Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

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Summary

Stiles does not want to get involved in supernatural business, and he's been keeping a low profile for months. Enter the Hale pack who ruin Stiles' immaculate plan of playing human.

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“What the fuck are you?” Derek snarls out, in full beta shift now.

“I’m rare,” Stiles answers with a smirk on his face."

Notes

I haven't been keeping up with Teen Wolf since the middle of season 4 so I have no idea what's happening there, but this is an AU so I guess only basic knowledge of Teen Wolf lore is necessary.

I used some Supernatural lore for the creature that Stiles is so fans of the show might know
what he is, but for those not in the know: write your guesses in the comments!
Chapter 1

It’s a little less than an hour before sunrise but the sky is already turning a dark grey in the East. Queen is blasting through Stiles’ earphones as he jogs along the winding forest trail, trying to avoid treacherous roots and mouthing the words along with Freddie Mercury. Leaves and small blades of grass adorned with little icicles crunch under his feet but he can’t really hear it. Stiles reaches a fork in the path and after a couple seconds of deliberation decides to turn into the direction of his house.

He’s glancing down at his phone, scrolling through the song list because all of a sudden he’s feeling more like Led Zeppelin, when something crashes into him with a great force. The phone goes flying in one direction, taking the earphones with it, and Stiles tumbles down in another. He lands on his stomach with a heavy thud, all the wind knocked out of his lungs, but a few choice curse words still manage to pass his lips. Who would’ve thought that running around in the woods in the dark could be dangerous?

Stiles heaves himself up on all fours, his head still a bit fuzzy and ears ringing. He so needs to reevaluate his life decisions when he’s not about to throw up.

Suddenly, he’s upright and there are claws digging into his left shoulder and more claws right on his throat. Stiles’ whole body vibrates with the snarl that the creature pressed up his back lets out. Goose bumps appear all over Stiles’ body, anxiety churning his gut, and he just wants the creature off. His. Back.

Yep, this is turning out to be a great day.

“Dude, you’re so making a mistake,” Stiles grits out. He tries to move but the creature has a pretty tight grip on him.

“Shut the fuck up,” is snarled right into Stiles’ ear, which ew spit and all that, while the claws around his throat tighten.

Five werewolves appear before Stiles and his new blood thirsty buddy, half of them in full beta shift, half only showing off their fangs and claws. Stiles would verbally welcome the rescue party if he didn’t risk decapitation by claws by speaking up.

“Let him go,” the Alpha werewolf with glowing red eyes snarls. Her focus is solely on the beast currently holding Stiles at claw point.

Stiles himself tries to remember what Scotty told him about the pack that resides in Beacon Hills when suggesting that Stiles move here. Stiles knows she’s a Hale and he’s pretty sure her name starts with an L. Loraine? Lara? Somewhere in there certainly was an R.

“You have nowhere else to run. Killing another innocent won’t change anything.” Lorna (she definitely could be a Lorna) continues but doesn’t advance closer.

Stiles nearly scoffs at being called an innocent, he wrought much havoc in his day thank you very much, but the claws dig into his neck, drawing blood, so he stops himself.

A beta with serious abs that peak out of his torn shirt steps forward, standing next to his Alpha. He’s frowning something fierce, fangs poking out of his plush lips, and Stiles can’t stop himself from admiring how sexy he looks with that tight fitting t-shirt that hugs his muscles just right and his confident stance and that stubbly jaw that Stiles wants to feel rubbing all over him. Okay, maybe that’s a bit much. But no one can fault Stiles’ mind from trailing off even when he’s clearly about to
be murdered, Stiles is only human.

Though not really to be honest, but still.

The beta’s electric blue eyes run over Stiles’ no doubt bloodier by the minute form and his eyebrows scrunch up even more if that’s possible. Stiles can’t think of another person who could make a scowl more scowlier and still remain hot as all hell.

“If you release the human,” the beta starts, only slightly slurring the words over his fangs, “I will kill you quick and painless.”

The Alpha, Laurel possibly (and damn, it’s driving Stiles nuts that he can’t remember!), turns to him with a rather scandalized expression, hissing out, “Derek!”

One of the other betas, a guy with blonde curly hair and a scarf of all things around his neck, smirks. Stiles himself lets out an amused little chuckle which quickly turns into a whimper when both clawed hands sink even deeper into his flesh, warm blood soaking Stiles’ t-shirt even more. He so should’ve just jogged around the town like usual.

“Don’t!” The Alpha (maybe it’s Lauren?) immediately orders, stretching out a hand towards Stiles and his vicious new BFF even though there’s like ten feet between them. Still, Stiles appreciates the sentiment. Especially as all the wolves step imperceptibly forwards, growling their displeasure.

“You let me get out of your territory and I will release the human then,” the, as Stiles presumes, omega snarls out once again right into Stiles’ ear and presses closer to his back.

Stiles rolls his eyes heavenwards because first of all, disgusting, and second of all, why does the omega have to be this close to Stiles’ back? Stiles counts the leaves on the branch above, waiting for the spiked anxiety to reduce again and trying to think of a plan.

“Oh I could just rip your intestines with my teeth right now,” a blonde beta with red lipstick not even smudged around her lips growls. She wants to move forward but a burly stoic guy next to her stops her by placing a hand on her shoulder.

“Erica,” the Alpha reprimands, giving her a look and the blonde huffs. “We’re not negotiating with you,” the Alpha turns her attention back to the omega. “You’ve already killed three people; we can’t let you go.”

Oh! So that explains that at least. During the past two weeks Stiles has been wondering if he should maybe get involved or leave the supernatural threats to the residing pack at hand since he’s been trying to keep a low profile. Clearly, he should’ve taken care of it himself because his profile is about to not be so low anyway. At least if his plan works in his favor. Stiles just needs a bit of a distraction.

“It’s gonna be four if you don’t,” the omega declares.

“So dramatic,” Stiles can’t help but whisper under his breath, rolling his eyes.

“Shut it!” The omega slices one of his claws through Stiles’ throat, managing to avoid the important bits but letting a lot more blood coat Stiles’ neck. It’s a warning. Not that Stiles heeds any warnings anyway.

“I’m just saying,” Stiles says, as calm as he probably shouldn’t be in such a situation, but he’s faced worse and an enraged omega doesn’t really do it for him fear wise. The pack of five werewolves stare at him incredulously.
“They’re clearly not gonna let you go, man. I’d go with Derek’s here,” he waves slightly with his uninjured right hand in the direction of the mentioned beta, “suggestion of quick and painless.”

Derek himself glares at Stiles as if thinking that Stiles is the most idiotic person he’s ever met in his life. Truthfully, Stiles would think the same if he saw some human trying to negotiate with a wild omega that has his fucking claws embedded in the human’s throat.

“Is he insane?” The blonde girl, Erica, lifts an eyebrow, looking Stiles up and down. Normally Stiles would smirk and flirt with such a gorgeous girl as she is but now’s not really the time.

“I mean, come on,” Stiles continues because his throat hasn’t been slit thankfully. “We’re not just gonna stand here all day, are we? They’re,” he waves in the general direction of the pack, “gonna make a move and sometime soon, I’m guessing. They might be able to save me from the throat slicing and imminent death by bleeding out but let’s admit it, it’s more likely that I’ll die before hitting the ground and you’ll be mauled slowly and painfully. At least I think so. You’d avenge me, right guys?” He glances at the pack for a split second.

“Oh my God, he is insane,” Erica whispers.

“You really should shut up,” the Alpha hisses at him but Stiles ignores her along with Derek’s rumbling growl.

“Another option for you is to just slice me open right now and make a run for it,” Stiles keeps on talking because hey that’s what he does best. “But based on the fact that you had to get me into this hostage type situation, I’m thinking you’re not going to outrun them and you’re once again left with the painful mauling and what was that Erica mentioned? Intestine ripping?” He quirks a questioning eyebrow at the blonde beta who only rolls her pretty eyes. Stiles nearly smirks.

“Let’s face it, you’re shit out of luck, dude. Just roll over and let this end as well as it can for you,” Stiles says. But he’s barely keeping track of his words, he’s more focused on trying to materialize his silver blade at the right moment. Stiles has lost a lot of blood and doesn’t feel in top shape to be using any of his abilities, but he won’t survive this otherwise.

The omega growls lowly, the sound reverberating through Stiles’ body, reminding him once again that the threat is at his back (and Stiles thought he was over it after five years). The omega hesitates and his claws shift slightly away from Stiles’ throat and shoulder for only a second but that’s all Stiles needs.

The blade materializes in Stiles’ left hand. With his right, Stiles grabs hold of the omega’s right arm in a death grip, pushing it away from himself and feeling the bone break. The omega snarls in pain and surprise, grappling at Stiles with his left hand. But Stiles whirls quickly to the side and jams his blade right into the omega’s heart with a satisfying crunch of the ribs. The omega screams, bursting into flames for a second, and then only a pile of ash is at Stiles’ feet.

Stiles wipes the sweat from off his forehead, gulping in air. That took away way more energy than normal. He seriously needs those wounds closed ASAP.

“Nice team effort, guys,” Stiles tells the werewolf pack as he spins around to face them, a huge smile on his face. “Though you have to admit that I did most of the work.” He cleans the bloody blade off on his already bloody and completely ruined t-shirt and dematerializes it.

There’s only a second of silence as all the werewolves stare at him in what Stiles thinks is awe and wonderment of his amazing skills. And the next second he’s got yet another werewolf clinging to him, though this time face to face, and Stiles has to admit that he prefers the manhandling being this
Derek growls in Stiles’ face, his muscular arm against Stiles’ chest, pushing him into the nearest tree. Stiles would be lying if he said that this didn’t do anything for him. But the moment is ruined by the pain radiating from Stiles’ left shoulder that Derek is pressing on quite heavily.

“What the fuck are you?” Derek snarls out, in full beta shift now. And where did his eyebrows go?

“Hey,” Stiles pushes at him, scowling right back. He doesn’t try to get away, just needs Derek to keep the pressure off Stiles’ shoulder until Stiles can heal it. “I just took care of your problem that you couldn’t take care off for over two weeks. I’d say thank you is more in order and not this pushing around, growling in my face.”

“What. Are. You.” Derek grits out again without any intonation. But his eyebrows are back and only claws have remained.

“You’re real good at conversation, dude,” Stiles remarks, amused, letting the corner of his lips curl into a smile. “I’m rare,” he says in answer to Derek’s question and Derek only growls again.

“Derek,” the Alpha is next to them, her hand is on Derek’s shoulder and she pulls him back slightly. Now the whole of the pack is surrounding Stiles. Derek frowns at him with his arms crossed over his chest and that’s never going to be not sexy in Stiles’ eyes.

“Clearly, he’s a witch. He used magic,” the curly haired blond with the scarf says.

“I’m not a witch and it wasn’t magic,” Stiles rolls his eyes. He’s not about to tell them what it was or what he is though.

“I can’t hear his heartbeat,” the stoic beta says, staring at Stiles’ chest without an expression on his face.

“How long have you been living in our territory?” The Alpha questions, narrowing her eyes at Stiles.

“A few months.” He feels his energy slowly flowing back. If he can avoid their questions for a few more moments, he’ll have enough to safely get to his house.

“And you knew this was werewolf territory?” She asks.

“There’s no law saying a supernatural has to announce his arrival to other supernaturals, werewolf pack or not,” Stiles meets her gaze steady on. “Actually, we as a group have no laws at all, so.” He shrugs a shoulder and immediately frowns as it pulls at his wound.

“Quit dancing around,” Derek says surly. Stiles thinks the crease between his eyebrows is a permanent thing from all the frowning he must be doing in his life. “What the hell are you?”

“Is his record stuck?” Stiles glances at Erica, sharing a smile with her. Then he turns back to Derek. “I think it would be more interesting if you found out for yourself.” He grins at the werewolf, enjoying how Derek’s jaw ticks in irritation.

“Or I could get it out of you,” Derek says lowly, leaning with his hand against the tree, his face inches away from Stiles’.

Stiles darts his eyes to Derek’s lips for a fleeting second and then meets his human hazel eyes. “I doubt it,” Stiles says with a smirk.
He shifts his shoulder blades slightly in preparation, and with a thought Stiles is back in his kitchen, collapsing onto the tiled floor. Stiles groans, turning to lie on his back. Apparently, he did not have as much energy as he thought.

“Fuck,” he mutters to himself, panting.

Stiles stares at the ceiling for a bit longer, willing his head to stop spinning. Then he slowly gets up and drags his sorry ass to the downstairs bathroom. The image that meets him in the mirror is not a pretty one. Stiles frowns at himself immediately.

His shoulder is grandly messed up: bits of flesh are hanging off, there’s more blood than he thought and his t-shirt is drenched. Stiles removes it gingerly and it drops with a wet splat on the floor. His throat seems a bit better but overall he seriously looks like a slasher movie victim that barely escaped. Not to mention that he reeks of blood. The coppery smell is overwhelming in the tight space and Stiles gags. He grabs hold of the sink with both hands and turns the tap on, starting to wash off the blood.

The wounds have already started healing slowly; Stiles can feel the muscle and tissue knitting back together. He pulses some of his energy towards the wounds, sighing in relief when the pain starts to ebb away.

Stiles returns his gaze back to the mirror. His eyes are glowing light blue; the same color energy is seeping through his wounds, healing them.

“Laura!” Stiles suddenly shouts to no one but himself, a grin on his face. He knew there was an R in her name!

Speaking of the werewolves, maybe he should call Scotty and ask about the werewolf protocol in the situation that Stiles is in. He would very much like to stay as far away from the Hale pack and the supernatural as possible but he doubts that’ll be easy to do in such a small town as Beacon Hills. Especially not if the wolves want to find him, which, judging by their reaction, they will want to find Stiles and possibly rip his throat out while they’re at it.

Ugh. And he was really trying to keep a low profile. Now Stiles will have to ask Scott to help him relocate again. Shit. Stiles was kind of starting to like it here.

With a resigned sigh, Stiles digs into the pocket of his sweats to retrieve his phone. A frown appears on his face when the device is not there.

“Fuck me sideways,” Stiles swears, groaning.

He never picked the phone up after being tossed to the ground along with it. Stiles just hopes none of the wolves noticed it. He snorts to himself. As if he’d be that lucky.
Chapter 2

The afternoon finds Stiles sitting in the middle of his yard on the grass, soaking up the sunlight. There’s this barely there humming under his skin, a sign of an incoming storm, though a slight one by the feel of it. His wings, manifesting in the ethereal plane of existence, are spread wide but it’s not the same as having them here. It’s like an itch he can’t scratch and it’s getting harder and harder to ignore the longer he keeps them hidden.

Sadly, it’s not like Stiles can just prance around Beacon Hills with wings on his back. Not only would he be persecuted but also most likely taken into custody and dissected by some nerd working for the government. So Stiles keeps them in the ethereal plane no matter how much he’d like to manifest them.

A slight breeze spins around Stiles, ruffling the pages of the book that he has in front of himself. Stiles sighs and flips another page. He thought that a change of scenery might help but he’s as stuck in place on this case as he’s been for the past two days.

Yesterday, after the run in with the omega and the Hales, Stiles thought he had a breakthrough, but it was nothing more than a delirious idea brought on by lack of blood and too much adrenaline in his system. How could he have ever thought that a mermaid might be terrorizing a village in the middle of the desert he will never know. It’s the Hales’ fault to be honest. Before Stiles interacted with them he was able to solve even the most puzzling of cases. Now all he can think about is when the Hales will find out who he is and come storming his house.

Stiles huffs at himself. This is helping no one. Maybe he should go to the library, look up some lore books, or chat with the cute librarian Mary. Anything's better than this, really.

He closes his book and stands up only to stop in his tracks completely. The wards around his house tingle with the sensation of another supernatural crossing them. Another two, to be exact. Stiles recognizes the energy as werewolf and slams the book against his forehead a couple times.

“Fuck”, he mutters to himself.

Stiles looks at the forest behind his house, thinking of making a run for it. But he can’t avoid the Hales forever so he steels himself, and walks back inside. The doorbell rings just as Stiles is walking through the back door. He plastered on his most charming smile, and goes to open the door.

“Alpha Hale, Derek,” he greets the pair of werewolves on his doorstep.

Derek does not look impressed, he’s got his hands crossed and is scowling. Stiles is a bit sad he’s not
still wearing that ripped shirt that showed off his muscles, but he must admit that the leather jacket does make Derek look badass. Laura, unlike her brother, has a smile on her face.

“Stiles Stilinski,” she says. “Nice to finally meet you. Can we come in?” She asks but doesn’t wait for an answer and moves right past Stiles into his house.

“Sure, why would I not want two werewolves to enter my home,” Stiles murmurs to himself as Derek also invites himself in.

After closing the door, Stiles finds Laura in his living room, making herself at home on the couch, her feet on his coffee table. She’s looking around at all the stacks of books and unpacked boxes that Stiles has lying around. Derek stands silent guard next to her still glaring at Stiles as if Stiles is some particularly nasty pest that he wants to rip apart.

“Seeing the Hales twice in two days, just my luck,” Stiles says, plopping down in an armchair. He drops the book on the ground next to the chair.

Laura smirks. “We asked around town about you,” she says. “No one told us anything useful. Even your neighbors couldn’t tell us anything of substance and I made Derek flirt with Mrs. Freeman who’s a total gossip. So, Stiles, what are you hiding?” She cocks her head to the side and flashes her red eyes at him for just a second.

Stiles wants to say that it’s not what he’s hiding and more like who he’s hiding from but the Hales don’t need to know that.

“Listen,” Stiles says, leaning forward and putting his elbows on his knees. “I don’t want any trouble. I’ve been peacefully living here for months and I’d like to keep it that way. If you don’t bother me, I won’t bother you, and we won’t have to see each other until I move away again.”

“When exactly is that going to happen?” Derek speaks up.

“Do you wanna get rid of me that badly, big guy?” Stiles throws him a grin.

Derek steps forward, trying to look as intimidating as possible, Stiles supposes. “We don’t know what you are, so we have to assume you’re a threat. And yes, I do want you out of our territory.” He adds a growl at the end there, and Stiles applauds him for the added dramatic effect.

“What my brother means to say,” Laura says after glaring at her brother while Derek only rolls his pretty eyes, “is that we’d like to know you better. You did a great job with that omega yesterday morning, really helped us out. How are you feeling by the way? I see your wounds have healed up nicely.” She gestures to her own neck while staring at Stiles’.

“Yeah, I’m fine,” Stiles says, narrowing his eyes at her a bit. He has no idea what has Laura being so friendly and what her angle is but he’s not about to play into it.

“Great!” She looks too excited for Stiles’ liking. “Maybe you’d like to come have dinner with us and the rest of the pack? Let’s say tomorrow at eight?”

“Laura,” Derek protests but she doesn’t pay him any attention, just keeps looking expectantly at Stiles.

“I don’t think that’s –” Stiles starts to say but Laura stands up, clapping her hands.

“Wonderful,” she says. “We’ll see you tomorrow at our house.” And before Stiles can protest further, she walks away and out of his house.
“What just happened?” Stiles asks all confused, glancing at Derek.

Derek sighs and shakes his head. “My sister,” he answers grudgingly and leaves without so much as a ‘see ya later’.

“Fricking werewolves,” Stiles mutters.

He thinks of calling Scotty to complain about the Hales but then remembers he doesn’t have a phone, and the Hales clearly didn’t find it either, unlike Stiles assumed for the past day, or are holding it hostage. Stiles chews on a nail, thinking. If the Hales had his phone, they would’ve already used it as a bargaining chip in their devious plan to get Stiles to their house and murder him in cold blood. So there goes that idea.

Stiles heaves out a breath, leaning his head back on the armchair. Now he has to return to the forest and look for his phone. Just great.

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As the sun is setting Stiles is knee deep in mud. It started raining a half hour ago and he still hasn’t found his phone. Hell knows why he thought that coming to look for his phone late in the evening was a good idea. But he had an actual breakthrough with the desert case after the Hales left and it took him most of the afternoon to find the necessary book and translate the passages from it. Stiles should’ve postponed the phone search until tomorrow but he didn’t want to meet the Hales in the forest so he made the brilliant decision of coming into the woods in the dark.

And it all comes down to the Hales, doesn’t it? Before he met them, he was doing just dandy. Well, if you can call relocating every few months so as not to be tracked by people who want to rip you limb from limb dandy, then yeah, Stiles was doing perfectly.

Over the sound of raindrops hitting the forest floor he hears a twig cracking nearby and turns to the side, squinting through the rain. He doesn’t see anything suspicious, and his senses are not on alert, so he goes back to treading his fingers through the mud. And to thinking about how much he hates the Hales. Especially, Derek. Derek is the worst. Who does he think he is? Being all sexy with his muscles and stubble, not giving Stiles the time of day, and don’t even get Stiles started on the whole dangerous bad boy thing he’s got going on. It’s like Derek knows exactly how shallow and self-destructive Stiles is when choosing a partner and has made it his mission to check every item on the list.

But Stiles is not going to fall for that again. No, sir. Stiles is going to go to that dinner and not even talk to Derek. He’s not even going to look in his direction so as not to be distracted by those gorgeous hazel eyes. Or those jeans that hug his ass just right –

“Fuck!” Stiles near screams when his thoughts are interrupted by the ringing of a phone.

Stiles looks to his left where a few feet away he can see a lit-up screen that says ‘Scotty’ on it.

“Oh, thank god,” Stiles sighs and crawls on all fours to the phone, it’s not like his jeans can get ruined any more. “Scotty, did you get my email?” Stiles says as soon as his muddy fingers manage to press the ‘answer’ button on the touch screen.

“You wrote me an email?” Scott asks all confused. “Why? You could’ve just called me.”

“If you had read my email, you would’ve known why I couldn’t have called you,” Stiles says accusingly, which is not fair of him because he knows Scott’s not the best with emails. He checks them once a week and only if Allison or Stiles remind him to. Usually Stiles finds it endearing, Scott
living in the now, not shackled by technology and the like as all other 21st century people. But in cases like this that tendency of Scott’s is a real pain in Stiles’ ass.

“Sorry, man,” Scott replies with regret clear in his voice, bless his sweet little heart. “What happened?”

Stiles plops on his butt in the mud, getting ready to tell his best friend about all the misfortune that befell him over the past two days.

“I met the Hales and they’re already ruining my life,” he starts. “I helped them get rid of a rogue omega and I didn’t even get a measly thank you. And that Derek guy, like, what the hell is his problem? He acts like I came here to murder his family or something.”

“Wouldn’t be the first time,” comes a voice from behind Stiles that is decidedly not Scotty’s.

Stiles lets out a manly scream and drops his phone back in the mud in his haste to stand up and turn around. His heart is jack-rabbiting and his shoulder blades tingle, his wings wanting to appear.

“The hell, man!” Stiles shouts, waving his arms about in frustration. “You don’t just sneak up on people in the middle of the woods! At night, might I add. That’s just rude. You could’ve given me a heart attack.” Stiles jabs a finger in Derek’s (very firm and very wet) chest and retracts it immediately when Derek growls, his eyes flashing electric blue.

“What are you even doing here, anyway?” Stiles asks, keeping his muddy hands to himself, lest they’d be bitten off by an angry werewolf.

“None of your business,” Derek answers gruffly. To be honest, he’s not that intimidating when his wet hair is plastered to his forehead.

Stiles rolls his eyes. “Friendly as ever, I see.”

Derek glares at him even more intensely. If he keeps that up, Stiles thinks he might pop a blood vessel in his forehead.

“Stay away from my family,” Derek warns him. “And do not come to the dinner tomorrow.”

“I can’t just not show up, dude,” Stiles says. “Your sister is the Alpha, she’d rip me to pieces if I disrespected her like that.”

“Then get out of our town. Now.” Derek’s suggestion sounds more like an order. Especially with the growl at the end. How does his voice not get tired of so much growling?

“Hey, listen here, mister,” Stiles says, scowling back at Derek and putting his hands on his hips. Derek raises a questioning eyebrow, but Stiles ignores him and plows on. “It’s not just your town. I’ve lived here for four months now and I happen to like it here. So suck it up, buttercup, because I’m not going anywhere.”

Derek’s jaw clenches so hard Stiles thinks he hears bones grinding. He doesn’t say anything else, just glares Stiles up and down and disappears into wherever he came from.

“It was nice meeting you for the third time in two days!” Stiles shouts after him into the rain. “Hope I don’t see you or your muscles ever again,” he murmurs just to himself.

Stiles sighs and goes back to searching for his phone that’s back in the mud. Freaking Hales ruining everything.
The drive up to the Hale house takes Stiles a lot shorter than he’d like. He thought he’d be able to prepare himself mentally for a night filled with horrors but, as it turns out, ten minutes is not enough time for that.

The huge newly rebuilt house looms over Stiles as he steps out of his Jeep. Stiles shifts his shoulder blades restlessly and takes in a deep breath. He can do this. It’s just a dinner with five werewolves. No big deal that one of them is an Alpha. Stiles has faced way worse, he can deal with five wolves easily.

At least he hopes so.

Stiles doesn’t even get the chance to knock on the door as it opens right when he steps onto the porch. The blond girl with cherry red lips rushes out and nearly tackles Stiles but he manages to keep his footing.

“Stiles!” Erica screams in his ear. Stiles gets out of the hug as soon as possible, his shoulders tingling again. “I’m so glad you came. Derek told us you weren’t coming.”

“Oh, is that what Derek said?” Stiles questions, glaring at said werewolf who is standing in the doorway and looks about as happy as someone who’s having their teeth pulled out. “Well, I don’t know where he got it from, but I wouldn’t miss this for the world.”

“That’s great to hear,” Laura says, smiling from ear to ear. “Come in, the boys are nearly done with the cooking.”

Laura leads him to the kitchen to officially meet the other two pack members, Isaac and Boyd. They’re too busy with their soufflés or whatever and not too interested in Stiles to pay him much attention. Stiles is shown around the huge house by Laura and they’re both silently shadowed by Derek. It unnerves Stiles having someone constantly lurking behind him but he tries his best to hide his discomfort and pay attention to Laura's grand tale of rebuilding the house.

“Sorry about my brother,” Laura says when they’re in the library. Derek directs his glare her way for a second before returning it to Stiles, and Stiles thinks that maybe he should feel honored that he managed to capture Derek’s undivided attention. “He’s a bit overprotective of me,” she explains.

“I get that.” Stiles nods his head, looking at all the books the Hales have. His eyes widen a bit when he notices Monroe's 'Beasts of the Night'. Stiles has been searching for that book for literal years. His excitement is difficult to hide but Stiles tries to keep his cool so as not to look as a total nerd.

“Your living room is stacked with books, so I thought you’d find our little library interesting,” Laura says.

And she was absolutely right, not that Stiles is about to tell her that.

“What do you do exactly?” She asks.

“A bit of this and that,” Stiles answers vaguely, and oh so casually steps closer to the shelf where the 'Beasts of the Night' is sitting inconspicuously, minding its business.

Laura lightly punches him in the shoulder. “Oh, come on, Stiles. If we’re to become friends, you gotta start sharing with us.”

Stiles’ eyebrows go up his forehead. “Friends?” He asks, not even faking the astonishment. “You
shouldn’t say such scandalous things. I think Derek over there is about to get an aneurysm.”

“Don’t worry, my brother will come around. Won’t you, Der?” She sends him a look that makes Derek roll his eyes. “He just needs time to warm up to people. It would help if you told us what kind of supernatural you are.” She bats her eyelashes at Stiles. She’s gorgeous but Stiles is not falling for that. Not again, that is.

Stiles scoffs. “No way,” he says. “I can tell you that you won’t find me in any of the lore books you have here.” Just a couple more feet and he’ll be standing in front of one of the most informative beastiaries to date.

“Oh, okay,” Laura says, all diplomatic. “Then at least tell us what you do.”

Stiles considers his options. It’s not like he’s going to lose anything by telling them, and no one can track him down by what he does, he made sure of that. Stiles works anonymously, mostly through email, he never does field work, no matter how much people offer to pay him, and he absolutely does not get involved with anything that even remotely looks like it could be divine. However, what persuades him the most is the enormous collection of lore books surrounding him and the potential they present.

“I’m a consultant,” he says. He’s reverently trailing his fingertips down the spine of Monroe’s book. “Whenever some supernatural is having problems with something strange and unknown, which happens all the time, I help them figure out what it is and how to deal with it.”

“And people pay you for that?” Derek asks, as scathing as possible.

Stiles turns to him, book forgotten for a moment, crossing his arms. “For your information, yeah, they pay me quite well. And I like what I’m doing so keep your opinion to yourself, pal.” He shifts his shoulder blades again. That guy just pisses him off, how can a person be such an asshole?

“Well, that sounds interesting,” Laura says not sounding interested at all. “How about you use our library whenever you need it?” She suggests and ignores Derek’s scandalized shout of ‘Laura!’.

Stiles’ face lights up with a smile. Just what he was counting on. “That’s very generous, Laura, thanks.” He looks at Derek’s scowly face with satisfaction. “I’ll be sure to take you up on that offer.”

Erica pokes her head into the library. “Dinner’s ready.” She announces and winks at Derek for some reason.

As Stiles follows out Laura and Derek, he briefly glances back at ‘Beasts of the Night’ and promises it to come back soon.

Stiles gets seated on Laura’s right, a very honorable place, and doesn’t even get surprised by the glare Derek sends his way from across the table. Laura cuts the roast and gives everyone a piece and only after she’s had the first bite does everyone else start eating.

“So, Stiles,” Erica smirks at him. “What brought you to our little town?”

“My friend suggested it,” Stiles answers. He talked to Scott this morning and after Stiles told him about the Hales clearly wanting to get rid of him, Scott advised to mention him because, apparently, he was great friends with the Hales before moving away and joining another pack.

“Scott McCall,” he continues. “He said it’s a great quiet town with a pack of werewolves who wouldn’t get all up in my business.” He gives Laura a look that gets completely ignored.
“You’re friends with Scott McCall?” Derek asks. It sounds more like a demand, to be honest, but baby steps.

“Yeah, he’s my bro, my best bud, we were inseparable when I lived in Salt Lake City,” Stiles answers.

Derek looks suspicious, but his glare becomes less intense. Thank you, Scotty and your amazing friend making abilities.

“Well, if you’re good enough for Scott, then you’re good enough for us,” Isaac raises his glass at Stiles before taking a sip.

Clearly, Scott’s endorsement was all Stiles needed to get on the good side of the Hale pack. After that everyone seems more relaxed and the conversation flows easily. Except, for Derek, of course. Stiles thinks that he might have to do something epically heroic, like stopping the apocalypse or closing the gates of Hell levels of heroic, for Derek to even remotely tolerate him. But other than that the night does not turn into the nightmare that Stiles expected.

It also doesn’t hurt that the meal is amazing.

“Damn, you guys can cook,” Stiles manages to say through a mouthful of pie that Boyd just brought in.

“Thanks,” Boyd says, eloquent as he’s been through the whole dinner.

“You should open a restaurant because this is unbelievable,” Stiles can’t stop the compliments from spilling out, the pie is just that good.

Laura smiles. “Actually, we already have a place. ‘Jade Wolf’ on Main street. We all work there.”

“Really?” Stiles can only imagine how excited he looks. He turns his expression serious. “Do you serve pie there?” He asks in a grave tone.

“Of course,” Laura answers. “You’re welcome to stop by anytime.”

Derek’s growl makes everyone turn to him. “No, he is not,” Derek snarls, his eyes flashing blue and staring straight at Stiles. “I have tolerated you for tonight because I promised my sister I would be civil –”

“That was acting civil?” Stiles interrupts, raising an eyebrow.

Derek ignores him completely. “But I will not tolerate you in my place of work or in my home any longer. You are not welcome here. And you better leave before I show you just how much.” His fangs make an appearance as do his claws.

Stiles' wings spread as wide as they can, not that anyone can see, and his shoulder blades start aching.

“Please,” Stiles scoffs, playing cool even though every muscle in his body is tense, ready for anything. “You think that will scare me? You can’t do anything without the permission of your Alpha, pup.”

“Try me,” Derek grits out through his fangs, standing up; his chair hits the floor.

“Oh, bring it on.” Stiles smirks and rises from his own chair, his silver blade is back in his hand and
he flips it easily in the air.

“Derek,” Laura says, also standing up. Her eyes are bleeding red and her voice is low and brooking no argument. Derek flinches as does the rest of the pack. “Go outside and cool off. I will deal with you later.”

Derek looks like he wants to say something more, but he only puts his claws away and storms out of the room. What a drama queen.

“Stiles,” Laura addresses him. “I am so sorry for my brother. I have no idea what has gotten into him lately.”

Stiles just shrugs a shoulder, dematerializing his blade into thin air. His wings have folded down but he still feels on edge. “Don’t worry, I do have that effect on most people.” He offers her a smile.

“Please come by the ‘Jade Wolf’ sometime and I’ll buy you a drink, okay?” Laura touches his shoulder and it takes all Stiles has not to flinch away.

“It’s a date,” he says.

“Great.” Laura smiles. “Now I have to go deal with my brother. It was nice having you here tonight.” She turns to Erica. “Could you please show Stiles out?”

Laura leaves to presumably kick Derek’s ass, and deservedly so because what the hell? Stiles thought that mentioning Scott broke the ice between them and he was already imaging them both riding into the sunset. Maybe it’s that time of the month, Stiles wonders as Erica leads him to his Jeep. He doesn’t keep up with the moon phases as much as he should, considering he lives in werewolf territory.

“Derek’s not usually this –” Erica starts to say.


“Come on,” she rolls her eyes. “How would you feel if some unknown creature who can pull a dagger out of thin air appeared in your town and refused to say what he is?”

“That so does not give him the right to threaten me over dinner. I came in peace.” Stiles throws up the peace sign for added effect and it makes Erica laugh.

“I like you, Stiles,” she says, still smiling. “Come by the bar, maybe Laura won’t be the only one to buy you a drink.” Erica winks at him as she’s walking away.

“I’m not one to turn down free drinks,” he shouts after her and then remembers she’s a werewolf and can hear him perfectly. Right, he should keep that in mind.

Erica stops on the porch, waiting, so Stiles gets in his Jeep, a smile on his face. He waves at Erica and reverses the Jeep, heading home.
Stiles parks his Jeep in front of the diner, next to a delivery truck with a logo of a rich blue swallow in flight, and gets out. A chill breeze sweeps through the nearly empty parking lot, making Stiles shiver. He wraps his flannel shirt tighter around himself and heads inside.

The diner is as lively as can be at six a.m., meaning there’s only a sleepy waitress behind the counter and only two other patrons. One of them, a guy in his late forties, is sitting at the bar, reading a newspaper and occasionally sipping his coffee. He’s got a ball cap on the counter next to him. Stiles notes that the logo on the cap is the same as on the truck outside.

The second customer sits as far back as possible, facing the entrance. The girl lifts her head when the bell above the door jingles, announcing Stiles’ entrance. Her black eyes scan over Stiles and flash purple for a brief second. Their eyes meet, and she nods in acknowledgment while Stiles offers her a small wave and a smile.

Stiles heads to the counter asking for a coffee. While Louise, the waitress, pours one for him, Stiles glances around, his fingers tapping a rhythm on the counter. There’s a flyer next to the cash register, on it the word ‘missing’ is printed in big bold letters, below that there’s a picture of a kid about ten years old, smiling at the camera. Stiles averts his eyes.

Louise gives him the coffee with a ‘here you go, darling,’ and Stiles smiles at her. Once he thought only waitresses from the movies talked like that, but Louise always calls everyone ‘darling’ or ‘sweetie’. Maybe she’s watched some of those movies too.

After receiving his caffeine dose, Stiles makes his way to Reina, the resident witch of Beacon Hills, who’s sitting with a plate of untouched pancakes in a booth farthest at the back. Stiles sits next to her, back against the wall; they’re both paranoid like that, though for different reasons.

“Wow, that totally looks like me,” Stiles says not even hiding the awe in his voice. He always thought Reina’s drawing skills were more than amazing.

Reina’s sketchpad is open in front of her. On the page there’s Stiles sitting in a meadow with a wolf right beside him. The woods behind them are full of eyes.

“I know,” Reina says and frowns for no obvious reason. “I keep dreaming of you and this wolf. It’s very annoying.” She says it like it’s Stiles’ fault somehow.

Stiles snorts. “I wish my dreams were about handsome men and puppies,” Stiles comments. If they were, he wouldn’t be in a diner that serves questionable food at six fucking a.m.

Reina laughs out loud, drawing the attention of the truck driver. He looks at them for a second before getting back to his paper. Stiles nudges Reina with his elbow.

“What did you find so funny?” He asks. And there’s totally not a whine in his voice, nope.

“You said ‘handsome’ men,” she giggles again.

Stiles frowns, confused. “Why would that –” He starts to say before it dawns on him. He gives Reina a glare and a less than friendly shove. “I’ll have you know that I am a catch, and hundreds of men
and women have swooned over me.”

“Keep telling yourself that,” Reina laughs again.

Stiles rolls his eyes. “Anyway,” he says. “I had dinner with the Hales last night.” He’s already updated her via texts about the whole meeting the Hales situation, so that announcement doesn’t throw her for a loop.

“And you’re alive, congratulations.” Reina claps her hands a couple times in mock applause.

“Actually, it’s not that funny,” Stiles informs her and takes a sip of his coffee. He frowns, as usual. The coffee tastes disgusting, also as usual. He has no idea why he keeps ordering it.

“You gonna eat that?” He asks Reina, remembering there’s pancakes on the table. Reina pushes the plate towards him and Stiles stuffs a pancake in his mouth to get rid of the atrocious coffee taste. “I think Derek Hale is plotting my murder as we speak,” he continues his thought from before. A piece of pancake falls from his full mouth and back onto the plate.

Reina hums, twirling her pencil between her fingers, unaware of Stiles’ antics as she’s looking out the window. “Derek’s not the warmest of people but you get used to the scowling and death glares.”

“No, Reina,” Stiles says after he’s swallowed, turning his full body to her. “He actually would’ve clawed me to death at the dinner table if Laura hadn’t stopped him.” This makes Reina direct her attention back to him.

She lifts an eyebrow, surprised. “Really? Derek Hale?” She wonders, and Stiles nods a few times. “Well, you are quite annoying.” She smirks.

Stiles gives her a look. “I’m serious here. What if I encounter him in the woods all bloodthirsty for my, well, blood,” Stiles waves an arm about but that doesn’t help him find a better word than that, “and I have to kill him?”

“You’re such a drama queen,” Reina rolls her eyes and ignores Stiles’ protesting ‘hey!’. “Just talk to him. He’s a reasonable person and quite friendly in his own unique surly way. I’m sure he won’t want to kill you anymore if he knows you don’t mean any harm.”

“Yeah,” Stiles nods his head a few times, turning back to the pancakes. “I’ll talk to him.” He cuts a piece of a pancake and shoves it in his mouth. “How hard can it be?” He brandishes his fork around, and a splat of syrup lands near Reina’s sketch pad. She moves it away in an instant. “I’ll have to do it in a public place though, to avoid the mauling and all that,” Stiles continues, oblivious to his sketch pad destroying fork wielding.

“That’s a good boy,” Reina pats Stiles on the head and laughs when Stiles pretends to try biting her.

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The Jade Wolf happens to be a bar tucked away at the end of Main street in between a flower shop and a psychic’s parlor. It seems to be heavily frequented if the amount of people in the middle of the day is anything to go by. Half the tables are already occupied by people having lunch but there’s hardly anyone at the bar. Stiles makes a bee-line for it and sits himself on one of those spinning stools, making sure that he can see what’s behind himself in the mirror. Derek’s nowhere to be found.

Stiles is idly spinning himself in circles, waving to Erica who’s taking orders from clients and to Isaac who’s bussing tables. He notices some familiar faces among the patrons: there’s librarian Mary
who lets Stiles stay even past the closing time when he really needs to, grocer Mr. Jones who sells all his best fruit and veggies to Stiles, barista Mike from the coffee shop around the corner who always flirts with Stiles and adds extra whipped cream into Stiles’ hot chocolate. Stiles smiles at every one of them and adds a wink just for Mike.

“Stiles,” comes from behind Stiles and is said with such disdain that Stiles hasn’t even heard his actual real life enemies use. Stiles nearly falls off the spinnny stool, he’s so surprised.

After he’s composed himself, Stiles faces Derek with his most charming smile. “Derek,” he greets in fake cheer. “How are you, dude? Did Laura help you work out those anger issues you have?” Stiles asks and immediately regrets it. Wow, he never noticed that he can be a total asshole even when trying to be nice. Or maybe it’s just Derek that brings out this side of him.

Derek crosses his arms over his chest, and Stiles’ eyes trail over the muscles that the tight black Henley is hugging. “Don’t call me dude,” Derek mutters surly. Stiles’ eyes return to Derek’s face, and it’s not a bad trade. “What do you want?”

Stiles shrugs, starting to drum his fingers on the counter. “You know, to talk,” he says, glancing briefly at the mirror behind Derek, just checking. “Laura said we’re all supposed to become BFFs, so here I am. Making friends. With you.” Stiles grins and points finger guns at Derek. Admittedly, not one of his smoothest moves.

Derek only snorts and walks away. Stiles can’t say he’s surprised.

“Good talking to you, dude,” Stiles shouts after him and receives the middle finger from Derek who’s already serving another client. Stiles smirks to himself.

“He’s starting to warm up to you,” Erica says, plopping down on a chair next to Stiles. Isaac joins them too, leaning on Erica’s shoulder. He nods to Stiles in greeting.

“Yeah, he’s not growling at me, so I guess that’s a start,” Stiles smiles at them.

“Another year and he might even start saying ‘hi’ to you,” Isaac remarks. Which, true, to be honest, at this rate it’s going to take Stiles months to make Derek like him. He’s not sure if he’s going to be able to commit to that.

Erica glances at Stiles’ fiddling fingers on the counter, making Stiles aware of it, and he stops the drumming. “Isaac and I have been doing some research,” she says casually, glancing over her shoulder at Isaac who nods.

“Bout what?” Stiles asks them, and then, because he just can’t help it, louder he says, “Hey, can I get a drink? I’ve been waiting forever. The service here,” he shakes his head. Yeah, he’s so not committing to making friends with Derek.

Derek sends him a heated glare form the other side of the bar, and Stiles smirks, winking at him. Erica and Isaac huff in amusement.

“You were saying,” Stiles prompts, back to facing the two werewolves.

“We did some research on what creature you could be,” Isaac offers. He swipes his curls back, but they spring back into place on his forehead.

Stiles rolls his eyes heavenwards. “Why can’t you people just appreciate a bit of a mystery?”

Erica grins, and she and Isaac glance at each other. Completely not shifty or anything; Stiles already
hates where this is going. “We found something,” she says proudly and Isaac nods along.

“I doubt it,” Stiles says. There’s obviously a slight chance that they might have found something related to what he is and make the right conclusions, but that chance is miniscule. They can’t have found out what he is in a day, right? He needs a diversion.

“Do you ignore all new clientele? That’s just bad for business.” Stiles addresses Derek, loudly so the whole bar could hear.

“Your funeral,” Isaac mumbles under his breath and Stiles chooses to ignore him.

Derek grits his teeth, Stiles can visibly see his jaw working. And what a nice jawline he has. Focus! Stiles mentally berates himself.

Derek saunters back to them, he’s scowling with all the might that he has, and, damn, how does he make that attractive Stiles will never know. Maybe it’s the beard. Maybe Stiles should grow a beard. There’s an idea.

“What do you want?” Derek demands, drawing Stiles’ attention away from picturing himself with a beard.

Stiles smiles sweetly at him. “Just some water, please,” he says.

Derek grumbles something under his breath too low for Stiles to hear but it makes Erica and Isaac laugh out loud. Stiles narrows his eyes at them.

“What did he say?” He asks them, a demanding tone to his voice.

“Nothing you’d like to hear,” Isaac replies.

Erica grabs onto Stiles’ forearm. “Come on, listen to what we came up with,” she pleads. Stiles could never say no to a pretty girl, so he sighs and waves his hand for her to continue. Erica beams at him.

“Well, we have a few options,” Erica says, turning to fully face Stiles. “You could be a fairy or a pixie.” She stares closely at him, possibly trying to determine his reaction but Stiles is not that easy to read when it comes to this, he’s had years of practice.

“Because of the vanishing act you pulled on us,” Isaac adds.

“Nope, not it,” Stiles shakes his head. They’re way off base, and Stiles can let himself relax. And annoy Derek some more.

Derek returns with a glass of water, placing it quite roughly on the counter and sloshing some of the water on Stiles’ hands. “Enjoy,” he says as if wishing death upon Stiles and his whole lineage.

Isaac throws a rag on the counter that Stiles uses to wipe his wet hands. Derek turns to go but before he can, Stiles says, “Wait, you forgot ice cubes. I need me some ice cubes, dude. Can't have a drink without them. I'd like three.” He grins at Derek again.

There’s a tick in Derek’s jaw. Stiles is enjoying this immensely. Derek clenches his teeth and retrieves the glass, grumbling about ‘stupid newcomers’ or something along those lines.

“What’s next?” Stiles asks the wonder twins. Now that’s he’s sure they’re not even close, he’s happy to play the game.

Erica glances at Derek, who’s getting ice cubes out of the freezer under the counter. “He’s gonna get

"A nymph?" Isaac says it like a question. "They can teleport too, and they're rare."

"Not even close," Stiles says, crushing their dreams by the look of it as Erica pouts her cherry red lips and a crease appears between Isaac’s eyebrows.

"Three ice cubes," Derek says upon returning. He decidedly does not look like a happy camper, his glare is rather murderous, though that’s not unusual.

"Thank you, Derek," Stiles says all chirpy and cheery. "Could add some lemon to that too?" He bats his lashes at him.

Derek’s knuckles turn white with the force he’s gripping the counter. Stiles thinks he hears splintering wood. Derek glares daggers at Stiles for a few seconds, but then just takes the glass again, stalking away.

"Aren’t you supposed to be making friends with him?" Erica asks, the corners of her lips are turned upwards in amusement.

"I am," Stiles says, indignant. "This is some great bonding." He waves between himself and Derek at the other end of the bar, slicing a lemon and frowning something fierce.

"Don’t say I didn’t warn you," Erica says.

Stiles ignores that. "Do you guys have any more guesses?"

The two of them share another glance before Erica says, "It’s far-fetched but you could be one of the demi-gods. That would at least explain the cocky attitude."

"As well as everything else," Isaac mutters but Stiles doesn’t pay him any mind.

Stiles turns to Erica immediately, his mouth gaping open. "Cocky attitude? I’m extremely humble. I’m the most humble person you’ll ever meet." He declares, crossing his arms.

Erica only lifts an eyebrow at him. "So are we right?"

"No," Stiles grins. "But it’s not like I’d tell you even if you were."

Erica rolls her eyes and leans back in the chair, crossing her arms, and Isaac snorts in amusement.

"Iced water with lemon," Derek announces. The look he sends Stiles screams of pure unadulterated hate.

"Thanks, Derek," Stiles sing-songs. He doesn’t even reach for the glass. "But would you be a dear and add a mint leaf? I like my water a bit minty."

"Dude," Isaac whispers, shaking his head.

Derek stares at Stiles for a few seconds, before smirking almost imperceptibly and muttering a ‘sure’. Stiles watches Derek go back to the other end of the bar. There’s an ominous feeling in his gut; he did not like the look in Derek’s eyes. Maybe he should just apologize for the teasing and get the ‘Stiles and Derek BFFs’ plan back on track.
When Derek comes back seconds later, Stiles is about to say something, but before he can, Derek takes the glass of water and unceremoniously pours it all over Stiles, making sure that the ice cubes go under Stiles’ shirt and make him jump at the sudden coldness. A lemon slice makes its way down Stiles’ cheek and plops right into his lap as Stiles is glaring at Derek. The bastard only smiles and leans forward, placing the mint leaf on Stiles’ head.

“Iced water with lemon and mint,” he says. “Will that be all?”

Erica is snorting with laughter at Stiles’ side, Isaac is doubled over, no sound coming from his open mouth, he’s laughing so hard. A satisfied smirk is on Derek’s face, and Stiles be damned if he didn’t get even more attractive. But Stiles can’t think such things right now. He has to be angry at Derek not attracted to him.

Stiles runs a hand through his wet hair, brushing it out of his eyes. “This means war, Derek Hale,” Stiles says gravely.

He peels the wet shirt off his chest, but it sticks right back to his skin when he lets go, standing up. “It was nice seeing you, Erica, Isaac,” Stiles tells them. They’re too busy trying to stop laughing to answer though.

Stiles makes his way out of the bar, a small smile making its way onto his face.

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Morning runs are completely unnecessary for Stiles as far as the whole health benefit goes, but he likes them anyway. When he’s moving and there’s adrenaline coursing through his veins, his mind works better. After getting back from the bar yesterday, he got a particularly interesting case all the way from Australia, and he buried himself in it for the rest of the day and most of the night. When walls started to close in on him however, Stiles decided to go out for a run.

Now he’s making his way to a lake nearby that he accidentally found a couple months back. It’s pretty secluded there, and Stiles is quite certain that there won’t be a soul there before the sun is even up, so he might even be able to get his wings out. That’s an exciting thought as he hasn’t done that since he moved here.

The surface of the lake is glinting in the light of the rising sun, the reeds surrounding it are swaying in the light breeze. Stiles checks his surroundings with his supernatural senses, reaching out nearly half a mile around the lake to make sure that no threats are lurking around.

Satisfied with the check, Stiles opens his eyes and shifts his shoulder blades. His wings shimmer into being and the itching feeling under Stiles’ skin subsides. Stiles fans his wings out. He has the wing span of about twelve feet, so he can only do this way out in the open; that’s the main reason he prefers to live close to the woods. It would be near impossible to do this on the regular if he lived in the city.

He shakes his feathers slightly as he’s folding his wings down, stretches complete. Some of them have twisted uncomfortably so he brings his left wing forward and combs with his fingers through the black primaries, straightening them out. As he folds the wing back, the sun catches the golden barbs of his feathers that are randomly interspersed between the black ones.

Stiles runs his hand down his secondaries and sighs before pulling his wings out of sight, tight to his back. He walks to the water’s edge and sits down. The sun has finally risen above the tree line on the other side of the lake, and Stiles watches it paint the sky in oranges and pinks. A chill breeze ruffles his feathers, so Stiles wraps his arms around his knees, pulling them close to his chest.
Unconsciously, he brings his wings a bit forward and starts stroking the feathers, still watching the sun rise. He remembers doing this with his parents. His mom would wake him and his dad at an ungodly hour, both of them would grumble and groan but finally they’d give in. Mom would make them hike to a nearby cliff even though Stiles would complain the whole way there that he could just teleport.

They’d settle on a blanket on top of the cliff. Mom would sit in the middle, her pristine white wings wrapped around Stiles and his dad, offering comfort and safety. Silver would shimmer all around Stiles as the sun rose and its rays touched mom’s wings, and he’d feel the happiest he’s ever been.

Stiles shivers even as the sun gets higher and warms him up. He scrubs his wet cheek against his folded arms, fingers clutching at the feathers so tight it hurts, and just breathes for a second. When he’s finally ready, he folds his wings back and stands up.

The reeds are still swaying in the ever-present breeze as Stiles starts running the perimeter of the lake. It’s a bit harder with his wings out as they add quite a few pounds. He’s almost on the other side of the lake when he notices something on the shore.

Stiles stops and glances around. His breathing seems too loud in the stillness of the forest and his heart is drumming in his ears. Stiles walks closer to the water’s edge. The stench hits him first and he throws his hand over his nose, nearly gagging. The entrails are in a heap on the sand, there’s blood splattered all around. Stiles frowns, mostly disgusted but also confused as he doesn’t know of a wild animal that would just leave entrails lying around.

Suddenly his senses go on alert, his muscles tense on instinct and Stiles’ blade appears in his hand. His wings disappear immediately, making him wince at the sharp pain in his shoulder blades.

Water ripples in the middle of the lake, attracting Stiles’ attention. Something seemingly emerges from the depths, but Stiles doesn’t have the time to see what creature it might be as his instincts take over.

Stiles teleports in the middle of spinning around, his silver blade gets pressed to Derek’s throat when Stiles reappears milliseconds later. Derek’s got his fangs out and Stiles can feel claws pricking at his ribcage. Both their eyes widen when they register who’s standing before them.

Stiles recoils first, taking several steps back. His breathing is shallow and his heartbeat erratic. The only thought in his mind is if Derek saw his wings. No one except for Stiles’ dad has seen Stiles’ black wings, and Stiles made damn sure that no one ever got to see them. Damn him for being so stupid and just manifesting them out in the open. He should’ve done it at home, he wouldn’t have been able to stretch them but it would’ve been safe. Stupid stupid stupid!

“What are you doing here?” Derek asks, fangs and claws already put away. He’s looking at Stiles strangely, his eyes running all over Stiles’ body but not appreciatively, more like scrutinizing.

“Jogging,” Stiles answers. He dematerializes his blade. “You?” He asks. He tries to stop his heart from beating so loud, but it doesn’t work. All he can do is count to five in his head with every inhale and exhale. He hasn’t had a panic attack in years, and now would not be a good time for that.

Derek couldn’t have seen his wings, right? He wouldn’t be acting so chill if he had. That’s logical. Stiles loves logic, he strives on it. Derek couldn’t have seen them. Somehow that doesn’t let Stiles breathe any easier.

“Perimeter check,” Derek replies. Stiles completely forgot they were having a sort of conversation.
“Well, you’d better check that,” Stiles points his thumb behind himself where the entrails are lying around on the shore.

He only notes Derek’s confused expression before, with a thought, he’s back home, collapsing on the floor, unable to breathe.

Chapter End Notes

Little tid-bit from this chapter: the swallow logo is actually for a candy that's very popular in my country and everyone likes it but I don't know why 'cos it's disgusting. There you have it, super interesting stuff.

Anyway, hope you enjoyed the chapter! And hopefully you liked Reina 'cos she's an OC that's very dear to me, and she's probably gonna appear more from now on.

-E
After the lake incident, Stiles avoids Derek, and the Hale pack in general, like the plague. He spends three whole days at home without even stepping outside. It’s a good thing he has Reina who brings him food and tells him how ridiculous he’s being.

Stiles can’t even tell her what really happened and why it’s such a big deal to him as Reina doesn’t know what Stiles is or that he’s got actual wings or what it means that they’re black. So it takes her a while to convince him to get over it and get out of the house.

The thing that helps the most is the fact that Stiles still doesn’t know what kind of creature is terrorizing his Australian client. He’s been through all of his books already, and the mystery is driving him crazy. He needs the Hale’s library. So he sucks it up and calls Laura, although he does make sure that Derek’s not going to be home when Stiles plans to visit the library.

Boyd is the one to let Stiles in at nine p.m. It’s a Friday night so the rest of them are working late. And good riddance, Stiles is not ready to face them if Derek’s told anyone what he saw. The questions they’d ask would only spark the anxiety back into existence, and he absolutely does not need that to happen.

“Hey, man,” Stiles greets Boyd, stepping through the door. “Won’t they miss your awesome cooking at the bar?” he asks, playing nonchalant. His heart is rabbiting in his chest, not for the first time he’s glad that’s not detectable for other supernaturals.

“Isaac can handle it for now,” Boyd answers, leading Stiles to the library. Stiles hums something non-committal while taking a better looking at his surroundings.

The library is as impressive as Stiles remembers. Three walls are lined with shelves stuffed with books, though not all of them are about the supernatural. The fourth wall is made up of all windows and offers a nice view of the forest at dusk. A desk facing the windows has been cleared of clutter, as Stiles remembers it being covered in books and papers.

“Laura cleared that for you,” Boyd informs Stiles as he comes closer to the desk and drops his backpack next to it. “She said you can use whatever you need. You’re also welcome to anything in the kitchen.”

“Wow, that’s generous,” Stiles remarks, perching his butt on the edge of the desk so he’d be facing Boyd. “Does she want to butter me up for something? What’s your devious plan?” He asks, crossing his arms. He’s only half joking.

A corner of Boyd’s mouth turns up, but he doesn’t react otherwise. “We’re gonna be back at around three. If you want to leave earlier, just lock the door and take the key with you.” He turns around, ready to leave before Stiles stops him.

“Wait, you’re leaving me here alone?” He asks incredulous.

Boyd shrugs. “Laura trusts you,” he says succinctly and leaves.

