managed to secure for himself with Allison, Lydia and Jackson. I still couldn't wait to needle him about it later.

We were on our way back when Derek randomly pulled into that run-down gas station on the outskirts of town.

I looked at him, frowning. "What are we doing here?"

"Out of gas." He replied simply, then to out of the car. I made a face at the fact that I forgot that cars ran on gas for a moment.

This station itself was quite old, and dusty, and vintage - but they'd renovated the little shack two
summers ago, so the Mac's was new. The sun wasn't even on the horizon, though the sky was marginally lighter than the usual inky blue. Just as Derek was finishing with the pump, two black mini vans pulled into the lot and several familiar voices caught my ears. I sighed - this couldn't be good. The hunters were back.

Derek heard them too, and he muttered "Hide under the back seat," to me under his breath. I gulped and did as he said, straining my ears to pick up everything since I couldn't see.

"Nice ride," said the voice I recognized as Allison's dad. I heard the crunch of the gravel as he stepped right up to the Camaro. "Black cars though, very hard to keep clean. Definitely suggest a little more maintenance. You have something that's nice, you want to take care of it, right?" He then took a squeegee and began to 'clean' the windows. I frowned. What was he up to?

Derek - thankfully - didn't fall for the bait. I could imagine him turning his most potent death glare on the other man, though. Since Argent simply continued cleaning Derek's windshield (and that's a really freaking odd situation that was freaking me out) it didn't work.

"Personally," Argent continued, in that same dismissive tone. The squeegee had stopped now. "I'm very protective of the things I love. Something I learned from my family. Though, you don't have much of these days, do you?"

I heard Derek growl low in the back of his throat - too low for a human to hear - and probably made a fist. I could relate - my wolf wanted to rip that man to shreds too. Argent did something then, because I heard cloth rustle and what seemed to be a faint slap, and then the squeegee started back again.

"There you go," Argent said as the sound of the sponge against the window stopped. I heard him step back. "Everything is so much clearer."

I grit my teeth, hoping that Derek could keep his cool. He couldn't.

"You forgot to check the oil." He baited. I winced. The footsteps returned, Oh, shit. Argent was coming back.

I jumped at the sudden sound of shattering glass. Oh, double shit. Argent clearly broke something. This was bad...

"Looks fine to me." Argent sneered, then turned away. "Drive safely now." He called over his shoulder and he walked away. I heard the van door open, then shut, and then they pulled away. I waited until I absolutely could not hear them anymore before I raised my head.

"He's a dickwad." I growled, noting that Derek was still staring in the direction they had left. "I give you full permission to murder him."

This made Derek snap out of his daze. Shaking his head his eyes met mine. "I don't need your permission to kill him, and I won't. Can't. Hunters have connections."

I let out another growl. "Just, saying... If you ever need to hide a body in the near future..." I waggled my eyebrows, and Derek's lip turned up in a faint smile.

"Stiles." He said, exasperated.

I moved so I was resting my arm between the two front seats. "But we can still press charges, right? Like, look what he did to your car!"
"It'd be a bad move. You'd be called as a witness, and I don't think they know that you're a wolf yet." Derek countered.

"But your car!" I flailed my hands.

"Can be fixed." He reminded.

I huffed, resigning myself to a glare as I Derek re-entered the car. He started the engine, and I waited until we pulled out of the parking lot and onto the highway before I spoke again. Both our emotions were running high. Mainly, it was anger. Derek didn't show it, but I knew he was raging under that calm exterior.

Argent only did that because he could, and we wouldn't be able to do anything about it. At least, they had no idea I was there. It'd be best to keep it that way, but...

"They suspect Scott." I said, remembering how Argent's eyes remained trained on Scott during the game.

Derek snorted, then tapped the steering wheel lightly. "No, they know. It doesn't matter if the victim is just a suspect - they will send hunters after them anyways."

"I thought they had a code?"

"They're... more like guidelines." He amended.

I paused. Wait - just, did Derek quote... uh, was was it... oh yeah - Pirates of the Caribbean!

"Did you just quote a movie at me?" I asked.

Derek looked confused. "What?"

Oh. Well, accidentally then. "Never mind."

He shrugged and faced the road. I looked out the window. I was still in the back seat, considering that the car only had half a windshield now, but at least the windows were tinted. The forest blurred across my vision, interrupted occasionally by a stray car or early morning jogger.

"Drop me of at my house?" I asked when we were passing the entrance to the reserve.

"Of course." Derek said.

"See you after school?"

"Mm-hmm."

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School was normal, and for once I was thankful for it. The rumour mill was still alive with the tale of the bloody bus, and Scott mentioned Allison - how she was so pretty, or so smart, or so... ugh, something! - every other sentence. At least. But even with that, a normal day was just what I needed. I was still furious with Argent, for hurting me, then Derek, and finally Derek's poor car. The Camaro deserved better. I felt bad at what Derek must be feeling - f someone had done the same to my jeep,
I'd want to murder them too. Did he even have the money to fix the window?

It was after school, at home, and I was just finishing up my chemistry homework - seriously, fuck Harris. Three chapters on the Monday of the second week? Come on! - when my dad got a phone call from the Police Department. As usual, I listened in.

"Stilinski." My Dad said to the phone.

"Sheriff, we have news from the hospital," The dispatch officer replied. "Garrison Meyers, the guy that was mauled at the bus, he's succumbed to his wounds."

Dad let out a deep sigh. "Alright, I'll be right there." And hung up.

...

Well, shit.

I closed my eyes. This was a mess. I had a hunch that Derek wanted to talk to the guy, to ask him if he'd seen the Alpha, but now our only lead had gone cold. Couldn't I get one normal, all-good day?

I rocked back to lay flat in my bed, only to startle at a harsh ripping noise. What the hell?

I sat back up and looked around, then raised my hand - and immediately wanted to slam my face into something once I saw. Stupid wolf powers...

There, on my hand, impaled on my claws, was my chemistry question sheet. How the hell was I gonna explain that one? Forget Meyers - when Harris sees this, I'd be the dead one.

I reiterate my earlier statement - well, shit.

That same night, at some ungodly hour in the morning, I was brutally jarred awake by a shotgun. Someone had been shot - or, well someone had shot at something. It might have been a racoon in someone's yard or a stray dog but... I had the feeling it was a hunter's gun. I blinked, then an icy feeling creeped over me.

Derek.

DEREK.

What if he'd been shot? What if he'd been hurt really, really bad? What if he was already-

No.

No, Stiles.

I forced myself to take deep breaths, fighting of the amost-panic attack. Stay calm. It was probably nothing, go back to sleep. Maybe it was the dream.

This is what I told myself, but...
I still got dressed and crawled out of the window and down the tree, using only the moon and my kickass night-vision as guides.

I told myself not to, but deep down I knew - there was no way I wasn't checking this out.

...

I made it to the edge of the woods, by the highway, about two miles away from the Hale house when I heard the voices.

It was like I'd suspected - hunters. And I knew these ones. Well, one of them.

It was Argent's voice I heard first.

"Get in."

The tone was stiff and commanding. Hmm... not a friendly? I crouched behind a tree on the dark side, away from the car lights (because them seeing the reflection of my eyes because I looked at the headlights was a horrible idea. Way to out myself) and took in the scene.

There were two - Chris Argent, and a woman I didn't recognize. Even in this light, I could tell that she was pretty good looking. Eww. It seemed like Argent was giving the woman a ride, because her car... broke? Huh.

The woman spoke this time, “Oh, not even a hello.” she mocked. “Nice to see you.”

“All I’ve got at the moment is ‘Please put the assault rifle away before someone notices’.” Argent sounded like he meant business.

“That’s the brother I love. Chris, there were two of them.” I blinked, because this chick was fearless. I could admire that. Then the other shoe dropped - Argent was her brother? Oh, crap. More hunters.

Why is it always more hunters?

“The Alpha?” Argent asked.

“I don’t know but one of them tried to kill me.”

I filed this info away for later. As of now, I know that Scott and I have never killed anyone. Derek... maybe? He could, but he wouldn't. He cares to much.

“Well, one of them was going to lead us to the other and he can’t do that if he’s dead.” Argent scoffed. I grimaced.

The woman scowled. “Well, I can’t help kill either of them if I’m killed first.”

“How long will it take?”

“I give him 48 hours. If that.”

48 hours? For what?

Holy shit, what if someone - some wolf - was going to die tomorrow, because of her?

What if 'someone' was Derek?
The hunters left after that, but I remained frozen, leaning against the tree, all my worst-case ideas spilling into my mind.

A small part of me was convinced that it might've ben some random Omega, but the most of me was torn between Scott and Derek.

Which wolf did this?

...

I snuck back into my room within the next hour - or, I think it was an hour. Time's hard to tell in the middle of a forest. I investigated the scene once the Argents had left, but found nothing too shocking. Argent's scent was there (wood, gunpowder, metal) and so was the woman's (wolfsbane, perfume, metal), and I mentally catalogued them as trouble.

Once home, I looked at my evidence board. There, smack dab in the middle, I'd written the word "Alpha" and "mad." From that, there were various strings - red, for suspected connection, yellow for a connection with evidence, green for a definite connection, and blue for an unresolved connection. Mostly, I'd been using yellow and red.

I had one suspect so far - Peter Hale. He was the only name I had on there, but even that was pretty much a dead end. Peter was comatose, and suffering. If it weren't for the fact that I literally had zero names, Peter's wouldn't even be on there.

The rest of my 'suspects' are more like ideas of suspects: A former omega who went mad and killed Laura, then became insane and killed others, a werewolf that hunters tortured, a werewolf that the hunters are controlling (I wouldn't put it past them), or maybe some other supernatural killer.

In terms of the motive, I'm fairly certain that the Alpha is killing because of a personal vendetta. Unfortunately I haven't found the connection - I mean, what the hell did Meyers, a bus driver, have to do with werewolves?

Sighing, I flopped back onto my bed, closing my eyes, and wished I could just let it all go.

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It was during class the next day that I decided to confront Scott about this. I was out of ideas, and maybe Scott could find something from an unsuspected angle. Or something. Even if he kinda sucks at deduction, everyone has their moments of genius, right?

As the teacher was handing back our tests, I tapped the dest to get Scott's attention. “I’ve been trying to figure all this out. The Alpha, the one that bit us, who do you think he really is?”

Scott shrugged. “I don’t know.”

Well, he could give me a bit more that that. "Are you sure? You have, like, no suspicions or anything?"

He shrugged again. "I don't know."

I couldn't help but feel a little bit irritated at his dismissal. But what would get his attention on this?
Well, it was a shot in the dark and definitely a crack idea but I asked it anyways. “Hey, do you think Allison’s dad might have a clue about how to find it?”

"I don't KNOW!” Scott snapped, bristling. Then he froze and adopted a sheepish expression as he realized that the rest of the class were staring at us.

The teacher eventually got to our row, and handed me the test face down. Squashing my nerves, I flipped it over... and let out a sigh of relief. Still an "A" student. I leaned back on my chair to catch a glimpse of Scott's test, and frowned when I saw the "D-." That was unacceptable.


“No.” he shot down. “Studying with Allison after school today.” Oh... so that's how it is.

"That's my boy.” I smirked.

"We're just studying!” Scott defended. Uh-huh, sure...

“No, you’re not.” I deadpanned.

“No I’m not?” Scot sounded confused. Why...? Oh, he thought that I thought he was actually studying? With Allison? And ignoring all those rain teenage hormones? Poor, naive, innocent Scotty.

I snorted. “Not if I’m forced to live vicariously through you you’re not. If you go to her house today and squander that opportunity then I swear to god I’ll have you deballed.”

“Okay!” he said, finally getting it and squirming in his seat, decidedly uncomfortable. “Just...no more questions, okay?”

“Fine.” I relented. “No more questions. Or talk of the Alpha.”

“Thanks,” Scott mumbled.

"Just...” I paused, trying to word my query in a way that wouldn't spill the metaphorical beans.

"What?” Scott prodded.

"Um... I think there might be new hunters in Beacon Hills. Did you know anything about that?"

"No.” He looked surprised. "Wait, really?"

"Just something I heard.” I shrugged, not wanting to give away that said hunter was in cohorts with Allison's family. The only reason I asked Scott was because Allison might have told him her aunt was in town or something. Unless even she didn't know...

Scott nodded, accepting the excuse. "Okay."
After school I was walking through the parking lot when I saw Derek's Camaro parked near to me. The windshield was actually fixed, ad I briefly wondered where he'd even found the time to do it. Like, did he have a personal mechanic or...?

"Hey." I said, seeing said sourwolf leaning on the Jeep. "You fixed the windshield."

Then I froze - there was something wrong with this picture. Derek didn't look good. I mean, he'd always looks good, but he was worse than usual now. His skin was pale and he stood gripping his arm. Alarm bells started to ring in my mind. Something was wrong, and it must be bad, because Derek looked like he could barely stand on his own two feet.

"Had a spare." He bit out, trying to smile but still gritting his teeth. I dropped my bag and wen to him, looping an arm under ad letting him leant the most of his weight on me.

"Only you, Sourwolf. What's going on?" I demanded.

"You might need to call your other friend for this." Derek said, and I felt ice settle in my gut. Derek was asking for Scott's help? Moving to the Jeep again, I set Derek down on the passenger seat and honked the horn, Hoping Scott would hear. He did, judging by his wince, and he came over almost immediately. I couldn't help but notice how his expression darkened the moment he saw Derek.

"What are you doing here?" Scott snarled. "What's going on?"

I glared at him. No need to be that hostile. "I don't know, but it's bad."

"I was shot." Derek said, bluntly. My eyes widened at the confession.

"What?!" I gasp, "Where? Are you okay- no, don't answer that - are you gonna die? Please tell me your not gonna d- mfff!" Derek had clapped his hand over my mouth.

"I was shot in the arm. I'm not going to die." He reassures. It doesn't help my nerves.

Scott narrows his eyes. "Well, why isn't it healing then?" Not healing? I blink and turn my attention back to the wound. Scott had a point - the wound looked painfully fresh. As a wolf, I haven't been shot with a gun yet but the arrow wound healed within the following two minutes, at least. This must be really bad.

"Derek..." I growl warningly. He better not be withholding any info this time.

"I can't. It...it was a special kind of bullet."

I bite my lip worryingly. "Wolfsbane?" He nods. My head spins, the events of last night suddenly coming to the forefront of my mind. "That's what she meant when she said you had 48 hours! Derek, you are dying!" At this point, I can feel my eyes prickle with unshed tears. I blink them away stubbornly. I refused to cry - becoming a sobbing mess right now wouldn't help Derek at all.

Scott looks at me oddly at the emotion in my tone. "What do you mean?" He asks.

"I told you how a new hunter came into town last night - she shot Derek. It woke me up." I explain. Scot turned to me. "How do you-" He was cut of by Derek, whose eyes flashed electric blue and a growl rumbled from his chest. He looked like he was about to shift.

My eyes widened. "Derek, cut this out - we're at school!"

"That's just it." He snarls. "I can't."
Scott and I share a look. "Oh shit." He says, lips set in a grim line. I nod. The car behind us starts to honk, and I look back to see that it was Jackson. I send him my most potent glare and shove Scott into the Jeep.

"Buckle up." I order. "We're getting out of here. Now." I pull out of the school lot in record time, letting out a breath when we moved to a busier road.