Stiles is stumped for a moment before he remembers that he’s got work to do. He gets his things out of his backpack, laying them out on the table. After carefully scrutinizing his notes, he walks to one
of the shelf covered walls and starts looking through the titles, hoping to find something relating to his mystery.

Unknown time later, Stiles is struggling to translate a passage from Sumerian into English when he hears someone call his name. He halts in his pacing, lifts his head, and his eyes meet hazel ones. Fuck.

“You’re still here,” Derek remarks. He’s standing by the door, arms crossed, muscles bulging out, the usual.

“What time is it?” Stiles asks, looking for his phone around the mess he made. It’s not like he’s avoiding meeting Derek’s gaze. Nope. He just wants to find his phone in this precise moment.

“It’s two thirty,” Derek answers. “Why were you pacing?”

Stiles’ phone confirms Derek’s words, and Stiles throws it back on the table. “Helps me think,” he replies, still not looking at Derek. “Is everyone back or just you?” He asks the book he’s holding.

“Just me,” Derek answers.

Of course. It’s just Stiles’ luck. He lifts his head, risking a glance Derek’s way.

“Do you want me to get out of here?” Stiles asks. “I have only a page left. It won’t take me more than an hour.” He lifts the book as if to prove the point. Not like he wants to stay here with only Derek but he doubts Derek would stick around the library anyway.

Derek considers it for a second; Stiles thinks he weighs the pros and cons in his head. Finally, he says, “You can stay.” He doesn’t look happy with that decision though. But Stiles is not going to look a gifted horse in the mouth or whatever the saying is; it never made sense for him.

Stiles nods, bowing his head back to the book. “Thanks, man.”

There’s silence for a few minutes, and Stiles presumes Derek’s left. He lets himself get absorbed in the text again, so he jumps slightly when Derek speaks up again.

“What are you working on?” The question seems forced, though not unfriendly as Stiles would have expected.

Stiles lifts an eyebrow. “Are you trying to have an actual conversation with me?” He asks, stunned. Because, really? Derek Hale trying to talk to him? Did he hit his head? Can werewolves get concussions? Stiles doesn’t see any other explanation for this weird behavior.

Derek frowns something fierce. “Forget it,” he growls out, and Stiles immediately regrets it.

Derek turns to leave. “Hey, come on, wait,” Stiles says after him. “I’m translating a text on demons. If you know Sumerian, you could help me out.” He suggests it as a peace offering.

Derek stands with his back to Stiles for a few seconds before slowly turning around. “You know Sumerian?” He asks.

Stiles shrugs a shoulder. “I know most languages. It’s the translating that’s got me stumped. English doesn’t have enough words.”

“Maybe you’re just a shitty translator,” Derek comments.

Stiles sends him an unamused look. “Alright then, be my guest, translate this better than me.” Stiles
extends the book towards Derek who’s still standing on the other side of the room.

Derek looks at the proffered book for a few seconds as if it’s going to bite him before coming closer and taking the book out of Stiles’ hands. He looks over the passages, nodding to himself.

“You understand that?” Stiles nearly squeaks, he’s so surprised.

Derek glances at him. “No. I just wanted to see your reaction,” he says, face straight, and Stiles isn’t quite sure if he’s joking or not.

“Does Derek Hale have a sense of humor?” Stiles fakes a gasp, clutching at his imaginary pearls.

“I thought you figured that out at the bar the other day,” Derek replies, handing the book back to Stiles.

“That wasn’t funny in the slightest,” Stiles sulks. To be honest, it was hilarious, but Stiles is not about to admit that to Derek. He takes back the book, making sure not to lose the page.

“Erica and Isaac didn’t think so,” Derek smirks.

Stiles narrows his eyes at him, looking him up and down. “I don’t think I like you like this. Where’s the growling and the anger? What’s changed?”

Derek looks uncomfortable all of a sudden. He shifts his eyes to the side and puts his hands in the pockets of his jeans. “A few days ago, at the lake,” he starts. “I was watching you.” He mumbles to the floor.

“Woah, stalker alert,” Stiles says maybe a bit too loudly, his heart is hammering in his chest. He backs away from Derek and starts shoving papers into his backpack as fast as possible.

“It wasn’t like that,” the growl in Derek’s voice is back. He huffs. “I saw you watching the sunrise.”

Stiles stops in his tracks. Derek saw him. He fucking saw him. Stiles is such a moron, he shouldn’t have manifested his wings out in the open. Fuck fuck fuck.

“I saw your wings,” Derek near whispers, confirming Stiles’ incoherent stream of thoughts. “Are you an angel or something?” He asks carefully.

Pissed is what Stiles is at the moment. He quickly slings his still open backpack over his shoulder, grabs his phone and the Sumerian book. Stiles faces Derek head on, looking him straight in those fucking perfect hazel eyes.

“I am not an angel,” Stiles near snarls at Derek. “According to them, I’m an abomination, and my black wings mark me as such. I’m a creature so disgusting that it needs to be hunted down and tortured to atone for simply being born before being granted the mercy of death. That’s what I am, Derek. Happy now?” Stiles knows it’s not fair, he knows it’s his own fault that Derek saw him, but reason is not the one controlling Stiles right now.

Derek looks stunned into silence. His mouth is slightly open, and he’s looking at Stiles as if he’s a wild animal. “Stiles, I…” He trails off, shaking his head.

“Did you tell anyone about this?” Stiles asks through gritted teeth.

“No, I haven’t,” Derek replies, frowning.

“It better stay that way,” Stiles threatens.
Derek’s muscles tense, he straightens his back. “Or what?” He growls out, eyes flashing electric blue. He flexes his fingers as if stopping the claws from appearing.

“You will regret it, I promise,” Stiles replies. He doesn’t wait for Derek’s answer before disappearing on him again.

***

It’s a Monday afternoon, and Stiles has dragged himself to the diner. Reina is not here this time to keep him company. Actually, he’s the only client; how hasn’t this place gone bankrupt Stiles will never know.

Louise is at the counter again. She smiles as Stiles approaches. “The usual, darling?” She asks, and Stiles nods.

She’s pouring him a cup of that disgusting coffee, and Stiles glances around out of habit, fiddling with his backpack strap. The bell above the diner door dings, and two women walk inside. They’re both blond, both wearing dresses though of different colors, they’re also holding hands.

“Yeah, I know her brother. It’s awful, I feel so sorry for them,” the one in the blue dress says as they make their way over to a booth.

“And they’re all around ten or eleven years old. Noah is ten; I worry about him so much,” the girl with the pink dress says. The girls settle in the booth, sitting next to each other. “Mom doesn’t let him out of her sight, she’s afraid he might be next.”

“Here you go, sweetie,” Louise brings Stiles’ attention back to her and away from other people’s conversations that he probably shouldn’t be listening to.

Stiles thanks for the coffee and goes for the furthest booth, sitting with his back against the wall. He pulls out his laptop from his backpack, the Sumerian book follows suit as well as several pens and a notepad. He takes a swig of that god awful concoction they call coffee here and gets to work.

Stiles’ main coping mechanism is ignoring whatever is bothering him by burying himself in work. It might not be the healthiest thing, but it’s been Stiles’ go-to for ages. He solved the Australian demon case the same night he got back from the Hales’, and was since informed that his client managed to successfully take care of the murderous demon terrorizing his town. After that nothing more has come in. So Stiles made himself busy by translating that Sumerian book he borrowed.

There’s sun streaming through the diner’s windows and right on the spot where Stiles sits. He enjoys the warmth and stretches his arms above his head, yawning and popping his back. The notepad Stiles has been using is on its last empty page, and Stiles makes a mental note to stop by the shop and get some more of those.

The stillness of the afternoon is interrupted by the shrill ring of Stiles’ phone, making Stiles jump. He takes the phone gingerly, checking the caller ID and sighing in relief when it doesn’t say ‘Laura Hale’. He hasn’t been answering her calls or texts for the past two days, but she hasn’t stopped trying.

Stiles answers the phone with his usual cheer, “Hey, dad, what’s up?”

“Stiles,” John greets him. “I haven’t heard from you in a while, son.” His tone is slightly accusing.

“Yeah, you know, I’ve been busy,” Stiles says, waving his free hand about and nearly knocking down the coffee mug (his third one despite it being more than awful). “Got this interesting case from
Australia the other day, and –"

“Stiles,” his father interrupts him. “I talked to Scott, and he said you met the local pack.”

Damn it, Scott. Stiles is going to have a serious talk with him.

“Yup, sure did,” Stiles replies. “It went great, we were instant friends, you got nothing to worry about,” Stiles mumbles so quickly that even he has difficulty understanding what he said.

“Oh, okay,” his dad says, tone calm. “Now tell me what really happened.”

Damn, his dad knows him too well. Stiles sighs and recounts all the run-ins he’s had with the Hale pack. When he finishes telling about the lake incident, he’s nearly hyperventilating.

“Breathe, son,” John instructs calmly. He guides Stiles through a breathing exercise and after Stiles has calmed down, says, “Even if this Derek did see your wings, it doesn’t mean he knows what you are.”

“But he thought I was an angel, dad! He got that far,” Stiles whisper shouts not wanting anyone in the diner to overhear him.

“I know, I know,” John says. He’s using that cop voice he uses with victims that are freaking out, and Stiles tells himself to calm down. “But he thought that only because he saw that you have wings. Many other creatures have wings, Stiles. You know that angels wouldn’t allow themselves to be associated with you, so you won’t be mentioned alongside them in lore. Derek’s not going to make that connection. At worst, he’s going to think you’re one of the Fallen. And even then, he can’t do anything with that information. If he tries to contact an angel, we both know it won’t work because there’s not an ounce of truth written in the lore about that.”

Stiles nods to himself all throughout his father’s speech, biting at a thumbnail. “You’re right,” he says once his dad finishes talking. “You’re totally right, I’ve been stressing out over nothing. Thanks, dad. I should’ve called you at once.” He sighs in relief and leans back against the seat.

“Yeah, you should’ve,” his dad huffs. “You know I’m always here if you need me, son,” he says, all serious.

“I know,” Stiles answers. “I miss you.” He whispers, tracing a pattern on the tabletop with his index finger.

John sighs. “I miss you too, Stiles. But I’ll see you soon, right?”

Stiles smiles to himself. “Right,” he confirms. “I wouldn’t miss your birthday for the world, old man.”

“Old man?” Dad splutters, indignant, making Stiles laugh.

After Stiles hangs up, having caught up with his dad, he finds four texts from Laura.

From Laura Hale 5:42

We need to talk, call me

From Laura Hale 5:45

Stop ignoring me, Stiles
From Laura Hale 5:47

It’s serious

From Laura Hale 5:53

There are hunters in town. Come by Jade Wolf, we need to talk.

Stiles mutters, “Fuck,” after reading the last text. Hunters mean trouble. He can’t ignore Laura any longer.

To Laura Hale 6:01

Be there in half an hour

Stiles gathers his things and leaves the diner to go meet Laura. He prays to whoever is listening that Derek would not be there.

***

The interior of the Jade Wolf seems dark compared to the sunlight that Stiles leaves outside. He glances around as the door behind him shuts closed. There are a few people here but it’s not as crowded as it was during lunch the other day.

Laura is behind the bar and she greets Stiles with a nod. Stiles offers her an awkward wave and walks closer to the bar.

“Gracious of you to show up,” Laura says as Stiles takes a seat on the spinny stool. She’s bracing her arms on the bar top, blocking Stiles’ view of the mirror. It slightly unnerves him.

“Sorry,” is all he says, not offering an explanation; he doesn’t know what Derek’s told her or not told her. “So, hunters,” he prompts, placing his elbows on the bar top.

Laura carefully looks him up and down before saying. “Yeah. They came here last night. Isaac saw three but there’s probably more.”

Stiles nods, drumming his fingers unconsciously and biting his lip. “Thanks for letting me know. I’ll try not to get on their radar. Do you know why they’re here?”

“I suspect,” Laura replies, eyes cast down. “Kids are disappearing around here. Five in the last ten days. That must’ve attracted their attention.”

Stiles suddenly remembers seeing a flyer of a missing kid in the diner days ago. “Do you have any idea why?”

Laura shakes her head. “We’ve been scouring the woods at all hours, but we can’t find anything suspicious.” She bites the inside of her cheek, looking away from Stiles.

“I could look into it if you’d like,” Stiles offers, and Laura’s gaze immediately returns back to him.

“Really? That would be great, Stiles. I talked to Scott, he said you’re the best there is,” she smiles.

Stiles smirks. “Yeah, I am.” He’ll have to thank Scotty for talking him up, not that he said anything untrue, though after he’s finished berating him for spilling the beans to Stiles’ dad.

“I’ve got some info in my office in the back.” Laura points with her thumb behind herself. “Follow
me?” She asks.

Stiles nods and gets off the chair. They walk through the ‘Staff only’ door and down the narrow corridor. Laura walks behind the desk, shuffling with the papers, as Stiles comes closer.

“That’s all I have for now,” she says, extending him a folder.

Stiles takes it and sifts through the pages. It’s not a lot but it’s as good a start as any. “Okay,” he says. “I’ll let you know once I find anything useful.”

“Thank you, Stiles,” Laura says, seemingly genuinely.

Stiles offers her a tight-lipped smile and turns to walk away.

“Stiles,” Laura says after him, and he turns to face her. She looks uncertain for a second before making up her mind. “I talked to Derek several times, he promised not to be such an asshole to you. Clearly that’s not worked.” She rolls her eyes. “Do you want me to talk to him again?” She asks.

Stiles nearly scoffs but stops himself. Instead, he just shakes his head. “I’m a big boy, Laura, I can handle Derek,” he assures her. Which, not a complete lie. Stiles has been handling the situation with Derek, sure it’s by avoiding him, but still.

Laura crosses her arms and shifts her weight. “Okay, well, you say that but then you go and ignore the rest of us for whatever that Derek did,” she says, accusation in her voice. “And we’d really like to be friends with you, Stiles.”

Stiles chews on his bottom lip and nods. “Yeah, sorry, won’t happen again,” he promises, but he’s not sure if he’s going to keep it.

“It’d better.” Laura wags her finger at him, one hand on her hip.

Stiles smiles and salutes her. “See ya later,” he says before leaving her office.

The universe takes pity on Stiles, and he doesn’t meet Derek while leaving Jade Wolf. And he has what to occupy himself with. Getting back into his Jeep and glancing at the clear blue skies, Stiles feels like this luck won’t last for long.

Chapter End Notes

The Sheriff’s name is John here ’cause he doesn't look like a Noah to me *shrugs*

Also, sorry for missing a week; you would've found out that I'm shit at updating sooner or later anyway.

Thanks for reading!

-E
The light cast by the rising sun creeps over Stiles’ bedroom ceiling, making it glow orange. Stiles watches it happen from his bed where he’s been lying awake for over an hour now. His mind is spinning with all the possibilities of what could be kidnapping children of Beacon Hills; his fingers move restlessly over the mattress, smoothing out wrinkles in the sheets.

When he’s thinking that it would be the perfect time to go for a run, his phone rings. Stiles answers without checking the caller ID; it’s not like he’s avoiding Laura anymore, they’ve been working on this case together for a couple of days now.

“Yeah,” Stiles mumbles into his phone.

“I need a ride,” Reina declares without so much as a ‘hello’.

Stiles checks the clock on his bedside table. 6:23 a.m.

“Where to?” He asks, already getting out of bed.

Reina hesitates a second before replying. “LA,” is all she says.

Stiles stops in his tracks, one leg already in his jeans, phone pressed between his shoulder and ear. “What do you need in freaking LA? It’s hours away.”

“I know, dumbass,” Reina huffs. There’s some rustling and clinking of glass on her end. “Are you gonna take me or do I need to find someone else?” She demands, impatient.

Stiles nibbles on his lip. Laura can’t meet him today anyway, and maybe a change in scenery will help him have a breakthrough on the case. “No, I’ll take you,” he answers Reina.

Half an hour later he’s in front of Reina’s cabin in the woods, watching her approach his Jeep. Once in her seat, she fastens the seatbelt, and Stiles starts the engine.

“So what’s in LA?” He asks as they drive down the dirt road.

“A friend who needs my help,” she answers distractedly, tapping away on her phone.

“A friend like you actually know them,” Stiles asks, “or a friend like a random witch who needs help?”

Reina gives him a look. “A friend like my ex,” she replies. “We ended things on friendly terms before I moved to Beacon Hills. She’s not gonna screw us over,” she adds after seeing Stiles’ expression.

“You might think that you ended things friendly, but she might break into your house in the middle of the night and try to literally cut your heart out ‘cause she’s a psycho,” Stiles mutters. Yeah, good memories. He still hates the name Willow to this day.

Reina stares at him for a second. “Okay,” she draws the word out. “I don’t know what kind of psychos you’re dating, but Charlie is a normal person.”
Stiles shrugs a shoulder. “If you say so.”

They reach LA in a few hours, and Reina navigates Stiles to a psychic parlor somewhere on the outskirts of the city. The shop front looks innocent enough. A neon sign is in the window, a plaque reading ‘closed’ on the door. Reina strides to the building without hesitation, ignoring the sign and walking straight in. Stiles, obviously, follows after her.

“Charlie?” Reina says as Stiles is shutting the door.

A redhead girl with bright green eyes appears through the beaded curtain at the back of the parlor. She’s got rings and necklaces galore that jingle when she moves.

“Reina,” she beams upon seeing them, and comes to hug her. “I missed you so much,” she whispers in Reina’s ear, which Stiles can’t help but overhear.

“Missed you too, Charlie,” Reina whispers back.

They separate after longer than appropriate for exes who totally ended things, but hey, it’s none of Stiles’ business. Charlie looks at him with a quizzical expression.

“What are you?” She wonders, inspecting the space around Stiles’ frame.

“Stiles,” he introduces himself, stepping forward.

“Hmm,” she hums, but then smiles and launches herself at him. The hug is more than awkward, mostly because Stiles didn’t expect it and so he stands completely still, and also because he tries not to freak out as Charlie’s hands rest on his shoulders, way too close to his shoulder blades.

“I’m Charlotte,” she says once she steps back. “But you can call me Charlie.”

“Now that you’ve been introduced,” Reina interrupts. She’s leaning against a glass counter where all kinds of dream catchers are displayed. “What happened, Charlie?” She asks, all serious.

Charlie’s smile disappears. She sighs and moves to sit at the round table on the left of the room. “I was conducting a séance, as usual,” she starts, fingers fidgeting with one of her rings. “It was for this couple who lost their son. The spirit came, I relayed the parents’ message, everything seemed fine, but,” she bites her lip, shaking her head. “I don’t know how it could have happened, but a demon snuck into our plane through the rift I created. I didn’t notice until it was too late.”

“There’s a demon roaming LA right now?” Reina asks, too harshly in Stiles’ opinion as Charlie flinches slightly at her tone.

“I thought this was supposed to be the city of Angels,” Stiles snorts, trying to diffuse the tension. “Not that Angels are better than demons,” he mumbles only to himself.

Charlie offers him a half smile, and Reina glares his way before looking back at Charlie. “Okay, so we need to catch a demon.”

Charlie glances at Stiles in a way Stiles finds disconcerting, like she sees right to the very core of him. Psychics. They always give Stiles the creeps even when they’re seemingly nice.

“Yeah, we need to summon it,” Charlie says, “and then exorcise him back. That’s why I called you. You’re the only witch I’d trust with this, Rei.”

Reina smirks. “Let’s get to work then,” she says.
Stiles ends up being the driver for the rest of the day. Demon summoning requires a hell of a lot of extremely specific items. But even when they have collected all the necessary pieces, they need to wait until nightfall for the summoning itself. Stiles is only glad it’s a lesser demon that doesn’t require a specific moon phase.

As the sun in slowly sinking below the horizon, Stiles is helping Reina prepare all the ingredients while Charlie draws a complex pentagram on the floor of her parlor.

“Put these on the points of the star,” Reina instructs, motioning to the candles.

Stiles rolls his eyes. Like he doesn’t know where the candles go; please, he translated a whole book on demons recently. He doesn’t say any of this to Reina though, she needs to focus and not want to murder Stiles. He places the red, blue, green, and white candles on their respective points, leaving one point empty for Reina to stand in.

Stiles glances over the symbols around the pentagram, recognizing Enochian. He kneels next to Charlie, who’s nearly done with the drawing.

“Are you sure this is the correct symbol?” He asks, tapping the one next to the empty point of the star.

Charlie squints at it, consults the book she’s got open on the floor in front of herself. “Oh,” she says, her eyebrows going up. “You’ve got a good eye.” She winks at him.

Stiles huffs. “And I don’t want Reina to get possessed,” he says dryly, rising to his feet.

The ritual begins once the moon is out. It’s a fairly simple affair. Stiles watches it from the corner as Reina asked for as much space as possible. Also, he’d rather not be noticed by a demon who could easily out him.

Reina stands in the empty point, a bowl with all the ingredients in her hands. Her eyes start to glow purple as she whispers an incantation, and the candles flicker to life. Once that’s done she starts chanting the summoning, adding a drop of blood to the bowl.

Wind picks up in the room, howling something fierce. Smoke starts swirling in the middle of the pentagram. A figure appears out of the shadows. It’s a gorgeous woman, blonde with blood red lips and a figure hugging red dress. She does not look happy.

“You interrupted my meal,” she hisses. A drop of her lipstick runs down her chin, and Stiles realizes it’s actual blood staining her lips.

No one answers her, like discussed, and Reina starts chanting the exorcism. The demon’s eyes turn fully black and it locks its gaze on Reina, as it steps closer to her. Stiles doesn’t react, doesn’t think he needs to because the pentagram should contain a demon. But it steps right into the point that Reina is standing in and grabs her by the throat, ceasing the exorcism.


Stiles moves on instinct, teleporting right next to Reina and blasting the demon away from her. It stumbles a few steps back as Stiles didn’t use much power not wanting to hurt Reina accidentally. The demon’s black eyes turn to Stiles. It’s expression quickly turns confused, and then gleeful.

“Haven’t seen one of you in centuries,” it laughs. “It’ll be my pleasure to present your wings to Benjamin.”
Stiles doesn’t stop for chit chat. He materializes his blade and goes for the demon’s chest. It evades, grabbing Stiles’ wrist and yanking it back. Stiles screams as the bone snaps. The blade clatters to the ground.

The demon suddenly hits a wall, taking all the shelves and their contents down with itself. Stiles, breathing heavily, kneeling on the floor, nods at Reina whose eyes are back to purple.

But Stiles only gets that bit of a reprieve before the demon is standing up and throwing a ball of flames in his direction. Stiles evades the first one but is not so lucky with the second; it clips his shoulder, burning through his hoodie and skin, and making Stiles hiss at the pain. With one of his hands out of commission it's quite difficult for Stiles to block the attacks, he's just glad Reina is by his side, sending the flames back as much as she can.

The demon gets bored of that quickly though. Wind swirls in the room again, but now it picks up more speed, forming a small tornado that chuckers anything in its path at Reina and Stiles. Stiles ducks and swirls out of the way of glass jars, candles, and pieces of shelves as much as he can, but he can feel blood running down his cheek and scratched up forearms.

Reina suddenly throws one arm forward, screaming at Stiles to duck. He obeys immediately. The glass windows of the parlor shatter behind them, and Stiles narrowly avoids turning into a pin cushion. The demon is not so lucky and gets hit with the full force of Reina's attack.

They don't rejoice for long though, as the demon screams in rage and all the shards embeded in its body explode outwards. Reina gets the worst of it; she gets knocked to the ground, bleeding from the cuts.

The demon returns its attention to Stiles and uses telekinesis to pin Stiles to the floor. The breath is knocked out of Stiles’ lungs, and he can feel the demon draining him of energy. Stiles tries to struggle against the demon’s hold but it’s of no use. Meanwhile, Reina is back on her feet (figuratively though as she's kneeling on the floor) trying to distract the demon by throwing various spells at it. She’s successful enough for Stiles to break one of his arms free, luckily not the broken one.

Stiles directs his sole attention to the demon, raising his arm a bit and clenching his fist. The demon’s ribs crack and it doubles over, howling in pain, but doesn’t lose its hold on Stiles.

“Charlie,” Stiles manages through gritted teeth. Charlie's been cowering in the corner behind Reina this whole time and she's the only one that the demon hadn't inflicted damage upon. “The blade,” he says and divert his gaze for a second to his silver blade lying on the floor.

Stiles manages a glance at Charlie who's standing frozen, eyes wide. She tries to take a step forward, but the demon throws her back. She hits her head and loses consciousness. Stiles hears Reina cursing up a storm, and then the demon shrieks, collapsing onto its knees.

Stiles can finally breathe again, and he sits up, glancing at Reina. She’s got her palms facing the demon, purple energy coursing between them, keeping the demon down. It doesn’t look like she’ll hold on for long though. So Stiles gathers his strength and grabs his blade off the floor. He approaches the demon and not wasting a second plunges the dagger through its chest.

The demon’s eyes glow orange, mouth open in a silent scream, before it turns to dust. Stiles sits back on his haunches and just breathes for a second.

“That was fun,” he says, turning to look at Reina.
She’s bracing her hands on her knees. “I don’t think that was a lesser demon,” she says, panting.

“You don’t say,” Stiles mumbles to himself.

He dematerializes his blade and then starts healing his broken wrist. Reina goes to Charlie’s side, waking her up and helping her sit up.

“I’m sorry,” Charlie says, as Reina is dabbing away the blood from her temple. “I didn’t know it was that strong or I would have warned you.”

Stiles snorts his disbelief and gets a glare from Reina. “Oh, come on,” he says. “She’s a psychic, how could she not have known? She didn't even try to help us out. Maybe she wanted us to be sacrifices for the demon.”

Charlie looks on the verge of crying, but Stiles couldn’t care less. The chick just tried to kill them as far as he’s concerned.

“You should go home, Stiles,” Reina says, her tone harsh.

Stiles’ eyebrows lift up. “Seriously?” He asks. “You want me to leave you with her?”

“I didn’t know,” Charlie says, tears spilling from her eyes.

“Go,” Reina snarls at him. “Now.”

Stiles shakes his head and stands up. “Whatever,” he mumbles and leaves the parlor.

***

Stiles stands in the pouring rain next to his Jeep with a busted tire. Of course, he doesn’t have a spare, it’s the middle of the night so no chance of anyone passing by, he’s tired and achy all over after helping Reina, which, by the way, never again, and he doesn’t want to use his powers if he can avoid it. In short, he’s screwed.

A shiver runs through him, but Stiles barely notices, only blinking the rain out of his eyes. Guess he’s going to have to risk it and teleport. Hopefully, he won’t end up in Mrs. Freeman’s bedroom instead of his own.

Stiles lifts his wings in preparation of flight, but a sudden beam of light illuminates him, and Stiles folds his invisible wings back, turning to look at the approaching car. Because of the blinding headlights and the pouring rain, Stiles realizes whose car it is a little too late.

He sighs and lifts his head, letting the cold rain pelt his face; the cuts that he didn't deem worthy of healing sting a bit. Of course. Of fucking course it’s Derek fucking Hale who happens to drive by Stiles’ busted car five miles away from Beacon Hills. “Fuck you,” Stiles whispers to the universe and imagines it laughing with sick satisfaction.

Stiles hears the slam of the car door, but Derek’s approach is silent.

“Stiles,” he says roughly.

Stiles blinks his eyes open, turning to look at Derek. He’s too tired to deal with this. “Derek,” he replies.

Derek studies him for a second, brows furrowed. His eyes catch on Stiles' bruised up face, his burnt hoodie, and Stiles is so not in the mood to explain. “What happened?” Derek asks.
Stiles motions to the car. “Flat tire,” he explains. He knows that’s not what Derek meant and gets an eye roll for his answer.

“Are you –” Derek starts to say but stops himself. He squares his shoulders. “Do you need a lift?” He offers, though doesn’t look too happy about it.

Stiles lifts an eyebrow. He was sure Derek would just leave him at the side of the road, what with how their last conversation went. “You sure?” He checks.

Derek grumbles something to himself and then says, “Just get in the car, Stiles.” He stalks away, shutting his car door with more force than necessary.

Stiles stares after him for a moment before retrieving his backpack from his Jeep and getting into Derek’s car. Inside it’s warm and smells of leather. Stiles shivers.

Derek glances at him before starting the car and driving off like a maniac. Stiles doesn’t much care about Derek’s reckless driving, he’s too exhausted. He rests his head against the headrest (and who came up with that brilliant name, by the way?) and closes his eyes. He hears Derek fiddling with some buttons on the dash, and hot air blasts in Stiles’ direction. If Stiles didn’t know any better, he’d think Derek turned the heat up for him.

“I heard you’re helping Laura with the missing kids case,” Derek says.

Stiles is once again caught surprised. He looks at Derek, his hands are clenched on the steering wheel, purposefully not even glancing in Stiles’ direction.

“Yeah, I am,” Stiles replies. “Why? Do you want me to stay away from her?”

Leather creeps under Derek’s hands. “Do you intend to hurt her?”

Stiles snorts. “Laura’s an Alpha, I’m sure she can protect herself.”

Derek lifts an eyebrow at him.

“Doesn’t mean I’m going to intentionally hurt her.” Stiles rolls his eyes. “Come on, dude, I thought we went over this.” He crosses his arms. Slight tremors are still running through his body; his energy is too depleted, so he can’t warm up properly, but the heating in the car is helping.

“You threatened me the last time we talked,” Derek points out, though without much anger.

Stiles frowns, turning to look out the black window. “Yeah, well, you saw something you shouldn’t have,” he mumbles.

Derek scoffs. “You can’t blame me for that. You were in the woods, anyone could have seen you.”

“I checked,” Stiles grits out. “There was no one threatening around me for miles. My senses don’t lie.”

“Why would you think I’m a threat to you?” Derek genuinely wonders, as if Stiles doesn’t have enough reasons.

“Um,” Stiles starts, turning to stare at Derek. “Maybe because you wanted to make a shish kebab out of me during dinner?”

Derek actually rolls his eyes. “That was before,” he says.

Stiles waits for him to continue, but Derek is as chatty as always, apparently. “Before what?” Stiles
“Before I figured out you’re just interested in Laura,” Derek grumbles, frowning again. “Not like that makes anything better,” he murmurs quieter.

“Interested in Laura?” Stiles repeats, dumbfounded. Then he laughs. “Are you for real now? Why in the world would you think I’m interested in dating your sister?”

Derek’s frown morphs into one of confusion. “You came to dinner at our house when you could’ve just skipped. You’re making friends with the whole pack because that’s what she wants. You jumped at the opportunity to solve this case with her,” Derek lists.

Stiles laughs again. “That’s called being friendly, Derek. You should try it sometime,” he says. “And your sister is paying me to work this case,” he adds for good measure.

Derek seems stumped, so Stiles decides to help him out. “I’m not interested in dating your sister,” he makes it as clear as possible. “And I don’t have an ulterior motive, Derek. I’m not an evil super genius who wants to ruin your life and slaughter your family. Who would even do that?” Even Willow wanted only Stiles’ heart, she never went after his father or Scotty.

Derek’s expression darkens, he tenses again. “My ex,” he near whispers. Stiles almost misses the two words and they make him frown in confusion.

But he doesn’t get a chance to ask as Derek parks in front of Stiles’ house, a clear aura of get-the-fuck-out settling in the car.

“Thanks for the ride, man,” Stiles says before getting out into the rain again.

Derek, the cool guy that he is, doesn’t answer. The second Stiles shuts the door, Derek speeds off.

For a couple of seconds Stiles’ mind is occupied with the mystery that is Derek Hale, but then fatigue hits him, and Stiles drags himself inside.

Chapter End Notes

I can’t go a chapter without Stiles and Derek interacting, it’s my weakness.

Do let me know what you think of the story so far, I love reading your comments!

-E
Chapter 6

Stiles steps out of his house in the late afternoon, having slept for over twelve hours. His energy is not yet fully back to normal, but it should get there in a day or two. He locks his door, thinking about how much it’ll cost to rent a tow truck and get a new tire, but he stops in his tracks as he turns around, ready to step off his porch.

His Jeep is in his driveway in all of its baby blue glory. Stiles frowns in confusion. The wind rustles a paper that’s pinned under the window wiper of the Jeep. Stiles walks closer and takes the note. ‘You’re welcome’ is all that’s written on it in neat writing.

“That nice handsome man, Derek, brought it here this morning,” Mrs. Freeman says, and Stiles lifts his head to see her sitting on her porch, lemonade in hand. “He’s a keeper,” she smiles at him.

“Derek Hale?” Stiles asks, ignoring the fact that his neighbor has apparently been surveilling his house. “Are you sure?”

“Oh, honey,” Mrs. Freeman laughs. “I could never forget such a pretty face.”

“You’re telling me,” Stiles mutters to himself. “Thanks,” he says louder to the old woman.

“You should thank him not me,” she winks at Stiles.

Stiles laughs. Like that would go over well. “Yeah, I’ll do that,” he says anyway. “Have a nice afternoon, Mrs. F,” Stiles waves at her before getting in his Jeep.

Stiles drives to the Jade Wolf almost on a whim. Mrs. Freeman was right, Stiles should thank Derek. It’s not like Stiles likes him and Derek being adversaries, and this might help them become friends. And if not, then Stiles can tell Laura that he at least tried. Several times, might he add.

He parks on the other side of the road and heads inside the bar. There’s quite a few people around which makes Stiles feel slightly uneasy as he walks up to the bar. Derek spots him almost instantly and walks over. Stiles beams at him.

“What are you doing here?” Derek asks, bracing his hands on the bar.

“I came to thank you,” Stiles says. “And to repay you.” He gets his wallet out. “How much did you pay to change the tire?”

Derek rolls his pretty eyes. “I did it myself, it didn’t cost anything,” he says. “And even if it did, I wouldn’t take your money.”


Derek crosses his arms, huffing. “I don’t… hate you,” he says, making a face.

“That looked like it hurt you to say it,” Stiles comments with a grin on his face.

“You’re not making it easy to like you,” Derek deadpans.
“Hey,” Stiles jabs a finger in Derek’s direction. “I’m a joy to be around.”

Derek snorts, amused. Stiles narrows his eyes at him.

“Fine,” Stiles says, putting his wallet into his back pocket. “If you won’t accept my money, then let me at least buy you a drink and a dinner,” he suggests.

“I don’t drink alcohol,” Derek says.

Stiles rolls his eyes heavenward. “Of course, you don’t,” he mumbles. “Okay, then I’ll buy you a couple of dinners and we’ll be settled,” he bargains. “And before you say no, you should know that I’ll keep suggesting stuff until you agree ‘cause my daddy taught me to always pay my debts.”

Derek lifts an eyebrow at him. “Are you a Lannister now?”

Stiles’ jaw drops because did Derek just really make a reference? Like, an actual modern TV show related reference? Stiles’ mind is blown.

“Dude,” he says in awe. Derek’s cheeks turn redder and he averts his gaze, crossing his arms over his chest. “You’re actually a nerd at heart, aren’t you?” Stiles grins.

“Game of Thrones is not a nerd show,” Derek defends himself. He sounds surly and is not meeting Stiles’ eyes.

“Whatever you say,” Stiles lifts his hands up in surrender, but he’s so going to use this information later. “So, dinner? Yes, or should I think of something else? Do you want me to cover a shift for you? Oh, I know, I could buy you one of those muffin baskets, or like several of them if you like them? Or –”

“Fine,” Derek growls out, and Stiles smirks. “I’ll have dinner with you,” he agrees reluctantly.

“Oooh,” Erica says as she approaches the bar with an empty tray. “Are you boys going on a date?” She dumps the tray on the bar top and sits on the spinnny stool. “I knew one of you would break soon.” Her cherry red lips form a grin. “Who asked who?” She asks.

“It’s not a –” Derek starts saying, but Stiles talks over him.

“I did, obviously,” he answers Erica, turning to her. “Like Derek would ever pluck up the courage to ask me out.” He rolls his eyes.

“Yeah, that’s true,” Erica nods sagely. Derek huffs, mutters something along the lines of ‘why am I always surrounded by idiots’ and walks away.

“Did he finally tell you that he thought you’re into Laura?” Erica asks with a smirk.

“Erica,” Derek hisses from across the bar, but she pays him no mind.

“He did,” Stiles laughs. “I have no idea why he thought that.” He glances at Derek who’s furiously cleaning a tumbler, the tips of his ears red.

“I know, right?” Erica rolls her eyes. “You’re totally into him, that’s plain as day,” she says, and Stiles nearly chokes on his spit.

“Erica,” he’s the one hissing now. He checks if Derek was listening, but as luck will have it he’s taking an order from a client. Thank the heavens above.

“What did Stiles ask out?” Isaac asks, appearing out of thin air on the other side of Stiles, making him jump.

“Don’t sneak up on people,” Stiles chastises him, smacking Isaac in the shoulder. He can’t believe he got that distracted that he let himself loose his guard in a crowded place.

“Can’t help it; werewolf.” Isaac only grins at him. “You’re going on a date?” He asks Stiles.

“Yeah, with Derek,” Erica answers for Stiles. And Stiles would correct them but he’s having too much fun seeing how it annoys Derek.

“I thought it would take him longer,” Isaac comments.

“Don’t you two have work to do?” Derek snides, as he walks back to them.

“Sir, yes, sir,” Isaac salutes him, a serious look on his face before he and Erica erupt into giggles. But they do get back to work.

“About our date,” Stiles starts just to see Derek’s exasperated look; it makes him smirk. “When should I pick you up?”

“I’m not going anywhere with you in that blue deathtrap of yours,” Derek crosses his arms.

“Roscoe?” Derek lifts an eyebrow.

“Fine, you can drive your own ass to our date,” Stiles says, throwing his hands in the air. He wanted to be a gentleman but fuck that if Derek’s going to be an ass.

“It’s not a date,” Derek grits out. That adorable furrow appears between his eyebrows as he’s glaring at Stiles.

“What do you think of going to that fancy place on 1st and Main for our first date?” Stiles asks, adding the last part just to annoy Derek further.

Derek’s chest rumbles with a suppressed growl, making Stiles laugh. “Call it what you want,” he finally gives in. “But I’m not going to the Purple Crane.”

“Okay,” Stiles nods a few times, thinking. “So something more casual, yeah? How about the diner off route 15?” He suggests.

“Fine,” Derek grumbles.

“Great,” Stiles beams at him. He’s about to suggest the time for their (non)date when his phone rings. The caller ID tells him that it’s Reina calling, and Stiles has half a mind to just let it ring, but then remembers that he did leave her with her psycho ex, and his morality kicks in. He hates when it does that.

“Yeah?” He says, leaning on his elbows against the bar.

“You were right,” Reina says with a huff. Stiles can hear cars and people bustling in the background on her end.
“I’m always right,” Stiles says, smirking. He looks up and sees Derek rolling his eyes. “What about this time?”

Reina sighs. “Charlie,” she mumbles. “She thought the demon would help her get me back, and she didn’t think it would cause so much harm.”

“She told you that?” Stiles asks, surprised. He notices Derek looking at his hands and realizes he’s been tapping a rhythm on the bar top for who knows how long. Stiles stops immediately.

“Yeah,” Reina replies. “She broke down like an hour ago, said she couldn’t keep that a secret and didn’t want us building our relationship on a lie, especially since the demon killed so many people and nearly killed you. How are you by the way?” She asks, concern creeping into her voice.

Derek growls at that, glaring at Stiles’ phone. “Eavesdropper,” Stiles whispers to him.

“That’s why you looked like shit last night?” Derek asks, angry for some unfathomable reason. “You fought a fucking demon?”

Stiles rolls his eyes. “I’m fine,” he tells both Reina and Derek. Derek narrows his eyes at him, looking him up and down slowly. “Do you need me to come get you?” He asks Reina, looking away from Derek; Stiles doesn’t want to think about the worry he thinks he’s seeing in Derek’s eyes.

“That would be great,” Reina says. “I’m sorry about the whole –”

“Rei, we can talk about that on the way back,” Stiles tells her. “I’m sorry about Charlie. But hey, at least she didn’t try to cut out your heart and eat it.”

Reina snorts. “Yeah, at least my ex isn’t as psycho as yours, that’s a relief.”

Stiles smiles. “I’ll see you in like five hours,” he tells her and they hang up after saying goodbye. Stiles pushes back off the bar and meets Derek’s eyes. His eyebrows are raised and he’s looking at Stiles expectantly.

“Your ex tried to eat your heart?” He asks.

Stiles waves a dismissive hand. “She thought it would let her live forever or some bullshit when she found out what I am. It was a long time ago. She’s in jail for attempted murder.”

Derek looks strangely at him, all sorts of emotions running through his face too quick for Stiles to catch them all.

“Anyway,” Stiles says, stepping away from the bar. “I’m going to LA to get Reina. You know her, right?”

“Yes, Stiles,” Derek says with no inflection. “I know our resident witch.”

“Okay, cool.” Stiles nods a couple times. “I’ll text you to coordinate the time of our date,” he says.

“It’s not a date, Stiles,” Derek grumbles.

Stiles only throws finger guns at him before leaving the bar.

***

Stiles finds Reina in a 24 hour McDonald’s, eating away her feelings. He joins her and steals a burger from her overflowing tray of food.
“Hey,” she says, frowning at him and batting his hands off the fries.

“Consider this payment for my driving services.” Stiles smirks at her, munching on the fry he managed to grab.

“Fine,” she mutters.

Stiles unwraps the burger and takes a bite, it’s a bit cold but it’ll do as he hasn’t had anything substantial to eat since breakfast. Granted it was at three p.m. but still.

“I’m not gonna say I told you so about the whole intentional demon thing,” Stiles mumbles, mouth full of McDonald’s goodness, “but I totally told you so.”

Reina gives him a look and stuffs more fries into her mouth. “Well, you’re not dead, are you? So shut up and let me drown my sorrows in this calorie bomb.”

Stiles looks carefully at Reina. Her mascara is smudged under her red rimmed eyes, her hair is tied in a haphazard mess on the top of her head, and she’s paler than usual.

“I scored a date with Derek,” Stiles says, trying to distract her from horrible thoughts that are surely plaguing her right now.

Reina lifts an eyebrow at him. “I think I misheard. You did what now?”

Stiles grins. “Me and Derek are going on a date.”

“Bullshit,” Reina says, pointing a fry at him before putting it in her mouth. “From what he told me about you, he doesn’t even like you, Stiles.”

Stiles’ eyebrows reach his hairline, he drops the burger in order to lean closer to Reina. “Since when do you talk to Derek Hale?” He demands.

Reina shrugs a shoulder. “We’re neighbors. He stops by mine on his runs sometimes, I give him iced tea, we chat,” she says all nonchalant as if she didn’t just blow Stiles’ mind.

And what the actual hell? Derek is getting more and more interesting by the minute. At first Stiles thought he was just another gorgeous muscly werewolf who hates everyone and everything on the planet, but it seems there’s more to Derek than Stiles assumed.

“You and Derek Hale just chat?” Stiles repeats.

Reina frowns at him. “Are you broken or something?” She asks. “Yes, Derek Hale,” she puts unnecessary emphasis on the name, “and I talk. Just because he doesn’t like you doesn’t mean he dislikes all people. I told you he’s friendly in his own way.”

“Well, I’ll be,” Stiles mutters in wonder, leaning back in his chair. “What did he say about me?”

“That you’re a loudmouth flailing idiot who’s ruining his quiet and calm life,” Reina says around a bite of a burger.

“Wow, you do not sugarcoat things.” Stiles frowns at her, crossing his arms, and receives a shrug as an answer. “Well, he’s about to change his opinion after our date,” he declares.

“Stiles,” Reina says seriously. “I like you, you’re a good guy, but you are a loudmouth who flails a lot.”
Stiles gives her his best bitch face. “Thanks,” he says. “But mark my word, I will be so charming that Derek won’t be able to help but fall in love with my flaily self.”

Reina snorts. “Whatever you say, dude.”

***

Stiles is driving back into town at three a.m., after having dropped Reina off at her cabin, and the last thing he expects is someone blocking the road. But lo and behold there’s Derek’s fancy car and a couple of heavy duty jeeps just standing there. In the light of the headlights, Stiles can see Derek, his back to Stiles, facing off four men who, by the look of it, appear to be hunters.

Stiles slows Roscoe down and stops behind Derek’s Camaro. He gets out and is greeted by Derek’s already familiar growl. Derek is, of course, threatening the hunters. Figures.

“Hey, guys,” Stiles greets, walking closer and stopping next to Derek. “What’s up, dudes? Are we having a meeting? I do love a secret meeting.” He puts his hands in his pockets, so he doesn’t start fidgeting like usual.

“Stiles, shut up and leave,” Derek snarls, he doesn’t even deem it worthy to look at Stiles.

“I totally would, dude,” Stiles says, looking at Derek’s profile, because he’s polite like that. Also, it’s a very nice profile, and the beard really suits Derek, Stiles would love to feel it rub on his skin. And hey, whoa, back to business, brain!

Stiles turns to the hunters, making a sweeping motion at them with his hand. “But your friends here are blocking the whole road into town, so you can see where it’s a bit tricky.”

“Would you look at the little red riding hood joining us?” One of the hunters chuckles. No one joins him because admittedly that was a bad joke, but it does make Stiles tug on his red hoodie subconsciously.

Another hunter waves his knife in Stiles’ general direction. “Is this your friend, Hale? We saw him hanging around you a lot.” He’s got a caterpillar like mustache that wiggles hilariously when he talks. Stiles nearly doesn’t manage to stop from snorting in laughter.

“No, he’s not, I barely know him,” Derek replies. His fists are so tightly clenched by his sides that his knuckles are white, and Stiles thinks he sees blood dripping onto the asphalt.

Derek’s words hurt more than they should. “Woah, and here I was thinking that we managed to break the ice of our animosity,” Stiles comments, and only receives a glare from Derek.

The mustache looks him up and down, and Stiles feels a disgusted shiver run down his spine. A hunter with glasses perched on his nose says, “Do you know what your friend here is?”

Stiles looks at Derek as if inspecting him. “I’d say he’s pissed,” Stiles replies. “I would be too if I had to talk to hunters for longer than five minutes.” He sees the puzzle pieces clicking in the hunters’ brains.

“What are you?” Chuckles asks. His eyes narrow at Stiles.

“Wouldn’t you like to know,” Stiles scoffs.

The stache pulls out a knife, smiling. “Maybe we’ll cut you open and find out.”
Derek’s resounding growl was probably heard in town. He steps in front of Stiles, and Stiles can see his claws have appeared, he’s going to make a wild guess and say that the fangs are probably also in place.

“You don’t know him, huh?” The glasses smirks. Stiles hears the safety on his gun clicking off. “Have I told you that these are laced with wolfsbane?” He addresses Derek.

“Hey, whoa, guys,” Stiles says, stepping in front of Derek, easily avoiding his grabby hands that want to push Stiles back behind him, hands raised in surrender. “We can solve this like civilized people, right?”

“Or I could just shoot the mutt,” glasses raises the barrel of the gun, aiming it at Derek. “Or maybe he’d hurt more if I shot you,” he says. He’s so close that the muzzle of the gun is nearly touching Stiles’ forehead.

Derek grabs the back of Stiles’ red hoodie, pulling him back. He clearly wants Stiles behind him, but Stiles doesn’t allow for that, so he ends up with his back pressed against Derek’s chest. Not an ideal situation. Stiles thinks he’d better have the gun against his forehead.

“This escalated quickly,” Stiles mutters to himself. He wants to push Derek away but manages to restrain himself, focusing instead on the hunters.

“Look at the puppy being all protective,” mustache laughs and the rest of the dickheads join in.

“Get back in the Jeep, Stiles,” Derek whispers right into Stiles’ ear. And yeah, more bad kind of shivers.

“Not a chance, dude,” Stiles whispers back. Louder he says, “Yo, assholes, clearly you don’t speak common sense, so let me break this down for you.” Stiles materializes his blade, letting his eyes blaze light blue for good measure. “Either you get into your overcompensating cars and fuck off, or you’re gonna become piles of ashes. Your choice.”

Now three guns and an arrow are aimed at Stiles. He sighs.

“What the fuck are you?” Chuckles asks, his eyes are wide and his voice a bit shaky.

“Oh, you’ve never met someone like me,” Stiles smirks. He flips his blade in his hand. “So what’s it gonna be?”

The question is not even fully out of Stiles’ mouth when he hears the telltale sound of a vibrating string of a bow. Instincts taking over, Stiles only has to lift his free hand to stop the arrow in the air. It hovers in front of Stiles’ heart, rotating slowly. The growl Derek lets out reverberates through Stiles’ back, making his wings twitch in the ethereal plane and his shoulder blades tingle.

Stiles lowers his hand, the arrow drops to the ground with a soft clatter. “Wanna try that again?”

Face tattoo, the one who shot the arrow, looks determined as he grabs another one from his quiver. But the glasses raises his hand, lowering his gun. The others hesitate for a second before following suit.

“We’re going to find out what you are and then you’ll wish you never stood up for this mutt,” he says and takes a couple steps back before turning around and walking to his jeep. The other three follow him, and then it’s only Derek and Stiles on the road.

Stiles breathes out slowly and dematerializes his blade. His heart is hammering a double rhythm.
“What the fuck were you thinking?” Is growled right into Stiles’ ear and Stiles remembers that Derek’s at his back. How could he have forgotten?

“Dude, I saved your ass,” Stiles replies, quickly stepping away from Derek and turning to face him. He lifts his shoulder blades and stretches his wings in the ethereal plane. “You could at least say thank you.”

“You almost got shot, Stiles,” Derek shouts, his eyes flashing blue. “Do not do that ever again,” he steps closer, getting all into Stiles’ personal space.

Stiles rolls his eyes. “Sorry I hurt your masculinity by turning you into a damsel in distress.”

“It’s not about that,” Derek growls then huffs, taking a step back. “Now those hunters will be on your tail. Congratulations.” He crosses his arms, looking at Stiles disdainfully.

Stiles snickers to himself at the pun.

“I dealt with many a hunter in my day, dear Derek,” Stiles says. He bends down to retrieve the arrow. “Believe me, they’ve got nothing on me. They’re not gonna find out what I am.” He waves the arrow about.

“Don’t underestimate them,” Derek warns.

“They can’t hurt me, Derek.” Stiles is sure of that. They can make him want to relocate but they can’t physically harm him if they don’t know what he is.

“You’d be surprised,” Derek mutters. He turns around, walking back to his car.

“What did they want from you, anyway?” Stiles calls after him.

“Social call,” Derek throws over his shoulder before getting in his car and driving off like a maniac.

Stiles is left in the middle of the road, watching after him.

Chapter End Notes

As a late Valentine's day present, here's a chapter filled with Sterek.

Hope you like it and thanks for reading!

-E

P.S. over 8k hits?? you guys are crazy!
Chapter 7

Stiles is at the Hale house as has become the norm during the past few days. He’s rummaging in the fridge, needing to eat something before he can read another useless book. He and Laura have been through all the possible monsters, and all of them could fit the MO in one way or the other. The missing kids are all around the age of ten, they’ve last been seen near the woods, and every two days a new kid disappears. The Sheriff’s station has of course sanctioned a curfew but that doesn’t help with the problem. Laura and the rest of the pack are scouring the woods every day and night, and nothing.

Stiles has been trying to distance himself from the case, not think that actual little children are probably being eaten by a monster in the woods, but that’s been working only partly. It’s awful, and Stiles can’t sleep let alone stop thinking about it when he knows that soon another child will disappear. He sighs and bangs his forehead against the fridge door for good measure. It doesn’t help him think though.

“We’re gonna figure this out, Stiles,” Laura says, behind him, startling Stiles and making him spin around.

“I know,” he says a bit too harshly, but it’s two a.m. and they’ve achieved nothing. “But how many kids are going to have to die until we do?” He asks.

Laura bites her lip, and her gaze slips to the floor. “I don’t know,” she whispers. “I can’t let myself think like that. This is my territory, and I’m the Alpha, I should’ve kept those kids safe.” She swipes at her cheek furiously and exhales loudly. “Maybe we should take a break,” she suggests, lifting her head with a smile back on her face. “I heard you and Derek are going on a date.”

Stiles wants to argue that they should get back to work, but he knows they won’t find anything, they have too little information. Plus, distractions sometimes help, an idea might come to him unbidden.

“Yeah,” Stiles huffs a not very amused laugh. “He doesn’t want to call it that though,” he says and makes a face. “To be completely honest, I just asked him to dinner to pay back for his uncharacteristic generosity.”

Laura moves to lean against the counter next to Stiles. “Oh, he told me that he found you on the side of the road, and that you looked rough. What happened?”

Stiles waves a hand absently. “Nothing major, a demon attack that we totally dealt with,” he says airily.

“A demon attack?” Laura’s eyes go wide.

“Not a big deal,” Stiles repeats. “Reina and I took care of it. Though it did take a lot out of me, so I couldn’t just teleport back home when my tire got busted, and Derek very generously gave me a lift.” Stiles shrugs a shoulder. “So I’m taking him to dinner to repay him.”

“Just to repay him?” Laura inquires with a little smirk.

Stiles rolls his eyes. “Yes, just to repay him, Laura,” he lies, glad that werewolves don’t know when he’s doing it. “But he’s been avoiding me since the night we met the hunters. I keep suggesting when
we could have dinner and he keeps saying it’s not a good time right now. Like, I know it’s not ideal, what with the kids going missing, but distractions sometimes help, right?” He asks, hoping that she’ll agree.

Laura’s expression turns unreadable. She glances out the kitchen window and sighs. “The hunters had a message for Derek,” she says, and Stiles can see she’s barely containing her anger. “His ex is coming back to town, apparently.” Laura’s eyes flash red for a second.

Stiles’ eyebrows furrow in confusion. “Derek has a hunter ex?” He wonders. And he thought Derek despised all hunters.

Laura’s expression turns into one of disgust. “Kate’s not as much an ex as she’s a fucking child molester,” she growls out. “Derek was fifteen when she seduced him with promises of love. She got him to spill secrets about our family, about our weaknesses as werewolves. Then one night she trapped all of our family in this house and set it on fire.” There’s so much anguish, hurt and hatred in Laura’s voice and her expression, and Stiles knows exactly how she feels. He wouldn’t wish that upon anyone.

“The Hale fire,” he mumbles slowly, remembering Scotty telling him about it before Stiles moved here. “Scott told me that was an accident.”

Laura wipes tears off her cheeks and exhales shakily. “No one knew at first that it was Kate,” she explains. “She got Derek alone a couple days later and told him everything. He was so scared that he begged me to take him as far away from here as possible. So I took him to New York. It was only a year later that he managed to tell me the truth.”

“Why didn’t you tell the cops that it was her?” Stiles inquires carefully.

“There’s no evidence, no motive,” Laura says, shaking her head. “We couldn’t just tell them that we’re werewolves and some psycho bitch murdered our whole family for that.”

Stiles nods and shuffles closer to Laura. He puts a hand on her shoulder, squeezing slightly. Laura gives him a sad smile, and Stiles drops his hand.

“Derek’s on edge because of that,” she says. “Kate’s coming back, and there’s nothing we can do. It’s going to be worse when she finally shows up. I’d love to claw that bitch’s throat,” Laura snarls out.

“That can be arranged,” Stiles tells her, already thinking of several ways how to do it.

Laura laughs. “Are you per chance an evil creature?” She asks, cocking her head to the side to look at him.

Stiles shrugs a shoulder. “I’d like to think that I’m cunning and resourceful.”

“You’re a slytherin, aren’t you?” She looks him up and down.

“Guilty as charged.” He grins at her, happy that the somber mood is slowly dissipating in the air.

Stiles turns slightly, his back against the counter, as he hears the pack returning from patrol. Laura seemingly hears it too as her gaze shifts to the door leading to the porch. The door soon opens, and in stumble four werewolves.

“Have a good run?” Laura asks.
“Yeah,” Erica pants, coming closer to them. She opens the water tap and drinks straight from it without using a glass. No one but Stiles seems to find it weird.

“We still didn’t find anything,” Derek grouches. He leans back against the kitchen island in front of Stiles, and Stiles can’t help but admire his muscular naked chest glistening with sweat. And yes, Stiles knows it’s shallow; sue him for being a 24 year old male who has been enjoying solely the company of his hand for the past whoever knows how long.

“Only more entrails on the shore of the lake,” Boyd adds. He’s more sensible than his girlfriend and gets water bottles from the fridge, throwing one to each Derek and Isaac.

“That could be done by any animal, though,” Isaac argues, uncapping his bottle.

“Yeah,” Derek says, having already gulped down half the bottle of water. “But we find them every other day when no child is taken. That can’t be a coincidence.”

One second Stiles is admiring how a bead of sweat is rolling down Derek’s chest and the next his mind fires off warning signals. His head snaps up suddenly, and he steps closer to Derek.

“Say that again,” Stiles orders him.

Derek lifts an eyebrow at him, presumably for the tone, but Stiles doesn’t have time for explanations or apologies. “That can’t be a coincidence?” Derek repeats dubiously.

“No, the other part,” Stiles tells him, waving a hand dismissively.

“The day after a child goes missing we find entrails on the shore of the lake,” Derek says.

Stiles’ eyes go huge, his brain making connections faster than he can process them consciously. Maybe because his brain is focused on something way more important is why Stiles doesn’t think it’s idiotic to just grab Derek’s bicep for support, lean into him and kiss Derek’s cheek.

“You’re brilliant, Derek,” Stiles exclaims after pulling back. “How did I not see this before?” He asks no one in particular as he starts pacing, fingers running through his hair.

“Oh, Stiles,” Erica says slowly.

Stiles turns to face them all. Erica’s got a smirk on her this time lipstick-less lips, Boyd’s expression gives nothing away, Isaac is grinning into his bottled water, Laura is still leaning against the counter with an amused expression on her face, and Derek’s glaring at the floor, the tips of his ears red. Stiles doesn’t stop to analyze all of their expressions, he’s got bigger fish to fry.

“I need to check something in one of my books,” he tells them. “I might know what’s taking the kids. I’ll call you as soon as I get it confirmed,” he throws at Laura.

Laura nods her understanding, and Stiles runs out of the house. Only when he’s halfway home does his brain catch up with the fact that he kissed Derek freakin’ Hale on the cheek.

Stiles groans to himself. “Idiot,” he mumbles.

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The book on water spirits confirms Stiles’ initial guess. However, there are a few more lake dwelling creatures that like eating children but not their innards. So Stiles jogs through the woods at three fucking a.m. to confirm his suspicions before rallying up the whole Hale pack. He hates being a
considerate person.

The lake is as still as on any other summer night. The reeds are swaying in the breeze, murmuring quietly. Stiles looks around carefully, but nothing seems out of the ordinary.

He walks up to the lake, careful not to get his sneakers soaked. Stiles crouches and lowers his right hand into the water, digging his fingers into the sand. Closing his eyes, he concentrates. Energy flows through his arm, into his fingertips, and spreads out into the lake. Stiles opens his blue glowing eyes, not seeing anything surrounding him, but searching the bottom of the lake. He sees a cavern, covered in weeds, and glowing silver eyes staring at him from the darkness.

Stiles registers the threat and suddenly he’s looking at the surface of the lake again. This time it’s rippling from the middle outwards, waves lapping at Stiles’ sneakers. He stands up, stepping back, and gets his phone out.

“Stiles,” Laura answers instantly.

“It’s a kelpie,” Stiles tells her, watching as a black as night horse emerges from the depths of the lake. “Get to the lake now.” He doesn’t wait for her answer before hanging up and stuffing his phone into his pocket.

Stiles moves further away from the lake the closer the kelpie gets. It walks onto the shore, its mane a writhing entanglement of hissing snakes that all stare at Stiles. Before coming closer though, the kelpie’s body ripples and morphs until a man is standing before Stiles. His long hair is black with tints of green, and weeds are knotted in it. His silver eyes track every minute movement of Stiles’. Stiles tries to keep his eyes on the guy’s gorgeous face because the dude is completely naked and, apparently, Stiles is a gentleman even to vicious creatures who snack on kids. Good to know his moral compass is in top shape.


The kelpie smirks, sharp teeth glinting in the light of the half moon. “Hello, handsome,” he says.

“Right,” Stiles mumbles, rubbing the back of his neck. “Listen, dude –”

“You can call me Ness,” he murmurs, coming closer, and making Stiles step back.

Stiles nods a couple times. “Okay, Ness –”

“What’s your name, gorgeous?” Ness asks. He keeps advancing, and Stiles keeps stepping back until he hits a tree.

“Stiles,” he doesn’t even know why he says it, and he can’t stop looking into the kelpie’s eyes. The mesmerizing silver draws him in, it’s all that he can focus on, and all other thought flees his mind.

“Your real name, darling,” Ness prompts.

“Mieczysław,” he admits without protest, and Ness’ smile turns predatory.

Ness presses up to Stiles, running his fingers down Stiles’ chest. “You’re a special one, aren’t you, Mieczysław?” He whispers and everything becomes a blur, the only thing Stiles can focus on is Ness’ voice and his hands on Stiles’ body, nothing else seems to exist for him anymore.

“There’s something… otherworldly about you.” Ness’ voice is full of wonder, and his other hand cups Stiles’ cheek, thumb stroking over Stiles’ cheekbone.
“I…” Stiles tries to say something, anything basically, but his brain feels like mush, and he can’t come up with a coherent thought, let alone voice one out loud. All he can think about is how much he wants Ness, how he would do anything to be with him.

“Would you like to go for a swim with me, Mieczysław?” Ness murmurs, his lips on Stiles’ cheek.

Stiles starts nodding his acquiescence when suddenly Ness is gone and Derek’s in his place. With Ness gone, something jolts in Stiles. He feels anger simmering under his skin and a need to ensure Ness’ safety.

“Are you okay?” Derek asks, his eyes scanning over Stiles’ body, his hand has replaced Ness’ on Stiles’ cheek.

“The hell are you doing?” Stiles demands, pushing Derek off himself so hard he hits the ground in a crouch, skidding back several feet. “What have you done to Ness?” He near growls. He knows his eyes are shining blue, and he can feel the cold metal of his blade in his hand.

“What are you talking about?” Derek asks, standing up. There’s a confused expression on his face.

“Mieczysław!” Ness shouts, and Stiles immediately turns to the sound.

Laura and Boyd have him on his knees, both holding his arms as he tries to struggle free of them. Erica’s claws are at Ness’ throat. Stiles feels rage permeating every cell of his body. How dare they touch him like that?!

“Let him go, Laura, or I swear you will regret it,” he threatens, pointing his blade in her direction.

“What has he done to Stiles?” Erica asks.

“I have no idea; just kill him,” Derek says from behind Stiles.

With a motion of Stiles’ hand Derek hits the nearest tree, as does Isaac who tries to go at Stiles. Stiles advances closer to Ness who keeps whispering his name.

“I am not joking, Laura,” Stiles warns. “Release him or I will slaughter your whole pack.”

Laura stares at him for a few moments, her eyes are glowing red. She purses her lips, and without taking her eyes off of Stiles says, “Erica, do it.”

Erica’s claws swipe through Ness’ throat, and Stiles sees red. He runs at the werewolves, Boyd meeting him halfway. Stiles throws him to the ground, straddles him, and is ready to plunge his blade into his heart, when Laura tackles him.

“Why didn’t it work?” Stiles hears Isaac asking.

No one answers him, as Laura knocks the blade out of Stiles’ hands and pins him to the ground. “Stiles, wake up,” she growls at him.

Stiles says nothing, teleporting from under her next to where his blade dropped. Derek’s already there, however, and grabs the dagger, putting it behind his back and stepping back.

“I don’t want to fight you, Stiles,” he says, his other hand raised in a placating gesture.

“Too bad you killed the man I love,” Stiles answers. He doesn’t get to attack Derek though as Boyd and Isaac grab at him, forcing him hit the ground on his knees.
“Fuck, what do we do?” Erica asks somewhere off to Stiles’ left.

Stiles easily gets his arm out of Isaac’s grip, hitting him square in the chest as he stands up. A bone cracking echoes through the clearing as Isaac hits the forest floor. Boyd has already let go of Stiles and taken a step back but Stiles doesn’t hesitate to direct an energy blast his way. Erica screams his name as Boyd goes flying and drops to the ground unconscious. Erica roars, her eyes flashing gold, and she comes after Stiles, but he stops her in her tracks by raising a hand and keeping her in place.

“Stiles, let’s be reasonable here,” Laura says. She’s slowly walking closer to where Derek is standing in front of Stiles. “You just met the kelpie, you can’t be in love with him,” she tells him. “And he’s been killing children for crying out loud. Or did he make you forget that part?”

“He has his reasons,” Stiles answers. He throws Erica away like a doll and steps closer to the Hale siblings.

“Mieczysław,” he hears from behind and abandons his plans of murdering Derek and Laura to instead go to Ness’ side.

Ness is no longer crumpled on the ground. He’s kneeling, arms reaching for Stiles, and Stiles falls right in front of him. The claw marks have nearly healed over, and his naked chest is covered in blood.

“How is that fucker still alive?” Isaac croaks out. Stiles assumes he’s already gotten over his breastbone being shattered, but he doesn’t really care right now, all he cares about is Ness and his voice that keeps whispering Stiles’ real name.

“I can finish healing you,” Stiles tells Ness, raising a hand to his wounds.

Ness’ eyes light up in delight, and Stiles smiles, glad he can be useful. He gently touches the wounds, a blue glow appearing on Stiles’ fingertips, and the gashes slowly seal up.

“Clearly, he can’t be just killed,” Derek’s voice breaks through Stiles’ concentration.

“Stiles did the research,” Laura growls. “He’s the only one who knows how to kill the kelpie so it wouldn’t just spring back.”

“Thank you, Mieczysław,” Ness says, and seals it with a gentle kiss to Stiles’ lips.

It doesn’t last longer than a second since Stiles is roughly yanked backwards and onto his feet, stumbling into a firm chest. “Mieczysław,” is said right into his ear, and Stiles’ world tilts for a second. He feels sick and lightheaded, and all his thoughts assault him in an overwhelming wave.


Stiles’ dagger is back in his hand. The kelpie’s eyes shift to it. He opens his mouth to say Stiles’ real name, to entice him again, but Stiles doesn’t allow for that, freeing himself from Derek’s grip and taking a step forward, he forces his dagger through the kelpie’s ribcage and pierces his heart. There’s a shriek of agony before the kelpie turns to dust.

Stiles just breathes for a second, staring at the ash. He quickly dematerializes his blade and lifts his head, looking around. Erica and Boyd are both unconscious. Laura’s next to Isaac, taking his pain as he’s hissing swearwords.

“Shit,” Stiles curses himself. He rushes to Isaac’s side, dropping on his knees next to him. “I can fix
this,” he says, reaching a hand to Isaac but not touching him.

Isaac’s breathing is ragged, he eyes Stiles for a minute and then nods. Stiles places his hand on Isaac’s sternum, the blue energy lighting up his palm again. He heals Isaac’s broken bones and his punctured lungs, not caring that he’s using up a lot of energy.

“I’m so sorry, Isaac,” Stiles apologizes when Isaac can breathe again.

Isaac shrugs a shoulder as he sits up. “You were under a spell or something, so I guess I can forgive you this time.” He cracks a smile, and Stiles grins back.

“You okay?” Laura asks Isaac, putting a hand on his shoulder.

Stiles stands up, letting the Alpha and her Beta have a moment. He spins around, looking to Boyd next as he took a harder hit than Erica who’s already coming around. She groans and curses, sitting up and raising a hand to her head. Stiles deems her healthy enough and jogs to Boyd who’s got Derek hovering next to him.

“Is it bad?” Stiles asks, voice full of regret.

Derek gives him a look that Stiles can’t quite interpret; it’s something between annoyed and compassionate. “I think he’s got a dislocated shoulder,” Derek informs him, glancing back down at Boyd.

Stiles only nods before dropping to Boyd’s side and placing his hand in the center of Boyd’s chest. He frowns as he’s examining the extent of the damage. “He’s also got a pretty severe concussion,” Stiles mumbles, mostly to himself, “and a couple of cracked ribs.”

“You better fix him, Stilinski,” Erica sneers behind Stiles.

Stiles turns to look at her and sees she’s being supported by Laura with Isaac standing on her other side. “I will,” he promises. “I’m sorry, Erica,” he tells her.

Erica only nods, and Stiles gets to work.

“How did you know how to break the kelpie’s hold on Stiles?” Isaac asks Derek. Stiles glances at Derek, also curious for the answer.

“It kept repeating that word, I just made a wild guess,” Derek replies, shrugging a shoulder.

“Dude, I could’ve killed you if that didn’t work,” Stiles says, eyes going wide. Derek only turns slightly redder and glances down at his knees, jeans already caked with mud.

“What was that word anyway?” Erica asks. “Is that what you are?”

Stiles snorts. “Nope, that’s my real name,” he replies.

Boyd starts stirring as Stiles is finishing healing his injuries. He blinks his eyes open, frowning.

“Is he gonna be okay?” Erica asks anxiously. She’s gotten to her knees too, pushing Derek out of her way to be able to kneel right next to Boyd.

“Yeah,” Stiles nods. “He should be fine as rain now,” he says, sitting back on his haunches.

Erica’s hand replaces Stiles’ on Boyd’s chest. “How are you feeling?” She asks tenderly, her other hand stroking Boyd’s cheek.
Stiles averts his eyes, standing up, feeling like this is an intimate moment that he shouldn’t be a part of. Apparently, the other three werewolves feel the same way as they step away the moment they hear a confirmation from Boyd that he feels fine.

“So your name’s not Stiles?” Isaac asks, a bewildered expression on his face. Derek and Laura also look at Stiles expectantly.

“You didn’t actually think my name is Stiles Stilinski?” He quirks up an eyebrow at them. When he doesn’t receive an answer, he just rolls his eyes. “My mom picked it out, it’s Polish. Apparently, she didn’t pick a difficult enough name if the kelpie took hold of me.”

“We’re lucky Derek has a knack for languages and could pronounce that,” Isaac comments.

“Can we go now?” Erica asks impatiently. She’s got her arm wrapped around Boyd to support him, but Stiles is pretty sure he doesn’t need that as Stiles made certain to leave Boyd in better shape than he ever was.

“Yes, of course,” Laura answers her. She then turns to Stiles. “Do you want one of us to escort you home?” Laura asks him.

Stiles is rather stunned by that. He just injured three of her pack mates, and she’s offering her help and seemingly isn’t even considering biting Stiles’ head off.

But Stiles only shakes his head. “I can take care of myself,” he tells her and glares at Derek who scoffs. “I totally can.” He doesn’t whine, even if it comes out sounding like a whine which it totally isn’t.

“You just made out with a kelpie,” Derek reminds him.

“Bleh.” Stiles sticks his tongue out, wiping at it with the sleeve of his hoodie. “Why did you have to remind me of that?” He asks Derek. “Now I’ll have to shower for like the rest of the night.”

Derek, the bastard, only smirks.

“Come by tomorrow,” Laura tells Stiles, touching him on the shoulder. The pack is already leaving the clearing, walking past Stiles and patting his arm, or in Erica’s case kissing his cheek. “We’ll celebrate having gotten rid of a monster.”

“Sure thing.” Stiles salutes her.

“Are you sure you don’t want anyone to accompany you home?” Derek asks seriously, replacing Laura by Stiles’ side. His fingers wrap around Stiles’ bicep.

“I’m fine, Derek.” Stiles pats his hand. “I’ll see you tomorrow, and we’ll have to agree on our first date.” He grins at him.

Derek only rolls his eyes. “Get home safe,” he says before jogging off to meet the others on the edge of the tree line.

Chapter End Notes

Yay, a Sterek (cheek) kiss!! lol
I would love to know if there's something you'd like to see in this fic, for example, more Stiles and the pack bonding, more Stiles and Derek spending time together, or any other more concrete ideas, I might incorporate them if they fit around the big plot points I have planned.

Anyways, hope you had a better week than mine, and if yours was shit too, let's hope the next will be better!

-E
Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

As per brilliant suggestion of Chibi_Overlord, have a chapter in Derek's POV.

Hope you enjoy!

-E

“You’re creeping again,” Erica sing-songs as she walks past Derek who’s leaning against the door jamb in the doorway of their library.

Derek only rolls his eyes. He’s not creeping, he’s observing. Stiles is just a very interesting person to observe. Right now he’s standing with his hands braced on the library table, the lean muscles of his arms taught. He’s chewing on a pencil, and there’s a small furrow between his eyebrows as he’s reading an ancient book in a language Derek’s never heard of. Soon he starts tapping a rhythm with his fingers, and shifts his weight.

Stiles doesn’t stay still for long, max five seconds, Derek’s actually counted when he watched Stiles. But not in a creepy way like Erica seems to think for some reason. During the first weeks of them knowing about Stiles, Derek kept a close eye on him because he thought that Stiles might be dangerous. Derek saw him killing that Omega in the woods, and he could instantly tell that Stiles was powerful. And dangerous. So he might’ve followed him around a bit, might’ve threatened him to stay away from his pack, but only because he was scared of him and what he might do to Derek’s pack.

Laura was immediately interested in him though. Unlike Derek she saw potential in Stiles, potential of him becoming an ally or even a member of the pack. She told all of them to play nice, to befriend Stiles. When Derek objected that they should be looking into ways of getting rid of him and of the threat he posed, Laura told him that it’s better if they keep Stiles close to know if he’s really as evil as Derek is making him out to be, and if he turns out to be one of the good guys then Laura would very much like to have him as an ally.

It didn’t help Derek’s simmering hatred of Stiles that everyone else seemed to love the fidgeting loudmouth idiot. Even Isaac who didn’t trust people easily was on Stiles’ side. And so Derek’s hatred turned into annoyance of the nuisance that Stiles became. Suddenly, he was all Derek could focus on, all he could think about, and it annoyed the fuck out of him.

But then he saw Stiles by the lake, his black wings glinting with gold in the light of the rising sun. Derek had never seen anything so beautiful, so ethereal and enthralling. The only thought in his mind was that Stiles was an actual angel sent to look after the Hales after all that’s happened to them. Better late than never, right? And he called Stiles just that, told him that he thought he was angel. Derek didn’t expect Stiles to react so violently to that, let alone threaten him. It struck something unpleasant in him when Stiles called himself an abomination. Derek thought nothing could be further from the truth.

He wanted to apologize after, but Stiles was avoiding him, and Derek wouldn’t tell Laura why Stiles was upset with him so she refused to help. Stiles started working with Laura on the case not long
after, and Derek couldn’t explain why he felt so frustrated and angry that they were spending time together. He made himself believe it was because he was still too protective of Laura and didn’t trust Stiles’ intentions as he seemed too interested in Derek’s sister.

As Laura was no help in this matter, Derek talked to Reina when he stopped by her place on one of his runs. They drank ice tea and Reina told him how brilliant if a bit of an acquired taste Stiles is, how kind and helpful he can be, and that he’s been through a lot, and Derek should come him some slack. Afterwards Derek cursed her for instilling all these ideas in his head because he could no longer think of Stiles as just the annoying nuisance, he started seeing how selfless and determined Stiles is, working way into the night together with Laura to find the creature terrorizing their town.

Without even letting himself, Derek grew to care about Stiles like the rest of the pack already did. Maybe even more. Laura quickly sniffed that out and gently encouraged Derek to pursue this. But Derek still worries. All of his relationships had ended in disaster. Paige, Kate, Jennifer – the worst decisions he’s made in his life. And he still can’t help this thing he has for Stiles that becomes harder to ignore every day.

Derek’s eyes focus back on reality, catching the movement. Stiles has started pacing, book in hand. He puts the pencil behind his ear and runs his free hand through his hair, tousling it even more. His mouth is slightly parted and he runs his tongue over his bottom lip unconsciously. Derek huffs in frustration. Stiles suddenly lifts his head, their eyes lock.

“Sorry,” Stiles says. “Am I hogging the library again?” He asks. It’s true that Stiles has been here nearly 24/7 the past couple of days. He got an important case, apparently, and has been working on it non-stop.

Derek only shakes his head. None of the pack really use the library anyway, they can’t read half the books as they’re in different languages. “Lunch is ready,” he relays what he originally came here to do almost 15 minutes ago. But he can’t help that Stiles is that distracting.

Stiles gives him one of his easy smiles, and Derek has to lock his jaw not to smile back. “Cool, thanks, man,” Stiles tells him. “You guys are really spoiling me.” He puts the book down and walks across the library.

Derek turns walking to the kitchen, where everyone else is already gathered.

“Woah,” Stiles whistles behind Derek. “Now that’s a feast.”

Derek raises an eyebrow at Laura who only shrugs with an innocent expression. She knows she doesn’t have to butter Stiles up anymore, he’s pretty inseparable from them as it is.

Stiles moves past Derek, grabbing a sandwich off a plate, and jumping on the kitchen counter, facing the whole room. Derek’s noticed that if he can help it, Stiles always sits with his back to a wall so he could see the whole room, at the Jade Wolf if he sits at the bar, he glances at the mirror every few minutes as if checking that no one’s behind him. Derek knows paranoid behavior when he sees it, he spent over five years doing exactly what Stiles does before Laura made him go to therapy.

“This is amazing,” Stiles moans around the bite of his sandwich, and Derek bites the inside of his cheek. “Hats off to the chef.” Stiles nods in Boyd’s direction and receives a small smile from him.

“How’s your case going?” Laura asks.

Stiles is swinging his legs back and forth, but he’s not hitting the counters. He shrugs. “I’m leaning towards a wendigo based on what the client told me,” he says.
Derek frowns. “But it’s not winter,” he comments.

Stiles’ eyes light up with something akin to pride as he looks at Derek. “I know,” he smiles but it disappears quickly. “That’s why this has been so difficult. All the evidence points to it being a wendigo but as Derek already noted it’s not winter, so they should be hibernating now.”

“Why are you in such a hurry to solve it anyway?” Erica asks.

“Oh,” Stiles says, eyes widening a bit like he surprised himself. “I forgot to tell you guys. I’m leaving.”

Derek’s breath stops short for a second. Judging by the reactions of the others, they’re equally as stunned.

“You’re leaving?” Laura questions.

“Yeah,” Stiles nods a couple times. “For a few days, max a week. It’s my dad’s birthday this weekend, and Scott and Allison bought a new place so we’re gonna have a barbecue.”

“You idiot,” Erica frowns, throwing her sandwich at Stiles. Stiles easily ducks and the sandwich splats on the counter behind him.

“Hey,” Stiles and Boyd say at the same time. Derek guesses Boyd’s more interested in his sandwich’s well-being rather than Stiles’.

“What’s the big deal?” Stiles asks, bewildered. Clearly, he doesn’t get how other people feel about him, how attached to him the whole of the pack got, especially after the kelpie incident. “It’s not like I’ll be gone a month, sheesh.”

Isaac snorts and shakes his head, starting to eat his sandwich again, Boyd rolls his eyes, and Laura kicks at Stiles’ shin. He’s too slow in avoiding that and frowns at her, rubbing at the spot. And Derek, well, he realizes what a real possibility it is that Stiles will actually move soon. He knows from Stiles himself and from Reina that Stiles moves a lot, so it’s not too big of a leap to think he might be moving out of Beacon Hills soon enough.

Derek wishes he had realized this when he hated Stiles and not when he’s halfway to starting to fall for him.

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Derek knows he’s being paranoid but he can’t help it. Kate could be coming into town any minute, and the thought alone is making him jumpy as hell. He hasn’t seen her since she told him what she did, what Derek helped her do. And yes, he knows he was only a horny teen and it’s not actually his fault, but even the best therapist in the world couldn’t beat that thought out of his head.

He’s dreading seeing her, so he sticks to only being at home, at the bar, or in the preserve. After the meeting with the hunters, Derek’s been to town exactly once. He went to get some groceries and saw a blonde woman who wore the same perfume as Kate used to. He instantly bolted the fuck out of that supermarket.

So he’s not that surprised that Laura kicks him out of the bar one morning, claiming she can get it ready for opening herself, and orders him to grab them coffees from the nearby coffee shop. He still grumbles all the way there though.

Derek nearly jumps at the jingling of the bell above the door of the café as he enters. He tells himself
to get it together; even if Kate was here, she wouldn’t do anything to him in front of all these people. So he queues up and only glances around because there’s nothing better to do while waiting, not because he’s praying not to see blonde curly hair and a cruel smile.

What he does see is a broad-shouldered plaid-wearing guy, easily laughing at a joke the barista made. Stiles looks carefree and incredibly gorgeous. He throws back his head as he laughs, the muscles in his neck going taut, and Derek wants.

Derek clenches his fists by his sides, trying to rein himself in. The rumble that echoes in his chest is a good indicator that he hasn’t quite succeeded.

“Derek!” Stiles shouts over the music and the conversations happening in the café.

Derek’s jaw tightens and he crosses his arms. It doesn’t help his self-restraint that Stiles actually sounds happy to see him. Why that is, Derek has no clue as he’s been nothing but an ass to Stiles.

“Hey, man,” Stiles greets him with a smile as he walks over. “What are you doing here? Caffeine has zero effect on you, right?”

“Laura likes the coffees with too much syrup,” Derek says as an explanation. Which is true, she does, but so does Derek, only he’s not about to tell Stiles that. “She ordered me to get her one.”

Stiles nods knowingly, sticking his hands in his pockets and rocking back and forth on his feet. “She’s a tough Alpha,” he says, seriously. “I have no idea how you put up with her.”

Derek rolls his eyes instead of smirking back at Stiles like he wants to. “Why are you here? Shouldn’t you be working?”

Stiles flails a bit, motioning to a corner behind Derek. “I am working,” he says. Derek glances over and sees a small table flooded with books, and notes, and a laptop on top of it all. “Needed a change in scenery, thought it would help with the thinking.”

“Stiles, your hot chocolate is ready,” calls the barista from before. Derek instantly hates him; his voice sounds too sweet saying Stiles’ name.

Stiles bounds off to collect his cup, and Derek doesn’t miss the flirtatious smile he gives the barista, or how their hands touch when exchanging the cup.

“Enjoy,” the barista says with a wink and a smile directed at Stiles.

“Oh, I definitely will,” Stiles answers. “You do know how to please a guy, Mike.”

The Mike guy looks incredibly delighted at Stiles’ words, and Derek wishes he could wring his neck. Stiles comes back to Derek, putting a straw in his paper cup that’s overflowing with whipped cream. The sound he makes when he takes a sip makes Derek want to do obscene things with and to him.

“Is the flirting really necessary?” Derek asks before he can stop himself. Damn it. It’s none of his business if Stiles flirts with people or not. They haven’t even been on a date because of Derek’s paranoia of Kate so he’s got zero claim on Stiles.

Stiles shrugs a shoulder. “It gives me extra whip cream free of charge,” he says. “And Mike flirts with everyone,” he adds as if that should make Derek feel better. It doesn’t.

“Next,” the barista calls, and Derek walks up to the counter with Stiles by his side.

“Sure thing, handsome,” that Mike guy says with a smile, taking Derek’s money. “How’s that hot chocolate treating you, Stiles?” He asks, turning to Stiles who’s perusing the pie selection.

“As great as always,” Stiles answers, swiping his thumb over his bottom lip to catch the whipped cream stuck to it. Derek has to count to five and slowly exhale to not jump him here and now.

Mike looks hungry as he’s staring at Stiles, Derek assumes he himself looks much the same. “We’d make quite a threesome,” Mike says, offhandedly, glancing at Derek and then back to Stiles.

Stiles laughs, leaning into Derek, putting a hand on his shoulder, his thumb rubbing small circles on Derek’s clavicle. “Sorry, Mike, I don’t share,” he says, and Derek finds it disconcerting that his heart skips a beat at Stiles’ words.

“That’s a pity,” Mike comments and finally turns around to make Derek’s order.

“Are you opening Jade Wolf already?” Stiles asks, his hand falling from Derek’s shoulder.

“Yeah,” Derek replies, and turns to stare straight ahead because Stiles and a straw is a deadly combination. “People like to come over for late breakfast.”

“Oh, cool,” Stiles beams. “I’ll come hang at your place. Let me get my things.” He bounds off to collect his stuff, and Derek glares at Mike with as much force as he can muster when he gives Derek his coffee.

Derek’s roped into carrying half of Stiles’ books, he doesn’t know how, but Stiles clearly has mind controlling abilities on top of all the other shit he can do. Laura lifts an eyebrow at them when they enter but doesn’t say a word about Derek apparently being Stiles’ personal assistant.

“Morning, Stiles,” she greets. “You can put your stuff in your usual booth.”

“Morning, Laura,” Stiles says cheerfully, and Derek follows him to the back, placing the books on the table. “Thanks, man,” he gives Derek a smile. Derek only nods in answer and goes to give Laura her coffee.

Laura’s wiping the bar and gives Derek a look as he approaches. Derek huffs, placing the cup on the bar top. “He was working at the café, asked if we’re open and when I told him that we are, he wanted to come over here.”

“So you just met him there? Accidentally?” Laura asks, skeptically.

“Yes,” Derek hisses out. “We have only one coffee shop in town, Laura.”

Laura hums, all non-committal, focusing back on wiping the bar. “If you say so, little brother.”

“I’m not having secret coffee dates with Stiles,” Derek grouches. Though he’d very much like to.

Laura lifts her hands in a placating gesture. “Hey, I never said you did. But would it be so bad?”

Derek doesn’t answer her. All he can think about are Paige, Kate, and Jennifer. Relationships just don’t work out for him, and he won’t ruin the tentative friendship he has with Stiles just to see if this time will be different. Besides, Stiles is probably leaving soon so it’s not even worth it to start anything with him.
“I know what you’re thinking, Der,” Laura says lowly, bracing her forearms on the bar and leaning closer to him. “But he’s not like those two bitches you dated who gave me the creeps, and he’s not as fragile as Paige. Stiles is great. Don’t stop yourself from being happy just because you’re afraid it won’t work out, or you think you don’t deserve it. Because you do, Derek, you deserve all the happiness.” She clasps her hand over his wrist, squeezing lightly.

Derek looks to his right where Stiles is sitting in a booth that already looks like a library threw up on it. He’s munching on the straw as he’s typing away on his laptop, and Derek wants him so much it hurts. And he doesn’t just want him in a sexual way; he wants to get to know Stiles better, to spend more time with him, to go on dates with him.

“I’ll think about it,” Derek says, turning back to Laura.

“Can you do that while doing inventory?” Laura gives him a charming smile.

Derek huffs in amusement and goes to do inventory.

***

“Take a photo, it’ll last longer,” Stiles mumbles, and Derek nearly jumps at the sound of his voice. Stiles is still sitting at the furthest booth, and it’s dinner rush already, but Derek’s so focused on him that he hears his voice over the loud chatter in the bar.

Derek’s been staring at him for the past he doesn’t even know how long. Stiles is so enticing with the way he always has to move. Derek’s been enthralled by the way Stiles kept biting on his lip as he wrote furiously on his notepad, or how he kept twirling a pencil between his long dexterous fingers while reading one of his books. And now he’s been caught. Figures.

“Sorry, didn’t mean to stare,” Derek apologizes, ears burning, as he puts down the glass he’s been cleaning for forever.

“I can see your lips moving, dude, but I gotta admit that my hearing is not as good as a werewolf’s,” Stiles smirks. “I do know you can hear me though.”

Derek rolls his eyes. He’s been doing that a lot lately, mostly around Stiles, the guy is as exasperating as he’s captivating.

“Hey,” Stiles says suddenly, and Derek doesn’t like the way his eyes light up with mischief. “You can’t escape me now, so how about we figure out when we can go on that date. I’m suggesting next Friday, I should be back from my dad’s by then.”

“It’s not a date, Stiles,” Derek mumbles; it’s become habit by now.

“Come on, Derek,” Stiles whines. He leans forward over all of the books. “We can even have the date here if that would make you more comfortable,” he suggests.
Derek immediately winces at the thought. A date with Stiles in a place where his whole pack can hear their every word and see Derek’s every reaction to Stiles? Thanks, but he’ll pass.

“Fine,” Derek grumbles. “Next Friday at the diner, not here.”

“Great,” Stiles smirks. “Get ready for the best date you’ve ever had.”

Derek snorts. “Yeah, can’t wait,” he mumbles. He actually can’t even though it fills him with dread that he’ll have to come out of his comfort zone. But it’s been a week since he met the hunters and there’s been no sign of Kate. Maybe they lied on her command. Kate is sadistic, maybe she just wanted Derek to squirm without actually having to do anything herself.

“Alright, now go with all of your distracting gorgeousness because I need to focus and you being here is not helping.” Stiles waves his hands at him.

Derek would find it so much easier if he could hear Stiles’ heartbeat or smell his scent to know if he’s joking or not when he tells these kinds of things.

“You still don’t know what the creature is?” Derek asks not really willing to leave Stiles’ company just yet.

“No,” Stiles sighs. “It doesn’t help that literally every evil creature eats humans. Which is gross, by the way.” He scrunches up his nose adorably. “I’ve read too many accounts where people witnessed others being eaten alive. But this creature drives people insane and makes them eat their family. Which is what wendigos do and they’re native to Canada, so it would fit. But it doesn’t look human like the wendigo. My client said it looks like an animal. Granted, he only saw the creature at night in the shadows, but wendigos don’t walk around on all fours as far as I know. So I got no clue wh–”

“Have you researched the wechuge?” Derek asks, stopping Stiles’ rambling.

Stiles stares at him with his mouth open for a couple of seconds before bursting into action and flipping through one of his books furiously. “Derek, you’re so brilliant I could kiss you right now. How did I not think of that? The wendigos and the wechuge get mixed up a lot. Like, it’s so obvious.” Stiles snaps his eyes to Derek. “How did you even know that?”

Derek shrugs a shoulder. “I read most of the books in our library that are in the languages I know. Guess that just stuck with me.”

“Drop dead gorgeous and brainy as hell.” Stiles shakes his head. “The world does not deserve you, Derek Hale.”

Derek feels his ears burning red. He scratches at his beard self-consciously. “Some people think otherwise,” he mumbles.

“Those people are wrong,” Stiles argues heatedly. “You are a gift to humanity.”

“He likes you already, Stiles,” Erica says, walking over to them with a basket of curly fries for Stiles. “You don’t need to keep sweet talking him.”

“Just telling it like it is.” Stiles smiles before grabbing a fry and munching on it. It’s no better than the straw when he licks his fingers afterwards. Damn him.

“Derek, you have customers,” Erica says, nodding to the bar where there’s quite a few people waiting.
“Shit,” Derek says under his breath. Stiles pays him no attention as he’s already typing on his laptop, but Erica smirks.

He stands up, walking back to the bar with her.

“I’m not blaming you for ignoring clients while you try to seduce your boyfriend, but I don’t think Laura’s going to be happy,” Erica comments.

Derek glares at her. It has zero effect on her. “I wasn’t trying to seduce, Stiles.”

“Oh, please,” Erica rolls her eyes. “He nearly jumped you when you helped him figure out we were dealing with a kelpie. It figures you’d try to do the same now.”

“I was just trying to help,” Derek mutters.

“Whatever you say,” Erica dismisses him with a wave of her hand and goes to grab an order from Boyd.

Derek gets back behind the bar and starts serving beers, but he can’t help it if he keeps glancing over at Stiles every few minutes. Yeah, it’s going to be a long night.
The setting sun disappears behind the trees, taking with itself all the warmth. Stiles shivers as he gets out of his Jeep, wrapping his hoodie tighter around himself. He walks around the Hale house to their backyard where he can already hear talking and laughter.

“I got marshmallows!” Stiles shouts, nearing the campfire. He lifts the huge bag over his head and is met with cheers.

“ Took you long enough,” Erica admonishes, grabbing the marshmallow bag and skipping off with it.

“I had work to do,” Stiles says.

“You always have work to do,” Reina rolls her eyes. She pats the empty space next to herself, and Stiles sits down on the log beside her.

“Here you go,” Isaac tells him, giving him a stick for the s’mores.

Stiles nods his thanks, accepts the crackers and chocolate that Boyd is handing out on paper plates, and munches on the chocolate bar because he’s too damn hungry, and Erica is hogging the marshmallows. “Where are Derek and Laura?” Stiles asks.

“Closing up the bar,” Isaac answers him. He too is stuffing his face with chocolate. “They should be here soon.”

“Can we even start without them?” Stiles wonders.

“We’ve been waiting for hours,” Reina says. “Screw them if they’re too busy being adults.”

“Hey, what’s the hold up with the marshmallows?” Isaac asks, leaning into Stiles’ personal space to glare at Erica as the fire they build is more like a pyre and the flames are too tall for him to see over.

“Erica, we talked about sharing,” Boyd tells her.

“But, babe, they’re so good,” Erica whispers reverently, clutching the bag to herself. There’s marshmallow on her cheek.

Boyd rolls his eyes and goes to grab the bag, but Erica jumps off the log and out of reach. “You don’t understand,” she says as Boyd stands up. “I need them.” She takes a couple steps back before breaking into a run. Boyd goes after her, but Erica’s quick even when she’s trying to stuff a marshmallow in her mouth, so Isaac gets up and goes to help Boyd wrestle the bag out of Erica’s clutches.

Stiles snorts, beside him Reina mutters ‘children’ and goes back to eating her cracker.

To Derek 11:17

Grab some marshmallows on the way back

Stiles lifts his head when there’s a shriek of agony. The three werewolves are on the ground, marshmallows have spilled everywhere. Isaac and Boyd each hold a leg of Erica’s as she tries to
crawl to the closest marshmallow.

“That can’t be normal,” he mutters to himself.

From Derek 11:19

Did you give the marshmallows to Erica???

To Derek 11:20

No one told me not to!!!

From Derek 11:20

You’ll know better next time...

To Derek 11:21

Does that mean you plan on keeping me around for a while?

From Derek 11:22

;)

“What do you think that means?” Stiles shows his phone to Reina. He and Derek have been texting each other a lot since they finally got rid of the kelpie. It’s mostly been Stiles flirting outrageously, and Derek answering in more subdued tones.

“Erica, they’re gone, accept that,” Isaac says somewhere off to Stiles’ left.

“It’s your fault, Lahey!” She shouts back, and Stiles turns just in time to see her standing up from where she was kneeling, cradling a few dirt covered marshmallows, and extending her claws at Isaac.

“I think it means that Derek doesn’t know how to use emojis,” Reina brings Stiles’ attention back to her. “But that’s not a surprise. He’s never been too technology savvy.”

“I’m not talking about that, we all know Derek’s shit with technology,” Stiles huffs. “What I meant was, does he like me like me? Or does he just like me, you know? ‘Cause he’s been nice to me lately, and that’s throwing me for a loop. But maybe he’s acting like that just because Laura told him to? Should I talk to him about it? I don’t wanna scare him, though.”

“Stiles,” Reina says calmly, catching Stiles’ forearm as he started waving his arms about. “You’re overthinking this. Tonight is not for overthinking, it’s for relaxing with friends.”

Stiles sighs, running a hand through his hair. “You’re right. You’re totally right, I’m just gonna enjoy tonight.”

“Ow, Erica!” Isaac shouts. Stiles turns to see him glaring daggers at Erica who’s being held back by Boyd. Isaac’s shirt has gashes in it, blood seeping from his abdomen and he’s cradling his left arm to himself. “It’s just some freakin’ marshmallows, you didn’t have to break my arm for it!”

“You spilled them on the ground!” Erica shouts back.

“Derek’s bringing more marshmallows,” Stiles announces.
Erica deflates instantly, and Boyd lets her go. “Thank you, Stiles,” she says with a smile on her face as she prances back to her log.

Stiles grins at her before standing up. He walks to Isaac, eyeing his wounds. “Come on, buddy,” he says, patting Isaac on the shoulder. “Let’s get you fixed up.”

***

“Derek and Laura are back,” Isaac says as Stiles guides him to sit down on the edge of the bathtub.

“Guess Erica won’t be breaking any more bones then,” Stiles says.

Isaac sighs. “She gets carried away sometimes,” he tells Stiles. “Especially when the full moon is getting closer. We all get a bit weird, to be honest.”

Stiles kneels in front of Isaac, gingerly taking his broken arm. “Scotty used to get all cuddly before a full moon and totally murderous when it came.” Stiles grins.

“It’s easier when you have a pack,” Isaac comments. “We do full moon runs, and that helps a lot too.”

“Yeah,” Stiles nods as he’s examining Isaac’s injury. “When Scott got officially accepted into the pack in Salt Lake City, he got settled with the full moons.”

“I wish he would’ve stayed here and joined the pack when he got bitten instead of moving so far away,” Isaac says wistfully, staring off into middle distance.

Stiles glances up at him, quirking up an eyebrow. “You liked him?” He knows that Scott keeps in contact with the pack, Isaac especially, but he thought they were just really good friends before Scott moved away. Clearly, for Isaac it was more than friendship.

Isaac suddenly goes red and averts his gaze. His blonde curls fall over his eyes.

“I’m sorry it didn’t work out, man,” Stiles tells him. His fingers glow blue over Isaac’s broken forearm, and the bone begins to reset.

“He’s happy,” Isaac whispers then frowns. “Even if it is with that hunter chick.”

Stiles hears approaching footsteps, and Isaac cocks his head to the side, looking to the open door. But he doesn’t lose concentration on healing Isaac’s broken radius.

“Isaac, are you okay?” Derek’s worried voice says behind Stiles.

“Yeah,” Isaac tells him with a small smile. “Erica scratched my stomach but that’s healed over already, and Stiles is healing my broken arm.”

“Stiles is done healing your broken arm,” Stiles declares, letting go of Isaac’s forearm. “How does it feel?”

Isaac moves his arm about and smiles. “It’s great. Thanks, Stiles.”

“No worries, man,” Stiles tells him as he stands up. “Just don’t try and get in the way of Erica and her marshmallows again.”

Isaac rolls his eyes. “I’m gonna go and change,” he says, glancing down at his ruined t-shirt.
He leaves the bathroom, getting a pat on the back from Derek because werewolves and their weird need to touch everything. And then it’s just Stiles and Derek and slight awkwardness in the air.

“Hey,” Stiles says as he turns to face Derek.

“Thanks for healing Isaac,” Derek says to the spot above Stiles’ shoulder. “We probably would’ve had to break the bone if it didn’t heal correctly.”

“Yeah, I know,” Stiles tells him, coming closer. “You werewolves.” He shakes his head. Derek turns to the side, letting Stiles pass through the doorway, and they head downstairs. “Next time when one of you breaks something, which will undoubtedly happen, just call me. I can heal a broken bone without having to break it again.”

“I’ll keep that in mind,” Derek says, and Stiles totally hears the eye-roll in his voice. “When are you leaving for Salt Lake City?” He asks.

“Tomorrow morning,” Stiles replies. “It’s a long drive, but totally worth it in the end.” They walk outside. Stiles can see that Erica has her own bag of marshmallows.

“Can’t you just teleport there?” Derek asks, a confused frown on his pretty face.

Stiles doesn’t want to lie but he also doesn’t want to tell Derek that it’s easier for the angels to track him down when he uses his powers, especially for long distance teleportation. So instead he says, “It doesn’t work long distance.” He’s glad that werewolves can’t hear him lying, but the lie still leaves a sour taste in his mouth. He hates lying to people that are close to him.

Derek nods like it makes sense, and Stiles averts his gaze to the fire. They sit on one of the logs together, side by side.

“Alright,” Laura claps her hands. She’s sitting with Isaac and Reina. “Who wants to start the scary story contest?”

Stiles perks up immediately. He loves scary campfire stories and he’s got a ginormous competitive streak. This is right up his alley.

Derek groans beside him, and receives a glare from Laura. “Don’t spoil the fun, Derek,” Laura tells him.

“It’s not fun when we live through actual scary shit every day,” Derek mutters, violently piercing a marshmallow with a stick.

“Come on, Derek,” Stiles nudges him with his shoulder. “I’ll start,” he says excitedly. “Have you heard about the Dread Doctors?” He asks with a smirk as everyone leans closer to listen to him.

***

The drive from Beacon Hills to Salt Lake City is grueling even for someone likes Stiles. He finally reaches his dad’s place late in the evening. As Stiles is parking his Jeep on the curb, his dad walks out of the tiny house. There’s a huge smile on his face, you’d think he hasn’t seen Stiles for years and not just for a couple of months.

“Hey, dad,” Stiles greets, a smile already stretching his own face. He drops his bag on the floor of the porch and doesn’t hesitate to put his arms around his dad.

“Hey, kiddo,” dad says, hugging Stiles close.
It seems like for the first time in a long while Stiles feels safe. He doesn’t have to worry about Angels hunting him, about having to hide what he is from people he cares about, or about having to move and start over again in a new town. Right here, with his father’s arms around him, Stiles lets himself breathe. His wings don’t flutter in fear, his shoulder blades don’t tingle, he feels nothing but calm when his dad softly claps him on the back a couple times before pulling away. Stiles missed this more than he realized.

“Good to have you back, son,” dad says, one of his hands on Stiles’ shoulder.

“Come on,” Stiles rolls his eyes though they are stinging with tears. “You saw me like two months ago.”

“I’d like to see you more,” dad answers.

“Yeah, I know,” Stiles sighs. Then he puts the smile back on his face, grabs his bag, and puts an arm around his father’s shoulders, leading him inside. “Let’s see what kind of healthy dinner we’re eating tonight.”

***

It’s midday on a Saturday, Stiles is in a lounge chair, face turned to the sun, a mojito in his hand. He’s never felt more relaxed. And then the whole of Scott’s pack arrives to the house warming barbecue slash Stiles’ dad’s birthday party. Stiles loves every one of Monroe pack but their little werewolves are way too loud and have too much energy.

“Stiles, Stiles, Stiles!” The twins come running at him, and Stiles has a split second to put down his drink before two excitable young werewolves are on top of him.

“Hey, guys,” Stiles says, smiling at the two boys in his lap. “How’s it going?”

“Look what I can do,” Lucas says. He raises his right hand, extending his claws and retracting them. There’s a furrow between his eyebrows as he’s concentrating so hard.

“That’s great, Lucas,” Stiles offers him a huge grin. “When did you learn to do that?”

“I can do it too! Look, Stiles,” Gabriel says, pulling on Stiles’ t-shirt. He tries to do what his brother did but his fingers remain clawless even as he stares at them with his brows furrowed. He looks adorable.

“Daddy says Gabe needs more time to learn,” Lucas stage whispers to Stiles.

“I do not!” Gabe shouts angrily, and pushes Lucas off Stiles and onto the ground, jumping down on him.

“Guys, come on, you’re civilized werewolves,” Stiles says, standing up, but doesn’t make an effort to break up the two boys rolling around in the grass.

“Hey, Stiles,” Eric, the Monroe pack Alpha, greets, approaching them. Stiles is grateful for that, he hates when people sneak behind his back, it unnerves him.

“Eric,” Stiles smiles at him warmly, shaking his hand.

Eric looks down at his sons, growling at each other as they try to pin the other down. He does absolutely nothing about that. “The boys were excited that you’re coming back.”
“Yeah, Lucas showed off his control skills,” Stiles says.

A proud smile appears on Eric’s face. “They’ve both been doing great on that.”

“Hey, don’t hog Stiles all to yourself,” Anna walks over. She looks perfect as usual, even Erica would envy her style. “Come on,” she says, taking Stiles’ hand and towing him along, closer to the house where everyone else already is.

Stiles walks around saying hi to everyone in the pack, catching up with them, and trying to fend off the children flocking to him. He’s talking to Nathan and Allison, when Lucas clings to Stiles’ leg. Stiles looks down and receives a toothy grin.

Nathan sighs. “Lucas, what have I told you about –” He starts and then stops, properly looking at his son. He then turns to his husband, who’s on the other side of Scott and Allison’s backyard talking to Stiles’ dad and Scott’s mom. “Eric, why are our son’s clothes stained green again?” Nathan asks, annoyance creeping into his tone.

Stiles sees Eric wincing as he turns to face Nathan. Allison seemingly sees it too as she snorts inelegantly. Nathan storms off to scold his husband, and Stiles is left with Allison. He’s never been that good at being just with her. It makes him uneasy that she was a hunter, and he knows she’s not anymore, and that she’s a great person overall, and that Scott’s madly in love with her, but it’s still awkward between them.

“Shouldn’t you, I don’t know, not be standing up this much?” Stiles asks, glancing down at Allison’s huge baby bump.

“Ally, Stiles is right,” Scott appears out of nowhere. Stiles knows his senses are attuned to every mention of Allison’s name but he thought Scott was getting ice from the store. This is on a whole new level.

“Scott, I’m fine,” she tells him even as Scott gently leads her the two steps to the nearest chair, seating her and kneeling in front of her, asking if she needs anything. Stiles can see that she’s exasperated by the doting, so she only caresses Scott’s face and tells him to get her a drink.

“You’ve learned to manipulate him quite well,” Stiles tells her when Scott rushes inside.

“What’s that mean?” Lucas asks, looking up at Stiles. Damn, Stiles forgot he was there.

“Go ask one of your dads,” Stiles encourages him, and Lucas darts off. Stiles is sure neither Eric nor Nate will thank him for that.

Allison sighs. “Scott wants to help,” she says. Then she rolls her eyes. “He wants to help too much. He’s been by my side every second since we found out I was pregnant. Don’t get me wrong, that’s great, but sometimes I just need some alone time.”

Stiles nods in understanding. Then an idea dawns on him. “Hey, what if I take him off your hands for a night? We could have some quality bro time, and you’d get to be alone.”

Allison’s face lights up. “That would be amazing, Stiles. Thank you.”

Scott rushes back with a glass full of iced water. “Here you go,” he says with the biggest smile.

“Dude, have I got news for you,” Stiles says, clapping a hand on Scott’s shoulder. “We’re going out tomorrow night, and celebrating you being a full grown adult the right way.”
Scott looks at him all confused. “I can’t go anywhere, Stiles. What if Allison needs me?” He asks, the poor adorable clueless Scott.

“Scott, you can go,” Allison says, taking his hand. “You deserve a night off. I go to bed early anyway, I will be fine.”

Scott considers this for a second. Allison keeps looking at him, stroking over his knuckles with her thumb, and Scott cracks. “Okay,” he finally says. Then turns to beam at Stiles. “I’m in.”

Stiles shares a conspiratorial grin with Allison before looking back at Scott. “Dude, we’re gonna have so much fun.”

***

Stiles is not having fun waking up on Monday morning. He has a splitting headache, the light is hurting his eyes, and he still feels slightly drunk. Turning over on his back, he notices he’s not lying in his bed. Slight panic overtakes him and he snaps his eyes open. He breathes a sigh of relief when he finds he’s lying on the floor of his dad’s living room.

“Morning,” dad’s voice carries over.

Stiles lifts himself on his elbows and peers around the corner of the couch. “Hey, dad,” Stiles greets. His dad smiles, sipping at his coffee. “Fun night?”

“The best,” Stiles smiles.

He and Scott hit every supe club in town. Considering there are only four, it doesn’t seem like a big deal, but those places serve alcohol mixed with no one knows what that kicks hard. Stiles has no memory of the last place and only snippets of the third. He’s pretty sure he didn’t do anything crazy in the first two places but he can’t guarantee for the other two.

“My healing’s not kicking in,” Stiles moans, getting to his feet. His head is pounding, and his legs feel like jelly. He guesses whatever the drinks had to affect Stiles’ healing so he could feel the effects of the alcohol is still going strong. He’s going to have to suffer like humans do until it wears off. Which, sucks ass, but totally worth it.

“I made some pancakes,” John says, walking to the kitchen with Stiles following.

“Oh my gosh, you’re the best,” Stiles gushes. He rushes to the table, grabbing a pancake with his hands and stuffing it in his mouth.

John pours him some coffee, places the mug in front of Stiles, and sits opposite him. He just watches Stiles devour the pancakes for a second. “I want to talk to you about something,” John starts, “but it can wait until you feel better.”

“I’m fine,” Stiles says after gulping down half the cup of coffee. “What do you wanna talk about? Is it about you and Mellissa?” He drops the pancake back on the plate, focusing on his dad. “Are you finally going to admit you’ve been secretly dating? Are you moving in together? Me and Scott wouldn’t mind, you know.”

“Woah, woah,” dad says, raising both his hands. He’s got his neutral face on so Stiles knows he’s hiding something. “I wanted to talk about you.”

“Me?” Stiles lifts an eyebrow. “What about me?”
“We need to start making plans where you’ll move next,” he replies matter-of-factly.

“Move?” Stiles parrots back.

Dad nods. “You’ve been living in Beacon Hills for nearly five months now, son. You need to move on.”

Stiles’ stomach churns, he feels slightly sick, and it’s not caused by the hangover. He swallows thickly and reaches for his cup, taking a sip, stalling. Licking his lips, he says, “I’m not sure I want to.”

John’s face stays neutral. His forefinger is tapping against the handle of his cup. “You know it’s dangerous for you to stay in one place for so long, Stiles. Especially since you used your powers so much there.”

Stiles nods, tracing patterns of the wooden table with his finger. “I know,” he says. “But…” He sighs, slouching back against the chair as he runs a hand over his hair. “I like them. The pack, I mean. I like the town too. I feel good there, like I belong. I don’t want to give that up. I’ve been running for years, dad, and I’m tired.” He’s glaring at his lap as he talks, scratching at a mysterious stain on his knee.

“Is it because of Derek?” Dad asks cautiously after a second of silence.

Stiles snaps his eyes to him. “Why would you say that?”

John shrugs a shoulder. “You talk about him a lot. So is it?”

Stiles glances away, biting his lip. “I don’t know, maybe,” he says. He knows his dad will interpret it correctly as ‘yeah, of course, duh’.

“Son, you know I want you to be happy, right?” Dad asks.

“Of course,” Stiles confirms immediately.

“But I also want you to be safe,” he continues, “and alive.”

Stiles starts pushing bits of pancake in his plate. He knows his dad is right. Logically, it would make sense for Stiles to move to the next town. He’s been thinking about this for weeks now, but he just can’t make himself do it again for the hundredth time.

“If you decide to stay there permanently, I will do everything in my power to keep you safe,” dad says. “But please, think about this, Stiles. Think if it’s really worth it.”

Stiles nods his head a couple times. “I will, promise,” he says. And he’s not lying, he will think about it, but he doesn’t think he will change his mind.

John sighs, and they sit in silence for a few minutes. “I gotta go to work,” he says, rising from his chair. He walks to Stiles, ruffles his hair, and places a kiss on his temple. “Don’t get into too much trouble, kiddo.”

Stiles offers him a smile as John leaves the house, it disappears as soon as the door closes. He sits there, thinking and overthinking, for a while. Stiles doesn’t know what compels him but he gets his phone and scrolls to Derek’s name. He considers it for a second and then presses the call button.

“Stiles,” Derek picks up after the fifth ring.
Suddenly, Stiles realizes he might be interrupting. He knows Derek likes to exercise in the mornings. “Hey, uh, sorry, are you busy?” He asks, shielding his eyes with his hand and mouthing ‘idiot’ to himself.

“No, I just came out of the shower,” Derek answers. And boy does that spark some images in Stiles’ head. “Is this about the messages from last night? You don’t need to explain, I already understood you were completely wasted.” Derek gives this little chuckle, and Stiles’ heart soars.

Wait. What?

“What messages?” Stiles asks, alarmed now. He does not remember texting Derek, though to be fair he doesn’t remember half of last night.

“You left me some voice mails,” Derek explains. “There was loud music in the background, I heard Scott yelling that you’ll regret this later. You had a good night, I gather?”

Stiles is too stunned by this revelation to make fun of Derek for saying ‘I gather’ like he’s some old lady. The frickin’ book nerd.

“What else was in those messages?” Stiles asks not really wanting to know. If Derek is talking to him right now, it can’t have been that bad. Oh, who is Stiles kidding, it’s probably mortifying. He eyes the stack of pancakes on the table, considering suffocating himself in it.

“Mostly you complimenting me,” Derek answers, and Stiles can vividly imagine the smirk on his face. “You said you think my eyes are pretty, and that you like my brain, and that you think I’m smart and sexy, and sexy when I’m being smart.”

Yep, mortifying, just as Stiles thought. He groans. “Liste, man,” Stiles tells him. “It’s not that it’s not true, but I’d rather pretend this didn’t happen.” At least he didn’t announce that he wants to climb Derek like a tree. That seems like a win in this situation.

“I’ll consider it. It’s too good for blackmail material for me to give this up,” Derek says. The bastard. But Stiles has to admit he admires the cunning.

“Ugh,” Stiles groans. “You’re the worst. Enjoy it while you can. When I come back, I will delete those off your phone.”

“I’d like to see you try,” Derek scoffs.