Derek shifted in his seat, then addressed Scott. "I need you to find out what kind of bullet they used." Through the the rearview mirror, I saw how Scott looked like he was about to protest, only to have Derek cut him off. "I know you have a date with her later. The hunter who shot me was her aunt."

"Her.. aunt?" Scott whimpered. "Wait - how the hell do you even know about me and Allison?"

I roll my eyes. "Scott, I'm pretty sure even blind people know about you and Allison." He looks betrayed. I sigh. "No, I didn't tell Derek."

Scott's lips set themselves in a grim line. He turns to Derek. "How am I supposed to do that?"

"Figure it out." He growls, then winces as the Jeep rolls over a pothole. I reach back and pat his shoulder.

"We'll figure this out. I refuse to let you die." I murmur. He gives me a weary half-smile.

Scott stares. "Since when did you and Derek get so chummy?" He accuses. I feel my nose wrinkle in irritation, and maybe a little bit of anger. How was that Scott's problem?

"Since he saved my ass the other day!" I snark. Scott looks confused.

"The other day..?" He asks.

I turn back to the road. "Hunters."

"You were shot too?" Scott hisses. I give him a flat stare through the mirror.

"Almost." I reply, and my eyes shifted to Derek again - it doesn't look good. His face is ashen, eyebrows scrunched in a way that I now knew meant he was trying to hide the pain. His hand was still clenched tightly to his forearm, hiding the wound.

"Stiles!" Scott looks at me in worry.

"I said almost." I snarl. He looks hurt, and I immediately regret it. "Sorry- just, Derek could die. Worry about him." Scott nods.

"Drop me off here." He says, once we reached the fire station. Allison's house is about five blocks east of this intersection. If Scott walked now, he'd probably arrive just as Jackson's group reached the house. I pull over and he slips out, then turns to me. "Where are you gong to be?" He asks.


Scott shake his head. "No, Don't go there."

I frown. "Where else?" He quickly searches his bag and hands me a key. I haven't seen this one, yet.

"It's for the clinic." Scott explains. "Deaton's gonna be gone for the next few days. He's got some seminar to attend. There's medical stuff there.
"Thanks." I nod. Scott's unexpected genius strikes again.

"No problem." He grins, then takes off.

I focus back on driving as fast as legally possible. I say legally, but I'm pretty sure went over the speed limit. If only Dad saw me now...

"Stiles..." Derek whispers from the back seat, but I shush him.

"Don't talk." I say. "Save your energy."

This was not the end. It couldn't be.

We got to the Animal Clinic well enough, and I helped him move from the car to the examination table. He'd passed out on the drive here, but woke up as soon as I set him down.

"Why did you bring me here?" He frowns, like he can't remember the car ride. "I can't protect you here. This is the first place the hunters are going to look for me at."

I nuzzle his forehead. "Well, I can't really take you anywhere else. Also, we've got bandages and stuff here, and it's safe."

"I'm not sure how this is the best option if you're my only line of defence." He snarks. I glare.

"I've been improving!" I protest. "Not helpless anymore! Besides, I've got a gun with me."

Derek looks alarmed. "Where did you get a gun?"

I grin. "Swiped one of my dad's spares. I take it with me everywhere after... you know. He won't notice it's gone. It used to be faulty, so Dad tossed it, but I got it fixed. Works like a dream now."

Derek makes an incredulous noise, but his lips are turned up in that little half smile of his. I pick up my phone and call Scott... and it goes straight to voicemail. I growl. I try again. Voicemail. It's voicemail the third time as well. What the hell was he doing?

Derek tries to sit up, fails, then settles for propping himself up on his elbows. "Stiles, I'll be fine as long as Scott gets the bullet in time."

"Yeah, maybe you shouldn’t be feeling safe having him as your last hope." I grimace, trying to ignore how the blood around the wound had melted into a sickly black. I had to move his hand the I was carrying him, and it wasn't a pretty wound. A bloody red hole with spidery black veins spreading from it. It looked like an infection. Poison.

Derek pauses. "What? Why not?"

I scowl. "Because, if I know Scott, and sadly I do, he’s not looking for your magic bullet right now. He’s busy doing something else and he’s not going to be in a hurry to stop."

Derek's brows furrowed. "What?"
"Studying." I snarl, using air quotes. The double entendre was morbidly clear to us both. Here we were, my Alpha (and boyfriend) was dying, and Scott - who was also a werewolf - was busy trying to get some. With an Argent. Oh, the irony...

Derek huffed, and tried to move to the floor. I help him, then curl up at his side, trying to get lost in our pack bond and ignore how Derek's scent kept getting closer to that of death. I was involuntarily whining, my wolf in distress because my Alpha was dying, and I wasn't doing anything about it. Derek snaked his hand behind my head and drew me in close, tucking my face into the crook of his neck. I feel Derek's breath ruffle my hair and I know that he is scenting me too.

We had just found each other, and now there was a high chance I'd lose him. Forever.

I didn't even realize I was crying until Derek's thumb brushed away the salty streaks.

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We sat there, listening to the outside forest sounds. Waiting.

We didn't speak. Whatever I want to say got caught in my throat, and Derek's was too tired to speak.

No words needed to be said, really. We knew what the worst case scenario could be.

Prepare for the worst and hope for the best, right?

We were painfully unprepared.

Scott still didn't come.

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I eventually lost track of time, too busy trying not to break down. Derek gently roused me, and I felt my heart freeze over and shatter when I looked at his face again. He actually looked like a zombie - his complexion grey, dark circles under his eyes, weary, tired. The only thing that remained unchanged were his eyes - which still burned with that dangerous, determined spark I'd come to love.

Oh my god, I'm turning into a giant sap, aren't I?

"Stiles.." he whispered, nuzzling my hair. "There's one other thing you can do."

I look up at him. "What?" I say flatly. If there was something, couldn't he have mentioned it sooner? Before I became a sobbing mess? Derek just grins - or tries to. The pain he's in makes it come out as a grimace. The overdramatic asshole...

"If your friend doesn't come, you're going to have to cut off my arm." He explains.

"WHAT?"

I stare at him, gaping. He shrugs.
"At least I won't be dead. I can... live with one arm."

Well, there is that. I scowl and turn away, biting my lip. I run through my options, then turn to face Derek. "What do I have to do?"

"Cut it off. With this." He holds up a bone saw. A freaking bone saw. I really didn't want to know where he got that. I ask anyways.

"Where the fuck did you get that?" I try to make it sound like an order, but it comes out more like a stutter.

"Somewhere." He smirks.

I grimace. "I don't think I can do this..."

He gives me a flat look. "What - scared of a little blood?"

"Scared of cutting through skin, muscles, fat, tendons, bone and my boyfriend's arm all at the same time!" I huff, giving him a sour look. I hope he understood how awful what he'd just asked me to do truly was. "But I'll do it."

He nods and we settle down on the floor again, leaning into each other.

"There's seven hours left..." I murmur. Derek nods.

Scott still hasn't come.

I start texting him once we reach the six and a half hour point.
But there's no reply. I seriously hope he's doing what he's supposed to do, or I might not forgive him. Ever.

It was at the six hour mark that Derek told me to get the saw ready. We'd given up on Scott then, and we both knew that if we did this now, then Derek would at least only lose an arm.

I was psyching myself up for the operation when-

A knock.

On the front door.

"Stiles..?"

He came.

Scott came back!

I wanted to laugh in relief, to howl, to do something, but managed restrain myself, turn off the saw and call back. "We're here!"

Scott's tan head peeked into the room, and he blanched at the scene that he saw - Derek, sitting on
the table with a bandage tied painfully tight to his forearm in order to stop the blood flow, and me, holding a buzzsaw dangerously close to Derek's skin.

"What the hell?" He asked, somewhat hysterical.

Derek huffed. I let out a shaky, hysterical giggle. "Never mind. You got the bullet?"

He nodded. "Yeah, here." He dropped the tiny silver object into my hand. I studied it, noticing that this wolfsbane had been ground to a yellow powder and packed inside a small hollow within the bullet. Deadly, but I could respect the ingenuity. I turned back to Derek.

"What do we need to do?" I asked.

Derek held out his hand. "Give it here...." And fainted. He hit the ground with a dull thud, and I stared at his prone body before whipping around to look at Scott.

"What do we do?" I asked, my voice shaky.

Scott held up his hands. "I don't know! You're the one with the plans!" I nodded. He was right - I came up with the plans... I turned back to Derek and gnawed on my lip as an idea came to me.

"Oh, please don't maul me for this..." I muttered, then leaned over and slapped Derek as hard as I dared on the cheek. He gasped as the slap re-set his nerves and woke his body up again. After a quick look around, he met my eyes and nodded. I handed him the bullet.

Derek took it, and bit the casing off. He then spilled the powder in a concentrated pile on the table. The smell of the toxic plant became almost unbearable then, and Scott and I both pinched out noses to black it out. The didn't help, at all. I watched as Derek reached into his jacket pocket and pulled out a lighter, and set the powder on fire. It wasn't long before the yellow poison had been burnt to a fine ash. He then took the as, and shoved it into the wound, letting out a yell at the pain.

He started to flail around, and I moved to restrain him, pinning him on the ground. In any other situation, this would be the perfect time for a lewd joke. But anyways - Scott and I watched, with wide eyes, as the wolfsbane ash began... almost eating the bullet wound from the inside out. It looked like Derek was bing tortured, but it worked. The black veins from the infection receded, and the wound began to close up.

Once he'd had some time to recover, Scott blurted out "That was awesome!" His voice tinged with awe.

I gave him a dirty look, I moved to help Derek stand. "Are you okay?" I asked.

"Ignoring the agonizing pain, I'm great." Derek snarked.

I grinned. "Well, at least you retained your ability to use sarcasm. A sure sign of good health. Trust me, I know."

Scott sighed. "I'm glad it's over."

I nodded. "Me too. How did you even get the bullet?"

"Uh..." Scott fidgeted. "Well, the short version is I asked to go to the washroom, and then stole it from Kate's handbag. Allison covered for me by saying it was a tampon." His face flushed red.

I snickered. "For an Argent, I'm impressed. Allison's got guts."
Derek huffed. "You said Kate, right? This confirms what I suspected - Kate Argent came back."

I turn to him. "Someone you know?" I ask.

He shrugs. "Something like that." I strain my ears, but his heartbeat didn't falter, so I let it go.

"This is a mess..." I moan. "They never leave us alone..." I dramatically wave my arms and drape them across Derek's shoulders. Scott's giving me more weird looks now. I bask in his uncomfortableness. This is payback for taking so goddamn long...

"I told you so." Derek says, managing to sound smug despite what just happened. I grin.

"You're an ass," I say, but there's no heat behind the words. I'm just thankful we got through with the best case scenario. Watching us, Scott frowns - as if something's just occurred to him.

"Argent was right..." He mutters under his breath. I narrow my eyes - he obviously didn't mean for that to be heard, and Derek hadn't heard, but I did. I'd realized by now that my hearing was better than that of normal wolves. Or, well, better that Derek and Scott's.

But back to the main issue - Argent was right - what Scott mean? I keep my eyes on him, watching as he seems to come to a decision.

"Derek," He began, "You have to leave us alone now. We saved your life, you owe us - so stay out of our lives." He states, in a positively venomous tone.

I pause.

Rewind. Replay. What?

What the hell? Where did this come from? I opened my mouth to speak, but Derek beat me to it.

"What are you saying? Have you forgotten about the mad Alpha out there - killing people? You need us." He explained. I tighten my grip on his shoulders.

Scott outright glared now. "No, more like Stiles and I DON'T need you."

"Really? What about the fact that you came to me and asked me to tell you what you did to the bus driver?" Derek growls.

"I was protecting him - I din't DO anything. I didn't need your help!" He bares his teeth - now fangs - at us. My eyes flash.

I crossed my arms, making a 'x' with my hands. "Whoa, no, time out! I'm with Derek on this one - we're stronger together." I pin Scott a loaded look. "You don't even know with a how to fight!"

"And what - you do?" He snarls. I don't answer. A betrayed look flickers across his eyes as he answers the question for himself, before that mask of anger settles in again. "You're a part of Derek's pack." He breathes. I turn away, and that action alone is all the confirmation Scott needs.

"We're stronger together." I repeat.

"No we're not - he's using us!" Scott yells, and gestures to Derek. His fingers end in claws.

"Allison’s dad - I'll go back to him and explain everything and I’m sure-"

"You're going to trust them?" Derek glared, a warning growl lacing his words. "You think they can help you and Stiles?"
“Why not?” he spat. “They’re a lot freaking nicer than you.”

"Scott!” I hiss. "They're hunters." He ignores me. He seems to be doing that a lot lately. Derek looks like a mask of cool indifference, but in the inside I know he's seething.

"Yeah, I’ll show you exactly how nice they are.” He snarls. My minds flashes back to Peter, and I know Scott wouldn't be so trusting of them if he saw what they'd done.

Scott shakes his head. "I don't want to know. I don't want to hear anything you want to say. You've almost ruined my life! You took away my best friend. Stay away from me - I don't want in on any of this!"

"Scott-" I call, but he turns around, and the looks he gives me freezes my in my tracks.

"Don't. Don't apologize. I'm sorry you can't see how Derek's controlling you." He snarls, then turns around. I click my jaw together as I watch his retreating back. Apologize? No fucking way. He thought I was going to apologize? Also, Derek wasn't fucking controlling me! I jab my clawed fingers into my forearms to ground myself before I shifted and clawed Scott.

I'll admit, that last one hurt. How, just how, had everything gone south so fast? I thought Scott was opening up to the whole pack idea? What changed?

Once he's gone, I feel Derek'd arms encircling me in a hug. "It's not your fault." He mumbles. I sigh. "I feel like I just lost my best friend."

"You won't." He assures, and I'm surprised by the conviction in his tone. "Scott will come around."

"In like a hundred years. You know that as long as he's got Allison he won't fully see our side." I say bitterly.

Derek hums, or purrs, I guess. Can werewolves purr? I ask the question out loud.

He laughs silently. "That's really random." He observes. "But, somewhat."

I raise an eyebrow. "Is that what you're doing now?" I ask.

"Kinda."

"Mmh."

"Nordic Blue Monkshood." Derek says, breaking the silence.

I blink. "What?"

"Nordic Blue Monkshood." He repeats. "That's what they use. Remember it."

I nod. "I will." Then a thought comes to me, and I turn so I can see Derek's eyes. "They're going to pay, right?" I ask. "I mean, revenge isn't the right way, blah, blah, blah, but at the very least we can egg their house, right?"

He nods. "I won't kill anyone, but they will pay."

It's a promise.
(more shit hits the fan)

THERE WAS A QUIET FEW DAYS AFTER THAT AND THE RIFT between Scott and I only seemed to cut deeper. It got lonely, I'll admit. After having him around like my shadow (more like I was Scott's shadow) for so long, even a couple days without him were shockingly lonely. It's like they say - you never truly appreciate what you've got until it's gone. But in this case, I wasn't the one who pushed him away. At least, that's what Derek says. Me? I want to apologize, even if it was his fault. I wanted to do anything that would give me my best friend back.

Of course, the more Scott drifted away, the less I recognized him. And the real kicker? Allison was a really, really nice person. We actually bonded, in a sense, over our love for Scott and an innate respect for sarcasm. It all started when she sat at my table, at lunch. I'd gotten the usual cafeteria fair (it's horrrrrriible) and sat at the corner table (it used to be our table, but now it was the no-Scott table), and was minding my own business. I had my computer out, and was working on compiling my own version of a bestiary - a tome that contained all sorts of information on supernatural creatures. The difference was mine was digital, not some ratty, leather-bound book transcribed in handwriting. Like, who even reads handwriting anyways?

Actually, no - I can't say that. It'd be hypocritical. I can read handwriting.

Anyways, Allison decided to join me that day. I heard her footsteps a while off but I only looked up when she moved a chair to sit. She was wearing black boots, a simple black skirt with tights and an oversized, white, knitted sweater. Her hair was down, and she carried her school bag with her.

"Hey." She greeted, setting said school bag on the floor and pulling her tray towards her. She still didn't meet my eyes.

"Hi." I replied. Unlike some others, I was determined to remain open minded about this werewolf vs. hunter shit. Since Allison hadn't done anything bad, I was in no position to be mean to her. I watched as she shuffled her chair in and picked up her fork. She'd gotten a salad and a turkey club sandwich, contrary to my pizza and apple slices. "Where's your other half?" I ask. She raised an eyebrow in
"Isn't he your other half?" She asked.

"Not anymore." I laughed weakly. "We're taking a break." She looked sympathetic.

"I'm sorry." She said. I blink. She's sorry?

"For what?" I frowned.

"Splitting you guys up." She murmurs, looking dejected. Oh no, Allison was blaming herself for my (*ahem* Scott's) mistake. What did he even say to her? I shake my head.

"Not you." I countered, "You didn't do anything." It's not exactly a lie - it's the Argents I have a problem with, not Allison. I shrugged. "We had... other stuff. He didn't agree with me, I didn't agree with him. We both got angry. You know. It's just... kinda lonely now."

"I understand. Being lonely." She muttered with a thin lipped smile, and I momentarily felt like she really did. Then I shut that feeling down. She's an Argent, don't forget it. Open minded doesn't mean sympathetic. Our conversation seemed about to close then, and I frantically scrambled for something to continue with.

I poked my pizza. "Must be tough. Moving around all the time."

"It is." She set her fork down. I throw my hands up in the air. This tension was killing me.

"Okay, why are you here?!" I exclaimed. "Was it Scott? Do I need to pelt him with lacrosse balls again?"

Allison let out a small snicker. "No, I'm here on my own accord." She paused, as if considering something. "Um... can I be honest with you?" I froze, unsure how to handle this. Oh shit oh shit oh shit shit shit.....

"Sure." I shrug, trying for nonchalance. "I won't tell Scott, if that's what you want."

"Don't tell anyone." She clarified, her voice stony.

"I promise. Scout's honour." I pledge, giving her a smile. She really isn't so bad.

"I'm here because everyone else around me is lying. My parents are definitely hiding something big from me." Allison says, blunt and to the point. "They don't know that I know, and all of a sudden my Aunt shows up out of nowhere. Just the other day, I caught my dad talking about stealing police case files. Even you agree that that's suspicious."

I sighed, because that sounded like exactly what hunters would do. "That is suspicious. But why are you telling me this?"

"I'm hoping you'll give me a straight answer. At the moment, I trust you more than I trust Scott." She admitted, and I was.. shocked.

"Whoa, what? You trust ME? But, like, you don't even know me!" I stammered. That was definitely a surprise. I was expecting her to come here and ask me to forgive Scott, and now the tables have turned...? I double check her heart again just to make sure she's not lying. Allison huffed at my (probably) incredulous expression.

"Yeah, well, I know the you that Scott talks about all the time." She pointed out.
I nodded. "Okay, true. But he can be biased, I'm warning you. What did Scott even do to make you not trust him?"

"It's more about how my family acts around him." She continued. "The tension's so strong I could cut it with a knife. I'm willing to bet that whatever my family hasn't told me, Scott's in on it too." And her heart stutter at all during this, so she had to be telling the truth. That, or she was a brilliant liar. At this point I was leaning towards the former.

"And that's why you came to me." I add.

"That's why I came to you." She agreed. "Because I'm certain that you're in on it too. Scott doesn't keep anything from you." Oh yeah? Well he's been rather shady these last few days... Oh. Huh. She is smart. In a split second, I made a decision. Derek could kill me about it later. A sharp mind like Allison's would be nice to have on our side. Also I don't even hate her. In fact, I think I like her. She's witty, and smart, and I can see why Scott chose her.

But I had Derek. Nobody compares to Derek Hale.

"Maybe." I confess. "But, I need to get you to promise - what I'm about to tell you, you can't tell anyone else. Ever. Especially your family. It's an extremely serious matter."

She blinked. "You know what's going on? I guess you would, being Scott's best friend and all. How serious is this?"

I felt my smile turn into a grimace. "Like, someone could die if you tell your dad serious."

"Holy shit." she breathed, not as shocked as I expected her to be. "You know, this was honestly more a shot in the dark."

I laughed, because it's becoming apparent that Allison is a risk taker. "Yeah, well it worked. Congratulations" Jazz hands accompanied my statement, earning my a grin from the girl sitting next to me.

"So you'll tell me?" She asked.

I nodded. "I will If I can, but you have to promise first anyways." Allison finally met my eyes with her own, and all I can see is intrigue, fear and trust - no maliciousness. Her heartbeat was steady as ever, if a bit fast. She took a deep breath.

"I, Allison Argent, swear on my life that I won't repeat what Stiles Stilinski tells me about the secret to another soul." She vowed.

"You sure you wanna swear in your life?" I asked, half teasing. She tilted her head.

"Why?" She questioned, her voice guarded.

"Because now, if you spill, I'll really have to kill you." I warned.

"Well, it's a good thing I won't, then." She countered.

My eyes widen. She's got guts. "Even if it was matter of life and death and your family are killers?"

She gives me a weary, bitter smile. "I figured as much when I saw that Kate's gun was covered in blood." She pauses, steeling herself for the next bit. "I need to know, Stiles - are they the ones behind the murders?"
I shook my head. "No. No, they're innocent of that."

Her eyes are wary. "But not innocent of everything."

I give a sheepish shrug. "Yeah, but I need to check with someone else before I can tell you the rest."

Allison actually looked relieved at that and nodded assent, self-consciously tucking a strand of hair behind her ear. I called Derek, of course, and to say he's was furious is the understatement of the century. Derek was livid. In fact, the first few minutes are just of him swearing (I even learn a few new ones!).

I managed to convince him in the end, though it took a half-hour argument and Allison saying "If I betray you you have full permission to kill me" into the speaker for him to agree. I asked her about why she'd bet her life like that, and she told me that it was a matter of who'd lied to her, and betrayed her trust - her family, for her entire life or me, (currently) never.

By the time it got resolved, Lunch was almost over. I bit my lip in frustration. There's never enough time for this shit. Allison manages to read my expression though, and tapped me on the shoulder soon after.

"What?" I muttered, still running scenarios in my head.

"Wanna skip?" She asked.

"Skip?" I parroted, frowning because that seems rather out of character for her.

"Skip class. This is more important." She said gravely. "And I'd much rather get it over with now." I sigh, then nod. This is definitely more important than a lesson on H2O.

"Alright, but what are you gonna say when the school calls your house?" I counter.

She shrugs. "I'll say I'm on my period." WHAT. Wait, can we replay that?! I raised an eyebrow, because Allison Argent had just surprised me again and I realized then that I sorely mislabelled her. Let's remedy that.

"Clever." I commented. She smiled.

"Shall we?" She asked. I hold up a hand in the 'stop' motion, because there are a few other things we need to consider before taking off.

"Wait, what about Scott?" I countered. "He'll notice."

"I'll say it's family stuff - like an appointment or something." She explained.

"And if Scott calls your dad?"

She shook her head. "He won't. He doesn't have my dad's number. Worst case scenario, he'll go to my house and when my dad calls me I'll say I went with Lydia. Dad will buy it, and Scott won't bother checking in with her. Scott's really sweet, and a totally adorable dork, but he's terrified of Lydia."

I snicker. "Who isn't?"

She gives me a masterful faux-innocence smile. "See? All covered."

"You are way to comfortable of a liar for this to be your first stunt." I applaud. "I'm sorry to say that
I've completely misread you based on what Scott's told me." Because the person I thought Allison was couldn't be more different than the person she really is.

Allison sighs, "Well, most people do, and I've been playing it safe with Scott. Let's start over?" I mentally celebrate, because it's really hard to hate someone who has such a resilient spirit. And she's giving me a second chance, willing to forget that I pretended she didn't exist for a whole two weeks. It's more proof that she is not her Father, or Aunt. I hold out a hand.

"Sure. Hi, I'm Stiles Stilinski. I like solving murders before the police do." I said.

"Hey Stiles. Nice to meet you. I'm Allison Argent. I like to go behind my parents' back." She replied.

We shake on it, and she grins. I grin back, all teeth.

"I have the feeling that this the beginning of a beautiful friendship." She said, her voice light.

"Me too." I agreed.

Of course, the place I took her was Derek's house. His charred remains of a house, anyways. Allison opted to remain silent for the first bit, but started asking questions once she noticed that I was heading to the forest. I just told her - again - that it would all make sense in an exaggeratedly cryptic voice (channeling my inner Deaton, am I right?). She punched me in the shoulder for that. I guess I deserved it.

"Stiles, why? The suspense is killing me." She grumbled. I snickered. We were almost there, anyways. She could wait.

"I was actually just channelling Deaton." I confessed, parking the Jeep in the 'driveway.'

"Scott's boss?" She asks, and I nod. She let out an irritated huff. "That does sound like him."

I looked at her. "Pause - When did you meet him?"

She smiles, and her eyes adopt that dreamy quality I see in Scott when he talks about her. "The same night I met Scott. I accidentally hit a dog with my car - It was raining, okay? - and I wanted to make sure it was alright. So it took it to the vet." Oh my god, they first met while saving a puppy's life. Could they get any more cliché? It was a literal Romeo-and-Julliet-esque story, but in real life. With werewolves.

"I see. Well, we're here. Just, uh, follow me, I guess? I'm not sure if Derek is back or not, but he can be... uh..." I fumble with my hands, trying to find the right word. "Intense." I close the Jeep's door.

"Derek as in Derek hale?" She questioned, eyes wide as she took in the house and surrounding forest. Derek's car was there, so I figured he'd be here, only there was no sign of him... Ignoring that tiny prickle of unease, I look back at Allison.

"Yeah. He's, uh, in on this too." I confirmed.

"Are you even going to tell me what this is?" She snarked.
I roll my eyes. "Yeah, yeah. I'm getting to it." By now, we were almost at the front door. I decided to just get it over with, then and there. Ripping off a badge, right? "What do you know about the supernatural?" I asked.

"I know that my family has more than a passing interest in it." She narrowed her eyes.

I nodded. "Uh-huh, and what would you do if that stuff was real."

"Stiles..." She said, her tone warning. "You better not be teasing."

I flailed. "I'm not! It is real! That's why nobody can find the killer - it's a werewolf." She frowned as she thought it over.

"Holy shit." She whispered. "That does make sense. It's too peculiar to be an animal attack."

"Like I said," I confirmed. "Werewolves."

"Werewolves.." She echoed, and then her eyes lit up in amusement. "Werewolves and possibly vampires? Stiles, are you telling me that Twilight is real?"


She snickered. "Just teasing. But, real? I'm going to need some proof."

"Oh, that's easy. I'm a werewolf."

She blinked. "You're... a werewolf?" I nod, and hold up my hand, drawing on my inner wolf. Allison watches with wide eyes as my fingernails turn to claws and back again. She pointed at my hand, then looked at my perfectly serious expression. "Ohmygod you weren't kidding."

I shrug, because it actually seems normal for me. "Yeah. I know it kinda does sound like an elaborate prank, but there's your proof."

"That's..." I tense as she takes another breath. I can hear her heart racing, and half of me is convinced she's going to run screaming. "Actually really cool. Who else?" She asked instead, enraptured. I felt my shoulders slump in relief.

"You're not gonna run away. Actually, you've accepted this really easily." I frowned.

"Once you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, no matter how improbable must be the truth." She quoted.

I grinned. "Sherlock Holmes?"

She nodded. "Yeah." She twirled a strand of hair between her fingers. "My family... I'm guessing they don't have a good part to play in this?"

"Aaaand why do you think that?" I stalled, unsure of how to break the news to her. She gives me the bullshit expression. Busted.

"Because I heard my Dad threaten to kill Scott. Like, actually kill him, Stiles!" She explains, voice tight with worry. Her eyes widened. "Oh my god... Scott's like you, isn't he?" I faltered then, because I wasn't expecting her to come to that conclusion so fast. Oh well, guess I'd have to go with it. So much for breaking the new lightly. It's just been one bandaid ripped off after another.
"I can tell you," I warned. "But it's not pretty."

"Stiles, I'd rather hear it from you than the people who've been lying to me my entire life." Allison countered, and I run a hand through my hair, sighing.

"You family, they're hunters." I muttered, unable to keep the bitterness from leaking into my voice.

"Hunters?" She echoed, tone heavy with the implications of that sentence.

"Yeah." I grimaced. "They hunt werewolves. It's not the metal silver that kills werewolves, but the family. Argent - it means silver in French. Your Dad's actually shot me, and your aunt almost killed Derek."

"My dad... shot you." She stated, emotionless. Then I watched as her face crumpled and she blinks a few times, as if fighting tears. I immediately regretted my words. Shit, she was gonna cry.

"Oh, no no, Allison. I'm fine, they're fine! I just..." I trail of, unsure of how to salvage this. I am horrible at this. Should have left it to Derek. Can't even have one conversation with a girl with making her cry, huh? Way to go, me.

Allison, however, just gave my a biter smile and moved to hug me. "I'm so sorry, Stiles. On behalf of my stupid family, I'm so, so sorry that you almost died." She whispered. I freeze, because this is not how this was supposed to go.

"Whoa, no - I'm sorry. Allison, I'm the one who's supposed to be comforting you." I argued. "I just told you that your entire life was a lie!" She ignores me, so I end up returning the hug, even if only because she needed it more than I did. She eventually stepped away and gave me a weak, watery smile.

"I already suspected a long time ago. Thank you... for telling me the truth." She said. "I just... I don't know what to think."

I sighed. "Yeah. It's a really convoluted mess, isn't it? I mean, technically, your family isn't wrong - they're supposed to be protecting humans. but now they just go after all werewolves, regardless."

She nodded.

"Shades of grey, huh?" She muttered.

"Well, since we're spilling all the secrets now there's more I have to tell you." I start. She gives me a flat look.

"I hope you're not going to drop a bomb like that again." She snarked, but there's no heat behind the words.

"Uh, maybe? I mean, I don't know what you define as a 'bomb' so..." I shrug. Allison's face remains stony, though I can see that she's fighting a smile. I roll my eyes. "Okay, so it started the night those joggers found the dead body. Dad wasn't telling my anything so I went to find it on my own. In the middle of the night. With Scott, and the killer possibly still on the loose."

She gives me an extremely unimpressed look. "I hope you know that that sounds really, really stupid."