Stiles smiles to himself. Then his headache decides to make itself known. “I gotta go cure my hangover the human way, but we’re not done here,” he says, massaging his temple.

“You must’ve drank a lot if you have a hangover,” Derek comments.

“I feel like I drank a whole liquor store,” Stiles replies. “I’ll talk to you when I come back.”

“Alright,” Derek says easily. “Oh, and Stiles,” Derek’s voice has this edge of mischief to it that Stiles really does and at the same time does not like at all, “in one of the six messages you left me, you also mentioned that you’d like me to bend you over a table and fuck you senseless. Thought you should know that.”

Stiles’ eyes bulge out, he goes red, and he chokes on his own spit. “Oh my god,” he groans and hangs up immediately as Derek laughs out loud on the other end of the line.

Stiles covers his face with both of his hands and swears to himself to never drink ever again.
The date will be in the next chapter, promise. It just needed to be later for plot reasons.

Hope you enjoyed! Suggestions on what you'd like more of in this fic are welcome any time!

-E
It’s late on Thursday night when Stiles gets back to Beacon Hills. He’s dead tired and should be going home but he can’t help but park in front of ‘Jade Wolf’. There are a few people milling about, and a couple of girls are smoking next to the entrance. Stiles walks inside the bar and looks around. There aren’t that many patrons, and Stiles nods to the regulars he already knows as he walks towards the bar. But he’s intercepted before he can reach it.

“You’re back!” Erica shouts in Stiles’ ear as she appears out of thin air and hugs him tightly. His wings spread wide in the ethereal plane, but before Stiles even thinks about shaking her off as quickly and gently as he can, Erica pulls back herself, her eyes flashing gold. “What the hell, Stiles?” She demands, hands on her hips, looking mad.

“What the hell what?” He asks her, confused.

“How could you do that to Derek?” Erica near growls, and Stiles is beyond lost.

“Hey, Stiles,” Isaac greets as he walks by to put a tray on the bar. “You smell weird.” He scrunches up his nose as he leans on his elbows on the bar top, facing them.

Stiles’ eyebrows furrow. He can’t smell weird, the werewolves shouldn’t even be able to pick up his scent, he’s got runes for that. “Weird how?” He asks, ignoring Erica’s heated glare.

“Erica, I have zero idea what you’re talking about,” Stiles tells her, and she rolls her eyes.

Derek shows up with a box of bottles, carrying it behind the bar. He actually smiles when he sees Stiles. “Hey,” he says, softly.

“Hi,” Stiles beams back at him.

“Don’t ‘hey’ the traitor, Derek,” Erica says, still glaring daggers at Stiles. Derek glances between the two of them in confusion.

“Derek, do you think Stiles smells weird?” Isaac asks, turning to the bar to look at Derek.

Derek stops in his tracks of taking bottles out of the box. “Stiles has no scent, that’s weird,” he comments.

“Can’t get tracked by scent if you have no scent,” Stiles explains, shrugging a shoulder.

Derek walks around the bar, coming closer to Stiles. His fingers wrap around Stiles’ bicep as he leans down, inhaling. A little rumble sounds in his chest, and he pulls away abruptly, frowning. “It’s your hoodie,” he says, glaring at said hoodie, eyes briefly flashing electric blue. “It smells of another pack.”

“Oh,” Stiles says, clicking his fingers together. “That’s right, I left it at Scott’s the night of the barbecue, only got it back before I left today. The whole pack is at their house a lot these days.”

“So you didn’t...?” Erica trails off, her cheeks turning a little red. “Sorry for assuming,” she says
quickly, grabs a tray from the bar and scurries off.

“Oh, so that’s what she thought,” Isaac laughs a little, and Derek snorts, not amused.

“Seriously, guys, I’ve been away for a week and it’s like you’re speaking your own language,” Stiles says, crossing his arms. He’s missing something, and he hates that.

Isaac smirks at him. “Erica thought you slept with a werewolf.”

“What?” Stiles deadpans. “Ew, the Monroe pack is like family to me.” He makes a disgusted face. “That’s sick,” he says louder in Erica’s direction. She completely ignores him, pretending to be very interested in what a customer is saying.

“Wash that,” Derek near orders, pointing at Stiles’ hoodie, as he walks back behind the bar.

“Why? Are you jealous?” Stiles asks him, a sly grin on his face. Stiles leans his forearms on the bar, looking at Derek expectantly.

“Alright, I’m out,” Isaac mutters before making himself scarce.

Derek watches him walk away, clearly stalling, before he looks back at Stiles. “It’s just,” he says and huffs. “I got used to you not having a scent. And now you show up smelling of another pack. It’s… unsettling.” He’s frowning at the bottles in the box.

Stiles bites his lip, feeling a bit guilty. “I know that scent is important for werewolves. But I can’t smell what you smell, so it literally didn’t even cross my mind. Sorry.”

Derek nods, but he’s still tense, and isn’t breathing through his nose.

“Right,” Stiles says, slapping a hand on the bar and moving away. “I’ll see you tomorrow for our date, don’t be late.”

Derek finally looks back up at him. “Wouldn’t dream of it,” he says, his lips slightly tilting up.

Stiles gives him one final smile before leaving the bar. When he gets back home, he crams all the clothes he wore during the last week into the washing machine. Just in case.

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Stiles thinks he’s been stood up on their non-date when it’s 15 minutes past seven and Derek’s still nowhere to be seen. He knew he should’ve insisted to pick Derek up when Derek said he’ll meet Stiles at the diner. Maybe Derek changed his mind, maybe Stiles called this meeting a date too many times and scared him off. Chewing on his lip, Stiles overthinks every possibility of why Derek could be late.

Just as Stiles is getting out of the booth, the bell above the door jingles, announcing Derek’s entrance. He’s wearing that leather jacket that makes Stiles all hot and bothered, and his face is set into a by now familiar scowl. Stiles drops back into his seat as Derek approaches, and beams at him when Derek sits opposite him. Derek’s frown softens and he doesn’t look to be angry at the whole world for the moment.

“Hey, man,” Stiles greets. “I was worried for a second there that you won’t show up.”

“It occurred to me that you’d think of something idiotic and inconvenient in order to ‘repay’ me if I didn’t show up,” Derek deadpans. He crosses his arms, leather creaking, and leans back in the seat.
“You know me so well,” Stiles sighs wistfully. “I don’t think this date is even necessary, we could just skip it and get to the good part.” Stiles wiggles his eyebrows.

Derek rolls his eyes. He then squares his shoulders and clears his throat. “Actually, Laura held me up,” he says, not looking at Stiles. “She wanted me to ask you if you want to run with us on the full moon on Monday,” he mutters all this as he’s staring out the window.

“Really?” Stiles says, stunned. He knows it’s rare for packs to accept outsiders during their full moon rituals. It must’ve taken a lot for Derek to even ask this on behalf of his Alpha. “I’d love to,” Stiles smiles.

Derek looks back at him, his lips tugging up. “You would?” He asks.

“Of course,” Stiles immediately confirms. “I know it’s a big deal for you guys; it would be an honor for me to be there with you.”

Derek just nods. He doesn’t look that nervous anymore. Did he really think Stiles would say no? Or did he think Stiles would make fun of him for asking, or make fun of the run itself? Stiles wouldn’t put that past Derek, he’s clearly not had any good experiences letting people in. Not that Stiles is one to talk, but still.

“Now that we have plans for our second date, can we get on with this one?” Stiles asks, trying to lighten the mood.

He moderately succeeds as Derek huffs in slight amusement. “This is not a date,” he says, seemingly more out of habit by now.

Stiles winks at him. “Whatever you say, cuddlebug.”

Derek’s eyebrow lifts at the ridiculous nickname, but he doesn’t get a chance to say anything as Louise comes up to them. “What would you like, boys?” She asks, smiling, her pen poised over her notepad.

“I’ll have a cheeseburger, curly fries, and a strawberry milkshake,” Stiles easily rattles off. “How about you, sugar plum?” He turns to Derek, batting his lashes.

Derek smirks at him. “Oh, I trust your taste, honey bear,” he says, and Stiles’ jaw drops as Derek turns to Louise. “I’ll have the same as him,” he tells her.

Louise scribbles on her notepad. “Alrighty, enjoy your date,” she says with a wink, and leaves them alone.

“You know, you can’t one up me on this, sweetums,” Stiles tells Derek once Louise is out of hearing range.

“I bet I can, sugar cookie,” Derek replies, eyes glinting with mischief. Oh, and Stiles does love some mischief. Also, Derek got even sexier if possible.

“Okay, what do you wanna bet, big guy?” Stiles asks.

Derek’s eyes slowly rake over Stiles’ upper body. Stiles doesn’t miss the way they linger on his mouth, and he unconsciously licks his lips. Derek’s gaze suddenly returns to his eyes.

“If I win, you’ll forget this ridiculous idea of repaying me,” Derek says.
Stiles nods. “Fine,” he says. “And if I win, you’ll let me take you to as many dinners as I deem necessary for your good deed. Agreed?” Stiles sticks his hand out to Derek. Derek eyes it for a second and then unfurls his hands from himself, placing his warm palm into Stiles’ and shaking his hand. “Get ready for many more dinners with me, honey bun,” Stiles grins at him as Derek releases his hand.

“Don’t be so sure of yourself,” Derek scoffs. Stiles lifts an eyebrow at him. “Love muffin,” he adds and smirks at the disgusted face that Stiles makes.

“You two are just the cutest,” Louise says, placing their milkshakes on the table. Stiles didn’t even see her coming. Huh. “My husband and I were never creative with the nicknames.”

“We’re new at this, so we’re testing some of them, see what fits,” Stiles tells her with a smile.

Louise nods knowingly. “If I can make a suggestion,” she says, glancing between the two of them, and then settling on Derek. “Love muffin’s a bit of a mouthful. You might just want to shorten it to ‘love’.”

Derek offers her a polite smile. “Thanks, I’ll think about it,” he says.

“Wow,” Stiles says when Louise walks away. “I didn’t know you could be polite to people.”

“I’m polite to people I like,” Derek says, a corner of his lips ticking slightly upwards.

“Ouch,” Stiles says, clutching at his chest. “That really hurt, Derek. And I was under the impression that you kept growling at me ’cause you liked me so much.”

Derek only snorts and turns to stare out the window. Stiles studies his profile for a few seconds. He knows that Derek’s probably aware that Stiles is ogling him but he’s sure Derek would order him to stop if it really annoyed him.

“So,” Stiles mutters, and Derek turns back to him. “What does Derek Hale do in his free time?” He asks, conversationally.

Derek lifts an eyebrow at him, saying nothing.

“Oh, come on, it’s a normal date question.” Stiles smirks.

Derek rolls his eyes. “This is not a date, Stiles,” he mutters, though without as much heat as before, maybe Stiles is wearing him down.

“Sure is, sugar lips,” Stiles replies chirpily. “It’s just the two of us having dinner, and I’m buying. Totally a date.”

“You didn’t even pick me up, sweet pea,” Derek replies.

“Cause you told me not to,” Stiles flails his arms about for emphasis. “You can’t have it both ways, pooh bear.”

“Still not a date, cupcake,” Derek says. He looks down at his hands that are still on the table, unlike Stiles’ fiddly fingers that are tearing apart a napkin. “And I do carpentry,” he mumbles near inaudibly.

“Carpentry?” Stiles repeats, slightly caught off guard before he remembers that he asked Derek a question. “Oh, so did you build the staircase at your house?” He asks, remembering that Laura said it
Derek glances up at him and then away. “Yeah,” he nods. “I salvaged what I could from the previous house, stuff that wasn’t too damaged by the fire, and incorporated it into the new house,” he says all this to the table.

And Stiles understands. He didn’t lose his whole family like Derek and Laura did, but loss is loss, and he gets it, so he tries to steer the conversation to safer waters. “You fix cars too, right?”

“Yeah, I worked in a few car shops in New York,” Derek replies. “Me and Laura moved there after,” he says and frowns hard at the table. “That’s why I don’t do this,” he growls.

Stiles doesn’t think before reaching out and putting a hand on Derek’s. He traces slow circles onto the back of Derek’s hand with his thumb.

“Hey, it’s okay.” Stiles murmurs. “I lost my mom, I know how every aspect of your life can get consumed by loss.”

Derek stares at Stiles’ hand on his own, both of them silent. Then Derek clears his throat and retracts his hand, crossing his arms over his chest, closing off again. And Stiles won’t have any of that.

“DC or Marvel?” He asks.

Derek glances at him, studying him for a few seconds. “Marvel,” he answers after apparently finding what he was looking for.

“What?” Stiles deadpans. “First of all, I totally knew you were a secret nerd. Second, Marvel? Really?” He rolls his eyes.

Derek’s slight smirk returns tentatively. “DC, really?” He mocks.

“Hey, Batman is the best superhero there is,” Stiles points a finger in Derek’s direction.

“His superpower is money,” Derek points out.

They avoid heavy subjects for the rest of the evening, and Stiles enjoys the easy banter and silly debates they come up with, like Derek abhorring the idea of e-books and Stiles defending their usefulness. The ridiculous nicknames don’t stop either, and Stiles bursts out laughing when Derek calls him ‘cutie pie’ and turns bright red. Neither of them have given up on it long after they’ve finished their burgers and milkshakes. It’s after ten p.m. when Stiles finally pays the bill, and they walk outside to their cars.

“I had fun,” Stiles tells Derek, leaning against Derek’s sleek car, not really ready to go home yet.

A corner of Derek’s lips tips upwards. “Me too,” he admits quietly to the ground, but at least he says it, and Stiles beams at him.

“Wanna repeat this next week?” Stiles asks hopefully.

“Can I pick the location?” Derek asks, stepping into Stiles’ personal space. “For our next date?”

“Hah, so you admit this was a date!” Stiles exclaims excitedly, pointing a finger at Derek’s face.

Derek rolls his eyes good-naturedly. He snatches Stiles’ hand from in front of his face and twines their fingers as he lowers their hands. “You’re an idiot,” Derek mumbles before placing his free hand on his car and leaning down.
Stiles can’t help his hand slipping under Derek’s leather jacket and twisting in his Henley. His smirk is wiped off his face the moment Derek’s lips brush his. But that’s all they get before Derek’s jerking back, letting go of Stiles’ hand, as someone shouts, “Derek Hale, is that you?”

Derek is rigid against Stiles and his eyes keep flashing from electric blue to hazel. His jaw is locked as he turns around, blocking Stiles’ view completely. “Kate,” Derek says without any inflection, crossing his arms.

Stiles’ eyes widen and he immediately slips from in-between Derek and the Camaro. He stands slightly in front of Derek in a protective position which is unnecessary as Derek is a werewolf and that woman is only human, but Stiles can’t help it. He also doesn’t particularly care that he exposed his back to Derek, which is a surprise to him but he doesn’t have time to analyze that now.

Kate is beautiful, Stiles can admit that. But she’s got a glint in her eye that makes Stiles want to keep Derek far far away from her.

“My, my, you grew up to be a handsome specimen,” Kate says, her eyes raking over Derek’s frame.

“What do you want, Kate?” Derek demands, a growl in his voice.

“Just came for a visit. Heard you have trouble with kids going missing,” she answers. She intends to take a step closer to them, but Stiles lifts a hand, not wanting her anywhere near Derek. Kate’s eyes immediately snap to him, her smirk disappearing. “What are you doing?” She hisses out.

“We sorted that problem weeks ago,” Stiles tells her. “You can leave.” He pushes slightly with his hand, making her stumble back a couple steps.

“Stiles,” Derek whispers to him as a warning, his fingers wrapping around Stiles’ elbow.

“It’s okay, Derek,” Stiles tells him, not looking away from Kate.

“What are you?” Kate sneers over their exchange.

“That’s not your concern,” Stiles answers her. “What should concern you is the fact that if you come near Derek, or any of the Hale pack, you will become a pile of ash,” he says coldly. He flashes his light blue eyes at her for effect, and his blade slips into his hand. Stiles releases her from his hold. “Now scamper off to whatever hell hole you came from.” He waves the blade at her.

Kate’s eyes focus on the dagger before raking over Stiles’ frame. She doesn’t say a word as she takes a couple steps back to her car, getting in and fucking off.

Stiles dematerializes his blade and turns to Derek. “Are you okay?” He asks softly, reaching a hand out to put on Derek’s shoulder.

“You shouldn’t have done that,” Derek bites out sharply.

Stiles winces and steps back. “Sorry,” he says. “I know you can stand up for yourself but –”

Derek shakes his head. “No, Stiles. You shouldn’t have shown your powers to Kate. She’s smart, she will figure out what you are and she will use it against you.”

“Derek, it’s fine,” Stiles tells him. “I told you I’m rare. She won’t find me in any hunter beastiary.”

“Kate’s resourceful, she’ll find a way,” Derek warns.

“Okay, okay,” Stiles gives in, putting his hands up in surrender. “I’ll be careful, alright?”
Derek nods reluctantly.

“Stop worrying so much, you’ll get an aneurysm,” Stiles tells him, taking a couple steps back. “I’ll see you later, okay?”

Derek nods again. Stiles feels his eyes on himself all the way to his Jeep.

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The afternoon sun makes the gold in Stiles’ feathers glint and sparkle. He doesn’t pay it much attention as he’s chewing on a pen, staring at the email on his laptop. During the past couple of days he’s been solving cases left and right as nothing too challenging has come up.

He stretches his wings as much as his tiny living room will allow for which is not much, but it’s better than being seen by someone like last time. Stiles unconsciously scratches at one of his wings as he’s typing out an answer to the most recent email, grumbling about how Russians should get normal keyboards as he never got the hang of where the Russian letters are on an American keyboard and he has to guess every fucking one.

There’s a knock on his door, and he instinctively lifts his head. Stiles checks the wards as he stands up, feeling a supernatural’s energy. He puts his wings away and walks to the door, grabbing a t-shirt from the couch on his way and shrugging into it.

“Hey,” Stiles greets Reina, upon opening the door. He steps aside, letting her in. “Haven’t seen you in a while. Where have you been?”

“Nursing my broken heart,” she replies, walking into the living room and casually plopping onto the sofa.

“That always sucks,” Stiles comments, sitting down in his favorite chair. “Are you feeling better?” He asks, concerned.

Reina nods a couple times, picking at a thread on her shirt. “I realized I still had feelings for her even years after we broke up.” She shrugs a shoulder. “I’m working on getting rid of them.” She sighs and then looks at Stiles. “But that’s not what I came here for.”

“And of course you couldn’t have just come to hang out,” Stiles says with a smirk, leaning back in the armchair.

“You know how I kept having those dreams of you and a wolf in a meadow?” Reina asks, ignoring his comment.

Stiles digs his brain for it, feels like that was months ago. “Yeah, so?”

“Well, for the past two nights I’ve been seeing you getting killed, Stiles, while the wolf howls at the full moon,” she says carefully, gauging his reaction.

“That’s morbid,” Stiles comments. “But so what?”

Reina rolls her eyes. “My dreams usually come true,” she says slowly as if explaining something terribly difficult to a child. “And tonight’s the full moon. Derek said you’re going to participate in the run with them.”

“You wanna say that I can’t because of the dream you had?” Stiles asks skeptically.
“I’m not saying you can’t,” Reina clarifies. “I’m saying you shouldn’t because it might not end well.”

“I’m pretty sure it’s going to be fine,” Stiles says dismissively. “I’ll have five werewolves with me at full strength, nothing’s gonna go wrong.”

Reina leans forward in her seat. “Stiles, please, reconsider,” she says seriously.

“Okay,” Stiles starts, “let’s say you’re right and this dream of yours will come true. But are you absolutely sure it’s going to happen this full moon? What if it’s meant to happen on the next full moon? Or on a full moon twenty years from now? You can’t be sure it’s going to happen tonight, and I can’t lock myself up every full moon.”

Reina huffs, falling back into the sofa. “Fine, it’s your life,” she sulks. “I did my job of warning you; my conscience is clear.”

“Great,” Stiles grins at her. “Wanna watch a movie and drink beer?”

“Like you need to ask,” Reina replies.

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Stiles is nearly late for the full moon run as he and Reina couldn’t stop watching one stupid horror movie after another. He thinks it was her tactic all along, to make him late and then tell him to not even bother going. But Stiles was never one to believe in prophecies and he’s not about to start now.

He gets to the Hale house after midnight when the moon is already high above the trees. Stiles parks his car and gets out, walking over to the house. The door, of course, opens before he even reaches the porch.

“Hey, lovebug,” Stiles greets Derek, a huge smile on his face. He’s really glad that Kate showing up hasn’t affected Derek as much as Stiles thought it would.

“Stiles,” Derek says laconically, but the corner of his mouth is tugging up.

“Oh, come on, man,” Stiles whines, hopping up the steps of the porch and coming to stand in front of Derek who’s leaning against the door jamb. “Don’t ruin the fun.”

Derek rolls his eyes heavenwards, sighing. “Hey, honeycomb,” he says without much enthusiasm, but Stiles still beams at him.

“You went on one date,” Erica says, appearing behind Derek. “And you already have nicknames for each other?”

“Stiles thinks he knows more ridiculous nicknames than me,” Derek explains, moving to the side and letting Stiles pass.

“Which is true,” Stiles tells them both. “You can’t out-nickname me, Derek, just admit it.”

“We’ll see about that,” Derek says with a smirk as he’s closing the door.

“You might have gotten yourself in trouble,” Laura comments as she walks down the stairs. “Derek’s got the biggest competitive streak.”

“I’m positive in my ability to win,” Stiles says. Let Derek try, he’s got nothing on Stiles.
“Can we go now?” Isaac shouts from the kitchen. “Everyone’s here.”

“Yeah, yeah, we’re going.” Laura calls to him.

They head out the back door and onto the back porch. Stiles hasn’t ever participated in a full moon run, so he’s surprised when the werewolves start shedding layers of clothes.

“Do I have to do that too?” He asks, glancing at Erica who’s down to tight tiny shorts and a sports bra.

“No, if it makes you uncomfortable,” Derek replies, shrugging out of his Henley. Stiles doesn’t even try and hide the fact that he stares at him nearly drooling. Derek only smirks.

When they’re all ready, they step off the porch. Laura raises her head to the moon and howls, the others joining in. Stiles howls too just for the fun of it, though his howl sounds pathetic compared to the werewolves’.

The run begins leisurely, they’re just jogging through the woods, pushing each other around, playing a weird version of tag where you have to pin the other person to the ground before tagging them. When Laura sees that Stiles can keep up, they start running faster and the game becomes more brutal; Stiles winces in sympathy when Isaac gets thrown into a shallow stream with a bed filled with rocks.

As the moon nears its peak, the werewolves shift into their Beta forms and start chasing a deer. The poor animal doesn’t even get much of a chance when five werewolves are after it. Laura gets the kill, of course, ripping through the neck muscles of the deer and quickly ending its misery. They howl at the moon again when it reaches the peak, and it all tames back again after that.

Erica is the so-called ‘it’ and everyone’s running away from her as she cackles maniacally. She doesn’t pull any punches when tackling people, and Stiles thinks he’d have bruises for days if he were human after she’s tackled him twice. He doesn’t think any of the werewolves want to get tagged by her either, and she seems to enjoy that immensely.

Stiles is somehow in the lead of the run when goose bumps appear on his skin and his shoulder blades start tingling with the need to spread his wings. He stops in his tracks immediately, sensing danger.

Laura runs past him at full speed, and Stiles manages to only shout her name before an arrow laced with wolfsbane pierces her shoulder and she goes down. The others haven’t caught up with what’s going on and they too pass Stiles without a second thought.

Stiles teleports into the middle of the clearing as arrows start flying from all directions. He raises his hands, trying to stop as many arrows mid-air as he can. The werewolves are ducking and spinning out of the way of those that Stiles didn’t notice; it would be a beautiful sight if their lives didn’t depend on it.

Stiles hears Boyd shout in pain, and then Erica calls his name, rushing to his aid, triggering another trap. She doesn’t notice this, and Stiles teleports to her side, tugging her down with himself. He’s successful in making sure the arrow doesn’t hit her, but it grazes his cheek and he feels blood trickling down it.

“Are you okay?” He asks Erica urgently.

She nods, eyes wide. Stiles gets off her, shouting for nobody to move. He glances around the meadow. Boyd is on the ground, writhing in pain, an arrow embedded in his shin. Isaac and Derek are crouched on opposite ends of the meadow. Stiles takes a look at Laura who’s on the ground,
unconscious, but she’s breathing, so he has a few minutes at the least.

He directs his gaze to the trees and sees them full of crossbows, trigger wires all around the floor of the forest. Stiles doesn’t even doubt for a second that hunters did this. Apparently, with Kate in town they came up with new tricks.

“There are three active ones,” Stiles says, knowing that Isaac and Derek have been tracking his eye line from one crossbow to the next. “Isaac, there’s one right behind you. It seems like it won’t hit anyone if no one moves.”

Isaac nods. He takes a few seconds to just breathe before he steps back, triggering the wire, and the arrow embeds itself in the ground a couple feet away from him. Stiles sighs in relief.

“Derek,” he calls next.

“I know,” Derek says, staring straight ahead. “In front of me. And I’m standing on the trigger.”

“There’s also one to the left of you. Same trigger,” Stiles says as calm as he can.

“Fucking great,” Derek mutters, his eyes flash blue.

“I can stop both of them,” Stiles assures him. “On three?”

Derek’s jaw clenches, but he nods. Stiles counts to three, and Derek steps back. The arrows zip through the air, stopping inches away from Derek’s body, rotating slowly in the air. Stiles lowers his hands, and the arrows drop to the ground.

Derek moves instantly to Laura’s side, and Erica runs past Stiles to Boyd. They’re both out cold by now.

“Erica, don’t get the arrow out,” Stiles tells her. “I’ll heal him as soon as I’m done with Laura.”

“Yeah, okay,” Erica mumbles, holding Boyd’s hand in her lap.

Stiles jogs up to Laura and Derek, Isaac joining them as well. He kneels by Laura’s side, watching the wolfsbane blacken her veins as its reaching for her heart.

“We need to know the kind of wolfsbane they used,” Derek mutters. His hands are shaking, just like his voice. “We need to… to…” He chokes up.

Stiles grabs his shaking hands, squeezing hard to get his attention. “Der, breathe,” he says, steadily. “I can heal her, she’s going to be perfectly fine.”

Derek nods a couple of times, eyes on Laura.

“I need you two to keep her down,” he says glancing between Isaac and Derek.

They get hold of Laura while Stiles moves to her left, closer to the wound. He grips the shaft of the arrow, pulling it out. Black blood oozes out of the wound, and Laura stirs slightly. Stiles puts a hand over the wound, pulsing energy into it. He cleans Laura’s blood of poison, working slowly, making sure he doesn’t miss anything.

The sudden roar makes Stiles coil back. Laura’s eyes are blazing red and she’s panting, but Derek and Isaac are keeping her down. Stiles puts his hand back on her shoulder and finishes the cleaning, sealing the wound up. Laura’s eyes turn back to her natural brown.
“Thanks,” she whispers hoarsely.

Stiles smiles at her and then pats Isaac’s shoulder. “Help me with Boyd.”

He does the same for Boyd as he did Laura. It takes less time and less effort though as the poison was nowhere near his heart and hadn’t spread much. He gets tackled into a hug by Erica for a second before she hugs the daylights out of Boyd.

Stiles stands up, looking around at the intricate work. His head spins slightly from all the energy he used up, but he grits his teeth adamant to not show weakness. How could the hunters know that the pack would run through here? There are probably more clearings like this one all around the preserve, they couldn’t have just set this one up and hope for the best.

“We need to sweep the woods,” Laura says, clearly on the same track as Stiles. “There are probably more of these around.” She’s already standing up on her own, but she looks rough, all pale and bloody.

“You should rest,” Stiles tells her and receives a glare from her, which is quickly blocked by Derek who walks up to Stiles.

“Are you okay?” He asks, swiping blood away from Stiles’ cheek.

“I’m fine,” Stiles lies and has to grab onto Derek as his vision blurs a little.

“Hey, Stiles,” Derek sounds all concerned, his hands are on Stiles’ hips, steadying him.

Stiles blinks quickly several times, the black spots disappearing from his vision. “I’m okay,” Stiles repeats and he can see in Derek’s expression that he doesn’t believe him. “I might’ve used up a bit more energy than I should’ve when I healed Laura but I’ll be fine.”

“Let’s just all rest up and we’ll check the preserve in the morning,” Laura suggests, though doesn’t sound happy about it.

Everyone agrees to the plan and they head back to the Hale house. Stiles waves the pack goodbye as he walks back to his Jeep, ready to go home and sleep for at least twelve hours. He’s about to open the door when a hand pushes against it. Stiles blinks at Derek in surprise. Clearly, he’s too tired to even notice a werewolf sneaking up on him.

“I’m driving you home,” Derek declares.

“And then you’re coming back here how?” Stiles asks him, leaning against his car door.

Derek rolls his eyes. “I’ll run back,” he replies.

Stiles nods a couple times. “Great plan. Especially with five hunters in town, one of which is your crazy ex, who’s dead set on murdering you.”

Derek glares at him, his jaw clenched. He doesn’t have a reprove for that.

“It’s a ten minute drive, Derek, I’ll be fine,” Stiles tells him. He leans forward, placing a kiss on Derek’s cheek. “I’ll see you tomorrow.”

Derek doesn’t look too happy, but he steps back, letting Stiles get in his car. In his rearview mirror, Stiles can see him standing there, watching as Stiles drives away. A small smile appears on Stiles’ lips. He hasn’t had anyone who’s not family that worried about him in a while. It’s nice to know that
someone cares.

Stiles stops at a red traffic light, a couple streets from his house. There’s no one around, the town is completely silent. The light turns green, and Stiles’ Jeep moves forward. He’s in the middle of the intersection when he hears another car’s rumbling engine getting way too close, way too fast. Stiles glances to his left and only registers a black jeep before it crashes into him, and everything descends into chaos.

Chapter End Notes

Are there no Shadowhunters fans here? I thought for sure someone would've noticed by now that I borrowed something from that show!

Hope you enjoyed, see ya next week ;)

-E
The Jeep flips onto its side and then goes belly up. Metal creaks loudly as the frame of the Jeep protests against the assault, there’s a sickening screeching sound as the Jeep skids on the asphalt. Stiles’ head is ringing, he tastes blood, and he has no idea which way is up. There’s a buzzing in his ears, and he blinks furiously trying to clear his vision.

After a few seconds he registers that he’s upside down in the Jeep, his seatbelt keeping him pinned that way. Stiles aches all over and as he glances up (down?) he can see his own blood dripping onto the roof of the Jeep.

“Fuck,” he mutters to himself. Stiles just breathes for a few seconds before manifesting his blade. He cuts through the seatbelt and regrets it seconds later when he’s in a heap on the roof of the Jeep, his limbs crammed uncomfortably. “Shit,” Stiles swears again. He maneuvers himself so he’s on all fours, facing the broken windshield, and crawls through the glass shards onto the asphalt.

Once he’s back on his feet, swaying lightly like he’s drunk, Stiles gets grabbed by the collar of his t-shirt, and the Face Tattoo from a couple weeks before smirks at him. “Not so smug now, are you, boy?” He sneers in Stiles’ face.

Stiles pushes him away, snarling, “Get off me, you creep.” Face Tattoo stumbles back a few steps, glaring at him, and Stiles has to grab onto the mangled carcass of the Jeep to not fall onto his knees. His head is swimming and he feels like throwing up. Warm blood is steadily trickling down his cheek.

“You were with the Hales tonight,” Glasses says, coming closer. Stiles lifts his head to look at him and quickly takes in his surroundings. Face Tattoo is the only other hunter in sight. Their jeep seems to be reinforced as there’s not much damage done to it, it’s also fitted with a bullbar that has efficiently crushed Stiles’ Jeep. That wasn’t on the jeep when Stiles saw it weeks ago. This was preplanned. “How are they doing?” Glasses asks with a smirk.

Stiles spits blood out of his mouth. “Better than you’ll be when I’m done with you,” he threatens. But he doesn’t let go of the Jeep because he’s quite sure he’ll stumble to his knees if he does.

Glasses and Face Tattoo laugh. Glasses raises a gun, the muzzle cold against Stiles’ forehead. “Really, boy? You’re going to threaten us now? You can barely stand, and I could easily end you.” He’s smiling, clearly enjoying the power play.

Stiles’ ribs protest with every breath he takes, the blood is now travelling down his neck, soaking his
t-shirt. “How brave of you,” Stiles says, “crashing into my car, injuring me, and only then facing me. You wouldn’t dare do this when I’m in full-strength, would you?” He quirks up an eyebrow, a small smile on his lips.

Glasses’ mouth sets into a firm line. “I could take you anytime, you filthy beast,” he snarls in Stiles’ face.

His demeanor changes drastically when Stiles’ blade is at his throat. His eyes get big and the gun against Stiles’ forehead trembles. “You were saying?” Stiles prompts.

Suddenly there are sirens howling in the background. Glasses jerks back immediately and takes a few steps back. Face Tattoo is already getting behind the wheel of the jeep. “We’re not done,” Glasses says, waving his gun in Stiles’ direction.

“Oh, I’m counting on it,” Stiles replies.

The hunters speed away, out of sight, and Stiles lets himself fall to his knees, hands braced on the asphalt. He has just enough energy to dematerialize his blade before the ambulance screeches to a halt nearby.

Over the next half hour Stiles is prodded by the EMTs and questioned by the deputies from the Sheriff’s department. He refuses to go to the hospital even though the EMT tries to persuade him several times. He also tells the deputies that he didn’t see who crashed into him and can’t provide any useful information.

“Mr. Stilinski,” Deputy Parrish says, as the EMT finishes stitching up a cut on Stiles’ forehead. It stings like hell, and Stiles can’t stop from flinching. “We will tow your Jeep into evidence. Do you want us to call someone to drive you home?” It’s nice of the Deputy to ask as Stiles’ phone got smashed along with his car so he’s not able to contact anyone. Unless he used the Bat Signal. That would be cool.

Stiles thinks about the question for a second. Reina would be the obvious choice but she doesn’t have a car and doesn’t know how to drive. He doesn’t want to worry any of the Hale pack, especially Derek, with what’s happened here, so he shakes his head slightly. “No,” Stiles replies. “I don’t live too far away, I can walk home.”

“You’re not walking anywhere,” the EMT says, Stiles thinks her name is Evelyn. “You should be going to the hospital,” she gives him a look.

Stiles scrunches up his nose. “I don’t like hospitals. You stitched up all the nastiest cuts, right? I’ll be fine with the rest.”

Evelyn sighs. “You most likely have a severe concussion and your ribs are probably cracked. You should get an X-ray and stay at the hospital tonight.” She braces her hands on her hips, staring him down.

“Thanks,” Stiles tells her. “But you can’t make me,” he smirks.

Evelyn shakes her head, ripping her gloves off. “Then at least let Parrish call someone for you. You shouldn’t be alone, you need someone to wake you up every couple of hours because of the concussion.”

Deputy Parrish gives him a strange look but nods. “Sure, no problem,” he says and walks back to his car.

Stiles watches as officers are milling about Roscoe, collecting glass shards, taking samples of the paint from the side of his car, collecting Stiles’ stuff from inside and putting it in evidence bags. Evelyn and her partner are in the front of the ambulance, filling out documents, Stiles guesses.

It doesn’t take long for Derek to show up. He looks furious as he steps out of the Camaro. Stiles is surprised to see Laura getting out too. Derek locates Stiles quickly and starts striding in his direction. Laura glances at him, assessing his injuries, her eyes flashing red for a moment. They nod at each other, and she goes to talk to the nearest deputy.

“Fucking hell, Stiles,” Derek swears when he’s standing right in front of him.

“It looks worse than it is,” Stiles tells him.

Derek takes the last step separating them, standing between Stiles’ legs. He brushes his fingers carefully over Stiles’ cheekbone and down his neck. His eyes run over all the visible injuries. “Hunters?” He asks, a growl in his voice.

Stiles nods. “They planned this,” he says. “Their jeep was ready for wrecking other cars. I’m guessing they have eyes all over town.” Stiles glances at the camera that’s overlooking the intersection. Derek tracks his eye line.

“The Sheriff’s department will know it’s them if they watch back the video,” Derek comments.

“I doubt it,” Stiles says. “They wouldn’t have crashed into me here if they knew they’d get caught. They for sure wouldn’t have stopped for a chit chat either. The video is gone or corrupted at best.”

There’s a tick in Derek’s jaw. “What did they say to you?”

Stiles shrugs a shoulder and hisses in pain. “Fuck,” he mutters. Derek’s hand immediately slips underneath Stiles’ t-shirt, warm against his shoulder. Stiles near moans when Derek starts to take his pain away. “They just threatened like usual,” he replies to Derek’s question. “I think they want me to know they haven’t forgotten about me.”

A rumble sounds in Derek’s chest. “You should’ve let me drive you back,” he says.

Stiles rolls his eyes and even that hurts. Damn it, he hates when he’s this low on energy. “How would that have helped?” Stiles asks him. “You think they wouldn’t have rammed me if you were in the car with me? Come on, Derek, they had this planned. If not tonight, they would’ve done it some other night.”

Stiles jumps slightly as the ambulance door shuts loudly. He can hear Evelyn approaching and he knows Derek can hear it too, but he’s not moving away from Stiles.

“Mr. Stilinski,” Evelyn says, glancing from Stiles to Derek, who’s standing way too close to Stiles to just seem friendly. “I’m glad you found someone that can stay with you but I still suggest you go to the hospital.”

“Believe me, I’m in very capable hands,” he says.

A smile tugs a corner of her lips upwards. “I don’t doubt that,” she comments and then turns her attention to Derek. “He needs to be woken up every couple of hours for the next twelve hours. Here are some pain meds, instructions on how much to take are inside,” she gives a plastic bag with a pill
bottle and a note to Derek. Derek slips his left hand under Stiles shirt as he reaches with his right to take the bag from Evelyn. “If he starts feeling worse, ignore whatever he says and bring him to the hospital.”

Derek nods. “Of course. Thank you.”

“Feel better, Stiles,” Evelyn says to him.

“I already am,” he winks at her as he stands up, hands on Derek’s hips, pushing him back slightly so Stiles would have room to stand. “Thanks,” Stiles tells Evelyn, and she nods.

Derek and Stiles walk back to the Camaro. Derek’s hand is on the nape of Stiles’ neck, still taking away pain. Stiles leans against the hood of the Camaro, batting Derek’s hand away.

“It’s fine,” he says. “Stop doing that.” He regrets the second the words leave his mouth as the pain Derek was taking returns and nearly punches out his breath. But it’s for Stiles to deal with and not Derek.

“You’re in a lot of pain, Stiles,” Derek frowns at him.

“I know, but you don’t have to be a martyr and suffer for me,” Stiles argues.

“Pfft,” Laura scoffs, coming closer to them. “Do you even know who you’re talking to?” She asks Stiles. “Derek thinks everyone’s pain is his responsibility.”

Derek glares at her. “Did you find out anything useful?” He asks Laura, crossing his arms.

“They have a witness from an apartment building on the other side of the street,” Laura replies, glancing at said apartment building. “But it’s an old lady who can’t see that well when it’s dark. They don’t have anything useful.”

Stiles nods. “Good. I’d like to deal with them myself for wrecking my baby.” Stiles looks at Roscoe that’s still on its roof, all mangled and sad. Fucking hunters.

“Maybe when you don’t look like a horror movie victim,” Laura tells him, looking him up and down.

“Yeah, yeah,” Stiles dismissively waves a hand at her. “Can you just drive me home so I can sleep and recharge?”

They pile into the Camaro and drive to Stiles’ house. Against all of Stiles’ protesting, which is not that much because he’s tired as fuck and in a lot of pain, Derek stays with him and Laura drives back to the Hale house to update the pack.

“You can find some bed sheets in one of the boxes,” Stiles tells Derek, waving at said boxes on the living room floor.

“You’ve been living here for nearly half a year and you haven’t unpacked yet?” Derek lifts an eyebrow at him.

Stiles’ place looks pretty much the same as the day he moved in. There are boxes and stacks of books everywhere. The sofa, an armchair, and a coffee table are the only unpacked things in Stiles’ living room. At least he’s got the kitchen sorted. Only because the last tenant left pots and pans and shit like that, but still.
“Hey, I’ve been busy,” Stiles tells him. He doesn’t want to get into the whole thing where Stiles doesn’t ever unpack his things because he moves every few months anyway, so there’s no point. That would be too heavy for tonight, and Stiles is way too tired.

He yawns hugely, and his ribs protest the action. “Shit,” Stiles mutters to himself, grabbing at his sides like that’ll help. “I’m fine, I’m fine,” he tells Derek, who’s crossing the room to Stiles, a worried expression on his face. “I’m just gonna crash.” Stiles flips his thumb in the direction of the stairs. “You don’t need to wake me, I’ll heal in my sleep. And I’ll probably be out until tomorrow evening, so just let yourself out when you get bored.”

Derek nods his understanding, still looking at Stiles like he’s about to break, and Stiles hates that.

“Alright,” Stiles says and turns around, heading to his room.

He crashes into his bed immediately. Stiles wiggles around kicking his shoes off, and getting out of his jeans. When he’s free of restricting clothing, he spins himself into a cocoon and finally let’s himself relax.

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Derek is still in the house when Stiles wakes up panting, his heart jack-rabbitting in his chest. Stiles can feel Derek’s presence through the wards and he can hear him thundering up the stairs to Stiles’ bedroom.

“I’m fine,” Stiles says immediately as Derek throws the door open, a murderous expression on his face. “Just a nightmare,” Stiles explains. He runs a hand through his hair, watching as Derek deflates slightly, leaning against the door. “What time is it?” Stiles asks.

“Nearly five p.m.,” Derek replies. “How are you feeling?” He’s not losing the worried look, and Stiles is so over repeating that he’s fine.

He huffs, getting out of bed and pulling on a pair of jeans. He does make sure they’re not the bloody ones from last night though. “I’m fine, Derek,” Stiles bites out. “I healed, I’m at full-strength, stop worrying for fuck’s sake.”

Stiles knows it was too harsh the moment the words leave his lips. Derek winces, his features smooth out into a neutral expression. “Okay,” he says and walks away, down the stairs.

“Shit,” Stiles mutters to himself, dragging his hands down his face. He stands there for a couple of seconds, collecting himself, and then heads downstairs.

Derek has his back to Stiles, staring out the window above the sink. The line of his shoulders is tense, his arms are crossed over his chest.

“Derek,” Stiles starts but shuts up as Derek starts talking.

“I get it,” he says. “I know I’m overbearing, I’ll dial it down.” There’s no emotion in his voice, and Stiles feels even more like shit.

He walks closer to Derek, propping a hip on the counter, staring at Derek’s profile. “You’re not overbearing,” Stiles says with conviction. “You care about people, I get that. I haven’t had someone care like that about me for a long while. I’ve been moving from town to town for five years. Alone. I just had to learn how to deal with this kind of shit on my own. It’ll take me some time to get used to the idea that I don’t have to solely depend on myself.” Stiles reaches a hand out, carefully wrapping his fingers around Derek’s upper arm. “I’m sorry that I lost my temper.”
Derek glances at Stiles’ hand on his arm and then at Stiles himself. He nods, and Stiles smiles at him. “We’re good?” He asks.

Derek’s mouth turns up in a small smile and he nods again. He leans forward, clearly intending to seal it with a kiss, but before their lips can so much as brush, his phone starts blaring. Stiles glances down at it and frowns. ‘Detective Stilinski’ is written across the screen of Derek’s phone.

“Why is my dad calling you?” He asks, a bit of accusation and suspicion leaking into his voice, because the last time he checked his dad and Derek were only vaguely aware of each other’s existence.

“Scott gave him my number because you’re unreachable, apparently,” Derek shrugs a shoulder. “I told him you’d call him and explain everything when you’re awake.”

“Good,” Stiles nods his approval. He snatches Derek’s phone, answering with a cheery, “Hey, dad!”

“Stiles,” John does not sound happy to hear him. “How is it that I had to find out from Scott who found out from the Hale Alpha that you were in a car accident?” He demands, fury barely controlled.

Stiles closes his eyes, dragging a hand down his face. Damn it, Scott. “I didn’t want you to worry. It wasn’t a big deal.”

“Don’t lie to me, young man,” John says. And when he breaks out the ol’ ‘young man’, Stiles knows he’s in deep trouble. “Scott told me everything. You were crashed by hunters?”

“Yeah,” Stiles sighs. He turns, leaning with his back against the counter. Derek is silent next to him. “They totaled Roscoe. I got a few nicks and bruises, but I recharged and I’m right as rain now.” Stiles is grateful that he’s got so many people that care about him, but he’s going to scream if he has to say that he’s fine again.

Derek glares at him for the lie, and Stiles only rolls his eyes at him.

“Okay,” his dad mutters. He sounds relieved. “You should’ve left that town weeks ago, Stiles. Now you’ve got hunters on your back. This won’t end well.”

Derek quickly looks back out the window at the mention of Stiles moving. Stiles looks away from him too. “It won’t end well for them. The Hale pack and I will take care of it,” Stiles promises.

John sighs. “I wish you didn’t have to, son.”

Stiles ruffles his hair again, biting his lip. “I know,” he says. “I’ll call you when I get a new phone, alright?” After receiving confirmation from his dad and saying goodbye, Stiles hangs up, passing the phone back to Derek. “Did you hear from Laura and the others?” Stiles asks him, praying to anyone who’s listening that Derek wouldn’t start asking questions about Stiles moving because, honestly, Stiles has no answers regarding that.

“Yeah,” Derek says. “Laura and Erica came by earlier to check on you. Now they’re in the preserve, dismantling traps.”

“Okay, good.” Stiles moves away from the counter, walking out of the kitchen. “Let me find my shoes and we can go help them.”

“You should eat something first,” Derek calls after him.

“I’ll eat on the way,” Stiles replies, already jogging up the stairs.
Before they leave Stiles’ house, Derek manages to convince Stiles to at least shower, but only because he tells Stiles that he reeks of antiseptic and blood. Stiles does it as fast as he can, eager to go and help the pack. He munches on a breakfast bar as Derek drives them back to the preserve. Good thing Laura thought of leaving the Camaro at Stiles’ after they visited this morning.

They park the Camaro at the edge of the preserve and hike to the location Laura sent to Derek. Stiles can feel Derek hovering. His hands are immediately on Stiles when he so much as stumbles over a tree root. It would be endearing if it weren’t so annoying, but Stiles keeps himself from exploding at Derek again, because he knows that’s just how werewolves are, a little too overprotective of the people they care about. Now Stiles knows how Allison feels every day.

Stiles throws his arm out in front of Derek when they reach the clearing to stop him from moving further. The pack is in the trees, unloading the crossbows, but the traps are still active on the forest floor and not all of the crossbows are harmless yet.

“You probably want to move up and not forward,” Stiles tells Derek and watches him looking around the trees.

“Good idea,” Derek comments. He steps away from Stiles and jumps into the nearest tree. The raw show of power leaves Stiles tingly in all the right places.

“Hey, Stiles,” Isaac shouts the greeting, and Stiles looks up at him. “Have a good beauty sleep?” He smirks, a claw easily slicing through the drawstring of the crossbow.

Stiles grins back at him. “Are you saying you think I’m pretty, Isaac?” That earns him a laugh.

“At the right angle and in the right lighting, maybe,” Isaac answers. He jumps gracefully to the next tree, taking care of the crossbow there.

Erica lands in a perfect crouch next to Stiles, and Stiles thinks his self-worth will plummet even more if he keeps spending time around werewolves. Even being a supernatural creature, Stiles was never the epitome of grace.

“Hey,” Erica greets Stiles with a kiss to his cheek. “You don’t look like you’ve been in a car accident,” she remarks, looking him up and down.

Stiles lifts an eyebrow at her. “Thanks?” He says.

She beams. “You’re welcome. Now,” Erica claps her hands, the smile on her red lips replaced by a predatory grin. “When are we going to rip some hunter intestines?”

“Erica,” Laura says, sighing. She’s across the clearing, easily balancing on a tree branch. Damn, Stiles wishes he had balance like that.

“What?” Erica demands, furrowing her eyebrows and crossing her arms. “They put traps all around our territory, and they nearly killed Stiles. We have every right to get back at them by ripping them to shreds.” Her claws pop out and her eyes are glowing golden.

Boyd is suddenly in front of her, taking her clawy hands in his. “We need to think this through. We can’t just storm the Argent house without preparation.” His words seem to work as Erica’s claws recede and her eyes turn to normal brown.

“Argent?” Stiles asks. Maybe it’s a freaky coincidence but isn’t Allison’s last name Argent?
“Yeah,” Laura confirms, coming closer to them through the clearing. “Kate Argent is staying at her family’s house. We’re thinking that’s where the hunter base is right now. Why?” She looks closely at Stiles.

Stiles shakes his head. “No, nothing. Just thought I heard that last name somewhere,” he lies easily. Stiles knows that Allison dropped out of the hunting game years ago and she doesn’t keep in contact with her family. But knowing that Allison is related to a psychotic bitch is still unnerving.

“First we need to get rid of all these traps,” Laura tells the group at large as Isaac and Derek join them. “And then we can start thinking of a plan of how to get rid of those hunters.”

“It’s easy,” Erica shrugs. “We kill them.”

“So that more hunters would show up and try to retaliate?” Derek asks, unimpressed.

“Well, they’re clearly not in a hurry to leave, so we need to do something,” Erica argues.

“They must want something, or we’d be dead already,” Isaac comments, and that strikes an idea in Stiles’ brain.

“I could go talk to them,” Stiles suggests, and everyone’s eyes are on him. Derek growls lowly. “If I find out what they want, it will be that much easier to get rid of them,” he explains.

“What if they want to play their little games and only then murder us?” Erica asks, rather scathingly.

Stiles shrugs a shoulder. “Then we know that it’s kill or be killed,” he answers. “And if they want something different which we can give them and be rid of them, then all the better.” It’s not like Stiles himself is thrilled with the plan, the last thing he wants is see those motherfuckers who sent Roscoe to the afterlife, but they have to play the odds here.

“You think they’d just let you walk into that house?” Laura asks. Stiles can see that she’s leaning towards this idea, and she’s the only ally Stiles really needs for this to work out.

“He’s not going anywhere near that house,” Derek growls out, flashing his blue eyes at Laura, shielding Stiles from her view.

Stiles rolls his eyes. This is ridiculous, really. “Derek,” he says, stepping up to him, a hand on his arm. “It’s a reasonable plan. All of you would probably be shot on sight, but they don’t know what I am or what I’m capable of. They’d let me in for no other reason than wanting to dissect me.” Derek glares at him at that, jaw locked, his expression all you-really-think-this-is-going-to-persuade-me. “And I could easily teleport out of there if they wanted to do that,” he assures Derek, squeezing his arm slightly. “But I could also find out what they want if it’s anything other than maiming and killing supernaturals.”

“You’d do that for us?” Laura asks, receiving another growl from Derek which she ignores.

“To be honest, I’d rather rip them apart like Erica suggested, but I don’t want more hunters coming our way, so that’s the only thing I can think of that would work out,” Stiles answers her.

“Okay,” Laura nods. Derek huffs and walks away. Stiles watches him go, but neither he nor anyone else calls him back. “We will provide backup for you when you go if something were to go wrong.”

“Great, thanks,” Stiles says, and feels his heart rate elevating at the mere thought that he’s actually going to have to go into the hunters’ lair. He’s so not looking forward to that.
Stiles catches Derek near the parking lot. The others went to another clearing to clear it of crossbows. Laura wanted to be the one to talk to Derek, but Stiles thought it would be best if he did it himself.

“Hey,” Stiles says, approaching Derek, who’s sulking leaning against a tree.

Derek glances at him and then away. “It’s a stupid idea,” he says. “If Kate figured out what you are, you’re not walking out of that house.” That’s blunt, and it makes Stiles immediately stop in his tracks.

“Um,” he mumbles, scratching the back of his neck. “I’m pretty sure she’s never going to figure that out. There are only two beastiaries in the world that mention what I am, so the odds are slim.”

Derek stares at him intently, his eyes running all over Stiles’ face. He huffs, annoyed. “I don’t even know if you’re making this shit up to make me feel better.”

Stiles chews on his lip for a moment, considering his options, and then materializes his blade. He rolls back the sleeve of his hoodie and presses the blade to it. Derek’s hands are immediately on him. “What the fuck, Stiles?” He demands, angrily.

Stiles rolls his eyes. “Just watch,” he says. He lifts an eyebrow when Derek doesn’t let go of him right away. Derek looks at him for a few more seconds before lowering his hands. But he still keeps close to Stiles.

Stiles runs the tip of his blade down his forearm, not drawing blood but lighting up all the runes etched onto his skin. They glow light blue, just like Stiles’ eyes sometimes do, and they tickle slightly. “These make it more difficult to track me for those who want to,” he explains at Derek’s intrigued gaze.

He slices through two of the runes, and they blink out of existence from his skin. Stiles dematerializes the blade and runs his hand over his forearm, the runes snuffed out. “Okay, now try,” Stiles tells Derek.

There’s a confused expression on Derek’s face. “Try what?” He asks. But suddenly his gaze lowers to Stiles’ chest, where his heart is hammering at a faster pace than normal. Derek inhales sharply and then his eyes go wide, running all over Stiles.

Stiles doesn’t expect it, so he stumbles back a bit, hitting a tree, when Derek lunges at him, his nose pressed to Stiles’ neck. Derek’s scruff tickles Stiles’ skin but he tries not to wiggle too much as Derek rubs all around Stiles’ neck, collarbones, and his jaw.

“I take it you like that?” Stiles laughs a bit.

Derek draws back, a wild look in his eyes which are rapidly changing from blue to hazel and back. “Your scent,” he mutters, trailing off.

“Yeah, I know,” Stiles says, his hands lifting up and cupping Derek’s cheeks, making him focus.

Stiles’ mom taught him the rune that could mask his scent first, she knew how much trouble it could cause if a supernatural were to catch it. Stiles himself learned it the hard way when he wanted to see what’s the big deal and slashed the rune near some werewolves. He nearly got ripped to pieces, the werewolves intent on having him each for themselves, before his mom showed up and saved his stupid ass.
“Now you know my baseline,” Stiles tells Derek. “So do your werewolf thing and reassure yourself that I’m not lying.”

Derek’s eyebrows furrow in concentration. He nods.

“There are only two beastiaries in the world that have any mention of me,” Stiles tells him. It’s the truth, and he sees Derek realizing that. “And I know exactly who has them. Kate will never figure out what I am. She can’t hurt me.”

Derek is focused solely on him, listening to his steady heart beat and scenting him for any notes of deception. “Okay, you believe that,” he says. “But last night –”

“Last night I was low on power,” Stiles interrupts him. “They took me by surprise with a fucking jeep. Cut me some slack, dude.” He grins at Derek when he rolls his eyes. “This time I will be prepared, and they will regret it if they try anything.”

Derek still doesn’t seem happy but he sighs. “Fine,” he bites out.

“Great,” Stiles beams at him. “Now, how about we get back to helping your pack?”

The mischievous gleam is back in Derek’s eyes, and there’s a smirk playing around his lips. “In a minute,” he murmurs, leaning forward.

Their lips finally meet, and Stiles doesn’t even try to stop the moan that escapes him. The kiss is gentle at first but quickly grows more heated as Derek’s tongue slips into Stiles’ mouth. Stiles doesn’t begrudge Derek the control of the kiss, he simply relaxes and enjoys being slowly taken apart, one hungry kiss at a time.

Derek nips Stiles’ bottom lip softly before moving his mouth over Stiles’ jaw, and lower to his neck. He bites and licks the skin there, making Stiles tremble and moan, holding tightly onto Derek. Derek’s hands find their way under Stiles’ t-shirt, running over his stomach, and ribs. His fingertips caress Stiles’ sides, sliding further onto Stiles’ lower back before moving upwards slightly, just brushing the edges of the scars. And just like that the spell is broken.

Stiles winces, pushing at Derek and moving away from him. Panic is consuming him, and he drops down onto his butt, head between his knees. His wings in the ethereal plane are beating violently and Stiles can’t make them stop. Phantom pain is radiating through Stiles’ shoulder blades, vividly reminding him how he got those scars, and it’s certainly not a memory he likes to dwell on.

“Stiles?” Derek asks, concern clear in his voice, but Stiles can’t look at him right now.

Stiles knows he should explain but he’s too busy trying to stop his heart from hammering out of his chest and trying to breathe. Derek is hovering nearby, and Stiles is thankful he’s not coming closer. Undetermined amount of time later, Stiles finally lifts his head, resting it back against the tree trunk and looking at the clear blue skies.

“Stiles?” Derek tries again.

“You can come closer now,” Stiles tells him, glancing at where Derek is standing ten feet away.

Derek approaches carefully, noting every minute movement of Stiles’, like he’s some ticking time bomb that will explode any second. Ugh. These past two days have not been the best for Stiles.

“I’m sorry if I crossed a line,” Derek starts, crouching in front of Stiles.
Stiles shakes his head. “I should’ve told you before,” he says. He always warns his partners beforehand, but they’re usually one night stands that don’t mean anything. He hasn’t been in a relationship for ages, not since he got those scars. Stiles doesn’t even know how to bring that kind of thing up. Or if he’s even ready to.

“I’m guessing your back is out of bounds?” Derek asks slowly, like he’s not quite sure.

“Yeah, it’s better if your hands don’t go wandering in that direction,” Stiles tells him with a weak smile.

“Okay, understood,” Derek says seriously.

They just sit on the forest floor for a few minutes. Derek keeps shooting Stiles worried looks, and Stiles hates that Derek’s seen him nothing but weak during the last 24 hours.

“We should really get back,” Stiles says, standing up.

“You don’t have to help if you’re not feeling up to it,” Derek tells him.

“It’s fine,” Stiles says, summoning his blade again. “I’m fine.”

Derek gives him a look, crossing his arms over his chest. “You know I can tell you’re lying, right?” He lifts an eyebrow at Stiles.

Stiles smirks. “Not for long.” He draws the runes masking his scent and heart beat onto his forearm, and feels instantly better. The blade disappears from his hand, and Stiles leans closer to Derek, pecking him on the lips. “Come on, time’s a-wastin’, sugar plum.”

Derek only snorts, but he takes Stiles’ hand, and they start walking deeper into the woods.
Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

So I'm back, sorry for not posting anything for a month, don't even have a good reason for it, just didn't feel like writing. I don't know how regular the chapters are going to be from now on but I do promise to finish the fic.

Hope you enjoy!

-E

It’s around nine p.m. and the sun is just starting to set when Stiles walks up to the Argent house and rings the doorbell. He glances behind himself, knowing he won’t see anyone, but he imagines being able to see over the walls of the fence and into the dark street where five werewolves are patiently sitting in their cars and listening to every beat of Stiles’ heart.

Stiles slashed the heart rate blocking rune and drew an amplifying one before he got out of Derek’s car, making it easier for the pack to know if he’s in danger or not. Derek had leaned over and kissed him like he’s sending Stiles off to war or something, and Stiles is sure that every werewolf could hear his heart making joyous somersaults. That is if the grin Derek gave him afterwards is anything to go by.

Right now Stiles tries to keep his heart rate at a normal level. It’s not like he hasn’t negotiated with hunters before. He actually has done it a few times, but none of those groups were led by a murderous child molesting zealot. But Stiles has totally got this too.

The door opens after a few seconds, and Stiles is greeted by Kate’s glinting smile. “Stiles, right?” She asks without so much as a ‘hello’.

“Yeah,” he answers. “I just –”

But he doesn’t even get to finish his sentence when Kate steps to the side, saying, “I’ve been expecting you,” like she’s some cliché baddie from a TV show.

Stiles quirks an eyebrow at her. “You have?” He walks inside and tries not to react when the doors close behind him. His heart starts beating slightly faster, but he doesn’t show Kate that he’s bothered.

“Of course,” Kate answers and waves to the right, leading him to a luxurious and spacious living room. Stiles wonders where her murder buddies are, he’d like to smash their faces for what they did to Roscoe. Maybe it is better that they’re not around, otherwise the negotiations would be doomed from the starts.

Kate gracefully sits down onto a sofa, motioning for Stiles to do the same. He obviously stays standing. “I’m assuming you’re here for negotiations on behalf of those mutts, correct?”

She’s clever, just like Derek said. And a fucking bitch. Kate watches him making his way over to the fireplace, leaning against it. “The Hale pack,” Stiles corrects her, keeping the ‘you fucking bigot’ to himself. “So let’s not waste either of our time, what do you want?” He asks bluntly.
“To rid the world of such atrocities like you and your puppy boyfriend,” she answers easily, a smile on her lips. Stiles bites the inside of his cheek so as not say something incredibly stupid that would ruin the negotiation. “But that’s the long-term plan,” Kate continues, crossing her legs and cocking her head to the side as her eyes run over Stiles. “Right now, I’m more interested in you.”

Stiles should’ve probably seen that coming. No surprise that an extremist bent on wiping out all supernaturals would take an interest in a creature she can’t put a name to and doesn’t know how to kill.

“That’s why you’re not leaving the town? Because you want to know what I am?” Stiles questions, crossing his arms over his chest.

“I don’t just want to know what you are,” Kate says, rising from her seat and coming closer to Stiles. “I want to know what else you’re capable of. You made quite the impression on me the other night at the diner. I’ve never seen something like you.” She’s too close to him, staring right into Stiles’ eyes. Her hand lifts and she runs her fingers down his bicep. “I bet you held yourself back that night. There’s so much more power in you, I can just feel it.”

Stiles is more than disgusted. He wants to shake her off, tell her to stop touching him. “Is that how you enticed Derek? Complimenting him? Stroking his ego?” The questions slip out of Stiles’ mouth unbidden. He seriously needs to check his brain to mouth filter.

Kate laughs. The sound is pleasant, though everything about her is deceptively pleasant. She reminds Stiles of a predator luring in their prey by any means necessary. “Oh, Derek was so easy,” she says. “He hung onto my every word. I could have told him to lit the match himself and he would’ve done it.” Kate’s eyes take on a different gleam, more sinister. “Is he still the same? Does he let you boss him around? He would never take initiative during sex, I think he liked being controlled. But maybe he’s grown out of it?” She quirks up an eyebrow at Stiles, actually expecting an answer.

The way she talks about Derek makes Stiles’ hackles rise. He barely controls himself from calling her out on being a child molester. The urge to crush her ribs is even harder to control, Stiles’ hand flexes into a fist without him so much as thinking about it, but he manages to stop himself from directing any of his energy at her, at hurting her.

Stiles regrets bringing Derek up. Damn him and his mouth. “You said you’re interested in me,” Stiles brings the conversation back around.

“Very much so,” Kate purrs, her fingers travelling up and down Stiles’ arm.

“So if I tell you what I am, will you leave this town and the pack alone?” Stiles asks. He doesn’t expect a positive answer, but he can still try.

Kate laughs again. “Oh, of course not,” she replies. “But I promise to not hurt them too much if you leave the town with us.”

Stiles is stunned for a second. He really did not expect that. “You want me to come with you?”

“I want you to work for us,” Kate says. “I’ve not seen all that you can do but even the little bit I saw was extraordinary. We could do wonders with your powers. Easily wipe out pack after pack of those disgusting mutts.” Her expression is gleeful.

Stiles’ heart rate rockets and he has to remind himself that Derek and the pack will storm this place half-cocked if they sense that he’s in danger. So he just breathes for a second, considering his options. “Let me sum this up,” Stiles says as calm as he doesn’t feel right now. “You expect me to
become your killing machine, and in exchange you will leave the Hale pack alone.”

“Smart boy,” Kate smiles at him, patting his cheek, and Stiles can’t help but flinch back. “It’s either that, or I will find out what you are, and I will kill you nice and slow in front of your puppy before I murder him and his pack. How’s that for a deal?” Her grin widens and her hand is back on Stiles’ arm.

Stiles shakes her off and steps back, a disgusted look on his face. “You’re fucking crazy if you think I’ll agree to that.”

“I thought you might say something along those lines.” Kate rolls her eyes, and there’s suddenly a gun being pointed at Stiles. “Whatever you are, I don’t think you’ll survive a bullet to your brain.” She grins wickedly.

One second Stiles is watching Kate clicking the safety on her gun, and the next he’s in front of the open gate of the Argent house, walking backwards as shots ring inside loud enough to attract the attention of an elderly couple passing by. Stiles hears them muttering something about calling the police and he hightails it out of there in an instant.

He runs around the corner where Derek and Laura’s cars are parked. The engines roar to life as soon as Stiles jumps into the passenger seat of the Camaro, and they drive off without a word.

“I take it went well?” Derek asks, glancing briefly at Stiles as they speed in the direction of the preserve.

Stiles shrugs a shoulder. He materializes his blade, slicing through the amplifying rune and drawing the blocking one as he’s sure his heart rate is more than distracting for the werewolves at this proximity.

“As well as you could’ve expected, I guess,” he answers Derek’s question. Which is to say, not at all. But Derek told him that plenty of times. Stiles is just surprised he’s not yet saying ‘told you so’.

They park in front of the Hale house and head inside. When everyone’s comfortably seated by the kitchen island or, in Stiles’ case, the kitchen counter, Laura says, “Okay, what happened?”

Stiles’ immediate answer is ‘a lot of inappropriate touching’, but he doesn’t want Derek to go all growly, so he sticks to the basics. “She wants me to work for them. Help them kill supernaturals,” he relays in the most business like tone he manages. “That’s the only way she won’t harm you.”

The pack looks at him stunned, just like he was when Kate made her suggestion. Then Laura’s eyes flash red, her lips set into a hard line. “I hope you told her that she’s a fucking delusional idiot and that we’re gonna rip her to shreds if she harms one of our pack.”

Stiles smirks. “That’s basically what I said.”

Laura nods. “Good,” she says.

“So can we now go along with my plan of ripping their intestines out?” Erica asks. They all turn to Laura with hopeful expressions on their faces. Stiles would find it disturbing that people he’s so close to are excited about what technically is murder if he himself wasn’t at least a little bit looking forward to snapping Kate’s neck.

Laura sighs, shaking her head slightly. “We can’t,” she says. Erica huffs, leaning back in her seat with her arms crossed. Isaac rolls his eyes while Boyd and Derek don’t show such strong adverse reactions to being told they can’t just go and kill someone. “We’re not murderers,” Laura reminds
them. “If they attack us, we fight back. But we can’t do anything if we’re not directly engaged.”

“Bullshit,” Isaac growls out. “You nearly died from the poisoned arrow. They crashed Stiles’ Jeep. They’re already attacking us.”

“What do you suggest then?” Derek asks. “Do you want us to break into the Argent house at night and kill them in their sleep? Do you want to hunt them down? We’re not like them, and we’re not killers that can’t control themselves. Let’s not prove that what they think of us is correct.”

Stiles is once again completely taken with Derek. It’s true that first Stiles only noticed how amazingly gorgeous Derek is, but he started to fall for him when Derek showed that he’s wickedly smart too. The fact that he’s also got a heart of gold might just do Stiles in.

“Fine,” Isaac grumbles, slumping in his chair.

Stiles sees Laura and Derek exchanging looks. He can’t be sure he interprets it correctly but Laura seems grateful for the input.

“I think we should implement some safety measures for now,” Boyd suggests, and everyone turns to him.

“Like what?” Erica asks.

“Like no one going anywhere alone,” Boyd replies. “If the five of them were to corner one of us, it would not end well. If there’s at least two of us against five of them, we have a fighting chance.”

“Good idea,” Laura agrees. “And keep your phones on you at all times.”

“We should also keep each other updated on where we are,” Derek adds, and Laura nods in agreement.

“Yeah, keep everyone in the loop. We don’t want to get ambushed,” she says.

“Ugh,” Erica groans. “Do we also get to have a curfew?” She asks blandly.

Laura rolls her eyes. “No,” she answers. “But everything else is for our own safety. We don’t want to risk anything here.”

“Yeah, yeah, okay,” Erica agrees, albeit reluctantly.

“Alright,” Laura says. “So we all agree?” She looks at every one of her pack members who nod their understanding. “Stiles?” She says looking dead at him.

Stiles quirks up an eyebrow, surprised to be involved in this discussion. “Yeah, sure,” he says, sounding not so sure because he doesn’t really know why Laura needs his agreement on the subject of her pack having ground rules for not getting ambushed. But whatever.

“Good,” Laura says. “Now, a more important discussion,” she grins. “What kind of pizzas are we ordering?”

Stiles groans, looking heavenwards as the werewolves start a shouting match. They can each easily devour a pizza, but Laura only lets them order one kind of pizza for everyone, it’s supposed to be some kind of a team building exercise or some shit. She’s a cruel Alpha like that. Derek only pats Stiles’ knee in solidarity, and Stiles throws him a smile.

***
For the following week Stiles is not left alone for even a minute when he’s outside of his house. He has no idea what got into the Hale pack but one of them is always at his side. It’s not too bad of a thing because Stiles doesn’t have a functional vehicle (RIP Roscoe, you were the best car), so he doesn’t give it much thought as he hangs out with the Hales all the time anyway.

It does get a bit weird when he has to go food shopping with Boyd who vetoes all of Stiles’ snacks and forces him to buy more vegetables. Stiles does not appreciate that. But then Boyd drives Stiles and his unwanted vegetables home, and makes him food, so he deems it a fair trade.

He and Derek don’t get to have a second date, however. There’s always someone or something in the way, but Stiles is determined and so is Derek, so they keep trying to arrange a suitable date. Not much luck in that department though.

They don’t hear anything from the hunters, don’t see them either. Which, suspicious, but Stiles is thankful for the brief respite. The pack, however, grows restless because of it, Stiles can feel it. They don’t like not knowing what their enemy is up to. To be honest, when it hits day eight of no news from Kate and her murderous friends, Stiles’ mind starts to spin with possibilities of why that might be.

And then comes a distraction.

Stiles wakes up not because of a nightmare, which is a rare occasion but happens sometimes, but because he’s absolutely freezing. He blinks blearily at his bedroom wall, trying to figure out why the fuck he’s so cold when he’s cocooned in a blanket. His eyebrows knit in confusion when he notices the condensation in the air every time he exhales.

Stiles sits up in bed, glancing around, but not noticing anything out of the ordinary. He shuffles to the edge and stands up, trying to keep the blanket wrapped around himself. His windows are open, as they usually are because it’s too frickin’ hot in Beacon Hills in July, but the breeze coming through them is notsummery cool, rather it’s harsh and freezing, and there’s ice on the glass of the windows.

“What the fuck?” Stiles mutters to himself, waddling to the window and gasping when he looks through it.

Either Stiles slept way too long, or he’s somehow traveled through time and space, because there’s a thick layer of snow covering his backyard. The little snowflakes flutter in the air, the wind helping them invade Stiles’ bedroom. “Fuck,” Stiles groans, getting his hands from underneath the blanket and closing the window. He’s so not in the mood to deal with the fae.

Stiles sits back on the bed, teeth chattering, and reaches for his phone. He dials Laura’s number, tightening the blanket around himself as he waits for her to answer.

“Hello,” Laura’s voice sounds bleary, like she just woke up.

Stiles glances at the clock on his bedside table. It’s a bit after six a.m., maybe not the best time to call someone.

“Shit, sorry for waking you up, I know you work late, and it’s the weekend,” he immediately starts rambling.

“Stiles?” Laura asks. She clearly didn’t check the caller ID before picking up. “What’s going on?”

“Um,” Stiles glances around his room. “Just look out your window.”

“Just do it,” Stiles says.

He hears Laura grumbling on the other end of the line, something about Nike? Stiles can’t have heard it right. But she clearly gets out of bed and looks out the window because Stiles hears her gasp.

“What the fuck?” She mutters.

“Yeah,” Stiles draws out. “It seems we have a problem. A fae kind of problem.”

“Ugh,” Laura groans. “Alright, I’ll send Derek and Isaac to you. Where should we meet?”


After making arrangements and saying bye to Laura, Stiles gets dressed as warm as he can when he doesn’t own any proper winter clothes. So he just layers a couple shirts under two hoodies, he debates wearing two pairs of jeans but finds that he can’t manage to get the second pair on over the first and scraps that plan, and puts on three pairs of socks, struggling to stuff his feet into his sneakers.

The wards announce Derek and Isaac’s arrival to Stiles before they can even ring the bell. Stiles dreads opening the door, but does so nonetheless because he’s a grown up, dammit, and he can deal with the cold.

“Morning,” Derek greets him with a small smile, and Stiles can’t help but answer in kind.

“Morning,” he mumbles, smiling at Derek like a dork. Stiles hasn’t seen him in a few days, and even though they texted and called it’s not the same as having Derek before him in person.

Isaac snorts, and Stiles catches him rolling his eyes. “Yes, it’s morning, can we go now?” He asks, looking from Derek to Stiles.

“Yes, sure,” Stiles mumbles, stepping out the door and locking it behind himself. When he spins around, Isaac is walking back to the Camaro, and Derek catches Stiles by the hips, pulling him closer.

The kiss is soft and warm, and for a second makes Stiles forget that they’ll have to go trek in the wintry woods soon enough. Derek presses a kiss to the hinge of Stiles’ jaw before drawing away. “You look ridiculous, by the way,” he says, pulling at Stiles’ hoodie strings and stepping back slightly.

Stiles huffs. “It’s sub-zero, dude,” he absolutely does not whine. Stiles falls in step with Derek, walking to the car through all the snow. “And I don’t run werewolf hot like you.” He glances at Derek wearing his normal outfit of black jeans, black t-shirt, and black leather jacket. Stiles should try and persuade him to introduce more color into his wardrobe, not that he doesn’t look good in all black, though when does Derek not look good. And Stiles’ mind has wandered off again. Focus!

“Do you want me to share some of my heat?” Derek asks him, quirking up an eyebrow.

Stiles snorts in amusement. “Maybe later,” he says, and that just doesn’t help with Stiles’ new goal of focusing.

They get in the car, and Derek drives to the preserve. The hike to the meet point is not fun for Stiles. Derek and Isaac have no problem dealing with the sudden winter, but Stiles is struggling a bit. By the time they reach the rest of the pack, Stiles’ feet are soaked, he’s shivering, and he’s very strongly leaning towards roasting whoever made this happen.
“So, the fae?” Laura asks as soon as Stiles is in hearing range.

“Yeah,” he answers, hugging himself to contain at least some warmth. “They most likely caused this.”

“How do we find them?” Boyd asks.

“They’re gonna be near the central tree of the forest,” Stiles says. Thank heavens above that Stiles has dealt with fae a few times and doesn’t need to research this.

“Which would be?” Erica raises an eyebrow at him. She doesn’t look too happy to be out of bed this bright and early. Stiles can relate.

“The Nemeton,” Stiles answers, nearly rolling his eyes because seriously, what else would he be talking about?

“The what?” Erica’s face scrunches up in confusion.

Now Stiles does roll his eyes. “The fucking huge tree in your forest that exudes magical power,” he says slowly and only receives blank stares. “Guys, do you know anything about where you live?” He wonders. Stiles found the tree exactly three days after moving here, it was calling to Stiles with its’ energy. Though maybe it doesn’t affect the werewolves the same, or at all.

“Right,” Stiles sighs. “Follow me,” he says, turning in the general direction of the tree and starting walking.

Derek soon falls in step beside Stiles, wordlessly drawing one of Stiles’ hands out of his hoodie pocket and wrapping his own hands around it, warming Stiles up instantly. Stiles slithers closer to Derek, side-hugging him as his hands slide under Derek’s shirt.

“Shit, you’re cold,” Derek flinches as Stiles’ fingers settle on his skin.

“Told you, dude,” Stiles answers.

Derek very carefully puts his arm around Stiles’ shoulders, keeping him pressed to Derek’s side but trying not to touch Stiles’ back. Stiles appreciates the heck out of that and ignores the calls from the pack urging them to get a room.

The Nemeton isn’t that far away, but in this weather it feels like they walk for hours. Stiles nearly jumps in joy when he sees the tree in the middle of a small clearing, leaves still green and lush even though snowflakes are spinning around it in the air. What Stiles doesn’t see are the fae, instead a black-haired woman with purple eyes is sitting at the base of the tree. She stands up, her red robes billowing around her, when she sees the pack and Stiles enter the clearing.

“Where’s your resident witch?” She asks, scanning all of their faces.

“She’s not a fairy,” Isaac remarks. Stiles gives him a no-shit-Sherlock look, and Isaac glares back. “You said we’re dealing with fairies.

“I said it’s most likely the fae,” Stiles mutters, frowning. “I went with the odds, dude.” Stiles hasn’t encountered a witch strong enough to affect weather in a while. Though she obviously is using the Nemeton to amplify her powers. “Why do you need Reina?” He asks, turning back to the woman.

The woman sighs. “She has very strong warding around her house, so I couldn’t get close to her. I thought this might do the trick,” she waves elegantly with her hand. “But all I got is you.”
Stiles draws away from Derek, reminding himself that most witches are not as nice as Reina. Actually, most of them are not above killing other witches and stealing their powers, which clearly is the reason why this witch expected to draw Reina out of her house. Stiles is so glad he didn’t call her to help with this.

“I suggest you fix this,” Stiles says, stepping forward, motioning around to encompass the sudden winter, “and leave, because it will not end well for you if you’re planning what I think you’re planning.”

The witch directs her full attention to Stiles. Her purple eyes drag over his body, and it makes Stiles want to shiver. “You’re a curious one,” she says. “I can’t read your energy clearly, but I can tell you’re powerful.” She takes a couple steps closer to him, still examining his aura or whatever shit witches like her do. “I think I’ve met one of you centuries ago,” she mutters mostly to herself.

That makes Stiles slightly worried. It also gives him vital information about the witch in front of him. She’s at least a few centuries old, so she’s powerful and has probably killed a fair amount of other witches to have stayed alive for this long. None of that is boding well.

“You’re not an angel, though,” she muses. “Their energy is different, it’s pure. Yours is more… tainted.” She doesn’t say it meaning to offend, it’s more of an observation, and that hits Stiles harder than it would’ve if it were just an insult. “But what are you? One of the Fallen, maybe?” She raises an eyebrow at him, as if expecting an answer.

“What do you want?” Laura asks, stepping to stand beside Stiles. Her eyes have turned red and her arms are crossed.

The witch’s eyes linger on Stiles before she turns to Laura. “I want to kill your resident witch and take her powers for myself,” she answers bluntly, not showing any kind of emotion.

“Yeah, that’s not happening,” Laura says, extending her claws.

The witch laughs. “You think a pack of new wolves can stop me?” She raises a hand, and all of the Hale pack fall to their knees, grunting.

Stiles glances at Derek on instinct. His eyes are glowing blue, fangs out, muscles taut either because of the spell or because he’s trying to fight its hold.

“Hm,” the witch hums, looking at Stiles. “I thought it might work on you too.”

“Sorry, no luck,” Stiles says. He’s got runes against some of the more common spells, especially the ones that render him immobile. “Last chance, release the pack and get out of here or you’ll regret it.”

The witch only smirks at him, and then there’s roots coming out of the snow and wrapping around Stiles’ limbs, forcing him to the ground on his knees. Derek and Laura shout Stiles’ name in near unison, but Stiles can’t focus on them now. He snaps his fingers, the roots disintegrate into dust. His blade appears in his hand, and Stiles gets up, advancing on the witch.

The witch only smirks at him, and then there’s roots coming out of the snow and wrapping around Stiles’ limbs, forcing him to the ground on his knees. Derek and Laura shout Stiles’ name in near unison, but Stiles can’t focus on them now. He snaps his fingers, the roots disintegrate into dust. His blade appears in his hand, and Stiles gets up, advancing on the witch.

She keeps throwing spell after spell at him, but Stiles blocks them easily. When there’s only a few feet between them, the witch lifts both her arms up in a sudden motion, and Stiles is cut off from her by a fire wall. He swears. Stiles dematerializes his blade for a second, stretches his arms out to his sides and turns his palms up. The snow from the ground rushes upwards and like a wave crashes over the flames, dousing them.

The witch doesn’t waste a moment, throwing icicles straight at Stiles. He avoids them by twisting and turning, but one of them does graze his side, cutting through his layers of clothing. Roots once
again twine around Stiles’ ankles, keeping him in place, as the witch bombards him with balls of flame. Stiles throws his arm in front of his face, creating a shield to protect himself.

Stiles waits until the witch wears herself out with that particular spell and throws his arm out, a wave of energy rushes forwards, knocking the witch off her feet. Meanwhile, Stiles gets rid of the roots and materializes his blade. He approaches the witch who is now standing up, a dagger in her own hands.

Stiles tries to grab at her, but she dances out of his reach. She manages to wrap her fingers around Stiles’ wrist and tries twisting his arm back, but Stiles gets out of her grip. He doesn’t have time to react as she swipes at his feet, and Stiles hits the snow. She’s on him in a flash, knocking the dagger out of his hand, and putting her palm on the center of his chest. Suddenly, Stiles is short of breath, his ribs feel like they’re cracking, and his heart seems to be literally bursting.

Concentrating his energy, Stiles extends one of his arms, palm up, and summons his blade. It appears instantly in his hand, and Stiles doesn’t hesitate to shove it into the witch’s heart. There’s a shriek, and then dust starts falling onto Stiles.

Stiles gulps in much needed air, his chest heaving. The ground below him thunders as the five werewolves run to him. Derek’s hands are on his cheeks, his face all that Stiles can see, while others touch other parts of him. He should probably feel more unsettled by that than he actually does.

“I’m totally fine, guys,” Stiles says, when he’s caught his breath. “Also, I’m covered in dead witch ashes, so.” He smirks when everyone suddenly withdraws from him, saying ew. Except Derek. Derek just smirks and wipes dead witch ashes off Stiles’ cheeks. He’s such a keeper.

Stiles sits up, looking around. The snow is still here but it’s no longer snowing, and the sky seems to be clearing quickly. “I don’t even know why I keep you around,” he says, looking at the pack. “It’s always me doing most of the work.”

“Jerk,” Erica says, pushing at his shoulder.

“It’s because we feed you,” Isaac says.

“Fair point,” Stiles says, pointing at him. “You probably owe me breakfast for this awesome save.”

Laura smiles at him, patting his knee. “You got it,” she says, standing up.

Stiles gets up too. Now not only his feet are wet but the whole of his back too, and it sucks balls. If he could kill that witch again, he’d so do it.

“I’m fine,” Stiles tells Derek, who’s hovering too close to him unlike the rest of the pack who are already on their way out of the clearing.

“Yeah, I know,” Derek says, his eyes running over Stiles’ body. “But she nearly got you, and I couldn’t do anything about it.” His eyes flash for a second and he lets out a frustrated growl.

“Hey, next time when we’re not dealing with a magical creature, I’ll totally let you save me,” Stiles promises, grinning at him.

Derek rolls his eyes. “Idiot,” he mumbles. But he does lean in to kiss Stiles.

What Stiles assumes to be a short sweet kiss, (not)surprisingly turns into tongues in mouths, Derek’s hands on Stiles’ ass, and Stiles’ fingers running over Derek’s muscles under his shirt. Only when Stiles’ teeth start chattering from the cold, threatening to bite Derek’s tongue off, does Derek insist
that they get Stiles warmed up. Stiles only agrees because Derek promises to get under the blankets with him and share his body heat.
A week after the witch incident, which Reina got really upset over because she wasn’t involved in it, the hunters leave Beacon Hills. Stiles doesn’t know exactly when it happens but one day the Argent house is just left empty, windows boarded, and the gate locked. Neither the pack nor Stiles believe it’s the end of it, but it is nice to know that they won’t run into one of the buttheads somewhere in town for now.

As things calm down, Derek seems to deem it safe enough to finally have that second date with Stiles. He doesn’t tell Stiles much, only that he should be ready by 8 p.m., and Derek will come pick him up at his house. Stiles would be lying if he said that not being able to control a situation isn’t making him anxious.

It’s five to eight, and Stiles is sitting on his stairs in front of the front door, his knee bouncing as he’s gnawing on a thumbnail. He shouldn’t be this nervous to be honest. The thing he’s got with Derek is going fine. More than fine. Great, actually. Considering the fact that they’ve had several near death experiences together, Stiles thinks their relationship has surpassed the casual dating stage and is developing into something more serious. He can’t be sure though as they only had the one date. Maybe he should discuss this with Derek.

Stiles stands up immediately when his wards warn him of Derek’s presence. He opens the door to see Derek stepping onto Stiles’ porch. Derek quirks up an eyebrow. “Eager?” He asks with a small smile.

“You could say that,” Stiles answers. He closes the door, stepping closer to Derek.

“Are you okay?” Derek asks, eyebrows furrowed in worry.


Derek shifts his posture. “Listen, if you changed your mind –”

“No, no, no, no, no,” Stiles protests immediately. He sighs, running a hand through his hair. “I just don’t like surprises. Can you at least tell me where we’re going?”

Derek studies his face for a second longer before answering, “The preserve.”

“Seriously?” Stiles lifts an eyebrow, unimpressed. “Literally everything bad that’s happened in this town, happened there. Are you trying to sabotage this?”

“It’s going to be fine.” Derek rolls his eyes. “Come on.” He grabs Stiles’ hand, towing him to the car.
“I’m gonna tell you ‘I told you so’ if some vampire or something ruins our date,” Stiles warns him.

“I can take that risk,” Derek tells him, pressing Stiles up against the passenger side of the Camaro and kissing him.

Stiles sighs into it, wrapping his arms around Derek and enjoying his warm lips and clever tongue. But Derek draws back too soon and smirks at Stiles’ whine.

“You have neighbors,” Derek reminds him. He still leans in to steal another kiss though.

Stiles glances at Mrs. Freeman’s fluttering drapes. “We could put on a show for them,” he says, wiggling his eyebrows suggestively at Derek.

Derek scoffs, stepping away from Stiles. “Not into that,” he says, shaking his head and walking around the car.

“Good to know for future reference,” Stiles says, getting in the car. “What else is off the table? Or can we talk about what’s on the table? Are tables on the table?” He smirks at Derek.

Derek only groans as he starts the car. “This is not a conversation I want to have while driving.”

“All right,” Stiles agrees. “We’ll have plenty of time on our date before we get attacked by some rugarus.”

“We’re not going to get attacked,” Derek insists. He glances at Stiles. “And tables are very much on the table,” he admits quietly, staring ahead, ears burning red.

Stiles gives him a grin.

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Stiles has to admit that the spot Derek chose for their sunset picnic is quite something. The cliff that they settled on has a great view of the whole town, and the setting sun provides a stunning background. It might even be worth the potential threat of getting attacked by something supernatural.

“All right, I take back my words,” Stiles says, popping a grape in his mouth. “This is a pretty good spot for a second date.”

“Thanks,” Derek near mumbles, pretending to be carefully selecting a strawberry. Stiles finds it extremely endearing how Derek gets suddenly shy when he’s complimented.

“Any reason in particular that you brought me here?” Stiles asks.

Derek shrugs a shoulder, and Stiles feels the movement as they’re pressed together from shoulder to knee. “I always thought the view from up here was nice. And I didn’t think you’d have come across here.”

“Yeah, my running trails are closer to home,” Stiles comments. “I assume you know every inch of the woods? You grew up here, right?”

Derek nods his head. “Our parents would let us wander around wherever we wanted as long as an older sibling or cousin would go with us. When we were older, we’d be the ones to look after the little ones. Laura hated it, but I couldn’t say no to those cute little faces.” He’s smiling as he’s telling all this to Stiles. But it’s more nostalgic than happy. “What about you?” Derek asks, turning to Stiles.
“Where did you grow up?”

“I’m a world citizen,” Stiles declares with a smile that quickly dies down. “We moved a lot when I was growing up. The longest we were in one place I think was a couple of years in this Russian mountain village. My mom used to make me and dad get up at an ungodly hour to go see the sunrise from the mountaintop.”

“Russia?” Derek repeats, eyebrows raised high.

“Yup,” Stiles pops the p. “We’ve been all over. Mexico, Spain, New Zealand, Tanzania. You name it, I’ve probably been there.”

Derek snorts in amusement, and Stiles turns to him expecting a comment. “The furthest my family went to together was probably the edge of the preserve.”

As the sun sets over Beacon Hills, they keep trading stories. Stiles mostly tells what kind of shenanigans he got up to in different countries, and Derek talks about his childhood and his time in New York with Laura. Stiles also asks him to tell how Erica, Boyd, and Isaac got to be his pack mates. Scott features heavily in that story, and Stiles finds it interesting to see his best friend through someone else’s eyes.

When the stars appear overhead, Stiles and Derek lie down on the blanket, staring up into the sky. Their hands are loosely linked, Derek’s playing with Stiles’ fingers. They keep silent for a while, letting the warm summer breeze rush over them.

“I wanted to talk about something,” Derek says. His voice has turned quiet and serious.

“Alright,” Stiles says apprehensively, turning his head to look at Derek, but he’s still looking up.

“About what your dad said the day after the crash,” he mutters. “That you should’ve left weeks ago.”

“Oh,” Stiles mumbles. He stays silent for a beat, thinking of what to say. “I move every few months to stay off the radar of people hunting me. My house has wardings hiding me, I have runes hiding me, but when I use my powers it’s like an emergency flare in the sky, if they notice it, they can easily track me down. And I’ve been using my powers a lot lately. I’m actually surprised no one’s come for me yet.” He scoffs, not quite amused.

Maybe he’s not high on the angels’ priority list. As far as he knows, there’s only a handful of them assigned to this, and hell knows what’s going on in their plane now. There could be another civil war brewing, and it might take them hundreds of Earth years to settle it. That’s the best case scenario that Stiles would love to come true.

“So you’re moving soon?” Derek’s voice is blank, so is his expression when Stiles glances at him, shrouded in shadows.

“I honestly don’t know,” Stiles near whispers. He sighs, closing his eyes. “I’m so sick of being on the run. And despite the numerous times I’ve been nearly killed here, hey –” Stiles flinches when Derek pinches his side. Derek’s eyebrow is raised in a you-were-saying sort of way. Stiles rolls his eyes. “I’m not saying I’m a fan of that part either,” he says, kicking at Derek’s shin. “But anyway, despite all that, I still like it here, and I’d like to stay.”

“Then stay,” Derek says easily. “We will deal with whoever is hunting you when they show up. I can promise you that Laura will be more than willing to let the pack kick some ass.” He smiles. “That’s the least we can do for all the times you saved us already.”
“It’s not that easy,” Stiles says. “They’re powerful. I’ve been hiding and running for a reason. I don’t want you to get hurt, or worse, because of me.” Stiles’ mom already paid that price, he wouldn’t survive if another person he cared about ended up dead because of Stiles.

“If you’d tell us what’s after you, we could prepare and help you,” Derek argues.

“Believe me, there’s nothing you can do that would prepare you,” Stiles says, and before Derek can argue further, Stiles rolls on his elbow, staring him down. “I’m not going anywhere right now, can we just enjoy that?”

Derek scrutinizes his expression, seemingly bent on fighting on this, but then he just nods. “Fine. I’ll drop it for now.”

Stiles grins at him and easily straddles his thighs. “I’ll make it worth your while,” he promises, bending down and meeting Derek in a kiss.

They don’t see much of the starry sky above them, or the twinkling lights of the town beneath afterwards. The rest of the night is filled with more fun things.

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Derek and Stiles go on dates during the next couple of weeks. Lots of dates. Most of them involve make out sessions, and avoidance of heavy subjects. Stiles is quite okay with that.

It’s a lazy Sunday afternoon. Stiles is in front of a wall in his living room, wings spread as far as they’ll go, and he’s concentrating on clues about his newest case. He’s pinning scraps of paper on a whiteboard he got a week ago, making connections between them in red marker.

“Stiles, hey –” Derek’s voice trails off.

Stiles folds his wings in and turns around. Anxiety spikes his blood with adrenaline, but he doesn’t demanifest his wings. Though he is starting to think that excluding Derek from his wards and giving him a key might have been too much.

Derek’s eyes are running over Stiles’ wings, taking in the black feathers, the gold shimmering in them. His gaze suddenly snaps back to Stiles’ eyes. “Sorry,” he says. “I texted.” He waves his phone before putting it in his jeans’ pocket.

Stiles glances at his own, set on silent so he could concentrate, sitting on the coffee table. “That’s,” he starts, clears his throat and tries again. “That’s fine. It’s why I gave you the key.”

“I didn’t want to disturb,” Derek says. His eyes keep wandering over to Stiles’ wings behind his back.

“I can hide them if you’re uncomfortable,” Stiles suggests.

Derek’s eyes go wide. “No, no,” he protests, taking a step closer, and Stiles tenses. He’s falling for Derek hard but he’s still not ready for him to go near Stiles’ wings. “That’s not why… It’s – they’re even more beautiful up close,” Derek admits, stuttering.

“Oh,” is all Stiles manages. He scratches the back of his neck. “Did you come here just because or…?” He prompts.

Derek blinks a couple of times before focusing back on Stiles’ face. “Oh, yeah,” he says. A smile blooms on his face. “I have a surprise for you. It’s at the house.”
"You know how I feel about surprises," Stiles mutters. But he puts his wings away and walks closer to the sofa, grabbing his shirt and putting it on.

"Have either of my surprises disappointed you?" Derek asks, crossing his arms, a challenging look on his face.

Stiles rolls his eyes. "No," he admits sullenly. Derek is making it harder for Stiles to hate surprises. It’s a so far successful work in progress.

"Then logic dictates that you don’t have to worry," Derek smirks, the bastard. He knows Stiles’ love of logic, and he’s using it against him.

"Fine, let’s go," Stiles says.

Derek grabs him by the hand as Stiles passes, pulling him in and kissing his lips. "Hi," he says with a smile.

Stiles laughs. "And the guys think I’m the sappy one in this relationship."

"Relationship?" Derek asks, pulling back a little.

Stiles suddenly gets nervous. Yeah, they didn’t have that talk yet. "Yeah, you know," he starts. "I just figured since we’ve been dating for a while that we are, like, in a relationship?" It comes out sounding like a question.

Derek blinks at him a couple times and then nods, a small smile on his lips. "Yeah," he says. "Yeah, sounds good."

"Good," Stiles agrees and leans in to kiss him again.

***

Stiles is in complete darkness and he hates it. Derek stopped halfway down the dirt road to the Hale house and asked him to put on a blindfold, saying it’s going to be worth it. Stiles grumbled under his breath that sensory deprivation isn’t one of his kinks, but Derek only rolled his eyes before tying the blindfold on him.

"This is by far the worst surprise yet," Stiles mumbles. His arms are crossed and he’s sulking in the passenger seat of the Camaro.

"Stop whining," Derek says. "Believe me, you’ll love it."

"I’m not loving this," Stiles mutters to himself.

The car stops, and Derek tells Stiles to stay put. He hears Derek walking around the Camaro and opening the passenger door. Derek takes Stiles’ hand, guiding him out of the car. As soon as Stiles is out in the open, a wave of anxiety washes over him. There’s nothing about this that he likes. The lack of control, not being able to see, his back being exposed. A shiver runs through him.

"Der, I really don’t like this," Stiles says, seriously now, as Derek takes his other hand and starts leading him somewhere.

They stop immediately. "You can take it off if you want," Derek says from in front of Stiles. "But I assure you that there’s no one around but you and me. You have nothing to worry about."

Stiles inhales and exhales deeply, holding it for a couple of seconds. He trusts Derek. He wouldn’t
have excluded him from the wards otherwise. So Stiles only nods. “Okay, I trust you.”

He receives a kiss to his hand for that and laughs. “You’re ridiculous,” he tells Derek as they start moving again.

By Stiles’ estimation they’re walking to the left of the house where Derek’s workshop and Boyd’s garden shed are. This doesn’t lessen Stiles’ confusion.

Derek stops again, puts his hands on Stiles’ hips to turn him slightly, and then says, “Alright. Take it off.”

Stiles lifts a hand and takes off the blindfold, blinking against the bright sunlight for a few seconds until his eyes adjust. When his vision clears, Stiles’ jaw drops. Derek was absolutely right, this is the best surprise ever.

“No fucking way,” Stiles says.

Roscoe is standing in front of Derek’s garage, baby blue and completely intact with a huge red bow on the hood. Stiles turns to Derek. “How the fuck?” He asks eloquently.

Derek is sporting a small shy smile. He shrugs a shoulder. “When the Sheriff’s department was done with it, and you said they can sell it for parts, I bought it. Erica helped me fix it.”

“That’s why you’ve been so busy the past few weeks?” Stiles asks, starting to connect the dots. He knew Derek was busy with a project, he had no idea the project was Roscoe.

“Yeah,” Derek nods.

Stiles launches at him and kisses the hell out of him. “You’re the best,” he mutters between kisses. “This is amazing.”

Derek laughs as Stiles peppers kisses on his stubbly cheeks, jaw, and neck. “I hope you’re not going to thank Erica like this too.”

Stiles pulls away, smiling. “Why not? I’m sure she’d appreciate it.”

Derek growls, pulling Stiles closer to himself. “I wouldn’t,” he says before kissing Stiles again.

He lets Stiles go a minute later, handing him the car keys. Stiles keeps muttering ‘thank you, thank you, thank you’ all the way to the Jeep. Once he’s in, he starts the car, and the engine purrs like a dream.

“I changed everything under the hood,” Derek informs him, leaning on the open window. “So it won’t explode on you anytime soon.”

“Hey,” Stiles jabs a finger at Derek. “Roscoe was perfectly safe before the crash.”

“Keep telling yourself that,” Derek scoffs.

Stiles runs his hands over the wheel, looks around the interior, and turns back to Derek. “Thank you,” he says sincerely, leaning in and kissing Derek again.

“I told you you’ll love it,” Derek grins after Stiles pulls away.

“Come on, get in,” Stiles says, nearly bouncing in his seat. “I’ve been itching to drive for weeks.”
Derek walks around the Jeep, removing the huge bow as he goes and tossing it into the garage. Stiles grins at Derek, pecking him on the lips once more when he gets in the car. Once Derek’s all buckled in, Stiles puts the Jeep in first without even having to struggle with the clutch, and Roscoe smoothly pulls away from the garage.
Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Stiles is jogging like he usually does when his mind can’t shut up for just one second. He’s listening to *The Beatles* this time and paces his running to the beat. It’s a beautiful nearly full moon night, and Stiles can feel his mind quieting down.

He runs down a slope, and suddenly all his senses go on alert. Stiles gets his earphones out and looks around, trying to ignore his heavy breathing so he’d hear what’s happening around him.

Complete silence surrounds him, nothing seems out of the ordinary, which gets Stiles’ adrenaline pumping through his veins. This doesn’t mean anything good. He’s proven right when a second later a dart embeds itself into his neck.

“Fuck,” Stiles swears, getting the dart out and looking at it.

“It took me some time to figure out what you are,” Kate says, a smirk on her lips, as she steps from behind a tree. Oh, how Stiles hates that bitch. “You certainly are rare, angel,” she continues as her psycho hunter buddies make their appearances too. Stiles knew it was too naïve to expect the hunters won’t come back, but he got lulled into a false sense of security over the past few weeks of not hearing anything from them.

A fever runs through Stiles’ body, and he shivers involuntarily. “What’s in this?” He demands, lifting the dart up. He’s so not going to correct her wrong assumption of him being an angel.

“Something that should have a fun effect on you,” Moustache answers, and they all laugh.

Stiles does not like where this is going one bit. Screw it, he’s making a run for it. He lifts his wings in preparation of flight but instead of taking him home, the wings materialize. Stiles grits his teeth against the pain radiating through his back, his wings are shaking.

There’s a gasp of surprise from the hunters. “I thought you said his wings are supposed to be white,” Glasses says accusingly. “How are we supposed to sell them now?”

Kate’s eyes rake over Stiles’ wings, and Stiles tries to demanifest them, but it’s not fucking working. Instead, he drops to one knee as a wave of pain hits him, bringing with itself nausea. The fact that the hunters seemingly want to sell him for parts doesn’t escape his attention, but it’s getting hard to focus on that right now.

“He must be one of the fallen angels then,” Kate says. “You can still sell them, we’ll just need to market them differently.” She comes closer, kneeling right next to Stiles and reaching for his wing.

Stiles flinches back violently, standing up immediately and backing away from her. He’s not about to let that disgusting bigot be the first to touch his wings. “Stay away from me,” Stiles growls at her.

“So sensitive,” Kate tuts at him. She turns to Glasses. “Make sure to keep me a few feathers when you cut them off,” she says offhandedly, moving out of the way of the other hunters advancing on Stiles.

Fear makes Stiles’ heart beat even faster. Not again. He’s not losing his wings again.
He lets his eyes glow and lifts his hands. Two of the five hunters hit trees before Stiles has to duck to avoid being shot. He directs his gaze towards Moustache, clenching his fist and making his ribs break. The hunter howls in pain, doubling over.

Kate starts firing at Stiles. Stiles spins to the side avoiding the first bullet and then raises his hand, stopping the rest. He’s too focused on that and doesn’t notice that Face Tattoo has recovered from hitting a tree. An arrow pierces Stiles’ wing. He curses in pain, losing focus, and a bullet grazes his side since Stiles was too slow in avoiding getting hit.

The hunters fire at him everything they have. Stiles tries to dodge the bullets, arrows, and daggers as best he can while still trying to inflict damage on the hunters. Another arrow pierces his left wing, and more cuts and bruises litter his body.

But he’s giving as good as he’s getting. Kate ends up with her arm pinned against the tree with an arrow that Stiles caught and threw at her. Face Tattoo gets a broken leg and arm and is now trying to replace the cartridge of his gun with only one hand. Chuckles was pinned to the ground, but as Stiles is slowly losing concentration, he’s back on his feet, ready to shoot Stiles right in the head.

Stiles gathers the last of his strength and claps his hands. The sound resonates through the forest, making the trees shake. The hunters that were still conscious have now collapsed, and Stiles breathes a little easier.

He doesn’t stay put, of course. He runs as fast as he can in any direction just to get away from the hunters. The fight took a lot out of him, so he has to stop sooner than he’d like, a hand on a tree as he’s trying to catch his breath.

Once he’s not about to keel over, Stiles brings his left wing forward, examining the damage that the arrows caused. One is stuck right below the wrist of the wing and the other is closer to his shoulder blade. Stiles grabs onto the shaft of the arrow stuck in his wrist and yanks none too gently. He curses up a storm at the pain, but the arrow doesn’t budge.

Stiles’ vision swims for a second and he feels nauseous again. The heat rolls through him once more. Stiles suspects there was some kind of poison in the dart, or maybe it was spelled, but whatever it was it’s making Stiles weaker by the minute. He needs help. And there’s only one person who knows Stiles has wings and lives in the vicinity.

Stiles gets his phone out of his pocket and finds the necessary contact. It rings for a few seconds before a gruff voice answers, “Yeah.”

“Derek,” Stiles says, and woah he sounds like he’s dying.

“Stiles, what’s wrong?” He sounds more awake now. Stiles hates to do this again, hates that he’s going to have to show Derek his vulnerable side again, but he’s not getting out of this on his own.

“Got into a bit of trouble with the hunters,” Stiles answers. He swallows hard as another heat wave makes him shiver. “I need a bit of help.”

Stiles can hear rustling on Derek’s end. “Where are you?” He asks.

“I’ll send you my coordinates,” Stiles says. His eyes close involuntarily and he leans heavier against the tree. “Der, please hurry,” he slurs.

“On my way,” Derek says, and Stiles hears a door slamming.

Stiles hangs up and manages to send Derek his location before passing out.
Stiles regains consciousness as someone’s shaking his shoulder and repeating his name. He blinks his eyes open, but it doesn’t get any brighter. Right. It’s the middle of the night.

“Derek,” Stiles mumbles when the figure in front of him focuses.

“What the hell happened,” Derek growls out, looking at all of Stiles’ injuries.

“Kate,” Stiles answers succinctly. A violent shiver runs through him, and Stiles has to stop himself from throwing up. “The hunters are back in town.”

“Can you walk?” Derek asks.

Stiles nods a couple times and stands up with Derek’s help. Derek throws one of Stiles’ arms around his neck and curls his own arm around Stiles’ waist. Stiles tries as best he can to keep both his wings away from Derek, but they’re shaking and it’s just too difficult though he’s not about to give up.

They walk for what seems like miles, not like Stiles can tell. Everything is fuzzy, and he can’t make sense of what’s happening, he thinks he blacks out for some of it. Stiles only stares at the ground, focused on putting one leg in front of the other and not letting his wings anywhere near Derek. The farther they go, the worse it gets.

The heat runs through him in waves, pain following suit. All Stiles can think about in those moments is the hunters wanting his wings. It’s all about his wings. He can’t let anyone touch them. They’re disgusting. Black and disgusting. But he doesn’t want them cut off. He doesn’t want to go through it again. He won’t survive it this time. An abomination is what he is. It’s all in the wings, his black wings.

“Stiles, I need you to focus,” Derek says. He’s in front of Stiles. They’re kneeling in the dirt. When did they stop walking?

“Stiles, come on,” Derek growls, his hands on Stiles’ cheeks.

“Not my wings, Der,” Stiles mumbles. He can’t let them. He won’t let them. Derek has to understand. He has to help Stiles. “Please, Derek, don’t let them.” He closes his eyes for a second and when he opens them again, he’s barely upright, being dragged by Derek through the woods.

“Fuck,” Derek swears. “Just a couple more steps, Stiles, come on.”

They’re by Stiles’ house. The pain is excruciating now. Stiles doesn’t remember how they got here. There’s only pain, so much pain. But it clears the fuzziness away. He’s shaking uncontrollably though it’s not cold, it’s hot, too hot. And the pain comes back again, searing every cell in his body.

Stiles is sitting against a counter in his kitchen. He only knows this because he recognizes the chipped tiles in the otherwise perfect layout. The tiles around him are red. Blood is dripping down his primaries, staining the floor.

“Stiles, you with me?” Derek asks. He’s next to Stiles on the floor, one hand on Stiles’ thigh, the other on his cheek.

“Yeah,” Stiles croaks out. His mouth is dry, it’s making it difficult to talk. “Yeah, I’m here.”

Derek sighs in relief. “You were gone for the last hour, talking nonsense. Did they drug you? Poison you?”
Stiles tries to shrug a shoulder, his eyes closing for a few seconds before a shake from Derek makes him snap them open. “I don’t know,” Stiles answers, slurring. “Whichever. If it was drugs, they’re wearing off. If it was poison, my system is fighting it and winning.”

“Your eyes have been glowing since I found you,” Derek informs him.

Stiles is too tired for this conversation, and in too much pain. He sighs. “Poison then,” he says. “I don’t know of any poison deadly enough to kill me. And they didn’t get what I am right. So I should be fine. With that at least,” he snorts, not really amused. A shiver runs through him.

Derek nods. “I can take care of the arrows. Do you have any bandages?”

“Bathroom,” Stiles waive in the general direction of it, and Derek leaves him.

While he’s gone, Stiles occupies himself with thoughts of how he’s going to rip Kate apart, piece by fucking evil piece. Her buddies too. Once Stiles is back on his feet, they better run and hide because he’s going to inflict damage beyond measure.

Derek’s suddenly back beside him with bandages and a bowl of water. He places them on the ground and kneels in front of Stiles, examining his wing. His hands reach for an arrow, and Stiles flinches back. Everything’s in sharp focus all of a sudden.

“Do not,” Stiles growls out, “touch my wings.” Stiles knows he’s weaker than a newborn baby right now, but he doesn’t fucking care. He’s not going to let Derek touch him, no matter how much he trusts him.

“How do you propose I get the arrows out then?” Derek asks, the smartass.

“I’ll do it myself,” Stiles grumbles, starting to curl his wing towards himself and stopping immediately because the pain it causes takes his breath away.

“You can barely stay conscious as it is,” Derek remarks. And damn his logic, Stiles hates logic. “Let me do it or you’re going to fuck up your wing.”

Stiles grits his teeth, trying to think of a better way to do this. But he knows there’s no other solution. He shudders again, feels a bead of sweat roll down his temple. Fuck.

“Fine,” Stiles mutters. “Get the arrows out.”

Stiles steels himself for pain, but Derek’s hands are gentle as they probe around the wound, fingers buried in black feathers. An unpleasant shiver runs down Stiles back, and not from the poison. Memories flood Stiles’ brain. His anxiety spikes up and his erratic heartbeat reaches new heights.

“Breathe, Stiles,” Derek says.

“I’m trying,” Stiles grits out.

Derek’s fingers finally wrap around the shaft of the arrow and there’s a cracking sound as he snaps off the arrow head. Stiles gets woozy and light-headed but it’s pain that he can handle. However, when Derek starts pulling out the arrow, Stiles clenches his fists and nearly bites his tongue trying not to scream from the pain. The arrow clatters to the floor, and Derek presses his hand to the wound.

“Can you heal it?” He asks.
Stiles can only shake his head in answer. His vision swims, and there’s a heavy pounding in his head.

“Okay,” he hears Derek’s voice, and opens his eyes not having realized he closed them. “I’m going to bandage it and then take care of the other one,” he says. “Stiles, can you hear me?”

Stiles wants to say yes but his eyes close again and he loses consciousness.

***

Thunder rumbles somewhere further away, wind howls, and rain is pelting the window. Stiles blinks his eyes open. There’s a pounding in his head, his limbs feel heavy, and he aches all over. He lifts himself, mindful of his wings, and sits up. Stiles stretches his right wing easily, but his left is bandaged and a twinge runs through it, making Stiles wince. So it’s not healed yet then.

A knocking comes from the door, and Stiles turns to see Derek standing in the doorway. A bit of a déjà vu. “Hey, how are you feeling?” He asks, coming in, offering a mug to Stiles.

“Like I’ve been run over,” Stiles mutters, glancing at the cup. Seems to be tea. “My wing still hurts,” he says, after taking a sip. It’s chamomile. “Everything else is healed, but I still feel… weak.” He frowns, hating to admit it. “It’s probably the poison.”

“You scared the shit out of me yesterday, Stiles,” Derek says, and Stiles glances up at him. He’s got his arms crossed and a frown on his face.

“Yeah, sorry it’s me that always gets hurt,” Stiles mumbles, taking another sip.

Derek huffs and kneels in front of Stiles, putting a hand on his knee. “Only because you think it’s a good idea to go for a run in the middle of the fucking night,” he deadpans.

“Hm,” Stiles hums around the rim of the mug. “True enough,” he concedes.

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“I could get a bodyguard,” Stiles smirks. “It would be like in a movie, they’d save my life and we’d fall madly in love.”

Derek gives him his most unimpressed glare, and it makes Stiles laugh. “Don’t be mad, boo. I’d still remember our time together fondly,” he says, patting Derek’s cheek and quickly retracting his hand when Derek pretends to bite him. “But, seriously,” Stiles says. “Thank you for taking care of me last night.”

“You scared the shit out of me yesterday, Stiles,” Derek says, and Stiles glances up at him. He’s got his arms crossed and a frown on his face.

“If course,” Derek says, an ‘obviously’ in his tone.

Stiles smiles softly and leans down to kiss him. Derek makes an appreciative noise, his both hands slide up Stiles’ thighs as he leans in closer. Stiles only has one hand free and runs it to the nape of Derek’s neck, into the short hairs there, scratching lightly. A shiver runs down Derek’s spine, and it makes Stiles smirk.

Derek pulls away, taking the cup from Stiles and putting it on the floor, before delving back into the kiss. He nips at Stiles’ bottom lip, soothing it over with his tongue and slipping it inside Stiles’ mouth. Stiles’ hands wander down to Derek’s shoulders, over his pectorals, reaching the hem of his shirt, and tugging it up. His fingertips glide over Derek’s warm skin, eliciting small shivers from him.
With a finger, Derek lifts Stiles’ chin up and kisses down the column of his neck, biting at his collarbones. Stiles sighs in pleasure, closing his eyes and just enjoying Derek’s attention. His wings flare slightly when Derek sucks on a particularly sensitive spot, and it pulls at the wounds. Stiles winces, drawing away from Derek.

“I think we’re gonna have to wait until my wing is healed,” Stiles says.

“Sorry, I didn’t mean,” Derek starts, but Stiles only rolls his eyes.

“You didn’t even touch it, dude, chill.” Stiles strokes his cheek. “Now give me back my tea and go see your pack, they’re probably worried.”

Derek does hand Stiles back the mug but stays put between Stiles’ legs. “They know I’m with you,” he informs Stiles. “They wanted to come check on you today but I told them you wouldn’t appreciate it,” he says, glancing at Stiles’ wings.

Stiles bites his lip. “Thanks.”

“Do you want to eat?” Derek asks. “I made breakfast.”

Stiles grins. “Have I told you that you’re the best?” He pecks Derek’s lips as his ears start turning red.