I falter, glaring at her. "I know! But in my defence, I was really, really bored. Anyways, we found the body but the killer - who's actually an alpha werewolf who's either super high or rabid - found us, and bit us. Then I discover that I was a werewolf because of super-healing, spend the rest of the day
convincing Scott about it, and met Derek Hale. Derek's a wolf too. His entire family is. Was. Actually, it was the mad Alpha who killed his sister, Laura Hale, to gain alpha powers. That's the creature behind all the" I made air quotes. "Animal attacks" I finished, then gasped for air.

Allison nodded. "So, you and Scott got bitten recently, Derek's a werewolf whose sister just died, and a crazy Alpha is going around killing people. What's an Alpha?"

"Um, there are three types of werewolves. Betas are the usual kind. Omegas are Beta wolves without a pack, and they go crazy because of it. Hunters usually go after Omegas. Alphas are like leaders. They're also the only kind of wolf who can turn others. Werewolves can be either born or turned." I explained.

She hmm'd. "Makes sense. Except now the hunters are after you because they don't know about the Alpha."

"Now the hunters are after us because they don't know about the Alpha." I confirm.

"And if you tell your father about this, I will personally rip your throat out. With my teeth." A new voice interjects. Guess who?

"What the hell, DEREK!" I screamed (a very, very manly scream) and jumped a literal four feet into the air. Allison, who was now clutching my arm like a vice, looked terrified. Apparently he'd been behind us the whole time? This place smells so much like Derek that I hadn't noticed his approach. Stupid sourwolf.

He'd also decided to go full wolf (or as much as he could without literally turning into a wolf). Like, sideburns fangs and red eyes galore, so excuse me for being just a teensy bit startled. It didn't help my case that I was the only one who screamed, but I'm willing to assume that Allison was simply mute with terror. Asshole sourwolf.

"Dude, can you not?" I exclaimed, flailing my arms. "I don't want to die from heart attack à la werewolf. Wait, can werewolves even get heart attacks? Like, would it be a mild heart attack or would the body self-heal so the arteries and veins remain clear, thus negating the heart attack. Oh my god, I'm rambling now. Derek look what you did." I weakly punched him in the chest, still trying to calm my racing heart. Derek shifted back to human and crossed his arms, asking a question with his impeccable raised eyebrow.

"Stiles?" Allison said, pulling me back to reality.

"Oh. Right. Allison, Derek. Derek, Allison. He's my Alpha, and I'm a part of his pack. He's the leader-wolf." I turned to Derek. "Please don't kill me for telling her?" I plead. Derek snorted.

"I'm not killing you." He turned to Allison as I let out a relieved breath. I mean, I knew that he wouldn't harm me, but my wolf was unsettled at the fact that Alpha was mad at me. Stupid instincts. I focus back on the current conversation. "Allison, I meant what I said earlier - you tell anyone, there will be consequences. Deadly consequences" He gave her the 'Alpha' look (you know, the one that intimidates people so much they have to comply) coupled with a fanged smile. It was terrifying, but also honestly kinda hot.

Allison, undeterred despite Derek's best efforts, just nodded. "Of course, I understand." Her brow furrowed as if internally debating something, before she looked up again and asked, "Excuse me, but where is Scott? I know he and Stiles had an argument, but I was under the impression that he was a part of your... er, pack."
"Scott's... err...not part of out pack? He didn't want in. He hates being a werewolf, actually, and now he's..." I look to Derek, unsure of how to finish. I didn't want to be the person who made her cry this time. Derek gives me an unimpressed look.

"Scott McCall is - and this I quote - "a douchebag who's conspiring with the enemy." End quote, by Stiles Stilinski." Derek said, completely straight faced. I just turn and gape at him, because whyyyyy? Why does he throw me under the rug like this?

"No no no no, that is NOT a direct quote!" I protest. "Absolutely not! Don't listen to him, Allison. Derek Hale is a lying liar who lies."

Derek snickered. "It is. You wrote it under Scott's name on your murder board."

I shoved him. "NOT a quote."

Allison giggled, just a little bit hysterical. "I heard that Stiles has a murder board, and Scott's a traitor?" She asked. I rolled my eyes. Murder board, my ass...

"Yeah, well, it's more like an evidence board." I explained. "Also, Scott's not a traitor. Not yet? We think he's just been giving your dad info."

"And my Dad's a hunter," She continued. "Who's out to kill you guys, so that makes him a traitor. I knew there had to be a reason that Scott and my father were getting along so well on such short notice. Just didn't expect... this. Werewolves and Hunters."

I shrugged. "Nobody does. I think that's the main reason everyone is willing to believe the 'animal attacks' angle." My feet were getting sore now, and I was kinda tired. Who knew a conversation could take so much energy? I sat down, then patted the space on the porch next to me in invitation. "Sit?"

"Sure." Allison agreed, and moved so she was sitting at my side.

"Well, that was an experience." I said conversationally, in the most droll, absolutely-done-with-this-shit tone I could conceive. Derek snorted, and even Allison managed a snicker. "Let's totally never do it again."

"Thanks for telling me the truth, though." Allison murmured. "Especially you, Stiles."

"Yeah." I agreed. "Your welcome. You kinda needed to know, since you're dating Scott and all..."

"I'm just salty he didn't tell me." She muttered, bitter.

"I told him not to." Derek intervened.

Allison shook her head. "Yeah, I know." She amended, "I've just been really stressed lately. I need something to get mad at."

I nodded in agreement. "We've all been extra stressed. It'll be nice having you on the team. Less work for me. Us. But mostly me." I give Derek the stink eye, because he's done zero research. Allison snickered, then took a deep breath, closed her eyes, and shook her head. When she opened them again, she was all warrior. No traces of insecurity and anger in sight, all replaced by burning determination.

"Okay, game plan." She began. "What is it?" She turned to Derek, and I followed her gaze. He was Alpha, he called the shots. Except when I disagreed, of course. Derek took the leader role in stride.
"Find the identity of the Alpha, keep an eye on Scott, and tell us if your parents and aunt are going out. I'd like to be out of the forest when they come around." He listed. "It would be nice if you could report everything, but.."]

"But your dad could have bugged the line or something. We're gonna need to figure out a code, but other than that all our conversations should be in person." I picked up.

She nodded. "Got it. Spy on my parents, help you investigate. Don't tell anyone. Sounds fun. Let's do this?"

I grinned, and even Derek cracked a smile. Things were looking up.

"Let's do this."

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Dad had come home after a gruelling night shift, slept until 1:00 pm, and then offered to take me out for lunch. I guess it was his way of apologizing, because he'd barely been around the house these last few days. More guilty thoughts gnawed at my mind as we drove to Dad's favourite diner. Here he was, working his ass of to find a killer that couldn't be found, and I could solve all of it by simply telling him. But I couldn't tell him, because then I'd out all of us, and I refused to betray Derek's trust like that. Alpha said to keep our mouths shut, so I kept my mouth shut. At least until Derek changed his mind and gave the go-ahead.

We were sitting in Dad's cruiser, in the drive-through, talking about nonessential things and waiting for our food. The mood was companionable and light, both of us content to pretend other matters didn't exist. Just me and Dad again, like old times.

My wolf already recognized him as pack, as a caregiver, and someone to be protected at all costs. That was another reason I refused to tell him about the supernatural - he's put himself right in the line of fire to protect me, and if he got hurt I don't think I'd ever forgive myself. I was a werewolf, I could handle it. Dad was human.

Our food finally arrived, and the first thing Dad did once we parked was look down and narrow his eyes.

"Did they forget my curly fries?" He asked, put out.

I snickered. "You're not supposed to eat fries, especially the curly ones."

Dad glared. "I am carrying a lethal weapon." He countered, and I tried not to flinch at the mention of a gun. "If I want the curly fries, I will have the curly fries."

I rolled my eyes. "If you think removing the contractions from your sentences makes your argument more legitimate, you are wrong. Only Optimus Prime can pull that." Dad gave me a loaded look, but relented because I had totally won that argument. Then the dispatch radio went off.

"Unit one, you copy?"

I immediately reached for the controls, but my head was slapped away and Dad gave me a look. The this is my job what are you doing you are a child look. I managed to look sheepish and shrunk back
into my seat. "Sorry."

Dad then picked up the mouthpiece. "Unit one, copy."

"Got a report of a possible 187."

"A murder?" I mumbled, unable to keep my mouth shut. Dad gave me an exasperated look, but I suspect it was more about the fries stuffed in my mouth rather than the fact I'd memorized the police codes.

We drove to one of the local video stores, where the police had already blocked the area with caution tape. Two other vehicle units were parked at the scene, and a few officers were milling about looking for clues. An ambulance had arrived as well, and I assumed it was because someone else had been injured. My mind immediately thought about Derek and Scott - but it was more than likely that were away. So an innocent, then. My theory was confirmed when I caught sight Lydia Martin and Jackson Whittemore huddled in said ambulance. Lydia looked like she was in shock, but Jackson was pacing, clearly irritated.

"No way." I hissed, more to myself than my Dad, because Jackson had probably just witnessed another supernatural event. He'd been snooping around ever since he found the glove with the claw holes, but we'd ignored him in favour of dealing with Scott and the Argents. Now he'd only be more suspicious. Shit.

Unfortunately, Dad decided to go there first. Jackson looked up at his approach, and a sneer settle on his face when he realized I was there as well. I waved cheerily from behind the windshield.

"Why the hell can't I just go home?" He yelled, then to my dad, "I'm fine."

Dad shook his head. "I hear you, but EMT says you hit your head pretty hard. They just want to make sure that you don't have a concussion."

Jackson glared. "What part of 'I'm fine' are you having a problem grasping? I want to go home!"

"And I understand that." Dad continued, calm as ever, but I wasn't letting Jackass bitch at my dad. I gave him a very prominent middle finger from where I was watching inside the car. Jackson saw it.

"No you DON'T!" He snarled, "Which kind of blows my mind since it should be a basic concept to grasp for a basic minimum wage rent a cop like you. Now I want to go home!"

I let out a growl and my claws were digging into my thighs. Too far, Jackass. Nobody insults my dad. Kill him, a voice whispered. He insulted what was yours! He threatened your pack! The outsider will pay.

I snarled in agreement. Jackson had it coming. I was fully ready to jump out and murder the dickwad, but then-

_Derek._

Alpha.

His scent, it was somehow still clinging to my hoodie. I took a deep breath, then another, then several more. I let the feeling of pack wash over my thoughts and felt my wolf settle. Derek was Alpha, strong and protective and always in control. Always in control. I wouldn't lose it now. I couldn't afford to wolf out now. Jackson, I'd deal with later, but for now all he's done was say several words. Only words.
What was it I always told myself? Right. *Words can only hurt you if you let them*. I wouldn't let them. Jackson could do whatever, I was better than this. I would be better than this. My heartbeat slowed down, and I calmed down enough to open my eyes again. I turned away from the ambulance, though. That had been a very close call.

That had been an extremely close call. I let my gaze wander to the building - it was probably a good idea not to look at Jackson for now. Oh, wait-

Was that Derek? On the fucking roof?

Huh. It was. I snorted. I'd recognize that silhouette anywhere.

I closed my eyes and concentrated, knowing that if I really wanted to I'd pick up what he was saying.

"*Not bad.*" He said, and I knew he was talking about how I'd managed to reign in the aggression earlier.

"Thanks." I replied, getting out of the car and making a show of looking around at the crime scene and absolutely not at the roof.

"*Have you got any leads?*" He asked. I shook my head.

"None yet. Is it close to the next full moon? Like, maybe the killer Alpha only goes out during the full moon." I suggested, making another sweep across the scene. The inside of the video store had been ravaged - shelves on their sides, disks everywhere, claw marks littering the scene. From what I could see through the window glass, the customer service desk had a deep set of gouges on the corner. Like, at least two inches deep. I wondered how the cops were gonna explain that...

"*It's been random, so far.*" Derek muttered, his voice bringing me back to the present.

"That sucks." I grimaced.

"*It's the truth. See you later?*"

I saw my dad making his way over here and nodded. "Bye, Sourwolf." The shadow on the roof melted away, and I turned my attention away from Derek and back to my Dad.

"Alright, kiddo. Let's get you home. I have to look into this so I'll be away all night." He moved to open the door, but froze. "What did this?" He asked.

"Did what?" I moved back to the car. Oh. Well, shit. Apparently my claws hadn't fully receded when I closed the door to step outside, and there were two short, jagged indents on the side, near the edge.

"The door." Dad gestured. I shrugged, pretending that I was as clueless as he was. Even though my mind was racing for an excuse.

"Maybe it was a key? Or, like, a knife." I suggested. It was the closest to the truth I could get. Let him believe some delinquent scratched the paint.

"Must have been really sharp to cut through this." He observed, fingering the damage before shaking his head and moving to the driver's side. I bit my lip, then glanced down at my hands to make sure they'd returned to being dull human nails.

Extremely sharp indeed.
"Stiles!"

I turned at the sound of my name to see Scott running towards me, school bag slung over my shoulder. Oh, crap. I was still mad at him - don't look at me like that. I was mad at him - and I didn't want to talk to him right now. Even though I missed Scott horribly these last few days.

"Hey." I offered, but my tone was flat. I still haven't forgiven me for blowing up the other day. Okay, maybe I had but I didn't want him to know that I'd forgiven him.

"Look, about what happened last time..." He fidgeted. "I'm sorry. I got mad for no reason, and I'm sorry I said Derek was controlling you." I raised an eyebrow, because was Scott McCall actually apologizing?

"What brought this on?" I asked. "You're apologizing, and not that I don't appreciate it, it's kinda... sudden."

"I miss you, bro." He admitted, and then turned the puppy eyes on full power. "I'm sorry." It was inevitable that I caved. Seriously, you try resisting Scott's pity face and see how well you do. I'm telling you, it's impossible.

Or, I'm just biased. Anyways...

"I miss you too, buddy." I agreed, but I kept my guard up. Usually, when Scott and I fought there was at least a week of radio silence before reconciliation began. Not a measly four days. We were so close that usually, when we hurt each other, we really hurt each other.

"Can we hug it out?" Scott pleaded. "I hurt you, and screwed up big time. I'm sorry."

I sigh, and give in. Because it's Scott. He pulls me in, and I can tell he's stuck his head in the crook of my neck, scenting me. It's a wolf thing. When he's satisfied, he pulls back and beams at me and I have to admit that I feel a lot better now. Oh, Wait a second....

"Did Derek put you up to this?" I frowned. Scott looked sheepish. Busted.

"Kinda. He convinced me that he wasn't controlling you." He admitted. "I'm really sorry for saying that. I understand that you guys are pack, and that's not something that I can change. It's good."

"And you're not mad?" I asked, skeptical.

"I mean, I guess I felt betrayed? But I was feeling a lot of things then. I'm good with it, as long as I don't have to join." He explained.

I nodded. "Okay. I can live with that. But why do you want to stay a loner? It's dangerous." I asked. Scott looked uncomfortable. "Reasons, okay? Private reasons." He offered, but didn't say anything more. I decided to let it go, even though there was something more than a little suspicious about this.

"Alright, man. It's good to have you back." I agreed, then patted him on the back. "But I get to plan our next movie marathon, and it's gone be a horror movie binge." I said this because I knew Scott hated horror movies. Consequences, bro. He nodded, albeit reluctantly. We wandered the halls
towards Scott's locker, then he suddenly froze and grasped my sleeve, pulling me so I faced him.

"What?" I questioned. I thought we'd resolved our argument.

"Hey, um.. do you want to wish Allison a happy birthday?" He asked.

I narrowed my eyes. "That's today?" Scott nodded, looking hopeful. It was adorable. I thought about it, but then decided that it wouldn't do much harm. "Sure."

We made our way to Allison's locker, which was located conveniently close to Scott's. She was placing some binders in her bag, and exchanging a makeup kit for her MacBook. From this angle, I could see the inside of her locker. It was decorated in shades of purple, black and blue. A mirror hung on the inside of the door. I should have expected Ally would be one of those super-organized people. Scott's locker was a mess in comparison, but you know - opposites attract.

Then they started making lovey eyes at each other, and I aborted mission to hightail it out of there. Just because I forgave Scott didn't mean I wanted to witness their sickeningly sweet romance. Ugh.... I turned and made my way to the history hallway, and was about to text Derek when the final bell rang. I bit back a groan when I remembered my schedule.

I had Chemistry first period.

With Harris.

Harris strut across the front of the class, eyeing us like a hawk eyeing it's prey, and tapping his pen on the clipboard he held in his hand. Such arrogance, such incompetence. Oh, how I loathed that man... When we were all seated - the latecomers receiving a particularly vicious glare - he decided to begin class with an announcement.

"Just a friendly reminder, Parent-Teacher conferences are tonight. Students below a C average are required to attend. I won't name you because the shame and self-disgust should be more than enough punishment." He then looked at the only vacant seat in the house. Scott's seat. I frowned. Where the hell was he? But again, his life was not mine. I returned to highlighting my textbook. "Has anyone seen Scott McCall?" Harris asked, and I knew he meant that question for me. I ignored him for a moment longer, finishing the paragraph, then looked up with the highlighter cap still in my mouth.

Then Jackson walked in. I know my eyes widened in surprise because I'd fully expected him to skip today after the attack at the movie store. Harris, however, seemed perfectly at ease with his presence. "Hey Jackson, if you need to leave early for any reason, you let me know." Harris offered, patting Jackson on the shoulder. Jackson nodded, and I rolled my eyes from desk in the corner. Teacher's pet, much? Harris then addressed the rest of the class. "Everyone start reading chapter 9. Mr. Stilinski, try putting the highlighter down between paragraphs. It's chemistry, not a coloring book."

I look up and levelled him with a glare. Then turned to the ceiling and spat the cap up, catching it effortlessly in my hand. Jackson's presence only led to more questions, but I couldn't outright ask him, because that would be bad, for me. I turned to Danny, who was sitting behind me.

"Hey Danny, can I ask you a question?" I whispered.
"No." Danny said, tone flat.

I shrugged, then asked my question anyways. "Well I’m going to anyway. Um, did Lydia show up in your homeroom today?"

Danny shook his head. "No."

Huh. Lydia stayed home. I'd have to ask her after school then.

I turned back to Danny. "Can I ask you another question?"

Dany scowled. "The answer is still no."

I rolled my eyes, ignoring the harsh answer. "Does anyone actually know what happened to her and Jackson last night?"

"He wouldn’t tell me.” Really? Nothing?

"But he's your best friend." I pointed out. Danny didn't reply, and I decided to break the silence again. "Can I ask you one more question?" I said, thinking about Derek.

"What?!" Danny glared, getting pissed at my bugging him. I gave him a cheeky smile.

"Do you find me attractive?" I asked.

"Stiles!"

During lacrosse practice after school, under the bleachers and away from prying eyes, I found Derek waiting. Or brooding. Or stalking me. I think the overprotectiveness was an ingrained thing from when he lost his entire family, and couldn't do anything about it. Then he recently lost Laura, and I'm willing to bet that now that he had me, he'd be a total mother hen. Not that I disliked it - it was kinda cute.

Derek was wearing his signature leather jacket, black jeans and a grey shirt. He had his hands in his pockets, and looked up the moment he heard me approaching. His entire demeanor lit up, then, and my stomach twisted itself in knots.

"Hey." I said as I reached him, leaning to give him a kiss on the cheek.

"Hey." He brushed his lips on my forehead, but I tilted my head up and captured his lips with my own instead. We kissed for what I knew had to be a short while, but felt like an eternity. I threaded my hands through Derek's hair, marveling at how soft it was, and his hands found their place on my hips. When we finally pulled apart, I was breathless. I couldn't stop the little delighted giggle that slipped out. Derek smiled as he scented me, kissing my neck as he did it. Every place his lips touched sending a spark of happiness through me. My wolf preened at the attention.

Then we pulled apart, and I felt a surge of protectiveness at the lost, somewhat uncertain expression in his eyes.

"That okay?" I asked.
"Perfect." He replied, making my cheeks burn and stomach flutter. Of course, this was school, so we'd have to break it up soon. It was too risky being seen together at school, so Derek would usually wait until I got home to see me. But he had come to me today, so... he probably had an ulterior motive - time to call him out on it.

"What's the occasion?" I said, and Derek blinked at my sudden change of topic. Then he smirked. I raised an eyebrow - this would be good...

"I came to interrogate Jackson. Do you want to watch?" He offered.

"Oh god, yes!" I agreed, thrilled. "You're awesome, you know that?"

"Obviously." He murmured, nuzzling my cheek once more before stepping away. "Just don't get seen." He warned.

"I can do that. I can totally do that. Stealth is my middle name."

... Jackson was showering in the locker room, perfectly minding his own business. I almost felt bad for what was going to happen next. Almost.

He noticed something red, but dismissed it because the room was steamy (hah!) and everything looked blurry in general. It turned out to be the light reflecting off someone's red headphones. Jackson huffed, berating himself for getting spooked because of nothing. Then he turned around and came face to face with Derek Hale.

Jackson's expression transformed to one of fear, and he backed away towards the lockers, his hands in the 'I surrender' position. "I don't know where Scott is. Stiles already left." Jackson pleaded.

Derek shook his head, giving Jackson a fanged smile. "I'm not here for either of them. I'm here for you."

"What? Why, why me? I didn't do anything." Jackson stammered. I felt a kind of perverse pleasure seeing my long time tormentor reduced to a stammering mess, then I demolished that thought and locked it away. No, I was a chaotic neutral, at the very least. Dark thoughts like that didn't have a place in my mind. Shouldn't have a place in my mind.

(There were plenty, regardless, and they weren't going away anytime soon)

I shook my head and refocused on the scene before me. My absolute catch of a boyfriend was scaring the shit out of Jackass, and I wanted to see every second of it.

"No," Derek's eyes were alight. And terrifying. And seriously hot. "But you saw something, didn't you?"

"No!" Jackson protested, shaking his head. "I didn't see anything!"

"What was it?" Derek asked, leaning in. "An animal? A mountain lion?"

"I didn't see anything," Jackson stammered. "I swear, I'm not lying."

Liar. I could hear it in his heart, blipping after every sentence he spoke. Derek did as well, and moved in so close that their noses were almost touching.

"Then calm down and say it again." He growled.
“Say what, that I’m not lying?” Jackson tried to sneer, but it came out looking like he was constipated. I bit my lip to muffle the snickers.

“Tell me that you didn’t see anything.” Derek snarled, one last time. “Slowly.”

“I didn’t see… anything. I’m not lying.”

Derek stepped back, accepting the confirmation that Jackson did see something that night, but was willing to deny it. He then reached out and grasped Jackson's neck. "One more thing." He turned so I couldn't see exactly what was happening, but it smelled like an infected wound - sickeningly sweet, with an iron undertone. “You should really get that checked out.”

Then Derek turned away and stalked out of there, like a boss (ba-dum-tshhh), and I snuck out soon after. Jackson was too busy trying not to pass out to notice. When we'd returned to out usual place under the bleachers, I turned on Derek.

"As satisfying as that was to watch," I snickered. "Was it really necessary to scare him that much? I'm pretty sure he was going to piss his pants."

Derek smiled. "I had a reputation to uphold."

"Oh yeah - all that tough Alpha street cred. I hope you know that, on the inside, you're a fluffy cinnamon roll." I tapped his chest. Sinammon roll, more like. I felt my face flush at that thought.

"And you have me all figured out?" Derek teased.

"Mm-hmm."

"Of course you do. This was... well, it was for how he treated your dad yesterday night." Derek answered, part proud and part terrified, and I felt my heart melt. He was a total romantic, huh?

"You didn't have to do that, you know." I argued, rubbing my nose in self-consciousness.

"But I wanted to. You're important to me, Stiles. I protect what's mine."

*Protect what's mine.*

That phrase send a bolt of happiness (or, more like pack-family-protection-belonging) through me.

"Does that mean you consider me yours?" I asked coyly.

"Of course. Always." Derek smiled gently, letting his generally glum expression recede, and I legit swooned.

"Thank you." I murmured, then kissed him lightly on the lips. When I pulled back, Derek’s face was actually slightly red. It was precious. I needed to take a photo to immortalize this moment forever and oh my god - we were just like Scott and Allison, weren't we!? Shit... I hope Scott never caught us like this or I'd never be able to tease him about his Allison obsession ever again.

I decided to ruin the moment then, because this was at school and I'm a little shit like that. "By the way, Scott's back on team wolf. Or he claims to be. He apologized today."

Derek tilted his head, tossing his arms. "Then we need to tell him what's going on. But not too much."

"Why? You think he's a spy?" I asked.
Derek nodded. "It makes sense, but... Scott doesn't seem the kind of person who'd double-deal like that."

I sighed. "He isn't. Loyalty is like, his thing." I frowned as the big picture became clearer. "So we still know nothing, save for what we'd already determined: the Alpha is a werewolf, he's uncontrollable, and the murders are sporadic. Chris Argent has an interest in Scott, and has a bunch of guns in his basement. Scott is dating Allison Argent, who's actually on our side, and Scott is on the fence. We're not telling Scott about Allison, and we're also trying to investigate the murders without the police knowing. And finally, Jackson is suspicious of us, and he's seen the Alpha. Probably." I shook my head with a grimace. "What a mess."

"Essentially." Derek agreed.

"Dammit." I muttered. "Okay. Just let me text Scott real quick."

Surprise, surprise! - Scott didn't answer my first text. He didn't answer the second, or any of them after. Derek and I spent a good fifteen minutes mulling over what might've happened, but then decided that he was probably still with Allison, and that they were doing stuff. He'd skipped class today, after all... and I suspected that it was because of Allison's birthday. Derek then informed me he had to go to work, and I would be the one to fetch our wayward omega.

Once Derek had left, I headed towards Scott's house. Eventually I gave up on texting him and decided to call instead. He picked up on the first ring. Of course.

"What?" Scott hissed.

"Finally!" I exclaimed. "Have you been getting any of my texts?!"

"Yeah, like all nine million of them." He complained.

I snorted at his annoyed tone, then let out a frustrated breath. "Do you have any idea what's going on? Lydia's totally MIA, Jackson looks like he's got a time bomb inserted into his face, another random guy is dead - don't you think we should be doing something about this?" I tapped a finger on the Jeep's dashboard in irritation.

"Like what?" He asked, sounding clueless. I heard what sounded like Allison's laughter and a car horn in the background. Just what the hell were they doing?

"Something!" I flailed.

He paused for a moment, then a thud, then: "We'll deal with it later!" And he hung up. He hung up on me, again. I fought the urge to slam my head against the steering wheel. Godammit, Scott.

I was really annoyed with my best friend now. He complained about his grades, his life, his spot on the lacrosse team - which was first line, mind you. He bitches about never having enough time to for work, then decides to spontaneously skip school with Allison. They were probably having sex. Again. I seriously hoped Scott knew that Derek and I smelled it after he'd done the deed, so any excuse he whipped up was null and void. I sighed and turned in a different direction.

To Lydia's house then.
Lydia was loopy. Like, really really loopy. Her mom was nice enough, though, and let me go up to Lydia's room after I told her I was a friend from school. Lydia Martin was in her bed, and she'd looked up at the ceiling with a dazed expression when I entered. The conversation we had was beyond weird, especially when she said she wanted to have sex, then mistook me for Jackson.

No wonder she's been so open about her half-answers. She thought I was Jackson. I don't think I've ever been so insulted in my life. She also asked, "What the hell is a Stiles?" Ouch. Like I said before, that conversation was beyond wired and to preserve Lydia's dignity, I won't be writing it here.

The SparkNotes version is this: I talked to Lydia while she was still high on pain meds, she told me that she'd seen a mountain lion. I held up a giraffe, and asked what it was. She replied with mountain lion, again. I then realized that she was in no condition to answer so I made to leave, but she stopped me and asked if I could stay. Because she mistook me for Jackson. Just before leaving, I caught sight of her phone, which was unlocked, and open to a video. I pressed play.

The Alpha.

I watched as a hulking black beast with red eyes dashed across the screen, only to pause and then look directly at the camera. My eyes flashed gold involuntarily.

The Alpha.

Lydia Martin had captured a video of the alpha, the killer, on her phone. This was... finally something!

I left then, muttering a quick goodbye to Lydia, and a thank-you, to Lydia's mom. Then I got in the Jeep and set a course to home. Or Derek's loft. I glanced at the passenger side seat, and grinned when I saw the sleek iPhone with a pink rhinestone case.

I'd taken Lydia's phone with me.

Of course I would! The evidence was gold, and there was no way I'd leave it behind. I needed to show this to Derek.

Hopefully, Lydia wouldn't kill me for stealing her phone. It was for an extremely valid, life-or-death cause.

Hopefully, huh...? But that's the thing - hope. We finally had a reason to do so. *Hopefully*, this puzzle piece will only bring us closer to finding the truth.

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The Tell - Part II

Chapter Summary

(I failed to keep my Dad away...)

THE TELL - PART II

REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED LAST TIME? HOW I TRIED TO INTERROGATE LYDIA while she was doped up on pain meds (not my brightest moment, I'll admit) and then found that she took a video of the killer - our mysterious rabid alpha - on her phone? Then I took the phone, because I really had no better plan at that moment. It was for an extremely legitimate cause! But then the guilt started eating at me, so the first thing I did when I got home was download the video on to my computer, then onto my phone through my computer (because Android and Apple don't mix) and then visited Lydia again the very next day to return it.

She was asleep this time, but her arm (which she'd hurt during the attack) looked infinitely better. She looked so... innocent, really, laying on her bed with her copper hair splayed around like a halo. So peaceful. So unlike the plastic visage she put on at school. I calmly placed a bouquet of get-well-soon flowers on her dresser along with the stolen phone. Hopefully, she hadn't noticed that I'd taken it. And if she did... well, let's just say I'd rather the Alpha kill me than have to suffer revenge at the hands of Lydia Martin. She could be downright vicious at times.

The next thing I did was - after reviewing the footage thoroughly and adding a screenshot to the murder board- send it to Scott, Derek and Allison. Along with the video, I also explained how it only confirmed what we already knew, and that the only real thing it did was give us a visual. The alpha could currently be running amok in the middle of Beacon Hills Preserve, or could have shifted back and be masquerading as an unassuming citizen. There was something I read once that stated that the most dangerous psychopaths are the ones nobody suspects. Like the kind uncle who'd buy the best Christmas presents and take you fishing.

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The next chapter of events would painfully reveal the irony in that ending statement.