Derek mumbles something inaudible as he pulls away from Stiles and goes get him breakfast.

***

Derek spends the whole day at Stiles’, mostly getting him food and not allowing him to work so he could rest. Stiles glares at him for that, but it doesn’t affect Derek one bit. Stiles will get his revenge though. He plots it while he’s got nothing to do because he’s not allowed to work.

“My brain will rot, Derek,” Stiles complains, unnecessarily loudly because he knows Derek can hear him from downstairs. “I need something to stimulate my brain or I will go insane. Do you want me to go insane? I’m injured already, and you’re just adding to my suffering. I take my words back. You’re the worst. What you’re doing to me could be considered torture. It’s inhu– oh, you brought me a book,” Stiles interrupts himself when Derek appears in the doorway with said book.

“You’re a drama queen,” Derek tells him, coming closer. “And it’s my book because you need to rest. Move over.”

Stiles glares at him but moves to the other side of the bed, still lying on his stomach. “You come into my house, forbid me to work, order me around. Did I tell you that you’re the worst?” Stiles keeps blabbering as Derek gets into bed and makes himself comfortable with a mound of pillows. He also makes sure to leave space between them so he doesn’t accidentally touch Stiles’ wings. It melts Stiles’ heart a little.

“Will you shut up so I can read to you or what?” Derek asks, eyebrow raised.

“Oh,” Stiles says, stunned. He grins and motions with his hand. “Go ahead.”

As Derek reads, something boring called *Mrs. Dalloway*, Stiles feels his eyelids growing heavier. He tries to fight it, knows it’s Derek’s devious plan of making Stiles rest working, but he’s too weak. Sleep overtakes him somewhere around *Mrs. Dalloway* meeting Peter Walsh.

It’s still raining when Stiles wakes up for the second time, though now it’s a softer pitter patter
against the ledge of the window. It’s oddly soothing. He opens his eyes to a dark room and reaches a hand to turn on the lamp but is met with another body. Right. Derek’s here.

Derek shifts suddenly, and light spills into the room. Stiles blinks, quickly adjusting to new lighting. He smiles at Derek. “Hi,” he says.

Derek glances down his own body, muttering a ‘hey’ in response. Stiles’ eyes track Derek’s line of sight and he blanches. He must’ve shifted in his sleep because now his right wing is loosely draped over Derek’s body. Stiles immediately draws it back in, settling it against his back, heart beating a mile a minute.

Stiles feels Derek’s eyes on him but doesn’t look up. Derek says something about dinner before getting off the bed and leaving the room.

Stiles moves a few minutes later. He goes to his bathroom, flexing his wings on the way. His left one doesn’t hurt as much anymore, only twinges a little like an old scar that’s being pulled at.

Stiles stands in front of the sink, looking at the mirror above it, trying to determine how to start unwrapping his wing. In the end he just takes scissors and carefully cuts through the bandages that he can reach and tears off the rest. Once he’s done with that, Stiles brings his wing forward, separating the feathers and looking at the damage. The wound has healed over, leaving a scar under the feathers. Stiles can’t check the wound closer to his shoulder, but it feels healed too.

He stretches his wings as far as they’ll go before demanifesting them. Stiles shifts his shoulder blades slightly. They ache, and he wants to manifest his wings again but he’d rather deal with the pain and hide them while Derek’s here.

Stiles walks downstairs, having put on a shirt, and sees Derek preparing dinner. It seems to be some kind of stew with a load of vegetables. Stiles grabs another chopping board, standing next to Derek and starting to chop a carrot.

“So, um,” Stiles starts awkwardly, digging his brain for a topic because he’s sure as hell Derek won’t be the one to start the conversation. “Did you tell Laura the hunters are back?”

Derek gives him a look like he thinks what Stiles said is incredibly stupid. “No, Stiles,” he says in a deadpan tone. “I didn’t tell my sister and my Alpha that a very dangerous threat is back in town.”

“Okay, sorry, sorry,” Stiles says, putting his hands up and nearly stabbing Derek with the knife still in his hands. Derek immediately takes the knife away, putting it on the counter. “Sorry about that too,” Stiles says.

Derek rolls his eyes. “I told her immediately after I bandaged you up.”

“And?” Stiles asks impatiently as Derek seems to be unwilling to share information.

Derek purses his lips and crosses his arms. “They went to check out the Argent house.”

A full stop again, and it drives Stiles nuts. “And?” He asks again, losing his patience and also wondering why Derek didn’t tell him before.

“They weren’t there,” Derek answers.

Stiles lifts an eyebrow at him, but Derek only looks at him impassively. “Seriously, dude?” Stiles throws his hands up. “Is the pack still searching for them? Did they find them? Come on, tell me something.”
“So you’d go there and get yourself nearly killed again?” Derek asks, adding a growl at the end. “You need to rest, Stiles.”

“So they did find them,” Stiles says, already getting his phone out and searching for Laura’s number. Oh, those hunters are so dead, Stiles will fucking rip them apart.

“That’s the part you’re focusing on,” Derek huffs, shaking his head.

“If you’re not gonna tell me where they are, Laura will,” Stiles tells him, pressing ‘call’.

“Stiles,” Derek mutters reproachfully, reaching for Stiles’ phone, but Stiles dances out of the way.

The line connects, and Stiles hears Laura’s voice, “Hey, Stiles, shouldn’t you be resting?” she asks.

“Nope,” he answers her, grinning at Derek who’s frowning something fierce. “I’m perfectly fine, so tell me where the sons of bitches are and we’ll kick some ass.”

“Do not tell him, Laura,” Derek says, glaring at Stiles. “Stiles, you lost a lot of blood, you were poisoned, you can’t just –”

“Yeah, yeah,” Stiles waves a hand dismissively. “Laura, the location,” he requests, trying not to start shouting at either of them.

“Stiles, maybe Derek’s right,” Laura says.

“No, he’s not,” Stiles grits his teeth. “Those motherfuckers threatened me, wrecked my car, and nearly killed me twice. Not to mention the horrible things they did to you. I’m not sitting on my ass when I can be out there kicking theirs. So tell me where they are, Laura, or I swear to god.”

“Fine, fine,” Laura sighs. “I’ll send you the location. We’ll be there and ready in half an hour.”

“We’ll see you there,” Stiles answers before hanging up.

“For the record,” Derek says, “I don’t approve of this, and if you end up dead, I will kill you.”

“First of all,” Stiles replies, putting up his forefinger, “I’ll be fine, and they’re gonna die horrible deaths. And second,” he puts up another finger, “I don’t need your approval, I just need you to have my back.”

“I will, Stiles, you know that.” Derek comes closer to him, grabbing him by the hips and pulling him in. “But I don’t want a repeat of last night.”

“It won’t be anything like last night. I’ll be fine,” Stiles promises, running his thumb over Derek’s lower lip and then kissing him. “Now get a move on, honey bun,” he says, pulling away from Derek. “We’re gonna hunt us some hunters.”

Chapter End Notes

I had to read the book Derek reads Stiles in university and I got about as far as the middle of the first chapter. Sorry Ms. Woolf, but you’ve written better stuff.

Hope you enjoyed!
Chapter 15

Chapter Notes

You'll notice that the rating for the fic has changed to Explicit, so if you're not into the smut stuff, be warned that it's at the end of the chapter.

Anyways, lots happening in this chapter, so I hope you like it!

-E

The bunker that the hunters are hiding in is on the opposite side of the preserve from the Hale house. Stiles and Derek meet the pack a few dozen feet away from it, hiding behind some boulders. Reina is there too and she waves excitedly as Derek and Stiles approach.

“Reina?” Stiles asks, lifting an eyebrow.

“I wasn’t gonna miss this like I missed your showdown with that witch,” she answers, hands on her hips in a disapproving mom pose. “Besides, who do you think helped those idiots find this place?” She points a thumb behind herself where the pack is.

“Hey,” Isaac whisper shouts indignantly, frowning at her.

“What’s the plan?” Derek asks Laura, ignoring the bickering.

Laura leans back against the rock, crossing her arms. “We wait for them to get out—”

“Oh, fuck no,” Stiles interrupts immediately. “I’m not waiting any longer.” Before anyone can get a chance to grab at him, Stiles storms out from behind the boulder, manifesting his blade and advancing to the entrance of the bunker.

Sirens start blaring and bright lights flood the forest. Right before that Stiles hears Laura muttering a ‘fucking idiot’ to herself. Which, fair enough.

“Oops,” Stiles says, when the others flank him. “Sorry, guys.” He gives them a sheepish grin.

Boyd rolls his eyes, Erica glares at him, and Isaac mumbles ‘nice going, Stiles’. Laura, Derek, and Reina just seem readying themselves for battle.

The bunker door opens, and out come more than a dozen hunters. Stiles knows the few of them that he and the pack dealt with during the last couple of months, but clearly they brought reinforcements. Kate’s not stupid. She might be a psycho, but she’s smart, and Stiles should’ve been too and he should’ve foreseen this turn of events. As it happens, he thought they’d have only the five hunters to deal with. Yep, he’s an idiot.

There’s no preamble to the chaos that ensues, no bad guy, or in this case girl, talk, the hunters just start firing, and the pack wolfs out and starts ripping them to shreds. Stiles has his eyes on Kate, who’s staying back, closer to the bunker, gun at the ready, but not doing anything, just watching. He starts making his way towards her when an arrow zips past him and he looks to his left to see Face Tattoo with a bow aimed right at Stiles. So Stiles changes paths and charges at him.
Face Tattoo drops his bow and meets Stiles with two knives at the ready. Their blades clash together, Stiles manages to nick the guy’s forearm and receives a nice cut to the thigh. Stiles just hopes his blades aren’t laced with the same stuff the hunters used last night, because he’d be useless in less than five minutes if that were the case. And he really badly wants to rip Kate apart.

Stiles knocks one of Face Tattoo’s blades out of his hand and forces him to the ground. The guy tries to go for Stiles’ belly, but Stiles is faster and lodges his blade into the guy’s throat. Blood spills everywhere, covering Stiles’ hands. The guy gurgles and grapples at Stiles for a few seconds before he goes limp. Standing up, Stiles cleans his blade on his jeans, looking around for Kate.

He sees Glasses, his throat being ripped out by Erica who’s got a murderous smirk on her bloody face when she drops the dead guy on the ground. Reina is fighting a couple hunters at the same time, throwing spells at them that make them scream and tear at their own faces. Derek is pinned against a tree by three hunters, a gun to his forehead. Stiles’ heart sinks and he’s about to teleport there, fuck the consequences of him using his powers, but Isaac throws himself into the fray, taking a hunter down with him, and Derek claws the other two. Stiles sighs in relief.

He spots Kate, backing into the bunker, as she clearly sees that this is not going great for the hunters. Stiles jogs right after her. The bunker is lit in red, and the sirens are still going. Stiles follows the long corridor that opens into a bigger space, filled with racks of guns and computer screens and more corridors branching off to other areas.

A gun clicks behind Stiles, and he turns to see Kate pointing it at him.

“Cute,” Stiles says and lifts a hand to immobilize her using his powers, but Kate only smirks. She pulls at the collar of her blouse to reveal fresh wounds that have been carved into her skin. Angel runes.

“I have a few tricks too,” she says.

Stiles doesn’t answer her. He mostly thinks ‘fuck it’ and moves to get to her, but a shot resounds through the room, louder than the sirens, and Stiles stumbles back, pain flaring in his shoulder. “You fucking bitch,” he growls out, glancing at the red stain that keeps getting bigger on his shirt.

“Move another muscle and I’ll shoot again,” Kate says impassively. Stiles can only glare at her. “This could’ve ended a lot differently, you know,” her tone changes to almost conversational. “If you had just agreed to work for us, none of this would’ve happened.”

“I’m pretty sure I still would’ve wanted to slice you up for what you did to the Hales even if you hadn’t tried to kill me,” Stiles answers. He’s gritting his teeth and trying to imperceptibly use his powers to heal himself, but that’s going to take some time, so he needs her talking.

Kate shrugs a shoulder. “Maybe,” she says. She’s stepping to her left every few seconds, and Stiles is turning right with her, keeping her in his sights. “But you could’ve done so much good with us. You could’ve helped us eradicate the world of monsters. Maybe that way you’d repay for what you are.”

“You don’t know what I am,” Stiles sneers at her.

Kate’s smile returns, and Stiles hates it more than the woman herself. “Oh, but I do,” she says. “I admit that I made an error in judgment last night and thought you’re a more pure creature than you actually are. I thought you’re an angel; my bad.” She puts her free hand up, tilting her head to the side. “But I read the beastiary again. And in there it mentions that fallen angels have black wings with white tipped feathers.” She gives him a meaningful look, and Stiles bites the inside of his cheek.
Stiles is now standing with his back to the entrance while Kate faces it. She’s very close to one of the
gun racks and blindly reaches for a gun with her free hand. Stiles thinks of doing something while
she’s slightly distracted, but his name rings over the sirens, and Stiles glances back to see the pack
minus Reina all jogging up to him. Before Stiles can warn them, a couple of shots make him wince,
and he watches in horror as Derek and Erica go down. Laura is instantly next to her brother, and
Boyd catches Erica as she falls. They’re both conscious, though Derek’s side is bleeding profusely,
and Erica cradles her arm to her chest.

“Now, now,” Kate reprimands when Stiles makes a move to go to them. “I told you not to move.”

“I will rip you to shreds,” Laura growls out, eyes burning red.

“You have bigger problems right now,” Kate replies. “The wolfsbane in those bullets is very potent.
Derek dear and the blonde bitch doesn’t have much time.” Her eyes rake over Derek’s body, and
Stiles grits his teeth.

“Fine,” he says. “Then make your escape and let us take care of them.”

“Oh, I wouldn’t miss this for the world,” Kate replies with a smile. “It won’t take more than a few
minutes. I’d like to watch the wolfsbane work. I haven’t tried this particular one in the field yet.”

“You fucking –” Stiles starts moving forward and stops immediately when a bullet hits the floor next
to him.

“Uh, uh, uh,” Kate song. “Stay where you are and watch them die. It’s your fault anyway.”

“You’re not only insane but also delusional,” Erica growls out. She’s panting and shivering, sweat
coating her forehead. Derek’s not faring any better. “You shot us, you crazy maniac.”

“Yes, but Stiles had a choice to come work for me. He didn’t accept it, and I told him I’d kill all of
you. Now I’m just fulfilling my promise.” Kate says it like it makes perfect sense. She’s really her
own kind of mad. “Now where were we when we got so rudely interrupted?” She focuses back on
Stiles. “Do they know what you are?” Kate asks, motioning with her gun to the pack.

Stiles knows that his face betrays it all. He sees it dawning on Kate and how gleeful that makes her.

“You didn’t tell them, did you?” Kate asks, looking at Stiles with that sadistic gleam in her eyes, her
lips stretched into a satisfied smile.

Stiles clenches his fists, his jaw locked, as he glares at her. He doesn’t say anything because what
can he say, really? Of course, he’s not told the pack what he is. And it’s not like Stiles didn’t want to
tell them. But he knows from experience it’s better not to tell anyone what he is, no matter if he trusts
them or not, it just doesn’t end well for anybody.

The other more selfish reason why he’s not told the pack, and Derek especially, is because he likes
them too much. They’ve become his friends during the past months and he doesn’t want to lose
them. Another thing Stiles has learned from revealing his secret to others is that they start thinking of
him differently, and not in a good way. Stiles would hate if the pack started seeing him as an
abomination, as something tainted and too dangerous and wild to keep around. It’s happened a
couple times before, and Stiles is not eager to repeat the experience.

So he stays silent, not answering Kate.

“You know nothing about what he is, you bitch,” Laura snarls.
“I think I know more than you,” Kate replies. “Should I tell them, or do you want to do the honors?” She directs the question at Stiles.

“Fuck you,” Stiles spits out. He’s trembling now, the fear of losing the pack over this bigger than having a gun pointed at him.

“Very well,” Kate nods. “He’s a nephilim,” she announces, not hiding the disgust when she spits out the last word. Stiles stares at the ground listening to her talk, not daring to look back at the pack. “He’s a filthy crossbreed. He’s an abomination so disgusting that angels themselves are tasked with finding those like him and cleansing the world of them and the angels that dared to bear such creatures.” Stiles feels it like a physical blow that punches the air right out of him. His anger has dissipated and he hugs himself, drawing in his wings closer to himself even if he can’t physically feel them.

“And that’s why you haven’t told them what you are, isn’t it, little nephilim?” Kate taunts him. “Because deep down you know that you’re disgusting, that you’re responsible for the death of an actual angel because it chose to bring you into this world, and you can never make up for it no matter what you do,” she says, satisfaction in her tone at seeing Stiles shrinking into himself.

“That’s enough,” Derek snarls from behind Stiles. Stiles glances back to see him standing, propped up by Laura. He looks away before he can register the looks on his or anyone else’s faces. “Shut your mouth, Kate, or I swear I will rip your throat out.”

“So protective,” Kate laughs. “Oh, Derek, I think you can do better than this,” she glances at Stiles who’s looking off into the distance, trying to keep the tears at bay. “Your threat is quite useless, Derek dear. You’re dying.”

“No on my watch,” Reina shouts, appearing from one of the other tunnels behind Kate. No one has time to so much as react before roots burst through the concrete floor, winding around Kate’s body as she screams. She’s completely covered in a root cocoon when Reina moves her hands, and Kate disappears underground, the concrete floor sealing up after her.

“Nice save, right guys?” Reina grins at them, eyes blazing purple.

Stiles just stands there, mouth gaping open, as he stares at the spot Kate had just been. He can’t believe they actually got rid of her. And he also feels slightly disappointed that he wasn’t the one to end her. Then he remembers that Erica and Derek are probably on the brink of death, so he turns around, wiping at his tears and wincing at the pull on his wound, and walks straight to Derek.

“Stiles,” Derek says softly as Laura next to him tries to act like she’s not here for this moment. “Not now,” Stiles bites out harsher than intended.

He tears Derek’s already torn t-shirt, putting a hand on his wound and making Derek hiss. The light blue glow dances over Derek’s skin as Stiles concentrates on getting the poison out of him and healing his wound. Once he’s done with Derek, Stiles moves on to Erica. She doesn’t say a word, but Stiles can hear Laura briefing Reina on what has happened.

“Thanks, Stiles,” Erica murmurs when Stiles seals her wound. He only nods in response.

“Is it true?” Isaac asks as Stiles moves away from Erica.

“Isaac,” Laura hisses.
Stiles turns to them, not really looking at any of their faces. “Everything she said is true,” he confirms. “I am a nephilim, and the angels want me dead. My mom, an angel, did die because of me.” Stiles bites his lip, looking to the side. “I have no idea how she found out, but it’s true.”

“Stiles,” Derek tries again, reaching out a hand to put on Stiles’ shoulder.

Stiles takes a step away from him, closer to the exit of the bunker. “Don’t,” is all he says to Derek. He runs a hand through his hair. “I’ll see you guys later,” he mutters before leaving, and no one tries to stop him.

***

Stiles’ phone has been ringing all day. The pack gave him until 8 a.m. before they started calling, texting, and even emailing him. So Stiles shut his phone off and relied on his trusted method of coping which is ignoring the problem until it goes away.

He tries to work on the case that he was solving before he got attacked by hunters in the woods but his mind keeps going back to the events of last night. Logically Stiles knows that the pack wouldn’t be calling him or texting him just to tell him they want him out of Beacon Hills, that he’s a freak and they don’t want to see him again. They’re not that cruel. But Stiles can’t help but overthink it.

Even if the pack accepts what he is no questions asked, their behavior around him will probably change. Stiles would hate it if they started tiptoeing around him, treating him as a bomb that’s about to go off at any second, like he’s a wild animal and they don’t know what to expect from him. He doesn’t want to be here for that and he doesn’t want to see people that he cares about scared of him because of what he is.

And then there’s the angel problem. Stiles’ wards are weakening with each day, he’s already been in one place for too long and he needs to move. If he doesn’t and the angels find him, there’s no telling what they’ll do to the pack. They’ll for sure murder Stiles slowly and painfully, and they might do the same with the werewolves just to spite Stiles. And that’s not a risk that Stiles is willing to take.

He should’ve moved the first chance he got. He should’ve hightailed it out of this town after meeting the Hales, and his heart wouldn’t feel like it’s being torn to shreds by rabid dogs right now. Just the thought of never seeing the pack, never seeing Derek, again is too painful. And Stiles promised himself he wouldn’t do this, but his stupid heart went and betrayed him. The fucking thing shouldn’t be trusted with important decisions.

Stiles shoves his laptop off his lap and stands up, starting to pace. He pulls his t-shirt off and manifests his wings, letting them spread across the whole width of his small bedroom. The left wing still hurts, and so Stiles focuses on that, sitting himself on the ground, curling the wing towards himself and starting to knead the muscles to get rid of the tension. He’s almost worked it out when a sudden ringing makes him tense all over.

The sound is coming from his closet where Stiles has shoved a bunch of boxes with unknown contents in them. Folding his wings behind himself, Stiles stands up and cautiously approaches the closet. He opens the door and peers inside. Nothing but boxes. And the ringing of a phone. Stiles digs through the box that the noise is coming from and produces a phone that is older than Stiles himself. His dad’s number is on the display screen.

“Dad?” Stiles answers, confused.

“Oh, thank god, Stiles,” his dad sighs in relief on the other end. Then his voice changes to one that Stiles remembers from childhood when he’d done something particularly bad, like set the garden
shed on fire. “Why the hell can no one reach you?” John demands.

“Relax,” Stiles tells him. He goes back to sit on his bed. “I just shut off my phone for a few hours.”

“Don’t bullshit me, Stiles,” dad replies. “You’re dependent on the damn thing. What’s wrong son?” His voice turns softer at the end.

Stiles takes a second to consider what to tell his dad. What comes out in the end is, “When did you slip a phone into my boxes?”

“Last time I came to visit you when you lived in New York,” dad answers easily. “Why are you stalling?”

Stiles smiles to himself. “Nothing gets past you, right?”

“Stiles.”

“Fine,” Stiles sighs. “The pack knows what I am,” he murmurs almost inaudibly. He spends the next hour talking to his dad about what happened and what he should do next. As expected, Stiles doesn’t like the solution his dad comes up with.

“It’s a nice town in Washington,” his dad is saying, trying to sell him on the idea of moving. “There’s not too many people, and the supernatural isn’t active there, so you won’t have to use your powers and you’ll be able to stay there for longer.”

“Sounds nice, dad, but…” Stiles trails off. He doesn’t really know what to say. He’s just so fed up with running and hiding, and he can’t do this for the rest of his life.

John sighs, and they stay silent for a minute. “Listen, son,” he finally says. “I will support your decision, but talk to him before you make it.”

“Talk to who?” Stiles asks, playing ignorant.

“You know who,” dad replies, and before Stiles can say it, he adds, “And no Harry Potter jokes. Talk to Derek, figure out what each of you wants, and then make a decision.”

“Okay, okay, I’ll be a grown up and won’t make rash decisions,” Stiles mutters, rolling his eyes. “So boring,” he whispers to himself.

“Let me know what you decide,” dad says. Stiles promises to inform him and hangs up after saying bye.

He sits there, dimly lit by his bedside lamp, thinking if one a.m. is too late to call Derek, when there’s a knock on his window. His second story window. Stiles nearly gets a heart attack. But he knows that only one person can come near his house without triggering the wards, so he goes to open the window, and steps back to let Derek jump in.

“I have a perfectly functioning door,” Stiles tells him, sliding the window shut.

“You weren’t picking up your phone, so I doubted you’d open your door,” Derek answers, though he does look a bit sheepish.

“Good call,” Stiles agrees, inclining his head.

The silence that stretches afterwards is neither comfortable nor easy. Stiles suddenly realizes he’s shirtless and his wings are out in the open, and tries to compensate for that by crossing his arms and
straightening his posture. Derek shoves his hands in his pockets and licks his lips nervously. Stiles would be lying that even in a moment like this that little tongue movement didn’t distract him.

“Don’t you have like a speech prepared?” Stiles, of course, breaks the silence first. “You’ve been calling me all day, I’d imagine you’d have something to –”

“I love you,” Derek blurts out, seemingly surprising even himself if the expression on his face is any indicator.

Stiles is left speechless for probably the first time in his life. He stares at Derek with his mouth open, completely frozen. “Okay,” Stiles says slowly, drawing the word out. “I did not expect that.”

“Me neither,” Derek mumbles, and they both snort in laughter. “But it’s true,” Derek continues. “I’m in love with you, Stiles. And it doesn’t matter what you are, or what bigotry Kate was spitting out about you. I love you and I want to be with you.”

Stiles clears his throat, looking away from Derek. It’s all a bit too much right now, and he just breathes, counting to five in his head. “Even if what she said is true?” He asks after a few seconds.

“What she said is not true,” Derek argues, stepping closer to Stiles. “She talked like that about all supernaturals. What do you think she called us?”

“But I got my mom killed,” Stiles whispers, staring at the ground. He curls his wings around himself. “She died because of what I am.”

“So you think it’s my fault my whole family died in a fire?” Derek asks, no indication in his tone on what he’s feeling.

“What?” Stiles instantly lifts his head to look at Derek, shocked. “Of course not!” His wings flare out.

Derek glances at them, momentarily distracted. “So you shouldn’t blame yourself for your mother’s death,” he replies. “You weren’t the one who killed her, Stiles.”

Stiles wants to argue further, wants Derek to understand that it really is Stiles’ fault, that he doomed his mother just by being born. The logical part of him, though, agrees with Derek. “I’ve done other things,” Stiles says. “A lot of which are more than morally questionable.” Stiles has killed and tortured in order to save people that he cares about. He quickly learned not to form attachments to people, and he was doing so good before the Hales showed up.

Derek’s eyes light up electric blue and they bore into Stiles. “You know what the color of my eyes means,” he states it, it’s not even a question. And Stiles does know, so he nods. “They’ve been like this since before the fire,” Derek near whispers it.

He’s right in thinking that Stiles assumed it was because of the fire. But even Derek saying that his eyes have been blue longer than that doesn’t change anything for Stiles. And it certainly doesn’t change the way he feels about Derek.

“We’ve all done things we regret and feel guilty about,” Derek says. “You don’t need to share every aspect of your past with me, Stiles. I just want you to share your future.”

Stiles chews on his lip, his eyes darting all around the dimly lit room. “Wow,” he finally says. “It’s so obvious you’re a literature nerd,” he deflects, making a half assed attempt at a laugh.

Derek gives him a stop-bullshitting-me look. “Stiles,” he says, tone serious and heavy.
Stiles is too overwhelmed to answer sincerely, so he closes the distance between them and kisses Derek. He cups Derek’s cheeks, scratching his fingernails lightly over the scruff of Derek’s beard, making Derek growl lowly and pull Stiles in closer. Derek’s fingers dig into Stiles’ hips, and then one of his hands makes its way up over Stiles’ naked chest, eliciting a shiver out of him.

Derek nips on Stiles’ bottom lip before dipping his head and gliding his lips over the column of Stiles’ neck. His thumb is stroking over Stiles’ pulse point that gets more erratic when Derek starts working on a hickey on Stiles’ clavicle. Satisfied with his work, Derek returns to Stiles’ mouth, licking into him and grinning when Stiles moans. Their kiss interrupted, they just stare at each other for a few seconds, both panting, before Derek looks at something to the side and lifts an eyebrow at Stiles.

Stiles tenses slightly when he realizes what Derek’s looking at. His wings have shifted without Stiles consciously thinking about it and have enveloped Derek, though without touching him. The black feathers surround them both, blocking out the rest of the world.

“Sorry,” Stiles mumbles, drawing his wings back.

“You know I like them, Stiles,” Derek replies. “You don’t need to be sorry.”

Stiles smiles at him and delves in for another kiss. Even though Derek means so much to Stiles, some things just take time. So Stiles demanifests his wings, wincing at the pain in his shoulder blades. He distracts Derek from noticing that by lifting the hem of Derek’s t-shirt and getting rid of it completely when Derek gets what Stiles wants.

Having Derek half naked, Stiles looks his fill before starting to trace his muscles with his fingertips. Stiles kisses at Derek’s neck and over his shoulders, his hands sliding lower and reaching Derek’s jeans. He pops the button open but doesn’t get any further as Derek’s fingers wrap around his wrists, keeping him still.

“What do you want, Stiles?” Derek asks, his pupils blown wide with lust.

“I want you to fuck me,” Stiles answers, extracting his hands from Derek’s gentle grip and instead pushing his fingers into the hair on the back of Derek’s head, bringing him closer to Stiles. “I want you to fuck me so hard that I could feel it tomorrow,” he says, brushing his lips lightly against Derek’s. “I want to come screaming your name, Derek.”

Stiles near smiles at the effect the words have on Derek. His mouth is devoured the instant Stiles stops talking and he gladly welcomes the dominant side of Derek. Stiles laughs slightly in surprise when Derek lifts him and carries him to the bed, dropping him on it and crawling over him.

Stiles continues with his interrupted mission of getting Derek out of his jeans by pulling the zipper down and getting his hand inside Derek’s underwear. Derek makes an inhuman sound against Stiles’ mouth when Stiles wraps his fingers around Derek’s dick and swipes his thumb over the head of it. Derek’s hips roll in tandem with the movement of Stiles’ hand and he whimpers when Stiles removes his hand to try and get the jeans out of the way completely. But he gets impatient pretty quickly and snaps his fingers to get them both naked. Derek pulls away from him, looking down at himself and then at Stiles.

“I wanted to get you naked,” he complains, glaring at Stiles.

Stiles laughs at the ridiculousness of it, his frame shaking under Derek. He pats Derek’s cheek. “Next time, babe.”
Derek rolls his eyes and returns to ravishing Stiles’ body with his mouth. He licks and bites and kisses down Stiles’ chest, making him writhe on the bed and grip the sheets. Because he’s such an asshole, he totally ignores Stiles’ dick and starts sucking hickeys onto his thighs as his fingers travel between Stiles’ cheeks.

“Oh, yes, yes, yes,” Stiles mumbles when Derek starts circling his entrance.

“You’re eager,” Derek comments, lifting up and kissing Stiles briefly.

“You have no idea,” Stiles replies before, with a snap of his fingers, a bottle of lube appears next to his hip.

Derek eyes it. “I’m not doing a good enough job if you’re still able to concentrate and do that.”

Stiles laughs again. “Then you should try harder,” he dares.

The smirk Derek gives him sends pleasurable anticipation shivers down Stiles’ spine and makes his heart beat faster.

Derek sits back, grabbing the lube and applying a generous amount to his fingers. He leans forward on one hand, his face inches away from Stiles’, and his slippery fingers just caressing Stiles’ crack.

“Come on, Derek,” Stiles demands, wiggling his butt.

“So impatient,” Derek mumbles, just brushing Stiles’ lips with his own. He kisses Stiles slow and gentle before starting to explore his mouth deeper, his finger breaching Stiles’ hole. Derek works him open too slowly for Stiles’ liking but he doesn’t hurry no matter how much Stiles complains and curses at him.

“Oh, okay, I’m ready,” Stiles mumbles when Derek’s three fingers deep inside of him. “I want to ride you so hard you’re fucking seeing stars.”

Derek seemingly isn’t opposed to that if the growl he lets out is any indication. They share another bruising kiss before Stiles flips them over and settles above Derek. He smirks, lowering himself torturously slowly onto Derek, but his smile quickly disappears and he throws his head back, moaning in pleasure, when he’s fully seated in Derek’s lap.

Stiles starts to move his hips in circles at first, watching as Derek bites his lip, his eyes flashing from hazel to electric blue. He changes his pace quickly, hands on Derek’s chest for leverage as he starts moving up and down, Derek meeting him for every thrust.

Derek’s hands wander over Stiles’ thighs, gripping onto his hips to help him move above Derek. He leans forward when Stiles slows down, only grinding into Derek and enjoying the sensation of being full, and licks at Stiles’ nipple, sucking on it.

“Fuck, Derek,” Stiles whispers, and his pace quickens again.

Stiles gets them both close just to back down and prolong it several times, but he loses it when Derek finally wraps his hand around Stiles’ dick, pumping him fast and hard. He doesn’t last for longer than a few minutes after that, spilling over Derek’s fist with Derek’s name on his tongue, and muttering gibberish in the aftermath.

Derek kisses him too gently, cradling Stiles’ cheek in his hand, swiping his thumb over Stiles’ cheekbone. It’s all Stiles can do to not fall for this man even harder.
Speaking of which, Derek’s still hard, and so Stiles starts to move his hips again. “Fuck me,” he whispers into Derek’s ear and suddenly finds himself on his back, Derek’s hips driving into him with renewed vigor. “Come on, Der,” Stiles encourages him, kissing any part of him that’s in reach. “Come inside me, fill me up and claim me as yours.”

That seemingly does the trick as Derek growls out Stiles’ name and finishes inside him. Derek slumps on him, breathing heavily. Stiles welcomes the weight, his hand running over Derek’s back, blindly tracing the swirls of the tattoo between his shoulder blades. Derek licks at Stiles’ neck, making him laugh and push at him.

“Dude, ew,” Stiles manages through his giggles.

“I’m still inside you, Stiles, and that’s what you find disgusting?” Derek snorts in amusement. He kisses Stiles before rolling onto the bed to lie next to him.

Stiles grimaces at the feeling of cum leaking out of him and snaps his fingers to clean himself and Derek.

“Handy,” Derek comments. He reaches out a hand, placing it on Stiles’ chest, over his heart.

“Why haven’t we done this sooner?” Stiles asks absentmindedly. “We could’ve been doing this for weeks. It was amazing.”

Derek’s hand moves to Stiles’ side and he pulls Stiles closer to himself. “We have plenty of time to do this plenty more times,” he mumbles into Stiles’ hair.

“You’re right,” Stiles smiles, turning to kiss Derek who’s already half asleep. “And plenty more kinkier things, right?”

Derek huffs a laugh, pressing a kiss to Stiles’ temple. “Whatever you want, Stiles.”

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The morning finds Stiles blearily blinking his eyes open to be greeted with the sight of Derek watching him. Stiles smiles before yawning hugely and hugging his pillow closer to himself.

“Morning,” Derek says with a soft smile. He runs his fingers through Stiles’ hair and down his cheek.

“Morning,” Stiles mumbles back. “How long have you been creepily watching me sleep?” He can’t resist from asking.

Derek, predictably, rolls his eyes. “Not too long,” he answers.

“Mmm,” Stiles hums. “In Derek language that means about an hour, right?”

Derek shakes his head. “You’re an idiot.”

“Love you too,” Stiles grins at him.

Derek’s eyes widen slightly and he freezes. Only then Stiles realizes that he didn’t say it back last night. He was too caught up in his own need to process it and later in having the best sex of his life to realize that he didn’t tell Derek that he loved him too.

Stiles lifts up on his elbow, reaching for Derek with his free hand. He strokes his stubbly cheek. “I love you,” he says sincerely.
Derek leans down to meet him in a kiss. The pose isn’t too comfortable for Stiles who’s still lying on his stomach, and he draws back sooner than he’d like. Derek, a soft smile on his face, traces his fingers down Stiles’ bicep before his eyes move to Stiles’ back and he stops the movement.

“Can I ask you something?” He asks too carefully for Stiles’ liking.

“You just did,” Stiles answers like the grown up that he totally is.

Derek doesn’t even react to that. “Those scars on your back,” he begins, and Stiles suddenly tenses. How could he have forgotten about that? “Are they because you have wings? That’s why you don’t want anyone touching your back?”

Stiles drops his head face first into a pillow and groans into it. “This is too serious to talk about in the morning after we just had mind-blowing sex. Can’t we just have the sex again instead of talking?”

He mumbles, only half his face visible from being smushed into the pillow.

Derek glances at his hand on Stiles’, his thumb moving in circles. “We don’t have to talk about it if you don’t want to,” he assures.

“Fuck it,” Stiles mutters to himself. He takes a breath and lifts himself up again. “The scars are not because I have wings,” he starts explaining. “When the angels eventually found me and my mom, they killed her for having me, and then they cut my wings off for being what I am.” Stiles takes a second to just breathe and focus on Derek’s soothing touch. “That hurt like a bitch initially and then the pain didn’t stop for a year until my wings grew back. When they did, they were black, marking me as a nephilim, so that every angel I encountered would know what I am just by looking at them.”

He chews on his lip for a moment. “That was over five years ago and I still can’t get rid of the panic I get when someone gets close to my back.”

It’s silent for a while after Stiles has stopped talking. Then Derek mutters, “Shit, Stiles,” and Stiles lifts his head to look at him, smiling wryly.

“Yeah, it’s fucked up,” he comments.

“I’m sorry you had to go through that,” Derek whispers, pressing his lips to Stiles’ temple.

Stiles closes his eyes, focusing on Derek and trying to block the memories. He clears his throat, sitting up. “Anyway,” Stiles says, ruffling his hair. “Breakfast?” He glances at Derek.

Derek sighs but he sits up too. “Yeah, sure.”

“We could drive to the diner. They have the best pancakes there,” Stiles rambles, getting out of bed and chucking on some underwear and jeans. He turns to Derek, watching him pull tight boxer briefs over his ass, and loses track of what he was saying.

Derek lifts an eyebrow at him. “You okay?”

Stiles makes his way to Derek over the bed, not wanting to waste time walking around it, and grabs him, kissing him with fervor. Derek smiles into the kiss before pulling Stiles in closer. “Or we could just stay here and have some of that awesome sex,” Stiles mutters, lips already sliding over the skin of Derek’s shoulder.

“You want to discuss some of those kinks?” Derek asks, lifting Stiles’ head up with a finger under his chin.

Stiles smirks at him, drawing Derek in by the nape of his neck, but before their lips touch Stiles
freezes. His wards hum loudly in his head, warning him that someone with angelic blood is poking around, trying to get in. How the fuck could they have found him already? His wards aren’t that weak yet, so how the hell they’re here?

“Stiles?” Derek asks, concern leaking into his voice.

Heart in his throat, Stiles looks at him, eyes wide with fear. “The angels,” he whispers. “They found me.”
Chapter 16

Chapter Notes

Sorry for missing a couple of weeks, but ya know, life and things and stuff. Anyway, here's another chapter, added some smut as a compensation for waiting for two weeks without anything new.

Hope ya like it!

-E

The diner is unusually full of people. Derek finds it hard to focus on the nephilim sitting in front of him as his eyes and ears keep trying to catch movement and snippets of conversation from other tables. That wouldn’t be necessary if he thought the nephilim was trustworthy and wasn’t planning on murdering all of them, but as it is, they’ve not had good fortune with other supernaturals, so he’s keeping his guard up just in case. In Derek’s experience that’s the best course of action.

“Why are you even here? Why are you so interested in keeping me safe? Why now? I’ve been in trouble plenty of times, so why is it that you show up now? And how do you know my mom?” Stiles rattles off questions, leaning forwards slightly, eyes boring into the nephilim like she’s a secret that he can’t wait to unravel. Derek nearly smiles at Stiles being just so… Stiles.

“Calm down with the questions, sheesh.” The nephilim blows a strand of hair out of her eyes, but seems unperturbed. “I’m just repaying a favor by keeping you alive, that’s all.” She’s chewing her gum obnoxiously loud, and the popping of bubbles makes Derek want to scream.

“I don’t need a guardian nephilim,” Stiles scoffs, rolling his eyes. “I’ve been doing great the past five years without anyone’s help.” There’s bitterness in his voice, and Derek can’t quite pin point why.

“Yeah, well, you’re about to not do so great,” the nephilim says. She pops another bubble, and Derek has to restrain himself from popping his claws.

Stiles’ hand finds its way onto Derek’s thigh, squeezing slightly. He doesn’t take his eyes off the nephilim though.

“Why? What do you know?” Stiles asks.

“They’re coming for you,” she says. “And you’re clearly not inclined to run and hide,” she says, throwing a glare Derek’s way. She’s been doing that a lot.

~1 hour earlier~

“The angels,” Stiles whispers. His eyes are wide with fear, and Derek bets his heart is beating as fast as Derek’s. “They found me.”

“Fuck,” Derek swears. His mind starts buzzing with ideas of how to help Stiles, he’s not even really aware of getting dressed. He needs to call Laura. That’s the obvious thing to do, he needs to tell his Alpha that there’s a threat in town, a dead serious threat. According to the little knowledge Stiles has shared with him, the angels are brutal and near invincible, but Stiles is basically pack and they’re not
going to let him deal with this alone.

Fully dressed, Derek starts looking for his phone. He drops the search immediately when his eyes lock on Stiles who’s kneeling on the floor, tying and retying his shoelace for probably the millionth time. His breathing is ragged and his eyes aren’t focused on anything in particular.

“Stiles,” Derek tries, stepping closer to him. If this is anything like that panic attack Stiles had in the woods, Derek doesn’t want to risk making it worse. After that incident, he read up online on how to help in such cases, so he just tries not to scare Stiles further.

“Hey, Stiles,” he kneels in front of Stiles, but that doesn’t give him any reaction either. Derek reaches out a hand and gently places his fingertips on Stiles’ shoulder. Stiles snaps his eyes to Derek and exhales heavily. “You with me?” Derek asks.

Stiles nods his head, swallowing hard and standing up. He runs a hand through his hair. “You need to leave,” he says.

Derek frowns and crosses his arms. “I’m not leaving you.” That’s not even an option. He’s going to call Laura and they’re going to solve this like a pack.

“Listen to me,” Stiles glares at him. “Get your furry ass out of here, Derek. You won’t be able to help me anyway, you’re just going to be a distraction.” His jaw is clenched, hands balled into fists. Are they really going to have to fight about this?

“I’m staying,” Derek says in his most assertive tone.

Stiles opens his mouth to argue some more, but he winces and grabs his head, swearing colorfully. Derek is immediately by his side, wrapping his fingers around Stiles’ wrists and trying to take away the pain. His brows furrow when he can’t sense any.

Stiles sighs, lowering his hands, and Derek drops his hold of him. “Fine,” Stiles bites out. “Stay. Let’s fucking die together like Romeo and Juliet. Motherfucking awesome,” he keeps muttering as he goes down the stairs. Derek, of course, follows close by.

Stiles’ hand is trembling as he reaches for the door knob. Derek can’t even imagine what he’s feeling right now. Derek’s own senses are on high alert, but he can’t hear anything from the other side of the door. The angels clearly have even more advanced cloaking abilities than Stiles, as Derek can at least hear Stiles’ ragged breathing.

Derek places a hand on the nape of Stiles’ neck, rubbing circles with his thumb. He remembers his mom doing this when he got too worked up about something. Obviously it was never life and death when he was a kid, but he hopes Stiles will at least appreciate the gesture.

Stiles exhales heavily and opens the door. He goes stock still faced with a dirty blonde girl who’s popping bubble gum bubbles. Derek thinks she looks like the furthest thing from intimidating. But he thought the same of Stiles when he met him the first time, so now he knows better.

The girl looks at Derek, scrunching up her nose, and Derek can’t help the rumble that escapes him as he sneers back at her. Then she focuses on Stiles, looking him up and down. “Stiles, right?” She asks.

“Yeah,” Stiles mumbles, and then clears his throat. “You’re…” He trails off, eyes darting behind the girl, seeing something that Derek doesn’t. It makes Derek tense up even more.

“I’m Alexis,” the girl says. “Now get your stuff ‘cos we’re blowing this popsicle stand.”
Derek growls even louder than before, stepping forward. “He’s not going anywhere with you.” Derek wouldn’t want to make a scene in the middle of the day in a suburb neighborhood, but he doesn’t think the angel has the same reservations. And Derek is not letting her take Stiles without a fight.

She rolls her eyes, popping another bubble. “Relax, Cujo,” she says. “I’m not an angel. I’m a nephilim just like Stiles. And I’m here to help you,” she directs the last part to Stiles.

“Help with what?” Stiles asks. Derek’s glad to note suspicion in his tone.

“You’ve been using your powers too much,” the yet to be confirmed nephilim says. “Your wards are weak. If you keep this up, the angels will soon know where you are. Come on, let’s not waste too much time.” She steps back, off the porch, and Stiles, to Derek’s horror, follows after her.

“What are you doing?” Derek grabs Stiles’ arm, spinning him to face Derek. His heart is beating too fast in his chest, and he’s barely controlling the shifting of his eyes.

“I…” Stiles mumbles, eyes wandering off to the blonde on his lawn. “How did you find me?” He asks the girl. But he doesn’t go closer to her, instead staying close to Derek, which makes Derek relax the tiniest bit.

The smile the girl offers Stiles edges on predatory. “I have my ways. You’ll be able to ask all the questions you want when we’re safe.”

Stiles’ throat clicks when he swallows. “I’m not going,” he says with less conviction than Derek would want from him, and he glances at Derek.

Derek feels the blonde looking at him too. She huffs, casting her eyes skywards. “For fuck’s sake,” she mutters.

Before Derek can even react, he’s pinned to the wall, unable to move, and the girl is in front of him, her blade under Derek’s throat. Derek growls at her, showing his fangs. Stiles quickly grabs the girl, yanking her away from Derek. Her blade drops to the ground as Stiles forces her arm behind her back. She grunts, frowning, but her hold on Derek vanishes.

“Touch him again and you’re dead,” Stiles tells her menacingly. “I don’t care if you’re the only other nephilim in the world.”

“This world,” the, apparently, nephilim says, struggling in Stiles’ grip. “Let go. I won’t touch your precious pet.”

Stiles lets her go and stands in between her and Derek. The wolf in Derek scoffs at that because he’s more than capable of taking care of himself, but the logical part of him wonders if he could actually hold his own against a nephilim. He keeps his claws on hand just in case.

“Claudia forgot to mention your fondness for strays,” the nephilim says, glaring at Derek.

Stiles visibly blanches. “You knew my mom?” He asks, voice soft and vulnerable.

~Now~

“No, I’m not running anymore,” Stiles replies. “Why did you show up only now?”

“Personal issues,” her eyes flit to Derek again. “You’re really prepared to risk your life for some werewolf?” She lifts an eyebrow, looking not impressed.
Stiles grits his teeth. “He’s not just some werewolf,” he almost snarls. It makes Derek want to bend him over a table and show him how much he appreciates Stiles. Instead, Derek gives a smirk to the nephilim who stops chewing her gum and focuses on Derek.

“And you’re willing to let Stiles die for you?” She asks coldly.

“I’m not going to –” Stiles starts indignantly.

“I won’t let anything happen to Stiles,” Derek tells her, staring straight into her eyes, letting her know how serious he is. “He’s more than capable of taking care of himself, but if he needs me or the pack, he’s got us no questions asked. Those angels will regret coming after him.”

Stiles squeezes Derek’s thigh again, and there’s a proud grin on his face. The nephilim looks between them and sighs. “Idiots,” she mumbles. “True love,” she spits those words out, “won’t save you from beings who can snap their fingers and turn you to dust. And your mother said you’re smart,” she shakes her head at Stiles.

“Wow, you’re not bitter or jaded at all.” Stiles rolls his eyes. “How did you know my mom?” He asks, eyes narrowing at her.

“When my dad was killed, Claudia looked out for me. They were friends, I guess.” She shrugs a shoulder.

“How come my mom didn’t tell me about you?” Stiles asks the nephilim. He’s tense, Derek can feel it radiating off of him.

The nephilim shrugs again. “She must’ve thought I was dead and probably didn’t see the point in telling you about me,” she says. “We didn’t keep in touch much. After the angels killed my dad and cut my wings off, I didn’t really want any angel around me. I think you can understand that.” She looks past Stiles, over his shoulders. Derek’s not sure how it works, but they clearly can see each other’s wings. “So Claudia kept her distance.”

“When was that?” Derek asks, not hiding the harsh tone. Things just don’t add up to him. The girl looks barely Stiles’ age. When would Stiles’ mother had had the time to look after a nephilim when she was busy protecting her own son?

The girl blows a bubble, looking into the distance, as she thinks. Derek grits his teeth when the pop resounds through the diner. “About fifty Earth years, give or take,” she responds.

“Fifty years?” Derek repeats, looking her up and down. What the fuck is she playing at?

“Earth years, Spot.” She rolls her eyes and then looks at Stiles. “Did you not tell him anything?”

~30 minutes ago~

Derek has no idea why Stiles agreed to meet the nephilim in a public location for a chat, but he wasn’t going to let Stiles go alone. She said something about Stiles’ house not being safe and that she’ll wait for them in the diner on the other side of town before disappearing. Stiles didn’t even talk it through with Derek before hopping into his Jeep to follow her.

“You really believe she’s a nephilim like you and not an angel sent by God or whoever to kill you?” Derek asks him, taking Stiles’ phone from him because he left his own at Stiles’ and he desperately needs to contact Laura and tell her about the situation.

Stiles glances at him, one eyebrow raised. “Okay, angel 101,” he says, turning back to the road and
changing gear. “They are not warriors of God. And they most certainly weren’t sent by God to look after people or kill nephilim. The way my mom explained it to me is that there’s this other plane, like another dimension or whatever you want to call it, where the angels come from. They can visit multiple other dimensions, and they like Earth ‘cos they’re seen as these divine creatures here, right? So basically, it was just people seeing what they wanted to see and the angels just went with it. Think of it as the multiverse theory. They’re just from another universe, parallel to ours. The only thing they got to do with religion is that some idiot saw an angel with his wings out and couldn’t think of a better explanation than that it was a messenger from God.” Stiles snorts, not really amused.

Derek secretly sighs in relief. He’s absolutely up for fighting anyone and anything trying to hurt Stiles, but God? That would have been a tough one to put it mildly. Besides, even though he’s not much for religion, he’s glad he doesn’t live in a world where God wants to eradicate someone like Stiles whose only fault is that he was born. That seems like a terrifying concept.

“So you think she’s a nephilim?” Derek repeats his question, scrolling through Stiles’ contacts to Laura’s name.

Stiles nods. “I saw her wings. They’re the same as mine.” He bites on his lip. “And I just know that she’s a nephilim. I can’t explain it, but I just know.”

Derek isn’t too happy with that answer. “Doesn’t mean you can trust her just because she’s a nephilim.”

“She knew my mom, Derek,” Stiles argues. “My mom wouldn’t have asked her to look after me if she thought that Alexis would hurt me or give me in to the angels. Look, I know she’s not the warmest of people, but she’s the only other nephilim in the world. My whole life I thought I was the only one, and now I’m not. It’s just…” He trails off. “She clearly knows more than me. She can teach me stuff to better protect myself. And I’m willing to deal with her being an asshole for that.”

Derek simply grunts in response, pressing the call button next to Laura’s name.

~Now~

Stiles’ cheeks color slightly, and Derek would find that incredibly appealing if they weren’t sitting in front of what Derek still assumes is an enemy. “He just found out what I am like two days ago.”

“Then why the fuck –” The nephilim cuts herself off, shaking her head. “You know? Whatever. I don’t care.” Another obnoxious bubble pop.

Stiles turns slightly to Derek. “Remember I told you about the different planes?” He asks, side-eyeing the nephilim. Derek nods. “So time flows differently there than on Earth. You can spend like what seems a few months on another plane, and on Earth it’s been like fifty years.” He fully faces the nephilim again. “You were with the angels?”

“Not on my own volition,” she answers. Her demeanor changes from the cool and composed one to something more vulnerable. “They caught me again, and they should’ve killed me, but they didn’t. They brought me back with them.” Her voice goes quiet in the end, eyes unfocused, and Derek feels almost sorry for what she must’ve gone through. Almost. The chick did try to kill him and is actively trying to talk Stiles into leaving so.

The nephilim clears her throat. “Anyway. I came back to Earth a couple months back, and only recently found out about Claudia. Sorry, by the way.” She glances at Stiles who only nods.

“How did you escape?” Derek asks. He obviously knows next to nothing about angels, but
somehow he’s pretty sure they’d have some security measures to prevent their prisoners from breaking out.

“The faction that captured me was attacked. I managed to escape during the chaos,” she explains, and even though Derek knows fuck all about angel factions and attacks, he calls bullshit. But before he can say that out loud, Stiles taps his fingers on Derek’s thigh.

“I thought the factions united years ago,” Stiles comments. Derek really hates not being up to date on what they’re talking about.

The nephilim shakes her head. “There’s more factions than I care to count. And less angels every day. Not a lot of them are interested in stopping killing each other or doing whatever the hell else they want. But Benjamin and his faction are pretty bent on eradicating nephilim. You were just lucky he was busy with me the past months. Or years. You know what I mean. Now that he no longer has a nephilim to experiment on, he will come for you, Stiles.”

Stiles squirms in place at the nephilim’s words. He glances out the window, his fingers restless on Derek’s leg. Derek weaves their fingers together, trying to calm Stiles down. He’s trying to piece together the nephilim’s story from the little bits that she shared and find plot holes to prove she’s playing them somehow.

Stiles sighs, turning back to the nephilim. “You spent months with them, right?” He asks, and when she nods, continues. “You must know something about them that we can use. Let them come. We just need to prepare and then end it once and for all.” His eyes are fierce as he says it, and Derek’s behind him one hundred percent.

The nephilim scoffs, reeling back slightly. “Are you crazy? I’m running as far away from them as I can.”

“And how long do you want to do that, Alexis?” Stiles asks. “You want to run and hide the rest of your life? You want to live in fear every second of every day? Or do you want to fuck those motherfuckers up for what they did to you?”

The nephilim looks away, still chewing on her gum. “I need to think,” is all she says before disappearing with the faintest sound of fluttering wings.

“Fuck,” Stiles swears, sighing heavily and slumping back.

“Do you think she’ll help us?” Derek asks him.

Stiles rubs at his eyes with his free hand. “I don’t know, man,” he says and runs his hand over his hair. “I hope so because otherwise we’re fucked.”

***

Derek is watching Stiles from behind the bar. It’s been two days since the visit from the nephilim and they’ve not heard anything from her, but Stiles has been working tirelessly. Currently, it’s after midnight, and Stiles is nearly asleep on his books in the corner booth of Jade Wolf.

“You should bring him home,” Laura says, appearing next to Derek.

Derek looks around the bar. There’s only a few clients as it’s not the weekend, and he knows that Laura can manage it on her own for a couple hours until closing time, so he nods. “You need help with anything before we leave?” He still asks.
Laura smiles slightly and shakes her head. “Nah, it’s all good,” she says and then pushes at his shoulder. “Just go already. And let him sleep.” She points a finger at Derek, and Derek’s ears totally don’t start burning with what his sister is implying.

So Derek only frowns at her. “You’re impossible,” he mumbles, walking away, followed by Laura’s snickers.

Stiles has his head resting against his open palm, looking through half-lidded eyes at a book in front of him. His hair is in disarray from all the times he’s run his fingers through it, and Derek’s pretty sure he’s wearing the same clothes from yesterday.

“Stiles,” Derek says gently, touching his shoulder, but Stiles still starts.

“Huh? What?” He mumbles blinking hard at Derek. “What time is it?”

“Time to go home,” Derek answers, starting to pack up Stiles’ things only to have his hands swatted at.

“Don’t touch it,” Stiles grouches. “You’re ruining my system.”

Derek looks at the haphazard piles of paper, books, and sticky notes stuck to anything and everything, and Stiles’ laptop in the middle of all the chaos. “System?” He raises an eyebrow.

“Are you a professional consultant on the supernatural?” Stiles asks. He’s totally just cramming everything in his bag without rhyme or reason. “I think not. So shut your pie hole about my system.”

Derek only stares at Stiles who’s trying to fit his laptop into the bag. There’s no way it’s even remotely possible, but Derek applauds him for persistence. “You really need some sleep,” he comments.

“Sleep is for the weak, Derek,” Stiles grunts, shoving the laptop with both hands. “What I need is to find a way out of getting killed by angels or being experimented on by them. I don’t need sleep. Pfft,” he scoffs.

“That’s not going in there.” Derek points to the laptop that’s sticking out of the bag no matter how hard Stiles is trying to shove it.


“Come on,” Derek interrupts him, taking the laptop and walking away with it. He nods at Laura on the way out, and she’s not hiding her amusement at Stiles’ sleep deprived antics.

“Derek!” Stiles shouts indignantly after him, but follows him out of the bar nonetheless.

Derek walks to his Camaro, getting in and placing the laptop on the backseat as Stiles opens the passenger door. “Hey man, I need that for work,” he says.

“You’re not working anymore tonight,” Derek tells him. “Get in.”

Stiles’ jaw tightens. “Give me back my laptop, Derek.”

“No,” Derek says passively. “You haven’t slept in nearly 48 hours. You’ll get your laptop back when you’ve rested.”

Stiles’ grip on the strap of his bag tightens and his knuckles turn white. “Are you my dad now? I can
take care of myself. I don’t need you or –"

“Get in the car, Stiles,” Derek growls out, letting his eyes flash blue to show how actually annoyed he is at the stupid idiot he calls his boyfriend.

Stiles grumbles something incoherent to Derek but sits his ass down in the passenger seat. He crosses his arms, sulking. Derek doesn’t even give a damn; Stiles can act as a petulant teenager all he wants as long as he lets Derek take care of his well-being.

The drive to the house is silent, and Stiles perks up only when Derek makes the turn off the road and into the forest. “Why are we going to your place?” He asks, suspicion in his tone.

“Because if I leave you alone in your house, you’re just going to keep working until you pass out,” Derek replies.

“That’s so devious,” Stiles mutters clearly in awe of Derek’s deception skills. Yeah, he really needs some rest if he didn’t see that coming. Derek just shakes his head.

He makes Stiles leave his book bag and laptop in the car, Stiles shows his displeasure by sticking his tongue out at Derek before stomping off into the house. Derek snorts to himself before following after Stiles.

“No way,” Derek says, catching Stiles’ arm as he tries to go past the stairs and towards the library.

“You’re such an asshole,” Stiles complains as Derek drags him by the hand up the stairs. “What if in one of those books I would’ve found a way to get rid of all angels with like a snap of my fingers? Do you want them to get me, Derek? Is this what this is all about? Do you want to get rid of me?”

Derek rolls his eyes so hard it nearly hurts. He pushes Stiles into his room before closing the door and standing in front of it, arms crossed. Stiles mirrors his position. “Get in the shower and then get into bed,” Derek orders him.

Stiles loses the frown and lifts an eyebrow. “Is this some weird sex role-play game I’m not aware of? Do you like ordering your partners around?”

Derek runs a hand down his face, groaning. He’s never dealing with a sleep deprived Stiles again, so help him. “Listen to me,” he says, walking over to Stiles and cupping his cheeks. “I care about you and I don’t want you to burn out. You need to rest and then you can go back to your research, okay?”

Stiles blinks at him a couple times before his shoulders slump and he leans forward, resting his forehead against Derek’s shoulder. His hands fist into Derek’s Henley, and Derek feels him take a shuddery breath. “I’m just so scared, Derek,” Stiles mumbles. Derek’s arms immediately wrap around his shoulders, holding him close. “I need to find something, anything, before the angels show up. If we’re not prepared…” He trails off.

“You’re doing everything you can, Stiles,” Derek tells him, one hand carding through his hair. “And I won’t let anything happen to you, okay?” He presses a kiss to the crown of Stiles’ head.

Stiles nods a couple times before pulling away slightly and kissing Derek. It’s chaste and warm, more for reassurance than anything else. Derek draws back after a few moments and grazes his thumb over Stiles’ cheek. Stiles turns his head, placing a kiss onto Derek’s palm and smiling slightly.

“I’m going to get you a towel,” Derek tells Stiles. “Don’t fall asleep yet.”
“Sir, yes, sir.” Stiles salutes him, stepping back.

Derek rolls his eyes and leaves the room. When he comes back two minutes later, towel in hand, Stiles is starfished on Derek’s bed, shoes still on, snoring lightly. Derek can’t help the small smile that comes over his face.

***

Derek wakes up with the sun like he usually does even if the sun is blocked out by thick curtains. Stiles is clinging to him for dear life, and Derek has to do some impressive maneuvering to get out of his grip without waking him. It doesn’t help that Stiles is apparently stronger than a full grown werewolf.

Derek makes it out of his room ten minutes later than usual, and Laura, who’s already in the kitchen munching on a carrot, lifts an eyebrow at him. Derek just looks up in explanation and Laura nods, heading for the door. It makes Derek’s life so much easier that his sister understands him without words.

They run through the forest barefoot, leaping over creaks, and jumping from boulder to boulder. It’s a full moon tonight, and Derek is eager to let out as much energy as he can. Laura tackles him mid-jump and they both fall to the ground, rolling in the grass. They stop with Laura on top of Derek. She smirks, showing off her fangs, then kisses Derek’s forehead and vaults right over him, plopping onto the grass.

“How is Stiles doing?” She asks. Derek is glad to note that she’s panting just as much as him.

“He’s scared,” Derek answers, looking at the clouds passing overhead, trying to catch his breath. “But the research is helping him focus, I guess.”

“Good,” Laura replies. “As long as he doesn’t overwork himself.”

“I’m on it,” Derek tells her. He’s making Stiles eat breakfast without checking his phone today even if it kills him.

“You think that nephilim will show up?” Laura asks, turning her head to look at Derek.

Derek frowns at the clouds. He’d rather the nephilim never showed her face again, but he knows Stiles will go even more overboard on research if she doesn’t. He shrugs a shoulder. “Stiles seems to think so,” he says instead.

Laura huffs, lifting herself on her elbow and focusing her laser gaze on Derek. “I asked what you think,” she says.

Derek sighs. “I think she just scared Stiles without any reason and then fucked off,” Derek admits. “She said it herself that the angels are busy fighting among themselves. And Stiles is only one nephilim. He can’t be that high on their priority list if they’re in a civil war.”

“You tell any of that to Stiles?” Laura lifts an eyebrow at him. Derek makes a face, and Laura punches him in the shoulder. “Why not, idiot? Maybe he’d worry less if he saw things like you do.”

“Or he’d think I’m being dismissive of his fears and not supporting him enough,” Derek replies.

Laura just stares at him for a few seconds before huffing a laugh. “Those therapy sessions did pay off.”
Derek cracks a smile. He glances at her. “Anything you want to share?”

She thinks for a second, scrunching up her nose. “No, I’m good. I think that concludes our weekly heart to heart,” she says, springing to her feet and bouncing in place. There’s something weird about how quickly she says all this, but Derek doesn’t have time to press it. “Now let’s see if you can catch me.” Laura sprints off, and Derek jumps to his feet, rushing after her.

***

When Derek gets back to his room after the morning run, Stiles is still asleep, hugging Derek’s pillow. Derek smiles but doesn’t disturb Stiles, instead heading straight for the bathroom. He throws his sweaty clothes on the floor and steps into the shower. The initial rush of cold water makes him wince, but soon his muscles relax under the hot stream.

The noise of a closing door makes Derek turn around. He watches as Stiles scratches something into Derek’s wooden door with his blade. The rune glows pale blue before vanishing and not leaving a mark on the wood.

“Neat trick, right?” Stiles asks him with a grin. The blade has disappeared from his grasp, and he’s taking his clothes off. Derek would be lying if he said he wasn’t captivated.

“Shouldn’t you still be asleep?” Derek counters as Stiles steps into the shower with him, gently closing the glass door behind himself.

“I’m very well-rested, thank you very much,” Stiles says, crowding into Derek’s personal space under the spray of water.

“What’s that for?” Derek asks, nodding with his chin towards the door. He desperately wants to reach out and run his hands over Stiles’ wet chest, but he’s sure he won’t be able to stop. And he’s not about to have sex with his boyfriend when his Alpha werewolf sister with amazing hearing is in the house.

The smirk Stiles gives him makes tingles run down Derek’s spine. “It’s a silencing rune,” he replies. He reaches out, running his fingertips over Derek’s collarbone. “No one will hear a sound coming from this room,” Stiles whispers, lips a hairsbreadth away from Derek’s.

Derek growls, grabbing Stiles by the hips and pulling him close. Stiles giggles into the kiss before letting Derek lick inside him. Fuck. Derek’s about to have sex with his boyfriend when his Alpha werewolf sister with amazing hearing is in the house. And Derek should not be thinking about his sister right now.

Stiles steps forward, pushing Derek against the cold tiles which make him wince. Stiles’ hands are in Derek’s wet hair, pulling at it slightly so that Derek tips his head back and Stiles can bite down his neck. Derek can feel his eyes changing color, but he gives zero fucks at this point.

“Shit, Stiles!” Derek shouts in surprise when he’s lifted in the air, legs instinctively wrapping around Stiles’ hips.

Stiles smirks at him. “Hey, I’m stronger than I look.” He delves back into kissing Derek, and Derek didn’t think that a show of raw power did it for him but apparently it does. “What do you want, Derek? Lay it on me and I’m gonna make you feel so good –”

“I want you,” Derek says, interrupting Stiles’ speech. “Inside of me. Right now.”

Stiles stops peppering kisses on Derek’s shoulders and looks up at him. “Huh. That was easier than I
thought.”

“I’m way past being shy about what I want,” Derek tells him, running his hand down Stiles’ chest, between their bodies, and gripping Stiles’ dick in his hand.

“Fuck,” Stiles mutters, dropping his forehead on Derek’s shoulder.

Suddenly Derek is back on his feet, and Stiles is spinning him around. Derek only puts his palms on the tiles, hanging his head as Stiles’ fingers dip between his cheeks and his tongue traces the tattoo between Derek’s shoulder blades.

Stiles’ wicked mouth works over Derek’s back while his slick fingers work inside Derek. At first Derek tries to contain his moans, but then he remembers the rune and lets Stiles’ name slip off his tongue in a filthy moan.

“That’s right, Der,” Stiles whispers right in his ear. “Let me hear you.”

“Stiles,” Derek groans when Stiles hits that particular spot, and feels Stiles’ grin against his skin.

Derek turns around, dislodging Stiles’ fingers and swallowing his protests in a kiss. His hands wander down Stiles’ body, over his chest, reaching his ass and cupping it. Stiles makes an approving noise into Derek’s mouth as his own hand skims Derek’s side, reaching down and going back to fingering Derek.

Derek’s panting into Stiles’ neck, seeing stars each time Stiles hits the spot now three fingers deep inside of him. Derek pushes against him. “I’m ready, I’m ready,” he mumbles out.

Stiles grips him by the nape of his neck and plants a wet kiss on his mouth before spinning Derek around again. Derek spreads his feet, sticking his ass out, and shaking with anticipation.

“You’re so good, Derek,” Stiles mumbles, running his hand down Derek’s back and teasing the head of his cock at Derek’s entrance. “So ready for me. I’m gonna make you feel so good, Der.”

Derek grits his teeth, chest rumbling with a suppressed growl. He glares over his shoulder at Stiles. “Shut up and fuck me.”

Stiles laughs out loud, bright and joyous. “Now who’s impatient?” He asks, but he pushes slowly inside, and Derek groans, balling his hands into fists against the shower tiles.

Stiles fucks into him slow at first, but then picks up his pace, giving it to Derek hard and fast. One of Derek’s hands slides down to his own dick, but Stiles bats it away, taking Derek into his hand. Stiles matches the pace of his hips to the movements of his hands, and it’s all Derek can do to keep upright. His legs are shaking and he’s leaning his forearms on the wall, head bowed down. Stiles keeps muttering nonsense encouragements and praise, but what really does it for Derek is when Stiles bites down on the nape of his neck and soothes it over with his tongue.

Derek’s trembling and panting from his own orgasm when he feels Stiles spill inside of him. “Fuck, Derek,” Stiles mutters, placing a few kisses across Derek’s shoulders before pulling out and leaning back against the wall next to Derek.

“Good morning,” Derek tells him, watching water beads rolling down Stiles’ chest.

Derek keeps his promise and makes Stiles eat without having his phone in his hand.

“This is so cruel,” Stiles complains into his pancake. “Did you know your brother could be this evil?” He asks Laura.

Laura shrugs a shoulder. “I can deal with it as long as he makes pancakes.”

Derek rolls his eyes. “Thanks, Laura.” She grins at him, chocolate sauce smeared on her chin. “And you can last 15 more minutes without a phone,” he tells Stiles.

“What if there’s an emergency, Derek?” Stiles asks. “What if Allison’s giving birth to the triplets right now and Scotty’s been trying to Face Time me so I could see the miracle of birth?”

“Ew,” Laura says, and Derek’s expression agrees. “Scott would do that? Does Allison know about this?”

“Okay,” Stiles says, “so maybe Scott wouldn’t Face Time me in the delivery room, but he totally would afterwards to show me how cute my niece and nephews are.”

Derek’s head turns automatically towards the sound of a car, speeding in the direction of the house. He recognizes the sound as Isaac’s Opel being pushed to the limit, and frowns.

“Hey, what?” Stiles says, looking between Laura and Derek. “I don’t have werewolf senses.”

“Isaac’s coming,” Derek answers. “He’s in a hurry.”

Laura is out of her seat instantly when the car screeches to a stop, and Derek follows after her. Erica jumps out of the driver seat, and Boyd helps a stumbling Isaac out of the backseat. Derek rushes forward, slinging one of Isaac’s arms over his shoulder while Boyd does the same with the other. Isaac’s head is bowed and he’s making small pained whimpers.

“What happened?” Laura demands as they bring Isaac inside and sit him on a couch. She kneels in front of him, putting a hand on his cheek, but he flinches back, mumbling something about green and red not mixing.

“I don’t know,” Erica answers. She’s not got her make up on and her hair’s not done. It must have been serious whatever it was. “Isaac called Boyd all panicked, saying he went blind. So we ran to the lake where he said he was and got him back here as soon as we could.”

“Can I?” Stiles asks Laura. He’s standing outside the pack circle surrounding Isaac and goes to crouch in front of him when Laura nods.

Stiles’ fingers glow blue as he reaches out to Isaac and this time Isaac doesn’t flinch back. Stiles lifts Isaac’s head, and they all see his eyes for the first time. They’re completely white out, and rubbed raw around the edges, blood rolling down his cheeks. Derek winces in pain just looking at it.

“Isaac, did you see who did this to you?” Laura asks, concern leaking into her voice.

“Green, green, scales glinting,” Isaac mutters. “Red and green, out of the water.”

“Yeah, he’s been making no sense since we found him,” Erica supplies.

“He’s actually making sense,” Stiles says, eyes running over Isaac’s injuries. “If I’m right about what did this to him, we need to hurry.” He drops his hands from Isaac’s face and stands up.
“Can’t you heal him?” Laura asks.

Stiles shakes his head. “It’s more of a spell than a poison. I can’t get rid of spells.”


Stiles glances around at them. “Does anyone know how to shoot a bow and arrow?”
Chapter 17

Chapter Notes

Can't believe the last time I updated this was in June...

Anyways, here's the rest of it in one go. Thanks to all those who read the fic, and I hope you enjoy it!

-E

Unsurprisingly none of the werewolves know how to shoot a bow and arrow since they can easily rely on their claws and fangs, so Stiles has a real head scratcher here as he hasn’t even held a bow in his hands. The only person he knows who can shoot a bow is eight months pregnant with triplets, and even if Allison agreed to this mission, Scott would literally rip Stiles to shreds, friendship be damned, if Stiles dared to endanger Allison and their unborn babies. So that plan’s out the window.

“Can’t you just kill it using your magical dagger?” Boyd asks impassively.

“Yeah, why can’t you use that?” Erica adds.

“That would kill it for sure,” Stiles answers, “but I have no idea if it would lift the curse.” He glances at Isaac, who’s now lying on his side, mumbling nonsense into the cushions that are being slowly soaked by blood coming from his eyes.

“Alright,” Stiles says, running his hands through his hair, pacing through the whole length of Derek and Laura’s living room. “So none of you can shoot a bow, but do you at least have one?” He asks hopefully. Either one of them can try their luck shooting it as long as they have one.

“Why would we have one?” Derek asks, his arms crossed like usual. “We’re hunted with bows.”

“I don’t know,” Stiles throws his hands up in the air in frustration. “I sure as fuck don’t have one, so I thought maybe you have one from all the traps you dismantled because Isaac is literally gonna die if we don’t kill the son of a bitch that cursed him!”

Derek gives him a disapproving look. And yeah, maybe Stiles has been all over with his emotions lately, but excuse him for finding it hard to deal with the fact that he’s not the only nephilim in the world, and the angels are coming to kill and/or torture him, and that Isaac managed to get cursed by a fucking Unhcegila that’s not even supposed to be on this side of the country. Stiles is ready to scream all that to Derek’s face, when Laura speaks up.

“Actually, we do have a crossbow and some arrows left,” she says, bringing hope back into Stiles’ life, bless her soul.

“Amazing!” Stiles shouts. “Go get it so we can save Isaac before he goes completely insane.”

The crossbow retrieved, the four of them pile into Isaac’s Opel and Laura floors it all the way to the lake. She’s even more of a maniac than Derek, and Stiles is never driving anywhere with her ever again.
“What even are we going to kill?” Erica asks, turning to Stiles from the passenger seat.

“Unhcegila,” Stiles answers, fiddling with the crossbow. He’s trying to load it and nearly stabs Derek with the arrow. That’s still laced with wolfsbane. That could poison Derek even if it just nicked him. Which Stiles nearly did. Oops.

“Watch it,” Derek grumbles, moving even further away from Stiles.

Stiles grins at him sheepishly. “Sorry, babe,” he says.

“An un-what now?” Erica asks, frowning at Stiles.

Stiles refocuses on her. “An Unc-Check-Yula,” he pronounces it as clearly as he can, syllable by syllable. “It’s basically a huge dragon monster living in lakes in North and South Dakota. No idea how it got here. Probably because of that Nemeton that no one is really taking care of. But anyway,” he goes on explaining, “the Unhcegila blinds someone if they look into its eyes, kinda like the basilisk. So like, don’t do that.”

“Duh,” Laura says from the driver seat, and Erica rolls her eyes. Derek just shakes his head.

“How do we kill it?” Derek asks, eyeing the crossbow. “Just shoot it full of arrows?”

Stiles bites his lip. “That’s the tricky part,” he says. “So one legend says you need to shoot this little crystal between the Unhcegila’s eyes, which is kinda difficult ‘cause we can’t look at its eyes. And the other legend says to shoot at the torso where the heart is. So we have choices.”

Erica just blinks at him and then nods a couple of times. “Yep, Isaac’s gonna die,” she says, turning back in her seat.

“He’s not going to die,” Stiles rolls his eyes. “We’ll try both and see which works.”

“Then we’re going to die,” Derek mumbles. “And Isaac too.”

Stiles glares at the both of them. “Well, aren’t you two just full of sunshine and rainbows?”

The trek to the lake takes more precious time than Stiles would like. He has no idea how long ago Isaac had been cursed or how much time he has left, but Stiles is sure they need to hurry.

“So do we just wait until the dragon shows up?” Erica asks, sitting herself on a rock nearby the shore of the lake. “‘Cause I don’t think we have that much time.”

“No, we won’t just wait around,” Stiles answers, extending the crossbow to Derek. “Hold this.” Derek takes it dutifully if a bit more than carefully, clearly worried Stiles will accidentally shoot him. Which, quite a valid point. Doesn’t mean Stiles isn’t slightly hurt by it. “I’ll get the Unhcegila here. Please don’t get blinded.”

Stiles receives scoffs and other derisory reactions from the three werewolves but doesn’t pay them much attention as he walks to the water’s edge. His sneakers squish into the mud, effectively getting ruined, and Stiles mourns the loss of them already. Crouching by the water, Stiles sticks his hand into the lake. He closes his eyes, searching the bottom of it, and trying to coax the dragon from its depths. This is so not his idea of a fun Thursday.

The bright red eyes that seemingly stare into Stiles’ very soul make Stiles flinch back. He blinks back to reality, eyes stinging slightly from the flood of light, and he stands up, retreating from the shore. “Get ready,” he tells the others.
“Did you actually just summon a dragon from the lake?” Laura asks, as they’re all watching a massive form emerge from the water and start swimming at an incredible speed right at them. They all start retreating back towards the woods.

“I’m very talented,” Stiles replies, taking the crossbow from Derek. “Hope I’m talented in shooting a crossbow too,” he mutters mostly to himself.

“How are we supposed to fight this thing blind?” Erica asks, eyes huge as she’s staring at the Unhcegila.

“The idea is that you don’t go blind,” Stiles tells her. “I think I repeated that enough times.”

Erica gives him a very non-friendly look. “You know what I mean.”

“Just go for the belly,” Stiles suggests, but it’s drowned out by the thunderous roar of the Unhcegila who has already reached land.

They don’t have time for more bickering as the dragon breathes fire on them and they jump out of the way as quick as they can. Stiles rolls onto the grass and leaps to his feet, Erica right next to him. There’s a wall of fire to their right separating them from Laura and Derek.

“Why didn’t you say it could do that!” Erica shouts at Stiles over another roar of the Unhcegila.

“How was I supposed to know it can do that!?” Stiles shouts back. “That wasn’t in the lore!”

“Duck!” Erica yells, and Stiles complies immediately, the dragon’s tail missing their heads by an inch.

Erica springs back to her feet and runs toward the Unhcegila, skidding on her back under it, and just starting tearing at its underbelly. Stiles watches her with his mouth open for a second before he remembers he has a task to do. So he lifts the crossbow, aiming it at the chest of the dragon, hoping against all hope that that’s where the heart is, and shoots.

“Motherfucker,” Stiles swears when the arrow just flings off the scales and falls to the ground, not having inflicted any damage whatsoever. So it’s not the heart. Stiles doesn’t risk looking up and checking for the red gem between the beast’s eyes though, he just supposes it’s there, and that’s his next target. Wonderful.

The Unhcegila is trying to slash at the werewolves with its talons, but they’re quick and easily avoid the attacks. Stiles keeps glancing at the dragon while he’s loading the crossbow, making sure he’s not about to be shish-kebabed. He manages to successfully do it, but then he hears his name being shouted and doesn’t even have time to lift his head when the breath is knocked out of him and he’s flying through the air.

Stiles lands on his side, rolling over a few times, and gasps for breath as he stares at the clear blue skies. His ribs are screaming in pain, and his vision is blurry. There’s the unmistakable taste of blood in his mouth, and Stiles frowns as he swallows.

He sits up, still disoriented, and looks around. Another line of fire is burning way to his left, the werewolves are slashing and tearing at the Unhcegila, but they’re barely leaving a mark. Stiles’ eyes search the ground for the crossbow, and to his horror, the weapon is ten feet away from him cracked in half.

“Fuck,” Stiles swears emphatically.
They need a new plan. And quickly. Stiles gnaws on his bottom lip trying to think of something, anything basically. He looks at Laura, already panting but still fighting, Derek who’s frowning and growling while slashing and clawing, and Erica who’s, apparently, not afraid to use her fangs even though that helps very little.

Stiles stands up, an idea forming in his head. Even though every muscle in his body is protesting, he runs to the spot where he dropped all his arrows and grabs a couple of them. Taking a deep breath, Stiles prepares himself before manifesting his wings. He spreads them wide and starts beating them until a few seconds later he’s airborne again, though this time on his own volition.

Actual flying has never been Stiles’ forte, and he’s done this only a handful of times, but desperate times and all that. Stiles rises up higher than probably necessary, drawing the Unhecigila’s attention. He knows he has only a few seconds, so he tries to make it quick.

Stiles looks at the dragon, spotting the ruby between its eyes and unavoidably meeting its gaze. Vision already starting to blur around the edges, Stiles dives down, wings folded neatly at his back. The Unhecigila is keeping their eyes locked, and all Stiles can see is a huge green blur that he’s plummeting towards. The pain comes quickly, spreading from his eyes to his temples, like someone’s pushing their thumbs into his eye sockets, and Stiles totally gets why Isaac nearly scratched his eyes out.

It only takes a couple seconds, and then Stiles is blindly stabbing the arrows into the head of the beast, hoping against hope that he hit the ruby. He’s beating his wings wildly, trying to get higher as any other direction is dangerous for him now since he’s completely fucking blind. There’s shrieks and roars and then a huge crash. Silence follows, and the darkness slowly recedes from Stiles’ vision.

“Yes!” Stiles screams still in the air when he sees the beast lying dead on the shore of the lake.

He touches ground next to the dragon. “Take that,” he tells the dead beast. He spins around to the three werewolves coming closer to him. “Who’s the best? Stiles is the best! Oh, yeah,” Stiles shimmies his hips to an imaginary beat.

“I didn’t know you could actually fly,” Derek says, smiling.

“Baby, you don’t know the half of it,” Stiles replies, winking at him.

Erica clears her throat. “So you have wings? What the actual fuck?” She asks.

Stiles’ victorious mood disappears in an instant. Right. He forgot that the girls haven’t seen his wings yet. “Yeah…” He draws out, demanifesting his wings at the same moment.

“Wanna explain?” Laura asks, arms crossed and an unimpressed look on her face.

Stiles does so while they clean up the mess, i.e. extinguish the fires and drag the humongous dead dragon into the water. He also gives them a quick angel 101 like he did with Derek, and he’s glad that their only reaction is passionate hatred of the angels on Stiles’ behalf.

Once they’re done with their clean-up, they drive back to the Hale house, and Stiles prays for his life all the way there because Laura wouldn’t let him drive instead of her. Isaac turns out to be completely fine if a bit tired, but Stiles still does a check on him only to find nothing, and Isaac goes for a nap. The rest of the pack follow suit; they deserve it after the morning they had.

Stiles groans when he falls onto Derek’s bed, starfishing. “Why can’t we have just one week where nothing supernatural happens?” He complains.
Derek scoffs, poking Stiles in the ribs so he’d move over and Derek could stretch out next to him. “You’d get bored on day two,” he says.

“Mmm,” Stiles hums, snuggling against Derek. “You know me so well,” he mumbles into Derek’s chest. Stiles thinks Derek replies something, but he’s too comfortable and warm to focus on anything but sleep.

***

Stiles is back in his research zone in the Hale library that he’s completely taken over during the last week or so. There are books stacked beside, around, and on the desk he’s working on, and even more open books buried under one another. And all of it is for nothing.

Covering his face with his palms, Stiles groans. He would very much like to scream but he’s aware it’s four a.m., and werewolves with extremely sensitive hearing are sleeping, so he resorts to quiet expressions of frustration.

After taking a moment to collect himself, Stiles looks back at the book he was reading. It’s got stuff about angels in it but fuck if Stiles knows what’s true and what’s fiction. He needs an actual reliable source on this. If only Alexis would contact him and tell him what he needs to know. At this point Stiles doesn’t even need her involved, sure it would help immensely, but as long as she’s willing to share information, he’s down for whatever.

As it is, Stiles has nothing that would help him defeat the angels. He’s been looking for days nonstop, and he’s got jack squat. Ruffling the pages of the book, Stiles once again thinks over the idea of leaving.

He’s been thinking about it for a couple of days now. Even though just the thought of it makes Stiles want to curl up in a ball and cry, Stiles would be even more devastated if something happened to the pack or Derek. He doesn’t want them fighting angels with zero advantages, and getting hurt or worse. He should just get back to the running and hiding routine. Who he was kidding by thinking he could just make a stand against angels? There’s no way he’d get out of it alive, and he’s not about to sacrifice others over that either.

“Hey,” Derek’s soft voice comes from the door, and Stiles lifts his head to smile at him. Derek looks soft with his disheveled hair, sleepily rubbing at his eye with the heel of his hand as he comes closer to Stiles.

“What are you doing up?” Stiles asks just as softly.

Derek snorts, lowering himself in Stiles’ lap. Stiles’ hands instinctively go to Derek’s hips to keep him stable. “I could ask you the same,” he says, arms going around Stiles’ neck. “You said you were coming to bed like five hours ago.” There’s a hint of accusation in his voice.

“I did?” Stiles scrunches up his nose. He can’t remember that. Probably a reflex answer. He’s been spending a lot of nights and days at the Hale house lately.

Derek just shakes his head. He leans in, brushing his lips over Stiles’. His fingers slide into the hair on Stiles’ nape, pushing Stiles closer to him as if Stiles is not willing already.

Stiles hums as Derek’s tongue delves into his mouth. One of his hands goes up Derek’s side and around to his back. Stiles’ fingertips glide over Derek’s bare skin, tracing the pattern of the tattoo on his back almost subconsciously.

Derek pulls away from Stiles’ mouth, peppering kisses over his cheek and down his neck. He bites at
the pulse point, making Stiles’ heart beat even faster. Then he brushes his lips up Stiles’ neck, kissing just behind his ear, and whispering, “Will you go to bed with me now?”

Stiles smirks. “You know what you’re doing, I’ll give you that.”

Derek pulls back with a smile of his own, arching an eyebrow. “Is that a yes?”

Biting his lip, Stiles sighs. “I wish,” he says. “But I have to meet this guy in an hour and it’s in another town, so I gotta leave in like ten minutes so,” he trails off, already feeling Derek tense. The frown that changes his smile also tells Stiles how happy Derek is about that nugget of news.

“You’re meeting some guy at five a.m. in another town?” Derek asks emotionlessly like only he knows how. “What for?”

“He’s got this book that might have something in it about angels,” Stiles answers. To be quite honest, Stiles didn’t even talk to the guy much, one of Stiles’ contacts recommended him. Not the safest meeting, but Stiles is sure it’ll be fine, and there’s no need to worry Derek even more.

Derek rolls his eyes, drawing away from Stiles and standing up. “Don’t you think this is becoming a little too much?” He asks. “You’ve been at this for days, and you’ve got nothing, Stiles.”

Now Stiles bristles too. “What’s you point?” He asks sharply.

Derek’s gaze softens as he looks at Stiles. “Maybe lay off it? You’re clearly not going to find anything, and it’s just making you into this zombie that’s only interested in research.”

Stiles stands up, crossing his arms. “So you’d rather I was interested in you, right?” He asks as Derek rolls his eyes. “What, you just want me to forget that angels are coming here to kill me so I’d have sex with you? I’m sorry you’re feeling neglected because I’m actually trying to save our lives.”

“You know that’s not what I meant, Stiles.” Derek’s jaw clenches. “That nephilim clearly didn’t know what she was talking about. The angels haven’t showed up yet and it’s been over a week. You should stop overworking yourself for something that’s not even going to happen.” His eyes flash blue and he near growls.

“My wards will hold for another week, Derek,” Stiles hisses his name. “Then they will know where I am. I either find a way for us to defeat them, or I move somewhere else where I can put up new wards. So if you’d rather I moved instead of –”

“Of course I don’t want you to move!” Derek raises his voice considerably. “Stop putting words in my mouth and actually listen to what I’m saying.”

“Oh, I’m listening,” Stiles matches him in volume. “And it’s making me think that moving is actually a great idea.” He lifts his shoulder blades, readying his wings for getting him the fuck out of here, but Derek catches his wrist.

“Don’t,” Derek says. “Don’t disappear on me when things get tough.”

Stiles snatches his wrist back. “I’m not disappearing. I need space. I’ll call you later.”

“Stiles,” Derek says, reaching for him again, but then Stiles is standing in his own dark living room.

He sighs, falling backwards onto the couch and staring at the ceiling. Stiles doesn’t want to fight with Derek, and he’s sure Derek doesn’t say things just to get on Stiles’ nerves, but Stiles can’t help himself. He’ll apologize later, it’ll be fine. Now he needs to get going for that meeting.
Stiles takes his trusty Jeep, not wanting to risk using his powers for long distance teleportation. Forty minutes later he's already in the agreed location, leaning against his car and watching as the sky is starting to turn grey in the East. Stiles glances at his phone, seeing several messages from Derek which he ignores, and checks the time. The guy is late.

Spinning the phone in his hands, Stiles glances up and down the street. There are a couple people walking by but otherwise it’s empty since it’s too-fucking-early o’clock. Stiles starts to regret coming here, thinking maybe he’s been duped, when another five minutes pass without the mysterious stranger showing up. It wouldn’t be the first time that such a lead didn’t work out for Stiles; that’s the price he pays for being a supernatural consultant.

“Batman?” Someone suddenly says to Stiles’ left, and he looks up to see an average looking guy, brown curls falling into his eyes, and a book pressed to his chest.

It takes Stiles a second to remember that he didn’t actually tell the guy his name, they both used fake names when emailing. “Yeah, I’m –” Stiles starts saying, turning to the guy who he knows as Dante, before freezing completely.

Dante is not just an average guy. His wings, hidden in the ethereal plane, are black, threaded with gold, folded against his back. The tips of them reach the ground, and the primary feathers sweeping it are white.

“Woah, you’re a…” Dante trails off. His eyes are wide, running over Stiles’ wings and darting back to look at Stiles himself.

Stiles has no idea what he should do. He’s never met one of the Fallen before. In theory, the fallen angel is in as much trouble with the angels as Stiles so there’s not much chance he’ll report Stiles. But that’s only theory, Stiles has no idea how any of this works in real life.

“Listen, man,” Stiles says, hands raised in a placating gesture. “I don’t want any trouble and I’m sure you don’t either. So let’s just forget about this and move on, okay?” He steps back, retreating to the car door, but ready to sacrifice Roscoe and leave him behind to save his own ass.

Dante shakes his head. “I don’t want any trouble,” he says quickly, one hand raised as the other still clutches the book. “I don’t have any affiliations with the angels. Obviously.” He points behind himself where his wings have spread to show Stiles clearly what he is.

“Okay, cool, cool,” Stiles nods his head a couple times. “That’s…cool,” he mutters, trying to slow his heartbeat. His eyes never leave Dante though, just in case.

“Do you still want the book?” Dante asks, watching Stiles as intently as Stiles is watching him.

Well, since Stiles is already in this mess, he might as well. “Yeah,” he replies. “I have the cash in my pocket,” he announces as if this is some dangerous hostage exchange situation where any wrong move can mean life or death.

Stiles removes the envelope with cash from the pocket of his hoodie, and reaches it out to Dante who is already extending the book. They snatch their objects quickly and retreat back.

As Dante counts over the bills, Stiles glances down at the book. It looks more of a journal than anything else. The cover is black, and the notes inside are handwritten, some of the words are crossed out and scribbled over, blots of ink dot every other page. The illustrations, even though incredibly detailed, look hand-drawn too.

“I wrote it myself,” Dante says, startling Stiles a little. “Everything in there is true. Swear on my
honor.”

Stiles nearly snorts at that, glancing at Dante’s wings. Though who is he to judge. Stiles doesn’t even know how an angel can fall or what that entails. “Right,” he says instead, lifting the journal. “Thanks.”

“I hope it helps,” Dante says, and for what it’s worth, Stiles thinks he’s being sincere. “But from experience I suggest to never stop moving and hope they never catch up with you.”

Stiles nods again and watches as Dante takes a couple steps backwards before lifting his wings and disappearing into thin air. He exhales shakily and leans back against his car. Looking at the journal, Stiles believes that he might have just found something actually useful.

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Stiles forgot to call Derek. He realizes that as the sun is setting, and he’s reading over the last pages of Dante’s journal in the low light when his phone lights up with a new message.

“Fuck,” Stiles swears, smacking the book against his forehead and then looking in front of him at his wall.

He’s been working non-stop since he got back home. This time Stiles camped out in his bedroom and meticulously read over every word in the journal, making notes on differently colored Post-Its and sticking them onto the wall. Green notes make up most of the wall, they’re things Stiles already knows. Yellow, for things that are new to Stiles but completely useless, is close second. For actually useful stuff, like combat moves and tactics, new runes, or any other things related to battle, Stiles used red notes. He currently has three of those.

Yawning hugely, Stiles thinks that he should read over the journal again. It might be that he missed something as the journal is written in Enochian and it’s been a while since Stiles used the language. It doesn’t help that Enochian is highly interpretative so he might’ve also understood something wrong.

Stiles’ phone blinks again with a message alert, and he swears again. Right. Derek. He should focus. Which is quite hard to do as Stiles hasn’t slept in 36 hours at the least and he has no idea when was the last time he ate.

Stiles rubs at his eyes, vision blurring around the edges, and reaches for his phone. He’ll call Derek to make up, and then he’ll get a few hours of sleep as he can feel his brain shutting down from the lack of it. Phone in hand, Stiles’ eyes catch on one of the green notes. It’s a crudely drawn rune with words ‘amplify’ and ‘magical source’ written on it. And then it clicks, just like two puzzle pieces fitting perfectly together.

But before the thought can fully come to fruition in Stiles’ brain, a sudden headache splits his head, making him grab at it and groan out loud. The phone clatters to the floor, but Stiles has no room to worry about it.

“For fuck’s sake,” he mutters as the doorbell rings. Stiles gets off the floor and stomps down the stairs to the door, throwing it open. “You didn’t have to breach my wards,” he growls out in greeting because damn, that hurt. Again.

Alexis only shrugs a shoulder. “Can I come in?”
“So you finally made up your mind?” Stiles asks, letting Alexis pass into his dark home. He flicks on some lights as they walk into the living room.

“Had a lot to think about,” she says, popping a gum bubble, looking around as if she’s afraid something will jump at her. “But yeah, I made up my mind.” She walks over to a shelf that Derek recently helped Stiles install, tracing her fingers over the spines of the books.

Stiles watches her, somehow uneasy having her in his space. His wards are unpleasantly humming in his brain. “I’m guessing you’re in?” He asks. “You wouldn’t be here otherwise.”

Alexis turns back to him, smirking. “Smart boy.” Another bubble pop. “I’m in, but only on one condition.”

Stiles narrows his eyes at her. “Name it.”

“You have to get rid of them.”


“The wolves,” Alexis elaborates, rolling her eyes. “You’re too attached to them. Especially that blue eyed Beta. You have to cut them loose if you want me in.”

Stiles considers her expression, and even though nothing in it indicates this, he has to ask, “You’re joking, right?”

But Alexis doesn’t change her expression. She pops a bubble, waiting patiently.

Stiles shakes his head. “I’m not choosing you over them,” he scoffs. “I don’t even know you.” Stiles’ gut tells him something’s not right here. What does she care about the pack?

Alexis watches him with chilling calmness. “You don’t know me but you know the angels. And you know they’ll use anything or anyone close to you to destroy you.” She walks closer to Stiles, right into his personal space, and it takes everything in Stiles for him to stay in place. “You think the wolves will help us fight them? They’re gonna be a distraction for you.” She pauses for a second. “If Benjamin doesn’t kill them on sight, that is.”

Stiles licks his lips, thinking this all over. It’s not like Alexis isn’t touching on the ideas Stiles has had, but he can’t help but feel like she’s being too intense about this. Then again, Stiles doesn’t know as much about angels as she does so maybe she’s right. Maybe the pack will be more of a distraction for Stiles. And just today Stiles thought it would be better to leave the pack than let anything happen to them.

“You don’t want them to end up like your mom, Stiles, now do you?” Alexis asks, too close to Stiles for comfort.

Stiles is unable to catch a breath for a second. His mom. She was murdered right in front of Stiles when the angels found them. And her only crime was that she gave birth to Stiles. Claudia was kind and loving, and she didn’t deserve to be slaughtered just because of Stiles. Neither does the pack.

He steps back, away from Alexis, and runs his hand through his hair, breathing shakily. The thought of leaving the pack and Derek makes his head spin. Or maybe it’s the lack of food and sleep. Either
way, he has to lean on the couch to not keel over.

Rubbing at his mouth, Stiles thinks over his options. One, he doesn’t agree with Alexis’ demands and tries to use whatever information is in Dante’s journal to defeat the angels. But he hasn’t found anything useful so far. Also, there’s a distant possibility that everything in the journal is a lie anyway, and Stiles would doom himself and the pack if he used anything written there.

Option two, he goes back to running. It has worked so far and it’s a routine he knows. Stiles would be safe for some time. Maybe he could even maintain a long distance relationship with Derek, come visit him and the pack once in a while like he does with the Monroe pack and his dad.

And three, he could agree with Alexis’ demands, defeat the angels once and for all, and live without always looking behind his back and waiting to be hunted down. He probably wouldn’t even have to leave Derek and the pack for good, Stiles just has to keep them away from himself for a while, and then, after he’s done dealing with the biggest threat of his life, he could go back to them. The pack would be safe, and Stiles wouldn’t be distracted. Wins all around.

Stiles exhales heavily, looking up at the ceiling as if waiting for some sign to tell him if he’s making the right decision. He gets nothing.

“You’re right,” he whispers, turning his head to look at Alexis. “It’s too dangerous for them to be near me.”

Stiles straightens, walking over to Alexis again. He meets her eyes; they’re swirling pools of cold blue and grey. “I’ll leave them, but you have to tell me everything you know about the angels and how to defeat them.”

Alexis’ smile seems amused to Stiles when she offers him her hand to shake. “Deal,” she says.

Stiles shakes her hand and feels goose bumps rise on his flesh even in the stifling warmth of his living room.

***

The pounding on Stiles’ door is expected, but Stiles thought Derek would at least wait until the morning. As it is, it’s three a.m., and Stiles is packing the last of his boxes. He glances at Alexis who has occupied his couch and didn’t move a finger to help him pack.

She pops a bubble, clearly not intending to move. Stiles glares at her with all his might until she rolls her eyes and teleports upstairs.

“Stiles, let me the fuck in or I swear I’ll break these doors down,” Derek growls, muffled by the layer of wood separating them.

Stiles rolls his eyes. Such a drama queen. But he goes to open the door nonetheless.

“Derek,” he greets him as Derek storms inside Stiles’ house, eyes flashing blue.

“What the fuck is this,” Derek says without much intonation but with a very distinct angry rumble in his chest as he waves a paper at Stiles.

Stiles closes the door, leaning back on it and crossing his arms. “I’m guessing that’s the letter I left you,” he says, keeping his emotions in check. Just stay calm. You’re doing this for him.

Stiles composed the letter hastily and left it in Derek’s bedroom while he was at work. He intended
to be gone from this house by morning when Derek came looking for him. It was such a good plan. At least by the standards of his sleep deprived brain.

“I was referring more to the contents of it,” Derek grits through his teeth. His eyes are flashing intermittently, and it’s not helping Stiles focus.

“I think I explained it pretty well in the letter,” Stiles says, wrapping his fingers tighter around his arm so he wouldn’t do something stupid like reach out for Derek.

“No,” Derek growls again. “No, you didn’t. What does it mean that you need space? In another fucking country? I get that we’ve been basically living together for a week but if you need space you can just be here and not on another continent.” Derek’s claws make an appearance, poking holes in the letter.

Stiles swallows the lump in his throat and the words that he actually wants to say. “Listen, Derek,” he says gently. He doesn’t want to do this, doesn’t want to break Derek’s heart, but Stiles knows that Derek won’t let him go any other way. “We both knew this,” he waves between them, “wasn’t going to last.”

“What,” Derek mumbles, a confused expression coming over his face.

“We’ve talked about this,” Stiles says, trying to keep the tears at bay, looking anywhere but Derek. “You know I move every few months. Well, now’s the time I move again. You heard Alexis, the angels are looking for me. I can’t stay here any longer.”

Derek’s jaw audibly clenches, and Stiles risks taking a look at him. “Stop bullshitting me, Stiles,” he says. “You said yourself that you’re tired of running, that you want to make a stand and fight the angels. What changed?”

Stiles bites his bottom lip. He knows that it doesn’t matter what he says, Derek won’t accept it anyway. The only way Derek will let him go is if Stiles breaks his heart.

“You were right,” he says, voice catching slightly. “This morning, when we talked.” Was it only this morning? Time has lost all meaning to Stiles.

He scrubs a hand over his face, sighing. “I’ve got nothing on the angels, my wards are failing, and you’re too weak to help me fight them, Derek. So I’m back to what’s worked for years.”

“What?” This time it’s a question, and Stiles can see it dawning on Derek.

Stiles prepares himself for the performance of his lifetime. Stiles stares into those hazel eyes, so full of love and warmth, and prays that he’s making the right decision. He steels himself, lifting his chin a little, closing himself off and only leaving a blank expression on his face.

“All I needed from you and your pack were fighters,” he lies boldly. “But I’ve seen that you’re too weak to fight angels, and I can’t find anything that will enhance your abilities, so you’re useless to me.”

Derek shakes his head all throughout Stiles’ lies. “No,” he says. He meets Stiles’ eye. “I don’t need to hear your heartbeat to know that you’re lying to me.” He steps closer, and Stiles regrets his position against the door as he’s got no escape route when Derek cups his cheeks. “Whatever it is, we can face it together.”

“I’m not lying, Derek,” he says emotionlessly. “I did before, but now I’m telling the truth. You’re useless, and I don’t need you anymore.”
Derek flinches back, stepping away from Stiles. He furrows his eyebrows, an assessing look on his face as he looks Stiles up and down. It’s all Stiles can do to not let his mask slip.

“When I said that I loved you?” Stiles prompts, lacing his voice with ice. “I lied.”

Derek’s shaking his head again, stepping back as Stiles is stepping forward.

“I just wanted you on my side, fighting for me against an enemy that’s too strong.” Stiles scoffs disdainfully. “But I was wrong thinking your pack would be decent enough. How many times have I saved your asses? You can’t even deal with hunters on your own, you wouldn’t stand a chance against angels.”

Derek hits the banister of the stairs, looking at Stiles with his teeth clenched, and wild eyes. Stiles walks right up to him. “I wanted to let you down easy,” he points behind himself, to the letter that has been discarded on the floor. “But you want the truth? The truth is that I was just going to use you like Kate did, but you and your pathetic little pack are useless.” There’s venom in his voice, every word resounding with disgust. He knows it’s a low blow to use Kate, and he hates himself for it, for doing this to Derek, but it’s to keep him safe. Stiles would do anything to keep him safe. “So now I have to find someone else to replace you –”

“No, no, no,” Derek pushes past him, fingers carding through his hair too roughly.

Stiles clenches his fists, nails digging into his palms, so he’d stay where he is and not run to Derek and try to calm him down. It’s going to be fine. Stiles will defeat the angels and he will come back to Derek. He’ll probably have to grovel for days on end but he’d rather do that than have Derek anywhere near the angels.

“That’s not true,” Derek says, desperation in his voice and tears pooling in his eyes. “You’re not that cruel. I know you, Stiles, and that’s not you.”

“You know jack shit about me!” Stiles shouts, letting his frustration and anger out. “You saw what I wanted you to see. Kate was right,” Stiles goes for something that will truly hurt Derek, and it kills him inside. “You’re so easy to manipulate.” The smirk he sends Derek is cruel. “You would do anything for someone who showed you some kindness. It’s pathetic.” He twists his mouth into a disgusted frown.

Derek clenches his jaw, hands balled into fists, as tears start making their way down his cheeks. Stiles tenses every muscle in his body, repeating to himself to stay in place, even though guilt and anguish are drowning him inside. But he deserves this. He deserves all the pain for inflicting so much of it on Derek.

“You’re disgusting.” Derek spits out and then leaves, slamming the door so the whole house shakes.

Stiles stands there for a few seconds before allowing himself to crumple down onto the floor and let the sobs wrack his body.
Chapter 19

After leaving, Derek doesn’t even get in his car. He just leaves it there, parked at an angle next to the curb, door open as he didn’t bother to close it. He heads straight for the woods without looking back.

The clothes he’s wearing rip apart as every bone in his body breaks with the shift. The pain of it is all Derek focuses on, chasing all other thoughts from his mind. A howl is ripped out of him as he drops to his knees, eyes glowing blue already.

His paws hit the ground, nails digging into dirt, and then Derek just runs.

The forest around him is a dark blur as Derek pushes himself to move faster, muscles burning with the exertion. His lungs are on fire but he doesn’t care, he just needs to chase those words out of his head.

The things Stiles said, the things he wrote in that letter, they still don’t make sense to Derek. He refuses to believe that the Stiles he fell in love with during the past few months is the same person as the Stiles he just talked to. Derek’s Stiles is kind, and self-less, and loving. This cruel ruthless person who ripped Derek’s heart out and stomped it into a bloody pulp is not his Stiles. He can’t be.

Ducking under a low hanging branch, Derek growls in frustration, and pushes himself even harder. He refuses to believe that all this time Stiles lied to him. Stiles couldn’t have faked all those moments between them, the love in his eyes and actions. Derek saw all that, felt all that along with Stiles.

Derek trips, doesn’t have time to right himself, and tumbles down the slope. He rolls to a stop, lying on his side and breathing hard and ragged. There are cuts and bruises all over him but he feels them healing already. Staggering to his feet, Derek whines at the sharp burst of pain in his hind leg. He must’ve sprained it. He drops back to the ground, nothing but to wait it out.

Unbidden, thoughts of Kate resurface in his mind. She deceived him. She made him believe she was in love with him, only to turn out to be a psychotic murderer who burned his family alive. And Derek had all his werewolf senses to sniff out her lies and deceit, but he didn’t catch any of that.

He had none of that with Stiles. Derek only heard his heartbeat a couple of times, and scented him only once. And both those times he was too preoccupied to listen for lies and deceit. He didn’t even have precedent to do so, Stiles seemed as genuine as they come. But Derek was foolish, and repeated the same mistake. At least this time none of his pack got harmed.

Derek stands again. After detecting no pain, he starts running again, gaining more and more speed. He relishes in the way his lungs burn and his muscles protest the strain he’s putting on them. This he can deal with, the thought that Stiles manipulated him and lied to him for months – not so much.

He’s a stupid fool who fell for a pretty face and some kindness thrown his way. Again. There’s no one but himself to blame for this mangled piece of flesh he calls his heart. Derek trusted too easily, gave himself away too freely, and Stiles, just like Kate, took advantage of it. How could he not see the signs?

Lifting his head up to the sky, Derek lets out a painful howl that echoes throughout the forest. He doesn’t stop to listen if anyone will answer it, just runs and runs.

***

It’s dark again when Derek finally stops, exhausted and starving. He finds himself in a familiar place.
The cabin in the woods is old, moss decorating the walls, dream catchers and wads of dried plants hanging off the banisters, pools of warm lighting spilling through the dirty glass windows, and stairs that creak with every step as Derek goes up to the porch.

The witch that opens the door has a reproachful look on her face, arms crossed as she leans on the doorframe. “Your pack is worried about you, you know,” Reina says. “Want me to call Laura to pick you up?”

Derek whines, dropping to the porch floor and putting his snout on his paws. He looks up at her, knows that the pitiful gaze will work on her.

Reina heaves a heavy sigh. “Fine,” she says, then stabs a finger at him. “You will not blame me for the ass kicking Laura gives you.”

Derek wags his tail half-heartedly in thanks. When Reina turns to the side, he gets up and walks inside the cabin.

“Your clothes are where you last left them,” Reina informs him. “Get dressed or you won’t be getting dinner,” she announces and walks to the kitchen.

Derek snatches his clothes from beneath Reina’s bed and walks to the bathroom to change. The shift back is even more painful, especially since Derek spent a whole day in his full shift. He dresses quickly, without sparing a glance into the mirror. He knows he must look rough when, after turning to him, Reina says, “Oh, Derek,” in a tone he’s never heard from her before.

She motions to the little kitchen table. “Sit.” And so Derek does. It’s much easier to follow someone else’s instructions and just not think about anything.

A plate of eggs, bacon, and toast is set in front of him. Derek near smiles. Reina can only make breakfast foods, anything else is an impossible task for her and tastes awful.

“Eat,” comes another order, and Derek takes the fork, digging into the food. Reina eats much more slowly, watching him intently.

“I was at your place when Laura told me about the letter Stiles wrote,” Reina says after a minute. “She also said that you went missing after going to talk to him.”

Derek doesn’t react to any of it. That’s all the information they have, nothing new.

“All hell broke loose when Stiles returned your car,” she says off-handedly, and Derek can’t help the wide-eyed look he gives her. “He said you left it at his place and ran off after you… talked.” Reina makes a face saying the last word, implying she knows they didn’t talk as such.

“What,” Derek tries and it comes out croaky and broken. He clears his throat, and attempts again. “What did he say?” Derek is a masochist, apparently.

“Not much,” Reina shrugs. “Laura, on the other hand, had a lot to say to him. Mostly swearwords and insults. He seemed very disinterested, and didn’t mouth off at her. Extremely unlike Stiles. Then he just disappeared like he does.”

Derek stares at his plate of half-eaten food, trying to make sense of Stiles’ actions and words. He swallows thickly. “He told me it was all a lie,” he near whispers, not meeting Reina’s eyes. “He said that he wanted to use us to fight the angels, but saw that we’re weak and not worth it. He deceived me just like Kate did.”
“Stiles told you that?” Reina asks, surprise coloring her voice.

Derek nods. “And a bunch of other shit which mostly consisted of him thinking I’m pathetic and useless.” There’s a sting behind Derek’s eyes and he rubs at them with the heel of his hand until he sees universes colliding.

Reina makes a considering noise. “Doesn’t sound like Stiles I know.”

Derek snorts a weak laugh. “Apparently, none of us know jack shit about him.” He runs his hands through his hair, leaning back in his chair.

“Okay,” Reina straightens in her seat. “Let’s approach this logically.”

Derek lifts a questioning eyebrow at her. He doesn’t need to approach this in any way. He wants to forget Stiles ever existed, not talk about him at length. Still, he doesn’t stop Reina from talking. Maybe he is a masochist.

“So Stiles came to Beacon Hills to… what? Recruit your pack to help him fight angels? Why your pack exactly? There are plenty of bigger and more powerful packs for him to choose from. No offence,” she adds.

Derek just shrugs off the sting those words incur. It’s true enough though; the Hale pack is not what it used to be. “I don’t know, Reina. Scott recommended he come here.”

“Scott McCall?” Reina repeats. Derek knows they’ve never actually met, but Scott comes up in conversation now and again. Especially since Stiles started to spend more time with them. “And you trust him?” She asks after Derek’s nod of confirmation.

“Yeah,” Derek answers. “Scott’s a good guy. Laura trusts him too.” Derek is putting way more trust in Laura’s judgment than his own from now on. Though, she trusted Stiles too, so maybe Derek should reconsider that.

“Scott’s got a pack too, right?” Reina asks without so much as stopping to wait for Derek’s answer. “And it’s bigger and more established than yours, isn’t it? Then why wouldn’t he go for them? Stiles is going to be Scott’s kids’ godfather, right? So, clearly he has as much attachment to that pack as he has yours. So why would he need your pack to fight for him when he’s got them?”

Derek frowns. Reina’s words are actually making sense. But Derek shakes his head. “Stiles didn’t even think of stopping running and hiding before he came here,” he counters Reina’s arguments.

Reina nods. “Alright.” She lifts a hand, taking a strand of her hair and twisting it around her finger as she thinks. “So if he only thought of stopping when he came here, then why did he? If he had decided that because he met you then it would make no sense for this diabolical scheme because he’d want to keep you.

So let’s say he decided that before meeting you. Which is when he only knew me. And from our talks I always assumed he never even wanted to meet your pack, he said he didn’t want to get involved in supernatural business directly. Again, this scheme doesn’t make sense.”

Derek groans, pushing his fingers through his hair. “Nothing Stiles did makes sense with what he said yesterday, Reina,” he says. “Stiles helped us numerous times, getting injured in the process. He never pushed me or demanded anything in return from me. I never felt like it was all just an act.” Derek thinks of all the talks they had, all the touches and moments they shared. “He’s a stubborn caring asshole that I fell in love with. It’s the complete opposite of what I saw him as yesterday. It just doesn’t make sense.” Derek sighs, rubbing at his eyes again.
Reina hums, drumming her fingers on the table. “That other nephilim that just showed up and disappeared,” she starts. “Did he get an answer from her about helping him?”

“No, she disappeared and never showed up again,” Derek grinds out.

Reina’s staring off into space, chewing on her lip. “Stiles depended on her help to make a stand against the angels,” she says. “Since she’s in the wind and of no help to him, there’s no way he would want to put himself, or you and the pack, in danger. So he cuts ties.” Reina glances back at Derek, lifting an eyebrow as if to ask if he approves of her reasoning.

Derek tries to stomp that bit of hope that’s already fluttering in his chest. Reina’s words sound more like the Stiles Derek knows than whatever nonsense Stiles spewed yesterday. “He didn’t have to do it so brutally,” he counters half-heartedly.

“But he did,” Reina leans forward on the table. Their plates are still filled with half-eaten and probably already cold food. “Would you have just let him leave so easily if you knew he still loved you and cared enough about you to sacrifice himself so you wouldn’t get caught up in this mess?”

Derek swallows hard. The flutter of hope gets stronger. “No,” he answers in a whisper, “I wouldn’t have.”

“Exactly,” Reina says smugly. “Am I or am I not the best detective witch this world ever saw? And I didn’t even have to leave my cabin.”

Derek’s heart is beating violently in his ribcage. He licks his lips. “What do I do now?” He asks her. The only lead Derek has of where Stiles disappeared to is in the letter. But Stiles wouldn’t be so stupid to leave the actual country he’s going to. So at least Derek can rule out Brazil.