And that was that. However, Scott was like, "Sure. That's cool. But why do I have to do something, again?" So we unanimously ('we' being me) agreed to (bitterly) 'respect Scott's wishes' and keep him out of it. Now, Allison - she's been invaluable, with research, spying on her parents and smuggling me a gun from the Argent armoury, along with several wolfsbane bullets. Derek refused to touch any
of that, though. Me? Well, I'd use them in a pinch, and I was a crack shot with a gun (being the Sheriff's kid meant that the shooting range was a prime spot for 'father-son bonding time'), but it was more Allison's department now.

We'd also stolen (*ahem* temporarily misappropriated) an abandoned freight car (from the junk pile at the train yard) and dragged it to the loft that Derek had purchased the week before. We'd done this in the middle of the night, using the Jeep and werewolf strength. Allison helped when she could, but mostly laughed at our failed attempts. Trust me, it was priceless watching Derek say "I don't need you help," then watching as his face fell when he failed to move the freight car a full five meters.

Somehow, though, we managed to get it to Derek's loft (also know as 'Team Wolf Headquarters') and if I ever have to do something that frustrating again in my life, it would be too soon. It probably helped that the loft was on the roof of some warehouse, in the literal middle of nowhere, so nobody really saw us flop this mission. A least we had an armoury, now. Sorta. We needed to get more weapons, and reinforce the walls, but it was a start.

Come to think of it, while Derek's loft was in Beacon Hills, it wasn't in any place I'd ever been to before. I should have found it during my eight grade 'urban explorer' phase. Actually, I'm pretty sure that Derek had the thing custom built.

But back to the first text I sent Scott, since that's the next significant event. I actually tried to call him first, before I even thought of calling Derek or Allison, because Scott was my best friend and he was supposed to be there for me but he didn't pick up. I sighed, flopping into my desk chair as his voicemail repeated itself for the third time. I called once more, but that time I left a message.

"Hey, it's me again." I muttered into the mic, "Look I found something and I need to talk to you. So, if you could turn your phone on, like right now, that would be great. Or else I'll kill you. Do you understand me? I will kill you. And I'm too upset right now to come up with a witty description of how I'm going to kill you but I imagine will involve claws, teeth and a lot of screaming. Okay? Goodbye." I pressed the 'end voice message' icon and listened to the dead tone ring three times before cutting off. I'm just going to assume, from now on, that Scott's phone is broken and he only text messages got through.

Growling in frustration, I threw the phone at my bed, then slumped over my desk and rubbed my eyes. Stupid, stubborn, lovesick Scott.... and I couldn't get mad at Allison because she was a decent person! I was so into moping about the shitstorm that was my life that I literally jumped out of my skin when my dad knocked on the door. I grimaced, willing my heart to calm the fuck down, and moved to open it.

Dad stuck his head in. "Please tell me I'm going to hear good news at this Parent/Teacher conference tonight?" He asked.

"Depends on how you define good news." I deadpanned. Dad gave me a flat expression.

"I define it as you getting straight A’s with no behavioural issues.” He said.

I winced, then tried to turn it into a shrug. “You might want to rethink that definition.” I muttered.

Dad shook his head, somewhat fondly, “Enough said." Then, "I'll see you later, Stiles.” and he stepped back into the hallway and closed the door. I stared at the door, blankly listening to the thump-thump of his slippered feet on the stairs, and the calm beating of his heart.

I shook my head - focus, Stiles! - and decided that, since I had already been mulling about it earlier, it would be a good time to get some more research done. Perhaps this time, I'd get a clue to the pattern.
I pressed play on the alpha video again, and fought a flinch when I saw those red eyes. This... yeah, it was messed up. The thing was huge, but I'd assumed that already from the attack I'd gotten bitten in. It was black, and hulking. A mutation between man and wolf, not quite either. Like something straight out of a horror movie.

I thumbed through the other photographs and diagrams Allison had sent me. They were from one of the 'dictionaries' in her family's little library, but looked more like a ritual circle from a cult. Exorcism, maybe?

Then I saw a hand gripping the windowsill in the corner of my eye, and I stumbled upright only to come face to face with Derek. I guess Sourwolf decided that entrance via window was the way to go. I smiled, letting happening was away the residual panic. "Really?" I teased, then leaned in for a kiss. A kiss that was eagerly reciprocated. "Mmm. What are you doing here."

Derek stepped in, carefully maneuvering over my desk, and settled himself on my bed. "I couldn't go back to the loft."

I felt my spirits plummet as my brain register that the glossy substance clinging to his leather jacket was blood. "What happened?" I hissed, already reaching for the first-aid kit hidden behind the trash can.

"Hunters. They tried to ambush me at my old house." He muttered, wincing as he shifted positions. "No, don't - it's already almost healed." He declined the bandage I had been preparing. I put it away with a huff.

"Allison's father?" I asked, then sent a text to said hunter's daughter to get here, NOW.

"No, it was her aunt, Kate." He corrected, trying and failing to hide how he flinched at the mention of her name.

"The one that shot you." I added, then frowned. "You're wet. This is mostly water."

"Only one real bullet. She decided to zap and torture me with an electric rod. I was barely able to get away from her before she emptied the full clip into my chest." Derek snarled. I bit my lip and sat next to him, letting him lean on me. Allison texted back, saying that her parents were home and there was no way she could sneak out. She also said that her aunt was boasting about killing something, and told us to watch out. She also apologized countless times before I sent her a text that we were okay, even though Derek got hurt a little. Allison responded with a detailed essay-ish thing describing how Kate really was a psychopath, then wished us all the best if we wanted to kill her. She then apologized to Derek on behalf of her family, and told us to tell her everything when we saw her later.

"She's a bitch." I stated, wishing bloody murder on Kate Argent. Derek nodded. I sighed. "Great. You know, that's just great. We have a new body out there, pole zapping and gun slinging werewolf hunters running around, an alpha werewolf beast prowling about, Scott’s out doing who knows what and now you're injured, again, and in my room -and my Dad's downstairs. Like, right now."

"It's the only other safe place I could think of." Derek murmured. I felt my heart break at that, and turned to I could nuzzle his neck and breath in his scent, a gesture that finally comforted my inner wolf. At least he got away. This time, that little voice countered. Who knows about next time?

I decided to fetch one of my Dad's old button down shirts for Derek. Those should fit. I handed it to
Then I was witness to the wonderful sight of Derek Hale stripping on my bed, in my room, while slightly wet, with those godly abs of his.

Let's just take a moment to appreciate that sight, shall we?

Derek, hair tousled and slightly wet, a smudge of blood on his cheek. Moving his hands up to pull his shirt off, his toned torso peeking under the hem of the bloody garment, and then sighing once it finally was off, as if wearing clothes was some kind of great inconvenience, and oh my god that chest.

I'd probably been drooling, then, if Derek's amused expression was anything go by. Eventually, the moment ended, because he'd put on the shirt I'd handed him and those chiseled abs were hidden from view.

He stood to hand me the bloody shirt (he'd re-worn the leather jacket, despite the wetness) and I took that chance to move behind him and press myself against his back.

"You can't do that, Sourwolf." I said, teasing. "It's making me feel extremely inadequate."

Derek turned his head so he could nuzzle my cheek. "You're not inadequate."

I sighed. "I'm glad someone thinks so."

"You will never be inadequate, Stiles. You're perfect." He countered.

"If I'm perfect, then what do I call you?" I whispered.

"The Alpha." He teased, with a perfectly sinful smirk.

"Derek, no! you can't say things like that!" I said, moving away so glare at him. "If you keep going I'm gonna lose control - and my Dad's downstairs so that should give you an idea of how horribly this could end!"

"I know." He threw an arm around my shoulder. "I'm sorry. I love you?"

I smiled. "Love you to."

We sat there in silence until I decided that, okay, time to kill the mood (again). As awesome as it was having Derek snuggling with me in my room, we had other things to discuss. Preferably before my Dad got suspicious and barged in here with a gun.

"So Allison's aunt jumped you?" I asked. Derek froze, slightly trembling.

"Tried to surprise me, then wanted to question and torture me." He muttered, fiddling with the buttons on his shirt.

I frowned, leaning against him. "What, she thinks you've been killing people around here?"

"No, she knows I haven’t. She was trying to see if I knew who the Alpha was and where to find it. When she saw I didn’t she saw no reason to keep me around anymore.” He snarled.

I felt my wolf snarl in disgust. "Guess you were right about their code - they really don’t follow it."

Derek hummed in agreement. "No, they don’t."
Then I remembered the video. It honestly should have been the first thing I mentioned, but excuse me for being distracted by Derek's abs. But back to the video - I had to show it to him. “Speaking of the Alpha, I found something.” I said, letting a little smugness creep into my tone.

Derek's curious gaze met mine. “What is it?” He asked, trying to appear blank but I could tell he was excited. Who wouldn't be? This was the first real evidence.

“I went to visit Lydia today, to see if she was okay and it looks like she might've seen something. Well, more than seen something.” I said, flipping up my computer and typing in the password. I clicked on the folder labeled 'S-stuff' (S standing for 'supernatural'). “She managed to get this with her phone.” I clicked play on the video, and watched as a flurry of emotions flickered across his face. “I sent it to my phone before I deleted it on hers so we don’t have to worry about anyone else seeing it.”

Derek leaned in, confusion in his eyes. "That's something, at least."

I blinked, because the inflection of the sentence suggested that this wasn't what he'd expected. “What is it? I thought it was the alpha. Haven't you seen that before?”

Derek’s eyes narrowed. “No, I haven’t. It’s not supposed to look like that.”

"It's not?" I asked, perplexed.

“No. We can shift into real wolves, but I'm certain that it's not supposed to look like that.” He stated, then re-played the video once more. I shivered. It didn't matter how many times I'd watched it before, that video would always give me chills.

"It's feral, isn't it?" I asked. 'I already suspected. Rabid, or insane. Mania. Something.'

Derek nodded, then stood up, closing my laptop as he did. “We’ve got to find this thing before the hunters do.”

"Why?" I asked, as another plan began forming in my mind. "I mean, it's just a suggestion, but if the hunters want to use you and then why can’t we use them? They take out the Alpha and-"

"No." He hissed, "We have to find it first. Stiles, please."

"Yeah, okay." I agreed. "But why do we have to find it first?"

Derek ran a hand through his hair. "I'll tell you later. Promise. Just worry about finding it first.” He moved so he was in a position to jump out the window, but then paused as if something had just occurred to him. "Does Scott know about this yet?"

"No," I admitted, bitter. “I’ve been trying to call and message him but he’s been dodging me all day.” I thought Scott said he was back on Team Wolf? Doesn't seem like it. "But, I'll text Allison. She'd want to know about it."

Derek nodded. "Yeah, she would. What the hell is Scott doing?"

I shook my head. "No idea."
“Stiles? That’s right but I thought Stiles was his last name?” Coach asked, frowning at his papers.

“His last name is Stilinski.” Sheriff Stilinski corrected.

“You named your kid Stiles Stilinski?”

“No, that’s just what he likes to be called.”

“Oh, well I’d like to be called Cupcake. What is his first name?” The Sheriff pointed to the name cleanly printed at the top of the form.

“Wow, that’s a form of child abuse. I don’t even know how to pronounce that.” Coach said, incredulous.

“It was his mother’s father’s name.” Stilinski explained.

“Wow.” Coach laughed. “You must really love your wife.”

“Yeah…I did.”

The atmosphere suddenly took a turn for the worse.

“Well this just became incredibly awkward.” Coach muttered, looking at the floor.

Stilinski groaned. “Why don’t we get to the conference part of this conference, Cupcake?”

“I like your thinking.” Coach grumbled, then cleared his throat. So Stiles = great kid. He’s had zero talent, though I’m happy to say that he’s been lately showing a marked improvement in Lacrosse.”

Sheriff Stilinski nodded. "Right."

“He is very smart, but he never takes full advantage of that.” Coach continued.

"What do you mean?"

“Well for his final question on his midterm exam he detailed the entire history of the male circumcision.”

“Well, I mean, it does have historical significance, right?”

“I teach economics.”

Meanwhile, I was busy going through Dad's old case files. Derek had left a while ago, and Dad was still at the parent-teacher conference so I'd have plenty of time to go snooping. On a side note, it was pretty much as I'd suspected. The police knew nothing. But... wait a second. Kate Argent. there was something suspicious about her. Suspicious enough that I'd stuck a photo of her and written "BITCH" across it in red marker. Let it be known that I can be petty, very petty, when I need to be. On the other hand, Derek's insistence that we found the rabid alpha before the hunters did led me to thinking that he thought this wolf was either an innocent, or maybe one of his surviving family members. So far, the killer had been going after people who had a connection the the Hale family fire.

It was kinda far fetched, but it made the most sense. One of his wolfy relatives was hell bent on getting revenge. But who? Laura was dead, and Peter was in a coma. Was there someone else who'd
survived?

I finished tacking the last point to my murder board and stepped back, surveying the work. It just got curieuxer and curieuxer.

“Let me tell you that there's plenty to say about Lydia.” The math teacher started.

Did I not predict this?” Her father teased.

“Here we go...” her mother murmured. “Total nuclear meltdown.”

They talk back and forth for a bit, until her father turned back to the teacher and asked, “Just tell us what the problem is.”

“I wasn’t aware there was a problem.” The teacher countered calmly, her voice carrying an undertone of pride. “Academically, Lydia is one of the finest students I’ve ever had. Her AP classes actually push her GPA above a 5.0. I'd actually like to have her IQ tested.” She smiled at the surprised expression on her parents faces. "And socially, she displays great leadership qualities. She’s a real leader.”

Meanwhile, Lydia was standing in front of her bedroom mirror, taking in the shaken demeanour she now ported, the tear streaks on her face and how hr eyes seemed dull and lifeless. She shook her head - this wouldn't do. She grabbed her cosmetics and began carefully applying makeup to her face. She looked up once it was done, and not a single trace of that insecure girl from earlier remained. She smiled. Lydia Martin, queen of Beacon Hills High, was back. Time to face the music.

"Where the hell are you?" Melissa McCall asked in a hushed whisper, her phone at her ear. She was sitting in front of Mr. Harris, and her son, who this interview had been set up for in the first place, wasn't here. "Get to school, now!" She hissed one last time, before tapping the end call button and raising her head to meet Harris' disdainful expression.

"How about we get started?" Harris asked conversationally. Melissa let out a tired sigh, but nodded. Harris smiled - it wasn't a reassuring thing. "Lately, Scott’s mind has been somewhere else as well as his body. Personally, I think it may have something to do with his home situation."

Melissa frowned. "Well, personally, I'm not sure what you mean by 'home situation.'"

"Specifically, the lack of an authority figure."

"Well, I'm the authority figure." Melissa corrected, trying to keep her tone level.

"Oh, sorry." Harris apologized, raising his hands. "Allow me to clarify - I meant the lack of a male
authority figure."

She grit her teeth. "Oh, well trust me, we’re a lot better off without him in the picture."

"Does Scott feel the same way?"

"Yes. I think so. I hope so."

"Well Scott’s going through some changes. It would be nice to have someone with him through this stage of development."

Meanwhile, Scott and Allison were speeding towards school in her Toyota, trying to make it in time for the conference. Despite the time crunch, they were both enjoying themselves, laughing with the wind and each leaning turn. Scott grinned at his girlfriend, marvelling at how beautiful she looked, with a carefree smile and the wind running through her hair. Allison smiled at how Scott's eyes flashed golden when caught in the flare of oncoming car headlights, and at how freeing it was to finally be in on that secret, even if Scott didn't know yet. Life was good.