Reina smirks at him. “You can ask your amazing witch friend to track him.”

Derek shakes his head. “Stiles has all kinds of runes against magical tracking.”

“Who said I was gonna use magic?” Reina asks, walking to her bed and picking up her laptop. “He’s still got the same phone he bought after crashing his Jeep, right?”

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Two weeks later and they’ve exhausted all possibilities of locating Stiles. Reina’s idea of using tech to track Stiles hasn’t led them anywhere. He clearly got rid of his phone, and even after Laura, with a lot of pleading from Derek, called in a couple favors with the Sheriff’s department to pull surveillance footage, they didn’t manage to find any instance of Stiles’ Jeep leaving town. Derek even contacted Stiles’ dad who was under strict orders to not tell Derek anything, so that was a bust too. They had nothing, and Derek started to lose hope.

“Stop moping,” Laura says as she throws a rag into Derek’s face.

Derek, who was not moping, only very intensely cleaning a glass, glares at her. He picks the rag up from where it fell to the bar top and throws it back at her. “I was thinking.”

Laura, of course, catches the rag easily. She puts her hands on her hips. “Well, stop that too. He’s not worth it. He broke your heart, Der.” There’s a slight growl to her words. Derek still doesn’t know what Stiles said the day he returned Derek’s car, but Laura has replaced all the love she felt for Stiles with unadulterated anger.

Derek glances up at the heavens as if expecting some help, but none comes so he has to deal with his
sister on his own. “I told you,” he says through gritted teeth. “Stiles only did that to protect us all. We need to find him and help him.”

Laura sighs, coming closer to him. “That’s only a theory, Derek,” she says softly. “He didn’t tell you he broke up with you and fucked off to nowhere ‘cause he wanted to protect you. He told you and us that he wanted to use us in his fight.” She reaches out, putting a hand on Derek’s arm and squeezing lightly. “He meant a lot to all of us, Derek. But Stiles was clearly a deceptive son of a bitch, and you need to forget about him for your own good.”

Derek shakes his head. “No, Laura. I don’t believe it. Stiles lied to me that night and not for all those months. I know it.”

They stare at each other, both stubborn and not willing to back down. Derek gets that Laura simply wants to protect him, but he also knows that Stiles needs him. He’s standing his ground on this one no matter what Laura says.

“Hey, guys!” Reina’s voice carries over from the open door as she steps into the bar.

Neither Derek nor Laura pay her any attention as she walks over, still engaged in their glare-off. Finally Laura huffs, shaking her head and returning to cleaning the bar. Derek turns to Reina who’s got an eyebrow arched at him in question.

“You have any news?” He asks her, ignoring the questioning eyebrow.

Reina glances at Laura then back at Derek. “Yeah,” she says, making a face. “I figured out a way to track Stiles with magic.” She sighs.

Derek’s face splits into a grin. “That’s great, Reina.”

Reina chews on her lip, fingers drumming on the bar top. “Yeah,” she draws out. “If you think summoning a demon to ask for their help is a great plan, then yeah, that’s great.”

“A demon,” Derek says without any inflection. That’s not something Derek considered ever in his life. Would he be willing to go that far for Stiles?

“We need a psychic to summon the demon, and I know just the one,” Reina says with fake cheer.

“And that’s the only way to track Stiles? A demon?” Derek questions. It’s been two weeks with no news, and Derek has to do something. Desperate times and all that. Woah, Derek is totally whipped for Stiles as he’s actually considering summoning an actual demon to find his stupid self-sacrificing asshole of a boyfriend. He never thought his life would turn out like this.

“No way you’re doing that,” Laura instantly argues, appearing next to Derek with a disapproving look on her face.

Derek frowns at her. “What, you’re going to use your status as Alpha to forbid me?” He crosses his arms over his chest. She wouldn’t dare do that, would she?

“If I have to,” Laura shrugs a shoulder. “It’s stupid and dangerous, and Stiles already made his choice by leaving you.”

Derek grinds his teeth. “You try that, Laura, and I will never forgive you.”

They glare at each other, butting heads again in less than five minutes, but again Laura gives up first. “Fine,” she growls out. “But I’m coming with.”
Derek nods and glances back at Reina. “Where does this psychic live?”

“LA,” Reina grounds out.

***

They reach LA just as the sun starts to set. The psychic shop that Derek parks in front of looks unassuming. There’s a neon sign reading *psychic* in one of the windows, but it’s otherwise undecorated.

They get out of the car, Reina shutting the door far too roughly for Derek’s liking. “Let’s get this over with,” she grumbles, walking right in.

Laura lifts an eyebrow at Derek who only shrugs and follows the witch. Inside is dimly lit. There’s a round table to the left and glass counters in front and to the right of the shop. The beaded curtain jingles slightly as a redheaded girl walks through it.

“How can I –” She starts saying before abruptly stopping as her eyes fall on Reina.

“Charlotte,” Reina says coldly. “We need your services,” she says without preamble.

Charlotte stares speechless at her before stammering out, “Of course. Whatever you need.” She walks from behind the counter, offering small smiles to both Derek and Laura. “You’re friends of Reina’s?” She asks.

“It doesn’t matter who they are,” Reina scoffs sharply.

“Rei,” Charlotte starts hesitantly.

“Don’t call me that,” Reina says in the same harsh tone. “I’m only here because we don’t have other options. We need you to summon a demon.”

Charlotte’s eyes go big, Derek can hear her heart beat elevating. “You want me to summon a demon? Why?”

“None of your business,” Reina scoffs. “You owe me. Will you help us or not?”

Charlotte glances at Derek and Laura, and then back to Reina. “Yeah, sure,” she says. “Let me get the supplies.” She disappears behind the curtain again.

“You two seem friendly,” Laura comments.

Reina just glares at Laura, who raises her hands up. “Sorry for saying anything.”

An hour later there’s a pentagram on the floor with all kinds of symbols on it. Reina and Charlotte are kneeling opposite each other with bowls filled with ingredients in front of them.

“The plan is simple,” Reina says as she lights up the three candles that surround her. “She summons the demon, trapping it in this pentagram, you make the deal, and she sends him back. If anything goes wrong, then I exorcise that fucker out of here. Got it?” She glances up at Derek.

Derek nods, running his fingers through the material in his hands. It’s easy. Just making a bargain with a demon. Ordinary Thursday. No big deal.

“I can do it for you,” Laura says from behind Derek where she stands to watch the show go down.
Derek turns to look over his shoulder at her. “You don’t even want me to go after Stiles.”

Laura shrugs a shoulder. “It doesn’t matter. You’re my little brother. I can see you’re freaking out, and I want to help however I can even though I think you’re making a mistake.”

Derek smiles at her. “Thanks, Laur. But I need to do this myself.”

“Are you done being gross and sappy?” Reina asks.

Derek rolls his eyes at her. “You can begin,” he says.

Charlotte starts chanting, and the circle around the pentagram glows red. She adds a drop of her own blood to the bowl. The red spreads throughout all the symbols of the pentagram, the wind appears out of nowhere, and shadows start swirling in the middle of the summoning circle.

As shadows disperse, Derek sees a figure emerge from them. The man is tall, dressed in a black tailored suit, his hair as well as the whole orbs of his eyes are black.

“What do we have here?” He asks, hungry eyes looking up and down Derek’s frame. “A werewolf. How quaint.” He smiles. His dark gaze sweeps over the room, noticing Charlotte who’s still murmuring some chant, and Laura who has come closer to Derek. “Hmm,” he hums slightly, walking closer to the edge of the circle.

“I want to make a deal,” Derek says. His werewolf senses are going haywire. He wants to shift or at least pop his claws out and growl at the beast in front of him, but that would be extremely counter-productive.

“What kind of a deal, darling?” The demon asks, nearly purring, as he paces around.

Derek swallows down the bile in his throat. “I need to find someone. He’s a nephilim.”

The demon stops immediately. He licks his lips before repeating, “A nephilim?”

Derek almost manages to suppress the look of disgust that comes over his face. “Yeah,” he replies. “I have something of his.” Derek shows the demon a t-shirt of Stiles’.

The demon eagerly steps forward only to be met with the invisible wall of the circle. He hisses as it burns him and immediately steps back. “That will do just fine,” the demon says with a smile.

“So you’ll do it?” Derek asks. “What do you want in return?”

The demon cocks his head to the side, his tongue running over his lips again. “Nothing much,” he says. “Only three feathers from the nephilim’s wings.”

All of Derek’s instincts and his gut are telling him that this is a bad idea. But he’s got no other choice. “Deal,” he says. A shiver runs down his spine, it’s suddenly difficult to breathe, and an invisible weight settles in his very bones.

The demon claps his hands in glee. “Wonderful,” he exclaims. “Now let me find you this delightful creature.” He extends a hand towards Derek.

Derek throws him the t-shirt. He watches as the demon sniffs at it, and frowns when he licks it. Then the demon cranes his head back and the most awful noises start coming from his mouth. Derek has to put his hands over his ears to dampen it somehow.

When it all stops, the demon tosses the t-shirt away. “I know where your nephilim is.” His smile is
vicious. “It’s a small little town but I’m sure you’ve heard of it.” The demon pauses, clearly enjoying the moment. “He’s in Beacon Hills.”

“What?” Laura says from behind Derek.

Derek shakes his head. “That can’t be. He left. He packed his things and left.” Derek went there the day after Reina convinced him that Stiles left only to protect him. The house was empty, no trace of Stiles ever being there.

“More like moved,” the demon laughs. “He’s ten miles northwest of the center of your little town.”

Derek clenches his jaw and nods. He’s not about to thank the demon, but he is berating himself and his stupidity.

He should’ve looked harder. Why didn’t he think of searching the preserve? He never saw Stiles’ Jeep leaving town limits, he should’ve known.

“I will come to collect my part of the deal in sixty of your Earth days, werewolf,” the demon reminds him. “If you fail to fulfill your part, I will take your heart.” He smirks once again.

Derek glares at him. “Got it.” He snarls it out.

The demon’s smirk turns delighted before he’s swallowed up by the shadows. Charlotte stops chanting, and the lights coming from the pentagram disappear. The demon is gone, and Derek just made the stupidest bargain of his entire life. At least those feathers can’t be that big of a deal, right?
Chapter 20

*I'm being paranoid*, Stiles thinks to himself as he’s tapping a pencil against his knee, frowning at the journal in his lap. He doesn’t see anything that’s written in it, though. Instead, his mind keeps supplying him with various snippets of conversation he’s had with Alexis over the past two weeks.

Stiles was sitting on the porch of his new temporary home, watching as Alexis put the wards up. Her moves were more practiced, more graceful than his would ever be. The wards sunk into the earth, drawing the energy from it; a low humming noise filled the air.

“You never told me how you got to know so much about the angels. It’s not like they told you all this stuff while torturing you,” Stiles said. He’d been curious about that since he met Alexis, but there wasn’t time before to ask such questions.

“It wasn’t always torture,” Alexis answered him after a pause. “And they weren’t shy when trading stories while torturing me.”

Stiles lifted a disbelieving eyebrow. “So you’re basing all this on what? Theories? Information extrapolated from some stories?” He was thinking she had actual intel or something.

Alexis glared at him, but her movements never wavered; the wards sunk deeper into the ground. “They’re not theories. I was with them for months, and I had nothing but time to think about what they said over and over again.”

Stiles chewed on his lip, not quite convinced, but all he said was, “Yeah, sure, okay.”

Stiles flicks through his notes that he made going through Dante’s journal. He shares a bedroom with Alexis so he couldn’t put Post-Its everywhere, and he didn’t really want to. He thinks he can trust her, but he’s not a hundred percent sure, so Stiles never even told her he got a journal from an actual fallen angel. His trust issues go deep, Stiles knows that, but his gut is warning him against revealing all his cards, so Stiles has kept the journal to himself.

Alexis was teaching him about demon runes, supposedly even stronger than angelic ones and the only thing that could help defeat them. By this point, Stiles had read through Dante’s journal over a dozen times and he was pretty sure he never saw anything about that. But he wasn’t about to challenge Alexis over this.

Stiles carved the rune onto his forearm with his blade, drawing blood since apparently that’s the only way to activate the demonic runes. “Why didn’t my mom teach me this?” He wondered, glancing at Alexis. “If it’s the only defense against angels?”

Alexis shrugged. “I didn’t know your mom that well,” she answered. “Like I said, I didn’t want to see any angel after what they did.” She looked away, a painfully familiar emotion on her face, so Stiles dropped it.

Stiles traces the *amplify* rune with his fingertips. He’s never used it, never had the need, but he’s been subconsciously coming back to it over the last days. Even now, when he’s thinking about other things, somehow he’s opened the page with that specific rune. He could probably draw it in his sleep.

Stiles had his wings out as Alexis was teaching him how to use them to his advantage in a fight. He was spectacularly bad at it.
“I need a break,” Stiles panted, doubled over, sweat rolling down his nose and dripping onto the ground. The wings added too much weight, his frail body wasn’t built to handle it.

Alexis made a derisive sound, and Stiles glanced up to see a frown on her face. “The angels won’t give you a break,” she sneered.

“Yeah, well,” Stiles breathed out heavily, plopping his ass on the ground and turning his face to the blaring sun.

Not for the first time he wondered if he actually made the right choice. Stiles sacrificed everything for this: his friends, his dad, the pack, Derek. All that for the slight possibility that he might defeat the angels. If he even survives that, which Stiles isn’t sure he will.

Stiles didn’t reveal his big plan to his dad, just told him that he has to go into hiding for a couple of weeks and that he’ll contact his dad again when he can. Lying to his dad was never a thing Stiles enjoyed, but necessary evil and all that. The thing he did to Derek was more cruel, and Stiles hoped against all hope that Derek will take him back if Stiles won’t be brutally murdered by beings way more powerful than him.

Stiles ran a hand through his sweaty hair. He couldn’t concentrate on that, he had more pressing matters. He’ll deal with Derek and the rest when the time comes.

Flexing his wings, Stiles beat them once, using the momentum to get back on his feet. Alexis lifted an eyebrow at him. “Well, at least you learned that.”

Stiles flipped the blade in his hand. “Again.”

Stiles rubs the aching muscles of his shoulders. Alexis never pulled her punches, but today she was even more aggressive than usual, and Stiles thinks he might not be able to use his wings tomorrow. Though, he’ll take combat training over the runes any day.

He glances at his forearms, the red scars standing out starkly against his pale skin. Using the demonic runes felt wrong, and Stiles had told as much to Alexis the first time she made him invoke one, but she waived it off. After seeing how powerful the runes were, Stiles shut up about it. But his stomach still roils with disgust every time he uses one.

The sound of fluttering wings notifies Stiles that Alexis is back. He quickly closes the journal and his notebook, stuffing both of them under his pillow. Not the best hiding place, but it’ll do for now. Stiles grabs his blade, lying beside him on the bed, and carves a rune onto his skin, not even wincing at the familiar bite.

“The oil for the summoning is in place,” Alexis says, leaning in the doorway of the bedroom.

Stiles turns to her, face bathed in the blood red light of the rune. “Good,” he comments.

Alexis pops a gum bubble. She looks more relaxed than Stiles has seen. “Wanna practice combat in the dark?” She asks.

There’s a part of Stiles’ brain screaming danger at him. But he just quietens the rune as he stands up, saying, “Sure.”

In the moonlight Stiles’ wings appear completely black, the gold twined in between feathers nearly non-existent. He spreads them as wide as they go, stretching the aching muscles. Alexis is doing the same in front of him. The silver patterns on her wings catch the moonlight far easier.
“What do you think it depends on?” Stiles wonders aloud, eyes skimming Alexis’ wings. “The barbs being gold or silver?” He clarifies when Alexis gives him an eyebrow raised in question.

“What parents?” She suggests, a blade dropping into her palm. “What kind were your mom’s? I never noticed.” She asks casually, slowly advancing on him.

Stiles gets in the defensive position, ready for her attack, but gets momentarily confused. “My mom wasn’t one of the Fallen,” he says slowly, frowning. Claudia’s wings were pristinely white, the angels never caught her to clip them.

Alexis stops in her tracks. She smiles, self-deprecating. “Right, yes,” she says. “Enough chatting.” She beats her wings once and appears right in front of Stiles who has only a split second to move to the side before Alexis’ blade plunges right where he stood.

He doesn’t have time to think about anything else for the rest of the night.

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The runes glow blood red on Stiles’ forearms instead of their usual soft blue. It still startles him somewhat every time he looks down even though it’s been a couple of weeks since he’s been able to invoke and use them. He silences them with a wave of his hand, and only the raised scars remain on his skin.

The summoning circle for the angels is burning a bright gold a few feet in front of them. Obtaining holy oil was a pain in the ass, Stiles used up all his favors, and now he’s just watching it burn away. Hopefully, it at least works. Angels, unlike demons, aren’t obliged to show up in a summoning circle.

The full moon has reached its peak above Stiles and Alexis. Wind rustling through the tall grass and the branches of the Nemeton is the only sound in the meadow, but Stiles can focus solely on the rushing of blood in his ears and his fluttering heartbeat.

This is it. This is what it comes to. Stiles has sacrificed so much for this – Derek, the pack, being there for Scott when he becomes a father, - and Stiles prays to anyone who’s listening that this would be worth it.

Every muscle in Stiles’ body tenses when several figures emerge from the tree line shrouded in fog. As the figures come closer, the terror consuming Stiles turns into bewilderment and anxiety. He knows those six figures. The fact that they don’t have wings and their eyes are glowing red, gold, blue, and purple, only confirms Stiles’ assumption.

“What the hell are they doing here?” Alexis near growls next to Stiles.

Stiles gapes at the pack. “I have no idea,” he answers, confused. He made sure to thoroughly crush Derek’s heart into the smallest possible pieces, he also pissed Laura off so that she wouldn’t plant ideas into Derek’s head of going after Stiles. Guess he wasn’t as efficient as he thought.

“You’re a tough guy to track,” Reina says when they’re standing a mere few feet away.

Stiles swallows audibly. He can’t not look at Derek and his frowny face all gorgeous bathed in the fires of the circle. He also idly wonders why Derek’s not ripping Stiles’ throat out with his teeth for the way things ended between them.

“You’re a fucking moron, you know that?” Derek tells Stiles. That’s about right, Stiles thinks.
Stiles licks his lips. “You really should leave,” he says, glancing away from the pack and at the circle.

“We’re not leaving you to fight the angels alone, idiot,” Laura scoffs, sending Stiles a glare. “Even though you went to great lengths to shut us out.”

“Not great enough,” Alexis mumbles, rivaling Laura’s pissed off look.

“What is she even doing here?” Derek asks, scowling at Alexis. “I thought you said she won’t help you.”

“You need to leave,” Alexis counters, stepping closer to him, her blade appearing in her hand.

“Are you threatening my pack?” Laura growls out, getting in Alexis’ face, fangs on display. The pack moves as one, flanking her and snarling at Alexis.

Stiles grabs at his hair. This is devolving into chaos. “Alright, everyone,” he nearly shouts, throwing his hands up in the air. “Alexis, please lower the blade.” He stands next to her, hand on her shoulder. She obliges after a couple more seconds of intensely staring at Laura. “You need to go,” Stiles tells the pack, taking Alexis’ place in front of Laura. “The angels will be here soon, and if you don’t leave –”

“I thought you didn’t care about us,” Laura interrupts him. “The way you treated Derek, the things you said.” She lifts a challenging eyebrow.

“I –” Stiles stumbles, glancing at Derek. The guilt and self-loathing for those things has been eating at Stiles since Derek left his house that night, and Stiles wants nothing more than to grovel on his knees in front of Derek until Derek forgives him, but this is so not the time. “I don’t care,” he says, finally. The mask of indifference easily slipping into place. Though he doubts it’ll do much good now since they saw his initial reaction.

“Then we’ll just stay. That should be fine with you if you don’t care, right?” Laura counters.

“Then we’ll just stay. That should be fine with you if you don’t care, right?” Laura counters.

Stiles grits his teeth. He looks at Derek again, longing to touch him to make sure he’s really here after two weeks of no contact. But the problem is that he does care. Too much. And he’ll be damned if something happens to either one of them. He just needs to convince them to leave.

But Stiles is out of time. Before he can even answer Laura, the fire of the circle dies out in a whoosh and the winged figures he dreaded seeing stand in the patch of burnt down grass. “Fuck,” Stiles swears. He doesn’t think about it, just teleports between the pack and angels. Alexis joins him, though she’s further away from the pack.

Stiles recognizes only two of the five angels that are standing a dozen or so feet before them. They all have their pristinely white wings out, flaunting them. Benjamin, the leader of the angel group dedicated to eradicating nephilim, is dressed in white, his blonde hair slicked back, and his eyes piercing right through Stiles’ very soul. Adriel, Benjamin’s right hand, and the one who cut Stiles’ wings off, smirks at Stiles.

“Mieczysław Stilinski,” Benjamin addresses Stiles, pronouncing his name perfectly which irks Stiles more than it should. “You have gathered quite the crowd for your reckoning.” He looks behind Stiles, scanning every one of them. And is it just Stiles or does Benjamin’s mouth set into a dissatisfied frown? The movement is so slight, Stiles can’t be sure.

“You also learned some new tricks,” Adriel adds, glancing up and down Stiles’ exposed arms, scars stark against his skin.
“Can we hurry this up?” An angel to Benjamin’s left asks, rolling his eyes. His wings twitch slightly.

“Of course,” Stiles answers him with all the calmness that he’s not feeling.

His blade manifests in his hand, and he uses it to waken the new runes. Only instead of the usual power surge comes pain like Stiles never felt before. He drops to his knees screaming as fire burns through his veins. Stiles is vaguely aware of snarling, and shouting, and the ground shaking beneath him, but everything quickly blacks out.

When he comes to, it can’t have been more than a few minutes. The moon is still beaming right at Stiles, and when he turns his head he can see the pack in various states of restraint by the angels. Suddenly there are fingers gripping his chin tightly and turning his head away from the pack.

“Oh, there you are,” Adriel smiles at him. “Good boy,” she pats his cheek.

“I-I don’t –” Stiles tries to say, his head feels stuffed with cotton and he’s got no idea what’s going on.

“You don’t understand why the runes didn’t work?” Adriel asks for him. Her eyes are black and soulless up close. “Why don’t you tell him, Alexis?” She lifts her head, addressing the nephilim.

Stiles makes an effort to turn his head and look at Alexis, who doesn’t look too bothered. “Demonic runes don’t work near angels,” she explains with a shrug of her shoulder.

The first thought that comes into Stiles’ mind is of course. Of course she betrayed him; Stiles’ gut told him as much would happen. He should’ve listened to it and dropped Alexis as soon as he could.

“I came up with that plan,” Adriel says, clearly proud. “It was supposed to be simple but effective. Alexis had to win you over by telling you she knew your mom, and you were supposed to go with her immediately.” Her eyes wander over to the pack. “That’s when complication number one happened. Then she had to get you alone, which clearly didn’t work out either.” Her reproachful gaze moves back to Alexis.

“They showed up just minutes before you,” Alexis tries to explain, her cool façade gone again. “I don’t know how they found us. They probably used the witch.” She looks at Reina, who is on her knees with an angel blade pressed against her throat.

Benjamin waves carelessly with his hand. “Doesn’t matter now. Just one more thing to take care of.” He looks at the three angels. “Kill the werewolves and the witch, and meet us back at the extraction point.”

Stiles’ heart drops to his stomach. He scrambles to his feet immediately. “No, please,” he pleads, turning to Benjamin. “You don’t have to do that. They’re not a threat to you. Just – just do what you want with me, but let them go.”

Benjamin’s calculating eyes run over Stiles’ face. The corners of his lips turn upwards in a dangerous
smile that makes Stiles regret speaking up. “I have a better idea. Why don’t we make you watch them die?”

Adriel is forcibly turning Stiles around even before Benjamin has finished his sentence. Her grip is tight on his arm and shoulder, Stiles can feel bruises forming already. His mind is working in overdrive trying to think of how to get close enough to the Nemeton; that’s his only hope of getting the pack alive out of this. But even with all that adrenalin clearing his brain from the fuzziness, Stiles doesn’t see any way to do that.

Benjamin easily teleports next to the pack. His wings neatly fold at his back as he looks at them before turning to Stiles. “Which one of these is your lover?” He asks like he actually expects Stiles to answer.

Stiles doesn’t let his eyes to even flicker to Derek who he saw was next to Reina on the ground, one of the angels’ foot on his back, keeping him down. But Stiles needn’t have tried as Alexis speaks up.

“The beta on the ground,” she supplies, and Stiles wants to choke her right here and now. He twitches only minutely, and already feels Adriel’s cold blade at his throat.

Benjamin motions for the angel to yank Derek up. This prompts the angel to let go of Reina, who he tells not to do anything funny, before he makes Derek stand.

Even though Stiles wants nothing more than to look at Derek and make sure he’s okay at least for now, he turns his eyes to Reina. She’s staring at him already and minutely shakes her head, glancing to Stiles’ left at Adriel.

“Don’t touch him,” Laura’s snarl brings Stiles’ attention back to the present. There’s blood trickling down her neck where the angel blade is pressed.

“Or what, little wolf?” Benjamin asks her. He manifests his blade, twirling it around in his palm as his wings twitch with what Stiles assumes is anticipation. “Quick and painless, or do you think I should draw it out and let you say your goodbyes?” He asks, turning to Stiles with a smile.

“You sick monster,” Erica growls out before whimpering as the angel that has her hand in Erica’s hair tugs on it to make her shut up.

Benjamin doesn’t spare her a second of his attention. “Well, Mieczysław?” He prompts. “The decision is yours.”

Stiles looks at Derek, his expression set into the usual frown, not betraying any other emotion than anger. He glances at Erica on her knees, Laura next to her, and Boyd and Isaac held by another angel, and then finally at Reina, who’s currently not being watched by any angel. So Stiles prays to anyone that’s listening, and then manifests his wings, spreading them as wide as they’ll go.

Adriel and Alexis, standing either side of Stiles, get knocked off balance. Stiles feels Adriel’s blade slice through his left wing, but doesn’t pay it much attention as he teleports in front of Benjamin, manifesting his own blade at the same time. He goes straight for Benjamin’s debatably existing heart, but the angel sees it coming, and Stiles nearly gets his hand chopped off.

Chaos erupts around Stiles as Reina’s eyes glow purple and she attacks the other angels, while the werewolves quickly catch on and struggle against their captors. Stiles briefly sees Derek’s eyes glow blue before he grabs the angel’s arm, breaking it, and turns to get his claws through the angel’s ribcage. He can’t focus much on Derek though as he has to keep moving to not get cut or stabbed by Benjamin.
Stiles adapts an avoid and evade tactic, moving closer to the Nemeton. It works for the most part; he gets a few cuts and bruises that he doesn’t waste energy on healing, instead focusing on moving. He gets momentarily distracted when a shriek rings through the meadow, followed by a bright light. Benjamin is seemingly as stupefied as Stiles because he too just watches one of his angel buddies, wings on fire, fall to the ground in a lifeless heap.

Isaac, who magically killed the angel with an angel blade, grins at no one in particular. Stiles’ eyes widen when Alexis throws her blade at him, hitting his shoulder. Laura screams some profanities as Erica tackles Alexis, and that’s about all Stiles sees before Benjamin is on him again.

They do the same dance of Benjamin advancing and Stiles retreating. Stiles knows he can’t take Benjamin, he needs help, but everyone is clearly busy with the other angels. So Stiles keeps avoiding direct contact, dropping down in a crouch when Benjamin’s wing goes to clip him again, though this time Stiles swipes at Benjamin’s legs with his own. Stiles manages to make contact, to his own surprise, and quickly stands up, towering over Benjamin.

Adrenalin rushes in Stiles’ veins as he lifts his blade, the previous plan completely forgotten in favor of sweet revenge. His wings are spread wide, eyes glowing blue, as he takes that second to enjoy giving his mother’s murderer what he deserves. However, Benjamin’s not even looking at him, instead his eyes move behind Stiles. “Adriel, no,” he commands.

Before Stiles can react to that, someone yanks roughly on Stiles’ wing, jerking Stiles back and down on his knee. “We’ll see if they grow back this time,” Adriel’s voice is right in Stiles’ ear, and before Stiles has so much as a thought to do something, anything, pain flares through his back.

Stiles screams just like he did last time. Tears are streaking down his face, his right wing fluttering helplessly. Stiles drops to all fours, breathing heavily, feeling the blood soaking his back. He faintly hears screaming and wonders if that’s still him or someone else.

“What have you done?” Stiles hears Benjamin’s angry voice booming above him. “He’s useless to us now!”

Through the haze of pain, Stiles wonders where his blade is. Benjamin is close, if Stiles had his blade, he could still kill him. His eyes search for the silver glint somewhere in the tall grass, but his vision is blurry.

“I’ll find you another nephilim from another Earth,” Adriel drawls out. “It’s not that big of a loss.”

Stiles notices it a couple feet to his left. Fingers digging into dirt, Stiles musters all the strength he’s got left, and starts reaching for it.

“Fine,” Benjamin huffs. “Finish him off then.”

Adriel yanks Stiles back by his right wing before Stiles can reach his blade. As Adriel’s blade digs into the shoulder of his wing, Stiles bites his cheek, tears streaming down his face again. Benjamin turns away from him, teleporting closer to the pack still fighting two angels and a nephilim.

Vision blurry, grunting from the pain, Stiles watches as Benjamin incapacitates Reina who was causing the most damage. She drops to her knees, a soundless scream on her lips, her eyes losing the purple glow. Laura and Derek go after him but he easily evades them, kicking Laura in the back and flinging Derek through the clearing.

A thud tells Stiles that he’s free of his right wing. There’s blood in Stiles’ mouth as he drops to the ground again. This time his arms don’t hold him up, and he eats dirt. The taste of it mixed with the
blood, and the pain radiating from his shoulder blades makes Stiles want to throw up.

Lying there on the brink of unconsciousness, Stiles notices Erica on the ground, struggling against an angel on her with the blade pointed at her heart. Boyd is barely keeping his own against the second angel, and Isaac, with a heavily bleeding shoulder, is doing his best to avoid Alexis.

Stiles can only mumble the softest no, when he sees Adriel walking over to a helpless Reina. The angel flips her bloody blade in her hand. She lifts Reina’s head with a fingertip, putting the blade that’s dripping with Stiles’ blood to the witch’s throat.

Stiles needs to do something. And quickly. His eyes search for his blade that he saw a few minutes ago. He spots it in the same place, and starts dragging his body the couple required feet.

A howl shakes the ground as Benjamin successfully swipes at Laura’s side. She stumbles back, gripping the wounds, blood trickles over her fingers. A huge black wolf tears into Benjamin’s wing, making the angel shout in pain. Adriel gets distracted from her task, immediately appearing next to Benjamin.

His fingers wrap around the handle of his blade. Stiles grunts as he sits up, blade in hand. He draws the rune on his right palm, fingers shaking, but he’s so familiar with it that it comes out near perfect. The rune glows a soft blue.

Stiles struggles to his feet, his back seems to be on fire, and it’s spreading through the rest of his body. He keeps his eyes on the Nemeton, not daring to glance down and see his mutilated wings. His palm makes contact with the tree, and Stiles gasps at the power surge.

Suddenly, there’s no pain anymore, and Stiles can breathe. He diverts his attention to the clearing. It’s too bright. Everything is bathed in the soft blue, and it takes Stiles a second to realize that it’s him that’s emitting the light.

The fighting has stopped. Laura is lying on the ground with the wolf standing over her. Erica is kneeling next to Boyd who’s sitting on the ground, looking dazed. Isaac is near them, and Reina has regained power over her body and is standing, watching Stiles with big eyes.

The angels gawk at him too. Benjamin’s wings are bleeding profusely, he has to lean on Adriel to keep upright, and that brings Stiles more joy than any good person should feel over something like this.

The Nemeton whispers to Stiles. Or maybe to the whole clearing, Stiles isn’t quite sure. But he suddenly knows what he has to do. Keeping his eyes on one of the angels, Stiles snaps his fingers. There’s a shout of agony, the angel bursts into flames, and after a couple seconds there’s only a pile of ashes on the ground where he once stood.

Another encouraging whisper, and the second angel becomes dust. There’s a smile on Stiles’ face when he directs his attention to Benjamin and Adriel. He enjoys their dying shrieks way too much.

Thank you, Stiles thinks, or maybe says out loud, as the connection breaks, and the only light left in the clearing is from the flames of Stiles’ burning wings. Stiles falls but never hits the ground, a wolf howl echoing all around him.

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Stiles blinks against the light streaming from the windows and moves to cover his face with a blanket, but the sharp pain splitting his back makes him abort the action and grunt in pain. He breathes heavily for a few seconds before bracing himself and lifting himself up into a sitting
Derek’s bedroom is filled with what Stiles assumes is midday sunlight. Why has no one closed the curtains is beyond him.

Stiles runs his hand down the bandages on his chest, the slight movement of his hand causing the pain to sharpen but not unbearably so. But he has to grit his teeth against it when he throws off the covers and goes to stand up. Stiles leans on every available surface as he makes his way to the bathroom.

Standing in front of the mirror, Stiles nearly doesn’t recognize himself. His skin is even paler, there are dark bags under his eyes, and the demonic runes etched into his skin stand out starkly on his arms. He ignores it all and focuses on peeling the bandages away, wanting to see the damage for himself, to make sure they’re really gone.

The process is painful, and after ten minutes of near tears and grunts of pain, bloody bandages are at Stiles’ feet. He’s gripping the sink, swaying in the spot slightly. Finally, Stiles turns around and glances back at himself.

The open wounds are wider than the first time, edges jagged indicating the rushed work. Stiles gags and nearly falls forward, catching himself on the shower wall. His breathing becomes sporadic, black spots appearing in his vision, and his legs don’t hold him anymore.

The panic attack consumes Stiles whole, and he lets it. He thinks he might just die from it but there’s not a thought in his mind that would be against that happening. And then Stiles thinks of his dad. And how Stiles is the only thing he’s got. And how when they talked before Stiles went radio silent for two weeks he promised his dad to get out of this alive.

So Stiles counts his inhales and exhales until his heart stops shaking uncontrollably. He wipes the tears from his face and stands up with great difficulty. Taking a second to lean on the cabinet, Stiles moves back to the bedroom and starts looking around for a phone. He needs to call his dad, tell him he’s okay.

“Stiles!”

Stiles turns his head to the door, one hand on the bedframe so he wouldn’t just sink to the floor. Derek looks wild. His eyes are huge, his beard more unkempt than Stiles ever saw, and he’s only wearing torn and muddy shorts.

“Hey, Derek,” Stiles croaks out and clears his throat, just now realizing how thirsty he actually is.

“Are you –” Derek starts, entering the room. “How are –” His eyes run all over Stiles’ form before he reaches out slowly, placing his hands gingerly on Stiles’ upper arms. “You should probably sit down,” he says, voice filled with worry.

Stiles doesn’t protest at all, sitting on the bed and just blinking at Derek as he kneels in front of Stiles, hands on Stiles’ knees. “Um, we,” Derek tries again, eyes not leaving Stiles’ face like he’s afraid Stiles will disappear if he looks away. Which is stupid, Stiles thinks. He doesn’t have his wings anymore, he can’t just disappear. “We – that is, I – I called your dad,” Derek says. “He should be here tomorrow.”

Stiles nods slowly. “Good,” he says, but it comes out in a whisper. He still feels slightly dazed. “Thank you.” Stiles reaches out to cup Derek’s cheek, and the fresh stab of pain sends a jolt through him, clearing some of that fuzziness.
Derek’s eyebrows immediately furrow and he grips at the hand Stiles has on his cheek, drawing pain away. But Stiles snags his hand back, frowning. “Don’t,” he says. “I need to think.”

“Stiles,” Derek says, anger making an appearance. “The pack has been draining you of pain for nearly 24 hours. And you’re still in too much pain.”

“I’m fine, Der,” Stiles assures him, patting his cheek a couple times. “How is everyone else?” He asks mostly worried about the pack but also for distraction purposes.

Derek huffs, but clearly thinks it’s futile to argue with him. “Boyd, Isaac, and Laura got injured but they healed quickly with Reina’s help. She tried to heal your wounds too but it wouldn’t work.”

Stiles bites his lip. “Nothing will work. These will heal on their own.” He doesn’t say that they might not heal at all, for all he knows. It’s not like this is recorded anywhere. He should’ve been killed and not left alive and mutilated.

Stiles closes his eyes for a second, just breathing. When he opens them again, Derek’s pitying gaze makes Stiles look away. “And the,” he swallows thickly, “and the angels?” He asks.

“You don’t remember?” Derek asks.

Stiles looks back at him, brows furrowed. “I passed out after Adriel,” he stops. He can’t say it.

Derek rubs soothing circles onto Stiles’ thighs. “I don’t really know what you did, but you and that tree, the Nemeton, were glowing. And then you just,” Derek lifts one of his hands and snaps his fingers. “And the angels were gone.”

Stiles nods, processing that information. So he blacked out and killed the angels? Right. Cool. A normal Saturday night.

Then a thought occurs to Stiles. “Only the angels?” He asks Derek. “And Alexis?”

Derek’s jaw locks. “The nephilim got away. I don’t know how but she did.”

Stiles scoffs. “Cockroaches always survive,” he mumbles to himself without much humor.

Stiles looks at Derek then, kneeling on the floor in only a pair of shorts, and his heart skips a beat. This man risked everything for Stiles, even after Stiles made sure to thoroughly rip his heart to shreds. The guilt gnaws at Stiles’ insides.

“The things I said that night,” Stiles starts.

Derek only shakes his head. “We can talk about that later.”

“No,” Stiles says firmly. “I want you to know that I didn’t mean any of it. I wanted to protect you and the pack. I thought me and Alexis,” he says the name through gritted teeth, “will be able to beat the angels. I didn’t want you to get hurt because of me.”

“I know,” Derek sighs. “It was stupid of you. Extremely stupid, Stiles.” Stiles is surprised Derek actually glares at him. “I have no idea why you even thought you needed to protect us and leave with a nephilim you knew for like five minutes.”

“Yeah, not my brightest moment,” Stiles admits. He runs his fingers over Derek’s unkempt beard. “I’m sorry I hurt you.”

Derek leans up, brushing Stiles’ lips with his own. “You’re forgiven,” he whispers against his mouth.
before he kisses Stiles with purpose.

“Why did you even go looking for me?” Stiles asks when Derek pulls back, his fingers splayed on Stiles’ thighs.

“I talked to Reina,” Derek replies. “When I told her what you said to me, she thought it didn’t make sense. She convinced me that you lied about, well, lying, and then we started trying to track you.”

That gets Stiles’ attention. He made sure no one could track him through magic or using technology. “How did you find me?”

An emotion flashes too quickly over Derek’s face. He lowers his eyes, not meeting Stiles’ gaze.

“Derek,” Stiles breathes. “Please tell me you didn’t do something extremely stupid.”

Derek only sighs. Resigned, he says, “I made a deal with a demon.”

Stiles’ jaw drops open. “You’re joking, right?” He asks incredulous.

Derek makes a face. “Reina got us in touch with a friend of hers who can summon demons,” he explains, sounding beyond guilty.


“I know,” Derek interrupts him, looking back up. “But we couldn’t trace you any other way, and I was desperate to find you.” He grips both of Stiles’ hands in his, squeezing lightly.

Stiles shakes his head in disapproval.

“Imagine what would’ve happened if we hadn’t gotten there in time,” Derek implores. “They could’ve killed you, Stiles.”

“I don’t think so,” Stiles says in protest. “Alexis clearly worked for them,” he muses, verbally working it out. “She was probably brainwashed or something. They must’ve wanted to do the same to me. There’s a lack of angels to fight in their civil war so they must use nephilim as a last resort.”

“You can’t know for sure,” Derek argues. “And I’d do it again. For you.”

“Fuck,” Stiles can’t help but swear again. “What did it want from you in return?”

Derek’s eyes run over Stiles. His smile doesn’t quite reach his eyes. “It wasn’t something important,” he says. “I got you back and that’s all that matters.” He lifts Stiles’ right hand, kissing the knuckles before placing a gentle kiss on his palm where the skin is still raised in the shape of the rune.

Stiles can feel his eyes water, overcome with the love he feels for Derek. He places his fingers under Derek’s jaw, guiding him to meet Stiles’ lips in a sweet kiss.
Stiles keeps forgetting. It’s been a week, and he forgets that every movement of his arms hurts, that he can no longer simply flop onto his back and lie in the sun, that there’ll be no comforting weight settling around him when he gets scared or sad. Frustration builds within him until he feels like exploding and destroying everything around himself. So Stiles does what he does best and shuts everyone and everything out and focuses on his work. At least that hasn’t been ripped away from him.

He rolls his shoulders, frowning at the painful pull of the wounds, and tries to focus on the words in the book in front of him.

“So you’re staying here permanently?” His dad asks, taking a sip of his beer.

John has been staying with Stiles for the last few days. Hovering is an understatement of what he’s been doing. Stiles thought he’d have a few quiet hours to himself at the Jade Wolf, especially since only Erica and Laura are working tonight, but his dad decided to tag along.

“Yeah,” Stiles answers, distracted. His usual booth is covered in books for his research into Kitsunes that one of his clients requested.

His dad hums. “Maybe I should see if they’re looking for people in the Sheriff’s department here,” he mumbles to himself, and that gets Stiles’ attention.

“What?” He asks, lifting his head and staring at his dad.

John shrugs a shoulder. “I’ve been getting bored in Salt Lake City.”

Stiles gapes at him. “Dad, you’re a detective there. In a big city. Where actual crime happens. What would you even do here?” He frowns, wondering if he zoned out of some conversation earlier because this is not making sense.

“Just a thought,” John mutters, drinking his beer nonchalantly.

Stiles is about to dive deeper into this when Erica shows up at their table. “Laura knows one of the Deputies at the station pretty well,” she says, putting a basket of fries right on top of Stiles’ keyboard, making him scramble to get them off. “I’m sure she could ask around if you’re interested.” Erica flashes Stiles’ dad a perfect smile.

“This is a private conversation.” Stiles glares at her.

Her eyes spark gold for a second as she turns to Stiles. “No such thing in a werewolf pack.”

Stiles rolls his eyes but doesn’t dispute that.

“She’s in the back now if you want to talk to her,” Erica says. She points to the door next to the bar labeled _private_.

John smiles, getting up from his seat. “Thank you, Erica.” He pats her shoulder as he passes, and she nearly preens at him.
“Do you have some agenda with this?” Stiles lifts an eyebrow at her when his dad has gone.

Erica looks faux scandalized for a second. “Me? With an agenda?” She turns fully to him, propping her hip against the table. “But seriously, would it be so bad if your dad moved here? We all know how much you miss him.”

“Beacon Hills is teeming with supernatural activity,” Stiles says, making a move to cross his arms but a sharp sting of pain stops him, so he just rests his elbows on the table. “I don’t want my dad anywhere near this.”

Erica eyes his back, the rigid way he’s holding himself, but doesn’t comment. “And we deal with all of it.”

“No do you think my dad would be happy to stay out of it and let us deal with it?” Stiles scoffs. “Stilinski men get right into the middle of things if you want us or not.” He glances away from her, licking his lips nervously. “I just want him to be safe and not have to deal with witches, kelpies, or whatever else comes stumbling through this town.”

Erica exhales heavily, shaking her head. She leans closer, her hand going to Stiles’ shoulder. Stiles flinches away, eyes wide and heart beating double rhythm.

Erica steps back, hands going behind her back. “Just give your dad more credit,” she says before walking away.

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The scars of the demon runes on Stiles’ forearms have faded from an angry red to a faint pink. Stiles twists his left arm to the side, looking over all of them. In his right hand he has his angelic blade; the metal glints catching the light of the afternoon sun.

Stiles brushes the tip of the blade over his arm, awakening the runes that are still active. There are four in total, two dampening ones and two enhancing, all of them glowing a faint blue, stained black at the edges.

A sharp inhale, and Stiles silences the runes as quickly as he can. The blade drops onto the porch steps next to him, rolling down them until it falls into the grass.

Why in the fuck did he listen to her? Why did he use demonic runes? He should’ve known better, should’ve known that nothing good would come out of using demon magic. What a fool he’s been. A desperate fool. Stiles should’ve stopped and thought for just one goddamn second. Why didn’t he do his research before blindly following her instructions? He always does his research.

“Fuck me,” Stiles mutters to himself. He rubs his hands down his face, tangles his fingers in his hair as he dips his head between his knees.

He tried researching this when he noticed his runes blackening a couple days ago, but he found nothing. Stiles is probably the first nephilim to try using both angelic and demonic runes at the same time, it hadn’t even occurred to him not to. He has no idea what are the consequences of such a stupid decision.

“Stiles?” Derek’s voice sounds worried.

Stiles lifts his head to see Derek making his way towards him over the backyard. “Did you run here?” Stiles asks, taking in a bare-chested Derek. His skin glistens with a nice sheen of sweat, and he looks good like that. Though, when doesn’t he?
“Yeah.” Derek shrugs a shoulder. He stops in front of Stiles, bending down to pick up the blade, before sitting down next to Stiles. “Where’s your dad?” He asks, twirling the blade between his fingers.

Stiles scoffs. “I don’t need a 24/7 babysitter, Derek,” he says, probably a bit too biting.

Derek gives him an unimpressed look. Stiles runs a hand through his hair, already used at the sting in his back. “Sorry,” he says. “I’m just…” Stiles trails off. He doesn’t even have words to finish that sentence. Fuck if he knows what he’s feeling right now. Or if anything at all.

“You were with Reina again?” Stiles asks, hoping Derek will take the subject change bait.

Derek flicks his eyes away and then down to the blade in his hands. “Yeah,” he says slowly. “She’s been helping me with something.”

Stiles lets his fingertips glide over Derek’s forearm, their hands connecting, fingers twining together. “If you told me what that something is, maybe I could help too.” He would also appreciate the distraction.

Derek stares at their joined hands, the blade forgotten on the floor of the porch. “I don’t think so.”

“Is it a witch magic thing?” Stiles asks, curiosity piqued. He’s been trying not to press Derek on this issue, they don’t have to tell each other everything, just like Stiles isn’t going to tell Derek about his runes. But it’s not like Stiles is known for self-control.

“No.” Derek shakes his head. “It’s,” he stops, licks his lips. “It’s nothing too important. You don’t need to worry.” He turns to Stiles, a small smile on his face.

Stiles is not convinced, but he doesn’t argue as Derek leans in, catching his lips. Derek’s free hand comes up to caress over Stiles’ cheek and then slides to the side of his neck. Stiles licks at Derek’s lips before biting at the bottom one and pulling away.

“I have very nosy neighbors,” Stiles reminds Derek.

Derek’s eyes briefly wander to the left and he smirks. Stiles is damn sure that Mrs. Freeman is glued to her window.

Derek stands up, taking both of Stiles’ hands, and leads him inside. They don’t make it further than the kitchen. Stiles presses Derek against the counter, his mouth already attached to Derek’s neck. He kisses lower, glad that Derek’s not wearing a shirt.

Derek’s fingers run into Stiles’ hair, gripping it slightly at the nape of his neck. He strokes there, touch light, as Stiles unsuccessfully tries to mark him with a hickey. Derek’s other hand slips beneath Stiles’ shirt, wandering over his stomach, fingertips running below the line of Stiles’ bandages.

Stiles goes back to Derek’s lips, kissing and biting at them. His hand glides down Derek’s bare chest, fingers dipping down into the waistband. His mind fuzzes over for a second, and Stiles breaks away from Derek, breathing heavily.

“You okay?” Derek asks, and Stiles glances at him, his eyes catching sight of black creeping up Derek’s arm.

Taking Derek’s hand from his neck, Stiles gives him a look. “You made me dizzy,” he states. “And I told you not to do that.” He indicates Derek’s arm.
Derek shrugs a shoulder, a small smile tugging his lips upward. “I never agreed not to.” At Stiles’ expression, his smile drops. “You’re hurting, Stiles.”

Stiles snorts. “No shit. But I can handle it, so keep your weird werewolf pain pulling magic to yourself.” Stiles steps back, his fingertips dragging over Derek’s skin, eyes following their movement. “I was actually enjoying this, you know.”

Derek rolls his eyes. “Fine, I won’t do it again.” He loops his fingers in Stiles’ belt loops, pulling him in again.

Stiles smiles into the kiss. Their hands return to wandering over skin, and soon Derek’s lost his shorts, and Stiles’ jeans are halfway down his thighs. Derek’s hand is wrapped around both of them, moving rhythmically, punching moans out of both of them.

Stiles rubs his cheek against Derek’s sharp jawline, enjoying the scratching of the scruff. He dips his head lower, biting at Derek’s shoulder and groaning at an especially clever twist of Derek’s hand. It takes only a couple more strokes before Stiles’ teeth sink deeper into Derek’s skin, and he’s trembling through the orgasm. Derek growls, it reverberates through Stiles’ chest, and then his own orgasm crashes over him.

They stay close together, both panting heavily. Stiles licks over the bite mark on Derek’s shoulder, making him hiss. “Sorry,” Stiles mumbles, gliding the pad of his thumb over the mark and watching as it quickly heals over.

“I actually liked it,” Derek admits, nudging Stiles’ jaw with his nose.

Stiles lifts his head, smiling, and kisses Derek again. It’s sweet and short, and Stiles snaps his fingers as he draws away. It takes him a second to realize it, but they’re both still complete messes. He looks down at himself, frowning. Derek only kisses his cheek, saying he’ll get a towel.

Once they’re both clean and reasonably decent, Stiles snaps his fingers again, thinking of his laptop. Nothing happens. Stiles clicks his fingers a few times more without results.

“What are you doing?” Derek asks, amused, when he walks back into the kitchen. Stiles didn’t even notice him leave the room.

“I –” Stiles says, he licks his lips. “I can’t summon anything.” He lifts his eyes to Derek. There’s an unpleasant trip in Stiles’ heartbeat.

“What do you mean?” Derek crosses his arms, a small furrow appearing between his eyebrows.

“I mean,” Stiles starts, voice higher than it should be. “I had telekinetic powers, and now,” he snaps his fingers again to prove the point, “nothing.”

“Stiles,” Derek says, stepping closer to him.

Stiles isn’t listening, he tries to manifest his blade that he knows they left on the porch, but once again nothing happens. Panic settling in his gut, Stiles near runs out the back door. The blade still glints silver in the sunlight on the floor where Derek put it.

Stiles kneels to retrieve it, holding it in his hand and trying to demanifest it. The weapon stays in his hand.

“Stiles,” Derek murmurs softly, kneeling next to him.
“I… I can’t, Derek,” Stiles tells him, tears welling in his eyes. “I lost my wings, Der,” he whispers. “And my runes, and now this.”

Derek’s palm cups Stiles’ cheek. He removes the blade from Stiles’ hand and then pulls him into a hug. “It’s okay, Stiles,” he says softly. “We’ll figure this out.”

Stiles holds tightly onto him. He knows that they won’t, but doesn’t say so out loud.

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“Aw, they’re so cute, man,” Stiles coos staring at the screen of his phone and smiling like a dork. The triplets are sleeping in the same basinet, their little faces all scrunched up.

Scott’s kids came into this world only a few hours ago, and Stiles has seen them for all of five minutes, but he’d die for those children.

“I know,” Scott says, a huge grin on his face when he directs the camera back towards himself. “I can’t wait for you to meet them.”

Stiles’ grin wavers slightly. “As soon as I can travel without bleeding all over my car seats, I’m there,” he promises.

Scott’s cheery expression drops. “I’m sorry that happened to you, man.” He’s said it already a few times after Stiles told him the whole story, but Stiles appreciates it nonetheless.

“How’s Allison doing?” Stiles asks instead of answering.

Scott tells him how amazing Allison was during the labor, how proud he is of her, and every little detail of his kids’ short lives. By the end of it Stiles is regretting asking anything at all. Little whimpering start sounding in the background as Scotty is working through the list of names he and Allison came up with but aren’t sure which ones to choose.

“Oh, they’re awake and hungry,” Scott interrupts himself. “Talk to you later, man.”

Stiles doesn’t even have time to say bye before the screen goes black. He shakes his head. Not even a day old and they’ve already got their dad wrapped around their little fingers; those kids are going to be menaces.

Now that Scott’s inane babble isn’t filling the room, Stiles can hear loud voices coming from downstairs. The last fight in this house was about Derek still choosing to be with Stiles while Laura argued that they should throw him out. Since then Stiles has done a lot of groveling and explaining to win Laura back over to his side.

Curiosity piqued at what this might be about, Stiles creeps down the stairs as quietly as he can.

“You have to tell him, Derek,” Laura says. “Maybe he knows something useful.”

Derek sighs. “He’s got a lot on his plate as it is, Laura. I’ll deal with this myself.”

“You’ve got 54 days left, Derek!” Laura growls this time.

Stiles rounds the corner, frowning at the Hale siblings. “54 days until what?” He asks.

Laura just lifts a challenging eyebrow at Derek who glares at her and then turns to face Stiles. He slumps back against the counter, crossing his arms. “It’s not a big deal,” he starts, and Laura scoffs. “It’s about the deal I made when looking for you.”
Stiles gets instantly worried. Derek said it was taken care of, and Stiles should’ve known better than to listen to that. Of course the demon would want something impossible to obtain. “What about it?” He asks, coming closer to Derek.

“The demon,” Derek starts and lifts a hand to scrape his fingers through his beard, “it wanted something that I thought I could get it, but now I can’t.”

Stiles reaches out, wrapping his fingers around Derek’s bicep, thumb stroking the skin there. “And if you don’t give it what it wants?”

Derek’s eyes flicker away, he clears his throat. “It’s going to take my heart instead,” he near whispers.

Stiles’ breath catches for a few seconds and he grips tighter onto Derek. Fucking demons and their fucking deals. “Okay,” Stiles says even though nothing is even remotely okay. “What did it want in the first place?” Maybe they can get it. Stiles has connections in very low places, he’d be fine with being in debt to some shady people if it helped Derek.

Derek doesn’t answer him though. He takes Stiles’ hand, kissing the palm with the scar on it. So Stiles glances back at Laura.

She looks almost apologetic as she says, “Nephilim feathers.”

Stiles steps back and hits the kitchen island. Did Derek think Stiles would just give him the feathers? To give to a demon who’d certainly do something nefarious with them? Derek knows how Stiles feels about his wings, surely he wouldn’t expect that from Stiles. Or maybe he would’ve just taken them without asking?

Doesn’t matter now, though, does it? Stiles doesn’t have his wings anymore. And that is the problem.

“I would’ve asked,” Derek says with conviction, interpreting Stiles’ silence correctly. “And I would’ve understood if you’d said no.”

Stiles only nods his head a couple times. He exhales heavily, rubbing over his eyes. “Okay, so we need to figure out either how to get those feathers, or how to get you out of that deal with the demon.”

Derek steps closer to him, cupping Stiles’ cheeks. “We don’t have to do anything. I’ll take care of it. You’re dealing with enough as it is.”

Stiles knows that he’s dealing with enough, but the point is that he doesn’t want to deal with it. He needs something else to focus on. And his boyfriend’s stupid deal with a demon will do the trick perfectly.

“You’re not getting rid of me, sunshine,” Stiles tells Derek with a smile. “I’ve got more books on demons than I care to count, and we’re gonna go through all of them until we find something. And there’s at least one more nephilim roaming this Earth, and I’ll dig her out of whatever hole she’s hiding in, so that demon isn’t getting any part of you.” He seals the promise with a kiss to Derek’s smiling lips.

“Told you he could help,” Laura says with a smirk, making Stiles jump as he forgot she was here.

“You people have no boundaries,” Stiles grumbles as Laura cackles, and Derek only shakes his head.
“Right.” Stiles grabs Derek’s hand, towing him out of the kitchen. “To the library! We’ve got only 54 days and we’re not wasting another second.”

Derek presses himself close to Stiles’ back, a hand on Stiles’ hip. It still makes Stiles shiver none too pleasantly, but it’s Derek, and Stiles can work with that. A fleeting kiss is placed on the nape of Stiles’ neck, and Derek whispers an *I love you* into his ear. Unpleasant tingles get forgotten as a smile slips onto Stiles’ face.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks again to those who read, and before anyone asks, I don't think there's gonna be a sequel, that's just how the ending turned out.

Hope you enjoyed!

-E

Works inspired by this one

Fan Art for Wolf In Sheep's Clothing by CaptEdKenway

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