"Jackson's a highly motivated student." Harris beamed, blatantly not trying to hide the favouritism. "In fact, I describe himself as unusually driven."

Jackson’s father smiled fondly. "Yeah, we were hoping he would ease up on himself a little. He’s always been so hard on himself. We think it’s an effect of learning he was adopted."

"I think I understand. He’s never met his biological parents."

"Right. It's the need to be impress the overachieving. The desire to make someone proud. Someone he’s never even met."

"Something certainly seems to have ignited his desire for achievement. Driven him to elevate himself even higher. Not to be too blunt about it but…he seems almost obsessed."

Meanwhile, Jackson huffed as the ball he tossed bounced of the bucket once more. He gripped his lacrosse stick, letting the frustration give him energy to continue. There was a metal bucket nailed to the back of a tree some twenty meters away, and for some reason, none of the lacrosse balls Jackson had flung at it landed inside. There had been plenty of close calls, but they all bounced off one way or another. He grit his teeth. First McCall and his miraculous improvement on lacrosse, almost costing Jackson the captain's position, then Stilinski and Derek Hale - who'd cornered him in the locker room and interrogated him about what he'd seen the other night. The other night... that monster he'd seen wasn't normal. That was no mountain lion, despite what the cops said. Something odd was going on in Beacon Hills, and Jackson's life was falling apart because of it. He had to get to the bottom of this.
"Allison Argent is an incredibly sweet girl." The teacher said, smiling appreciatively at Mr. and Ms. Argent. "And quick to adjust, despite the moving around."

Chris Argent nodded. "We know that it's been hard on her, but it's a necessary evil."

"Necessary or not, I'd be prepared for some..." She paused. "How should I put this...?"

"Rebelliousness?" Argent guessed.

Allison's mother nodded. "We appreciate the concern, but we have a great relationship with our daughter. Very open and honest."

"I'm happy to hear that. Please let her know that I'm hoping she's feeling better."

"What? She wasn't in class?"

"Oh, she wasn't in school. I checked with the office."

Allison's parents looked at each other, matching frowns on their faces.

Meanwhile, Allison and Scott had just reached school, only to see Scott's mom burst out, yelling into her phone. The same message was re-played in the car through Scott's mobile. Scott grimaced, trying to shrink into his seat. He was so grounded... Allison patted his shoulder comfortingly, then froze as her own parents walked through the doors. Werewolf and Hunter-to-be shared a look. They were so screwed.

My phone began ringing shortly after Dad got home from the parent-teacher interview. I glanced at the caller ID - it was Allison. Why'd she call now?

"Hello?" I said tentatively, and hoped that it wasn't more bad news. Hopefully she'd be calling about the video I'd sent.

"Stiles!" She gasped. "Oh, good. You're not gonna believe this. It's not about the video - thanks for the nightmare, by the way - but something else happened."

I groaned. "What happened?"

"Alright. Okay. So..." She paused, then: "Scott and I skipped school today and-"

"Whoa, hold up," I interrupted. "You skipped school, again?" I asked, teasing her. Okay, so I'd known this but hearing her admit it out loud was another thing altogether.

"Yeah, but it was my birthday, okay? And then Scott came to get me and you know it's impossible to say no to those puppy eyes!" She explained.
"True." I agreed. "It's a legit superpower. Happy birthday, by the way! What happened?"

"We didn't make it in time for Scott's interview, and then our parents caught us once they were done." She muttered. "I am so grounded. Like, extremely grounded. I think my Dad's going to murder Scott, despite their truce-thingy. Oh my god, it's not funny, Stiles!" She scolded, but I couldn't cease the snickers.

"Admit it - it's kinda funny." I teased. "This is the perfect opportunity for me to say I told you so."

"Except you didn't."

"I told Scott!"

"Alright." She conceded. "But then, while we were being chewed out - right at the school, because my parents have zero chill - someone screamed. Then everything went crazy. We though the alpha had attacked, everyone was screaming and we though someone had died, but it was just a mountain lion. My dad shot it."

"Say that again." I asked, leaning forward on my bed.

"A mountain lion. My dad shot a mountain lion, not the alpha. We're all okay, though." She repeated, probably adding the last bit because of my mildly panicked tone.

"Are you sure?" I murmured, frowning. This... this threw a wrench in the plans. At least the general public will be convinced that the murders are animal attacks.

"Certain." She answered, her voice cold steel.

"As completely not surprised as I am that your dad had a gun at school, do you think this was a freak incident? Something unrelated or..." I tried, not wanting to believe what I suspected.

"I don't think so, Stiles. I'm pretty sure you've figured it out by now, but I think that this was set up." She admitted.

"Whoever the alpha is, they're smart. And manipulative." I agreed. "Do you think the alpha made a mountain lion attack someone to pull our suspicions away from them?" I added. Allison snickered.

"It seems kinda crazy when you put it that way." She pointed out.

I sighed. "Yeah. I know. But the alpha is a person, at least half the time..." I paused, thinking. "Unless they're just always feral, and if that's true then there's another player on the field."

"Oh, damn. Let's hope not." Allison murmured, her tone bitter. "At least nobody died..."

"Yeah, there's that." I agreed. "Did you tell Derek?"

"No, but I can do that once we're done." She conceded. "Do you want to meet up, at Derek's place?"

I nodded, even though she couldn't see. "Sure. Are we gonna tell Scott?"

"He should know." She agreed. "I'll confront him about it, and hopefully he'll confess about the werewolf stuff."

I frowned. "Speaking of, aren't you worried your dad's gonna track this call?"

"It's no problem. I am letting a friend know that his other friends are safe, despite the.. um, attack?"
She said, and I got the impression that she was shrugging. "I'll delete the call as soon as we're done."

"Hah, true." I laughed. "You're too good at this."

"Rebel." She pointed out.

"I know. See you later? Ask Derek about when and where."

"Sure. Bye."

"Bye."

The phone clicked once, then the dull tone began to ring. I sighed and thumbed the 'end call' button. So we'd underestimated the alpha, big time. They were clearly more intelligent than we'd assumed, and definitely not feral if they'd organized this. So far, Derek and I (and now Allison) had been investigating based on the assumption that we were dealing with a rabid animal, but it was becoming apparent to me that this was more like a psychopath.

The thought chilled me. A psychopath. A murderer. Someone killing because they wanted to.

Dad would probably go to sleep on the couch-bed downstairs, and not come up here, so I was safe to do this: I stripped off my clothes, leaving only my underwear on and shifted to wolf form, then curled up on my bed, poking my muzzle into the duvet. I wished Derek was here, with me, right now. For once, I think I was truly terrified.

We were going to go head to head with a intelligent murderer who'd gotten so clear of the radar the police didn't even suspect it. Us - a group of teenage werewolves and the daughter of a notorious hunter family, all while keeping to the shadows. It felt like something straight out of a video game.

I burrowed further into the sheets, my ears flicking as a cricket hummed outside. Then my mind wandered to the other thing bugging me -

How the hell had our killer even gotten a cougar in the first place?

I was fully ready to go to bed when my phone rang again. I groaned, shifting back to human and pressed call.

"Hello?" I mumbled, expecting Scott or Derek to answer.

"Stiles, this is Melissa. Your father was just taken to the hospital."

"What!?"

It wasn't long before I was at the hospital, sitting on the chair next to my father's bed. Just, why? Why had this happened? I thought Allison had said everyone was okay? What had happened?

Oh that's right - some idiot driver had hit Dad with their car. It was probably the alpha, that asshole...

I brushed my thumb across the back of my Dad's hand. He was pale, maybe from blood loss, maybe from shock. His brows were furrowed, and he was looking at me with an unreadable expression. I
panicked, and double-checked that my eyes. They were still brown. Good. I heard the doctors footsteps approaching, and stood up just as he entered the room.

"Doctor." I greeted. It was Dr. Sèraz, one of the four licensed GP's who worked at Beacon Hills General Hospital.

"Stiles." He answered, nodding to me and then turning to Dad. "Well Sheriff, it’s not too serious. You just have some tissue damage which will leave you sore for maybe another day or two but you should be fit to protect and serve again in no time."

"Are you sure?" I questioned, still watching Dad. "There's nothing else wrong?"

Dr. Sèraz nodded, giving me a reassuring smile. "Your dad is fine. He’ll stay here one more night and then be let go in the morning. We’ll prescribe some medicine for the pain."

"Thank you, doctor." Dad said as Dr. Sèraz left our room, the soft click of the door following his exit. He leaned against the back of the bed, which was propped up a 45 degree angle. "See Stiles, how many times do I have to tell you? I’m fine. Go on home. You have school tomorrow." He moved to wave at me, but then cringed at the pain that probably shot up his arm. Fine huh?

I narrowed my eyes. "I can rest here." I muttered, slouching into the one armchair in the corner. "Go to school form here in the morning. Binder's in my locker, anyways."

"Hey, Stiles." A new voice said, and I turned my gaze to see Scott's mom poking her head into our room. "I just heard you'll be heading on home soon..."

"Yeah," Dad agreed with a sly smile. "Shame a certain someone here is trying to do everything he can't do."

I snorted. "Forgive me if I don’t take my dad getting hit by a car lightly." I rolled my eyes for added effect.

Dad sighed, exasperated, "It bumped me, it didn’t hit me. And you heard the doctor Stiles - I’m fine. Now go, get out of here."

Melissa walked in and gently placed her hands on my trembling shoulders. Trembling from fear or anger, I couldn’t tell you. "It’s okay. Go home Stiles." She murmured. By the time you get home from school tomorrow your dad will be there waiting for you."

"Fine, okay! You two can stop with the double-team. I’ll head on home." I sighed, conceding her point even though my inner wolf was in a state of turmoil. I wanted to stay with Dad and go after the idiot who hit him at the same time, but I also knew that the smart person's choice would be the third - go home and let the authorized adults handle it. Though I understood the reasoning, I hated the thought of leaving Dad alone with me more than three kilometres away from him.

Melissa gave me another tired smile, "Good, and..." She made a show of glancing down at her watch. "Speaking of home, I should be getting ready to head back myself."

I scowled, but grabbed my red hoodie off the back of the armchair and stalked out of the room, not bothering to hide my reluctance. Just before I left, I paused at the door and looked once more at Dad.

"I'll be fine, Stiles." Dad said, once more.

"Okay..." I muttered, willing the guilt that gnawed at my thoughts to go away, "Just... don't do that again."
Dad fidgeted, trying to wave his hand again, but then winced the moment he shifted his weight to the left side. I moved to him, grasped his arm and leaned him back against the bed. Dad closed his eyes and let out a shaky breath, his face in the expression I knew meant that he was hiding the pain.

Then suddenly, his face relaxed. I looked down in alarm to see black veins running up the length of my forearm. What the hell was this? My side began to hurt - in the exact same place Dad had been hit, and my eyes widened as I connected the dots. I seemed to be taking his pain. Huh. Was this a werewolf thing? It was probably a werewolf thing. Derek might have mentioned it once, but if he did I'd forgotten. I made a mental note to ask about this later.

I stepped back once I felt like Dad was comfortable enough to actually fall asleep. He smiled at me, unaware of what had just happened. "See, I'm feeling much better already. They must have used the good drugs." He joked. I self consciously moved my arm behind my back, then placed my most encouraging smile on my face.

"Only the best for the Sheriff, huh?" I teased. Dad shook his head fondly.

"Go away, Stiles." He scolded, and I threw him one last eye roll before I walked out of the room, still listening to Dad's steady heartbeat and how the door shut with a gentle click behind me.

... In the Jeep again, I wearily rested my head against the worn seat. The guilty feelings didn't go away - Oh look at this, now your Dad's been hurt. You should just tell him, you know? Secrets hurt people. You're going to hurt people. You're going to hurt everyone you care for, with all the secrets and lies and half truths you say. One day, he'll find out the truth... and when he does... will he still see you as his son? Or just a monster...

I shook my head. No. Dad loves me. He'll always love me. I'm doing this to keep him safe, even though it sucks. Even though I failed.

Monster...

I silently snarled at the voice. Not all monsters do monstrous things.

The best monster is the one nobody suspects...

I slammed my hands on the dashboard, the noise helping me ground myself. Those thoughts were rounded up, and locked away where they wouldn't bug me. For now, at least. I couldn't afford to be off my game, now. We were dealing with a madman, and they'd already made the first move.

I started the Jeep and mechanically went through the motions to reverse and drive out of the lot.

If I'd been less distraught, or less focused on my dad, I might have notice the faint red spiral painted right under where I'd parked.

The next day, Derek and Allison decided that training might get my mind of things. I'd been in a bit of a depressed flunk following Dad's injury. Derek had reassured me, between soft kisses and cuddles, that it wasn't my fault. What the alpha did wasn't my fault, and I had zero reason to feel so
guilty.

Even though the words were said, and repeated countless times, we both knew that the feelings didn't go away that easily. Derek had his own problems - a traumatic childhood, a less-than-stellar adolescence (his family was killed at the hands of Kate Argent), and then the Alpha killed his sister. His only other (sane) living family member had been his sister, and now she was gone too. Abandonment issues was just scratching the surface.

This meant - as horrible as it was - that Derek understood better than most, and he understood that the best thing he could do was just be there for me. He understood that even though others said it wasn't my fault, I'd only be able to let go if I believed it as well, and that was a hurdle I'd have to jump by myself.

I loved him (or, I think I love him. No, yeah - I'm pretty sure I really do love him at this point), so very much, and more than once wondered which supernatural deity I'd pleased to get so lucky.

Derek also knew when a distraction was needed so I wouldn't try to go hide in my self depreciating thoughts again, and that's why he suggested we grab Scott and Allison and train for the afternoon. Scott still had to learn how to fight properly, anyways. The little bit I'd shown him about a week and a half ago wouldn't hold up in a real, life-or-death battle. Allison was still 'grounded' so she couldn't sneak out as easily. We postponed the planned meeting, and decided that we'd just have a big one with Scott as well.

That's why Derek and I were stalking Scott, at the mall parking lot, and I have to admit that staking people... is actually kinda fun. I'm pretty sure it was just a wolf thing. The parking lot was a multi-level thing, made of grey desolate concrete. I hoped Scott wasn't too pissed, since I'd been ignoring his calls and messages over the last few days (gave him a taste of his own medicine). I watched as Scott tried to open the car door with his arms loaded with shopping bags, then watched as a juice container rolled out and he chased after it, paused, put all the other bags down, then resumed his chase.

Conveniently, the bottle rolled right under a car near to where we were hiding. Nice.

"Damn it." I heard Scott whisper, then watched as he got down on all fours, reaching to get the bottle back. He managed to snap the bottle, but that only made it roll in the other direction. "Crap." He stood up and moved to get the bottle from the other side. Derek picked it up and rolled it back, squeezing hard enough to leave faint claw marks on the plastic surface. Scott looked at the bottle, visibly spooked, and Derek growled low just for added effect.

It did the trick - in an instant Scott was sprinting back to where he'd left the other bags, then changed his mind and veered off towards the lower level ramp. Derek and I gave chase. Scott leapt over a couple of cars, touching the hoods and setting off the alarms as he went. Clever, but car alarms and footsteps make very different sounds. I followed Scott as he hunkered down behind a SUV to hide, while Derek moved to the other side, intentionally making noise to throw Scott off.

Then Scott's phone rang, and I had to muffle a snicker or I'd give my position away. I was literally right behind him, and he had no clue. But the phone alarm was a good excuse to wrap this up, so I grabbed Scott and manhandled him so I could pin him on the hood of the car, my claws feather-light on his throat.

"Dead!" I teased. Scott blinked, frowned, blinked again, then settled on anger.

"STILES! What the hell!" He yelled. I snorted, because his cute/angry face was adorable.
"Dead." I repeated. "If I'd been an enemy, you'd be dead."

"But why would you...?" Scott muttered, confused, then saw Derek jogging towards us. "Derek?"

Derek smirked at Scott's half lost, half pissed expression. "I said I was going to teach you, I just didn't say when."

"Come on!" Scott groaned, rolled his eyes, then turned back to me. "You scared the crap outta me." He scolded.

"Sorry, man." I apologized, "But if that's the best you can do, you're going to have to up your game."

"There was two of you!" He countered.

"Do you think the hunters are going to bother risking a one-on-one?" Derek growled.

Scott tilted his head. "No..?"

"You weren't fast enough." Derek pointed out. "You'd be full of bullets if it was real hunters."

"But... the car alarm thing, that was smart, right?" Scott asked, peeling himself off the car's hood.

"Until your phone rang." I snickered. "Also, car alarms and footsteps make completely different noises. And I could smell where you were going."

"Stiles!" He pouted.

"Okay, but did Allison tell you that we told her about our furry little problem?" I asked.

"You told ALLISON!?!"

"Well, more like she found out and then we had to tell her." I amended, raising my hands at Scott's snarling face. "Please don't kill me, man?"

"No promises." Scott scowled. "Just... why? How long has she known?"

I shared a glance with Derek. "Not long." He answered, his voice surprisingly gentle. "She was supposed to tell you today."

Scott grimaced. "She's grounded."

I sighed. "Yeah, we know. I thought you were as well?"

"Why do you think I'm grocery shopping?" He snarked.

I snorted, because Scott hated groceries. "Do you think you can spare an afternoon?"

"For what?"

"Training." I explained, drawing out the word sarcastically.

"Oh. Yeah, I think so." Scott mumbled, eyes unfocused as he thought about it, then looked at me with a bright smile. "Sure, as long as we sneak back before my mom gets home. I don't wan't end up double grounded. That sucks."

I nodded, "Can do." Scott was right to worry, though. Melissa's punishments were... extremely
effective. 'Double-grounded' preyed on the close bond between teenager and technology, and the withdrawal period was a bitch because you were left home alone with no TV, computer, phone or tablet, and the only thing left was your homework. I shuddered just thinking about it.

"Meet me at the loft." Derek ordered as I refocused on the conversation. Scott just looked confused. "The loft...?" He parroted. I face palmed, Derek rolled his eyes, sighing. We forgot - Scott didn't know about Team Wolf HQ.

Derek sighed. "Stiles, go with him."

I nodded. "Sure thing, Sourwolf. Scotty, bro, you can't tell anyone about the loft. Nobody, okay?"

"What is it?" He asked.

"Team Wolf's headquarters." I grinned. "It's also Derek's house. The hunters don't know about it. If you tell them, I'm pretty sure Derek will end you." Derek gave Scott a fanged smile, promising bloody murder if Scott actually turned traitor.

He nodded, face solemn. "I promise I won't tell a soul. Wait, what about Allison?"

I sighed, feeling guilty at the hurt look that flashed across Scott's face. "She knows. She's an official member of team wolf. Are you okay?"

"Sure." He murmured. "Just kinda... hurt, I guess, that Allison didn't tell me."

"I told her not to tell you." Derek clarified, but it felt like my fault anyways. "We weren't sure whose side you were on." I sighed, because Derek went straight to the point. The voices decided to intervene then, how do you expect Scott to trust you when you hide such important things from him? Lies, Stiles. Lies lies lies...

I shook my head, willing them to SHUT UP. Derek was looking at me with a concerned expression, Scott looked lost again.

"What do you mean?" He asked.

"He means that..." I fumbled, then steeled my resolve because it was better Scott heard it from me than Derek. "Well, we thought you were with the hunters, since you and Allison's dad weren't at each other's throats anymore. And you were avoiding us."

"Oh." Scott blinked, taken aback. "No, no - that wasn't why. I managed to convince him I wasn't a werewolf by not being around Derek and stuff, so then he just grilled me and talked to my mom and we were good. Until they caught us skipping school, so..."

"Wait," I said, holding up my hand, because barely believed what I just heard. "You managed to convince him that you weren't a werewolf? How?"

Scott smirked. "I let him take a photo of me, but I had coloured contact lenses on. I've been wearing them around their house all the time, just in case," I blinked, because that... that was kinda genius. Coloured contacts, huh? Why hadn't I thought of that?

"And it worked?" Derek interjected, intrigued.

"Yeah." Scott nodded. I grinned.

"Scott, buddy, you are a genius!" I beamed, patting him on the back. "I mean, mostly you're
stubborn, but you have your moments."

Scott looked at me with a confused look. "Thanks, Stiles. I think."

I snickered. "No problem, bro. So you're not going to kill me?"

"No... I think," He began, "That it's kinda fair. I abandoned you after the fight because it was the only way I could get Allison's dad's suspicions off me, and I didn't tell you guys about it. But then you brought Allison into this, and you didn't tell me. It's... a fair tradeoff, I guess." He shrugged, but I knew what he meant.

"Yeah. I'm sorry." I agreed. "No more secrets? Also, are you still not joining the pack?"

"No more secrets." He nodded. "And the pack thing... I'll think about it." I grinned, because that wasn't a no and definitely better than the other response we'd gotten. Hopefully I'd bring him to the dark side (haha, no - our pack) soon.

Derek moved forward from where he was standing behind me. "See you at the loft? I'll slip Allison a note to get there if she could." We'd decided that (thanks to Allison's grounded status) notes lodged in her window, as long as she was in the room, were the best way to communicate since paper could be burned and Derek was good enough that he could get in there and out without detection.

"Sure, Sourwolf." I agreed. "Scott? Let's go. We'll drop the groceries of at your house first."

"Right."

Training... went really well, actually. Outside Derek's loft (and I've mentioned that it was on a roof of a warehouse) there was a good sized concrete space (Derek's loft only took up about 1/2 of the roof) where we laid down yoga mats (I don't even wanna know how Derek got those), and that was our 'gym,' of sorts. It was really plain, but it did the trick. The whole gloominess of the last few days seemed to disappear once the 'exercise' Derek had suggested devolved into a mis-match between tag, sparring and just tackling each other. Scott was less hostile since Allison managed to make it fifteen minutes in, and she had a blast, too, if her bright smile was anything to go by. Derek even loosened up a bit, actually smiling (in a proud sort of way) when Allison managed to trip him, getting Scott to tag Derek instead of her.

I think I did a pretty good job, too. I beat Scott in sparring, but that might be because he's had way less experience. Derek and I sparred almost daily, and Allison herself was well versed in self-defence. Scott picked things up fast though and I could tell that Derek was impressed, however grudgingly, when Scott pinned Allison during one of their final matches. Scott was also stronger than me, so my focus was to stay out of his grip, because once he got on top of me it was extremely hard to wriggle out. For Allison's sake we toned down super-strength. The sparring matches that involved her were based on pure skill. Derek remained reigning champion, though. Undefeated even when we all teamed up against him.

I really was fun. There was also a moment when he pinned me at the end of a particularly long match (I'd almost gotten Derek. Almost...) and he'd had to go partial wolf to defeat me. Picture this: Derek, shirtless, a light sheen of sweat making his muscles glisten in the late afternoon sunlight. His teeth were slightly pointed, and the tip of a canine poked out when he smirked. His eyes blazed a supernatural blue, ears pointed, and an extremely smug look on his face.

And then my brain was like, Kink unlocked: Feral wolf boyfriend manhandling you, and my face
turned red in record time. Derek just winked, and it took all the willpower I had to not kiss him right then and there. Stupid, tease of a Sourwolf...

We called it a day at around 5:00 pm, when the sun was just beginning to set and the yellow rays shifted into fiery gold. Allison and Scott left together, after we'd gotten pizza (Allison got a salad, saying, "Normal people don't have crazy werewolf metabolism to compensate for junk food, we need to watch what we eat," but then caved when Scott offered her a piece and his puppy eyes). That left Derek and me, alone.

We sparred for a bit, but then that turned into kissing, and then moving inside and cuddling on the huge bed. Then we watched a movie, which turned into two, then three. They were all horror films, and I'll admit that I outright laughed when Derek legit whimpered in the middle of *Insidious 3*. It was awesome. My life was awesome, crazy killer alpha, hunters and Jackson aside. This whole werewolf thing wasn't really so bad, and I can now totally understand why Derek called the bite a 'gift.'

By the time I remembered that I had to go home, we'd actually shifted to wolf form, curled up beside each other on the sheets. It must have made for an odd sight - a black wolf, and a red, brown and grey wolf, curled up on a human bed, eating popcorn and watching the shining.

By the time I finally got home that night, it was way past midnight. Thankfully, Dad was asleep, dead to the world and sprawled across the couch. I winced sympathetically when I saw him because, in the position he was in, his side was going to hurt like a bitch in the morning.

I briefly wondered why he hadn't called me at nine, then assumed that he'd fallen asleep early and hadn't woken up.

That was good. Dad needed the rest. To be honest, I probably did as well.

The next day was nothing special, but I'd only been asleep for about an hour that night when Derek crawled through my window, woke me up, and told me to follow him.

"The alpha. They're... out there. I can sense it." He said. "Stiles, please, we have to find it."

I nodded. "Alright, I'll trust you." And then I followed after him.

We didn't talk much, but I got the general sense that Derek was both anxious and excited, and maybe just a little bit afraid. I wasn't paying attention to where we were going, just to Derek really (sue me, I was tired) so I only realized that we going to Allison's house when we were already there.

"Why are we here?" I hissed.

"Scott." Derek answered, nodding towards the open window of Allison's bedroom. It really was in a convenient place - second floor, right next to a tree and with a roof-overhang thingy right underneath that was supposed to provide shelter for those on the porch, but really gave the perfect platform for sneaking in.

"Of course." I grumbled. "You know they're probably fucking, right?"

"Stiles, shut up." He muttered, a faint blush on his cheeks (or, it could have been the lighting but I
really don't think so).

"Also, is crawling into your boyfriend or girlfriend's room in the evening via open window a werewolf thing or just a you thing?" I snarked.

Derek snorted. "It's not a werewolf thing..." He began sarcastically, but then cut himself off, looking thoughtful. "Actually, I'm not sure. I think it's not a werewolf thing, but I've done it, Scott's done it, you've done it, although Allisson's just a friend, and even Peter and Laura did so to their partners once or twice."

My eyes widened. "So it is a werewolf thing?" I asked, half interested and half hysterical. "Seriously?"

"I think it's just a Beacon Hills thing." Derek murmured. I shook my head fondly. "This town is crazy." I snickered. Derek hmm'd in agreement, then tapped my shoulder sharply. I turned to look at him, but his eyes were on Allisson's window.

"Stiles, look." He muttered, and I saw as Scott sneaked out of her bedroom, moved across the overhang and climbed down the tree. He wasn't the quietest about it, either.

I snickered again. "How has he not been caught yet?"

Derek rolled his eyes and shrugged, but moved in the direction Scott had left in. I followed. We actually lost him at first, but saw the alpha moving in the same direction. That hulking black figure with the demonic red eyes would make me shiver no matter how many times I saw it. My wolf recoiled, metaphorically screaming *wrong-abomination-should not exist-no-no-NO!*

We began to run then, hoping to get to the Scott before the alpha did. We failed. We actually lost Scott again, and I could feel Derek's frustration. How the hell had Scott evaded us? I's memorized his scent, and still couldn't seem to pick it up anywhere. I couldn't hear his heart either, so he must have been far away already (considering my hearing was - for some reason - actually superior to that of a normal wolf's, so I should have heard *something* ). It was then I suggested we go back to Scott's house, and ambush him there.

We got there as fast as we could, and found the window open with no Scott in sight. Derek settled down in the chair near Scott's desk, and I sat on his bed. I mean, I guess it was kinda creepy? But I needed to make sure Scott was safe, and Derek had to check in on his beta. I know Scott had said he'd *think about it* regarding joining our pack, but what he didn't realize was that both him and Allisson were already pretty much pack in my wolf's eyes. Derek knew as well, and that's why I got the impression that he didn't want to leave until after he'd made sure the alpha hadn't mauled Scott or something.

When Scott finally came home, moving cautiously and closing the for immediately after he'd gotten in, it was clear that he'd definitely seen the alpha. His eyes were wide with fear, and the hair on the back of his arms straight like he'd been shocked. He didn't notice us though, and nearly jumped out of his skin when he walked backwards into Derek.

"Whoa!" He yelped, scrambling back. "You seriously need to stop doing that! This is *my room*, dammit!" Then he saw me, "...Oh. Hey, Stiles."

"Hi." I waved, internally snickering at the mixed reaction. He got so defensive around Derek, but it was perfectly fine when it was me. I guess it was because I spent (probably) more than half of my childhood at Scott's house, so my scent was everywhere too.
"What happened?" Derek asked, his expression serious. "Did it talk to you? The alpha?"

Scott snorted. "Yeah, we had a nice conversation about the weather." He snapped. "No, it didn't talk."

"Are you okay though?" I asked. "It didn't attack you?"

Scott shook his head. "No, it didn't, and yeah - I'm fine."

Derek nodded, his expression carefully bank though I could tell he was relieved. I'd gotten rather good at reading Derek's little emotional nuances, even if he always attempted to be the tall, dark and broody enigma.

"Did you get anything off it? An impression, maybe?" Derek asked.

Scott frowned, moving to sit beside me on his bed. "What do you mean?" He asked.

Derek stood up, gesturing with his hands as he explained the next bit. "Remember that your other senses are heightened. Communication doesn’t have to be spoken. What kind of feeling did you pick up from him?"

Scott looked at me, and I shrugged. "I'm pretty sure it's just mad at me. Us. Maybe?" I offered.

Scott nodded. "Yeah. Anger... or something along those lines."

"Focused on you?" Derek asked, pacing across the room, his brows furrowed in thought.

"No, not at me. But it was anger, I could feel it. Especially when he drew the spiral." Scott explained.

Derek froze. "What!?" He whispered quietly.

"It was a spiral." Scott continued, as he and I both looked to Derek for answers. "He drew it in the condensation of my car. What?"

Derek bit his lip, glaring at the floor. "No, it's nothing."

"It's not nothing." I countered, shaking my head. "Derek, tell us. We need to know. Please?"

Scott nodded. "Stiles is right. You need to trust us. You can't just ask me to trust you and then not trust me. It works both ways, right?" He turned to me, and I nodded in agreement. Trust works both ways. We were pack - we just needed to trust each other. Derek paused, and looked like he was about to argue for a moment, but eventually conceded.

"I buried my sister under a spiral." He murmured, so soft that we needed to lean in to hear it. "It..." He trailed off, his eyes meeting mine and I nodded in support. Derek took a deep breath, as if he was bracing himself for what comes next.

"The spiral... It's a werewolf code. It means revenge. A blood promise. Something that should be completed no matter what."

The silence that followed Derek's confession spoke volumes.

I looked at Scott, how he swallowed nervously and averted his eyes.

*Shit.*
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